

Myth, Mythology, Mythopoeitics: Evolution, Interpretation, Comparative Analysis

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Abstract: At the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, the artistic transformation of myths and mythology in world literature became stronger. Over the past decades, this process has manifested itself in the revision of ancient myths and modern forms of artistic expression in modern literature. The example of the culture of ancient Mesopotamia, Sumer and other peoples does not have enough influence on literature. The legends of the Sumerians, Slavs, Germans and ancient peoples undergo many changes through the plots of various works of art and are reworked by the modern writer. It is the knowledge of myths that helps to build a society and helps the writer to understand the history of mankind. Myths, with their archaic images, plots, and motifs, are studied in many literary schools and thus become a source of literary innovation.

Keywords: Mythology, artistic changes, Mesopotamia, Sumer, ancient peoples, archaic images, literature, culture.

INTRODUCTION

At the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, there was a resurgence in the use of myths in world literature, and the transformation of myths reached the level of representation. Myths, which possess the binary nature of folk oral creativity, had been passed down orally from generation to generation for centuries. However, in the era of written literature, they increasingly began to manifest in harmony with artistic thought.

“Myth is one of the fundamental phenomena through which the essence of existence and the human being has historically been understood and perceived in a culturally and uniquely ancient way. Myth is the primary model of any ideology and, as has been noted, it is not only the origin of literature, art, and religion, but also of philosophy and even science in their initial syncretic form,” emphasized E.M. Meletinsky, the founder of the Russian theoretical folklore school. [Meletinsky, E. M. 2000]

“So, what is the foundation of the myths that have been passed down to us orally and through ancient sources?”

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODS

In ancient Greek, the region now known as Iraq was called Mesopotamia (Μεσοποταμία) located between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, where one of the earliest states emerged around 5000 BCE. This state is considered one of the cradles of world civilization and culture, and it was there (in Sumer – emphasis added, M.A.) that the first writing system based on linguistic principles was

invented. ... A comparison of the words alone shows that these languages (Sumerian and Turkic script – emphasis added, M.A.) are closely related. [Eshanqul, J. 2019] The Sumerians recorded in cuneiform script stories about the creation of the world and events that took place even before Adam and Eve. They also deified mountains. The chief god of the earth, Enlil, was referred to as the “Great Mountain” and was believed to live on a high mountain peak that connected heaven and earth. In the modern Uzbek writer Ulugbek Hamdam’s novel “*Muvozanat*” (“*Balance*”), the main character Yusuf, like many others, sets out on a pilgrimage to the Great Mountain. This shows that the author artistically reflects the mythology of the Sumerian era, in which mountains were also considered sacred. The writer emphasizes that the origins of literature do not begin with the “Classical Era” (i.e., Greek and Roman literature), but with Sumerian literature, which laid the foundation for them, as well as with the literary traditions of the Ancient East — including Egypt, China, India, Central Asia, and others.

In the religious beliefs of the ancient peoples who lived in the land between the two rivers, there was strong faith in the forces of nature and worship of deities such as the sun (Utu), the moon (Zuen), the sky (Anu), love (Inanna), stars (Ninsiana), water (Enki), and shepherds (Dumuzi–Abzu, Tammuz), along with belief in the spirits of good and evil.

The Babylonians built ziggurats — massive, layered stone towers resembling observatories, supported by solid stone walls and covered with glazed tiles — in honor of their gods. These ziggurats (from the Sumerian word for “multi-

level tower,” often compared to Babylonian pyramids) were majestic and beautiful in appearance, and the Babylonians were the first to use luxurious ceramics in architecture.

The seven-tiered Tower of Babylon had: the first level covered with glossy black tiles representing Saturn (Zuhal), the second in white — Venus (Zuhra), the third in red — Jupiter (Mushtariy), the fourth in blue — Mercury (Utorid), the fifth in dark red — Mars (Mirrix), the sixth in silver — the Moon, and the seventh in gold — the Sun.

In Babylonian belief, celestial bodies held great significance, and it was strongly believed that stars determined human fate.

The gods were often depicted as half-human, half-creature — for example, with the features of a fish, tree, dragon, snake, or bird. Numerous myths were created about them, such as those about the storm gods Apsu and Tiamat, and the sun god Shamash.

The religion of the ancient Germans was rich in gods and myths. They worshipped deities associated with the sun, thunder, lightning, sky, justice, war, seasons, plants, fertility, and fire. Belief in supernatural beings such as elves (from German – spirit or fairy), trolls (from Swedish – giant or demon), nixies (from German – water spirits), and gnomes (from German – small underground creatures) was also widespread.

The supreme god of the ancient Germanic people was Odin (from Old Norse – “supreme” or “head”), regarded as the ruler of the earth and sky, the god of storms, war, poetry, wisdom, and sacred texts. The Valkyries (from Old Norse – “angels of death”) were warrior maidens who served Odin. They brought brave warriors slain in battle to Valhalla (Old Norse – “realm of the dead”) and tended to them. In ancient Germanic mythology, the following deities were also prominent: Vanadis (Old Norse – goddess of beauty and love), Gudrun (Old Norse – associated with war, mysticism, and magic), Thor (god of thunder, lightning, and agriculture), Tyr (Tsiu) (god of the sky, war, and supreme justice), Baldr (god of spring, vegetation, and fertility), Loki (god of fire).

The religion of the ancient Slavs was a complex syncretic system that developed alongside the veneration of family and tribal ancestors, aligning with their patriarchal and clan-based social structure. The ancient Slavs believed in the “World Tree”, the center of the Earth, as the source of nature, movement, and life. Like the Germanic

religion, ancient Slavic religion was polytheistic, and Perun (Slavic – thunder god) was considered the chief deity. Other gods worshipped included: Svarog (Slavic – sky), Dazhbog (Slavic – sun), Khors (Slavic – wind), Stribog (Slavic – fire), Belbog (Slavic – luck and happiness), Veles/Volos (Slavic – wealth), Mokosh (Slavic – goddess of weaving). There were also anthropomorphic deities — half-human, half-animal figures — such as: Semik (Slavic – god of hunting), Yarilo (Slavic – agriculture), Kupala (Slavic – livestock), as well as deities associated with forests, groves, thickets, and vegetation. Tengrism was the ancient religion of the Turkic peoples who believed in Tengri, the god of the sky (also known as Tangrikhan). It emerged around the end of the 2nd millennium BCE and into the 1st millennium BCE. Many scholars note that the supreme sky god appeared under different names in various ancient cultures — such as Dingir in Sumerian, Tian in ancient Chinese, and Chenli among the Xiongnu — and argue that these all referred to the same singular deity: Tengri. According to many scholars, Tengrism was formed as a religion close to Buddhism but with its own independent doctrine, and was promoted by King Kanishka around 165 BCE. According to the teachings of Tengrism, Tengri is the spirit of the blue sky and the Master of the Great Heavens, with his eternal dwelling believed to be the sky. The word Tengri appears in various forms across Turkic peoples: *Tengri* or *Tengeri* (Altai), *Tengri* (Kipchak), *Tanrı* (Turkish), *Tengri* (Tatar), *Tangara* (Yakut), *Tengiri* (Kumyk), *Teyri* (Balkar–Karachay), *Tenger* (Mongol), and *Tura* (Chuvash). Tengri was imagined as the sole male deity — the creator of the universe, omniscient, just, and merciful, existing alone in the infinite expanse. In the Orkhon-Enisei inscriptions of the 4th–5th centuries CE, Tengri is praised as the only, eternal, life-giving, creator, destroyer, judge, helper, punisher, acceptor of prayers, protector, forgiver, knower of all things, teacher of knowledge, and guide. According to ancient Turkic belief, Tangrikhan, the supreme ruler of all existence, also created a pantheon of helper deities. This pantheon included:

Umay (also called *Jumay*, the mother goddess), Elik (the father god), and deities representing Earth, Water, Fire, Sun, Moon, Stars, Air, Clouds, Wind, Storm, Thunder, Lightning, Rain, and Rainbow. Tangrikhan, along with other spirits such as the Spirit of the Land and the Mother of Water, managed earthly affairs and determined the lifespan of all living beings. Umay, the goddess

who caused life on Earth, was depicted as a woman and revered as the “Mother of Life.” The male deity Erlik, by contrast, was associated with death and ruled the underworld.

Among ancient Turkic peoples, there existed a wolf totem, referred to as “Bozkurt” (gray wolf). The Bozkurt, whose blue fur symbolized the sky, was considered a sign of eternity among the Turkic nations. However, in the modern Uzbek writer Shoyim Bo‘tayev’s novel “*Qo‘rg‘onlangan Oy*” (“*The Fortified Moon*”), the image of the wolf is not used as a Turkic totem. Instead, it appears as a symbol of tyranny and savagery. Zarathustra, son of Pourushaspa from the Spitama tribe (Greek: *Zoroaster*, Middle Persian: *Zaraxustra*, meaning “eternal star” or “one with beautiful camels”), is considered the founder of Zoroastrianism. According to Zoroastrian belief, this name was given to him by Ahura Mazda (Greek: *Ormuzd*, meaning “Lord of Wisdom”).

Zoroastrian teaching is a moralistic religion based on the eternal struggle between good and evil. It promotes faith in a single God through justice, wisdom, creativity, and hard work. In this struggle, Ahura Mazda, the deity representing good, will ultimately triumph over Angra Mainyu (Greek: *Ahriman*, the embodiment of evil and destruction).

In Zoroastrianism, several core beliefs must be accepted without doubt. These include: the belief in one supreme and benevolent God, Ahura Mazda, the existence of two realms: Getig (material world) and Menog (spiritual world), that Zarathustra is the first prophet of Ahura Mazda in human history, that all parts of the *Avesta* are divine truth, that sacred fire is the earthly symbol of God, that mobads (priests) were Zarathustra’s first disciples, guardians of revelation, conductors of purification rituals, preservers of sacred fire, and interpreters of doctrine, the existence of eternal fravashis (guardian spirits) of all goodness, and that human fravashis chose to descend to Earth to combat evil, the eventual union of good and evil forces, the coming of Saoshyant (the savior), who will defeat evil Frasho-Kereti, the occurrence of the end of time, the final judgment after death, the triumph of justice, And the necessity of following Zoroastrian traditions and rituals to fight evil and preserve purity. Zoroastrians performed their prayers five times daily during specific time periods known as “gohi” (times of the day). These are: Khavan goh (from dawn until midday), Rapithwin goh (after midday), Uzarim goh (before sunset), Aiwisruthrem goh (after sunset), Ushahin

goh (from midnight until dawn). During the Zoroastrian festivals of Navrooz (the New Year festival celebrating the triumph of good over evil, observed on March 21, when day and night are equal) and Mehrjon (the harvest festival celebrated on September 23), the wearing of the kushti (a sacred cord) over their garments is an important ritual, and it must be untied and retied before every prayer [Tashkent, 2013]. Thus, the Zoroastrian rituals are not limited to lighting the sacred fire, circling the bride and groom around the floral fire, or lighting a candle when someone passes away. The Zoroastrian ritual garment, the kushti, is also worn during the Navrooz and Mehrjon festivals. In this regard, the sources cited in scholar Fozila Sulaymonova’s book “*East and West*” are worthy of recognition: “Although written records about Central Asia appear in the *Avesta*, Hindu epic poems, Persian and Chinese sources, the most reliable accounts are found in the works of Greek authors. Ancient, especially Greek, culture and literature were never separate or isolated from Eastern literature and culture” [Sulaimanova F. 1997].

The scholar who extensively and thoroughly researched the factors of connection and conflict in East-West relations concludes that ancient, especially Greek culture and literature, never developed separately from Eastern literature and culture. Although they differ from each other, they are not opposed to one another. Regarding this, the scholar identifies two historical periods of literary development based on the East and West regions: the first millennium BCE, which is the formative period of literature, and the second and concluding period of Hellenism (from the 4th century BCE to the 2nd–3rd centuries CE).

The scholar notes similarities between Eastern and Western cultures, stating that “the idea of mutual influence, where one culture and literature enrich the other, must have started long ago.” This view arose after identifying parallels between Gopatshoh and Minotaur, Greek mythology, and the pre-Islamic myths, legends, and folklore of Central Asian peoples [Sulaimanova F. 1997].

For example, the story of the one-eyed Cyclops in Greek mythology appears in many cultures. According to literary scholar Academician V.M. Zhirmunsky, who analyzed the similarities in their plots, there are 12 different versions of stories about one-eyed creatures in the folklore of Central Asian and Kazakh peoples [zhirmunsky V. M. 1974].

Geographer and academician L.S. Berg notes the poetic similarities between Kazakh and Greek myths in his article “Migratory Ethnographic Plots.” The classic Greek mythological hero, the one-eyed Cyclops Polyphemus, Poseidon’s grandson, appears in the Kazakh version as the creature “Temirtirnoq,” the father of a sorcerer; in Caucasian versions as a mighty warrior with the head of a dog; and in the Uzbek version as a one-eyed hag, among others.

The scholar describes this process as follows: “We observe contamination of the original content by another local story. What is noteworthy is that all one-eyed creatures possess a supernatural origin. Homer’s Polyphemus, the sea deity Poseidon’s grandson, appears in the legend recorded by L.S. Berg as a cyclops-giant. In Central Asian peoples’ tales, he is represented as the son of a fairy or a similar figure. The plot about a one-eyed creature holds a strong place in the folklore of Central Asia, the Near East, and the Caucasus. The spread of legends related to ancient Greek works among Central Asian peoples has a long history,” he clarifies [Sulaymonova F. 1997]

Turning to another scholarly source: in folklorist Jabbor Eshonqul’s book “*Myth and Artistic Thought*”, it is stated, “In particular, Turkic tribes wore iron helmets on their heads, which had holes around the eyes for protection. Unable to imagine this, the Greeks depicted them as Arimaspians — one-eyed giants. Overall, Aristeas’s epic about the East had a huge influence on Greek literature [Eshonkul. J. 2019].”

As we, scholars, study Fozila Sulaymonova’s scientifically supported findings that today’s presentation of the East and West as separate entities is misleading, and that in reality they have been intrinsically connected since ancient times, we become certain that millions of years ago our Earth was a compact whole, that our ancestors who lived then were never isolated, and that they accomplished tasks unique to their time. We also recognize that the oral creative works they produced have stimulated the spiritual and aesthetic development of other peoples.

Jabbor Eshonqul proudly states from his findings: “In Altai myths, Ulgen is the sky god, Erlikkhan is the underworld god; in Sumerian myths, Enlil is the sky god, Enki is the underworld god. In ancient times, the Turks imagined the world as consisting of three realms: the sky, the earth, and the underworld. The Sumerians had similar views.

Turks consider the sun sacred and call it Tangri; the Sumerians also call the sun Tangri. ... Murat Oroz, when comparing Sumerian myths with ancient Turkic myths, strongly concludes that these myths have a single source, and this supports our conclusion that in ancient Turkic myths caves, mountains, Tangri, evil spirits, and the underworld are closely related [Eshonkul. J. 2019].”

There is another point: during the comparison, we became certain of two closely related cases. In Abu Rayhon Beruni’s work “*Monuments left by ancient peoples*”, the legend about Queen Mina, when compared by scholar Fozila Sulaymonova with the Greek myth about Ariadne, the wife of Dionysus, shows not only a close similarity in content but also reflects a historical ethnic connection between the peoples. This connection is evident in the fact that the inhabitants of Greece called the archaic goddess Ariadne “Minaida.” This closeness can be explained by the fate of the Greek goddess Ariadne being interpreted through the name of the Khwarezm queen Mina, whose coming in the early spring night is associated with people’s deception.

We found it necessary to draw attention to another logical conclusion. Until recently, the works of the Greeks and Romans, as well as ancient literature, were considered to have laid the foundation for the cultural, ethnic, and historical development of other peoples. However, years of research and scientific studies have shown that, in many cases, the oral and written works of the Greeks and Romans were significantly influenced by the oral traditions of the Sumerians, peoples of the East, Central Asia, and the inhabitants of the region between the two rivers [Sarimsakov, B. 1988]. The scientific courage of scholar Fozila Sulaymonova revealed a truth that had been hidden beneath the layers of history for centuries. The period from the reign of Sultan Sanjar to the Russian invasion—marked by the closure of the Great Silk Road and the consequences of the invasions—led to a slowdown in the economic, practical, scientific, and technological progress in Asia Minor, the countries of the East, and the region of Transoxiana. Scholar Fozila Sulaymonova scientifically explains the reasons behind this decline. The conclusion is that “as a result, during the ancient period, ancient Greece, Rome, and Iran, and in the Middle Ages, Europe and the Near East, influenced Transoxiana geographically located in between, far from the main intercontinental sea routes, and cut off from the development of global connections. Wrapped in its

own shell and isolated from other peoples, the peoples of our region lagged behind in science, especially in applied knowledge, and later were relatively easily conquered by Russia [Eshanqul, J. 2019].”

Within the scope of the problem we are investigating, Russian writer S. V. Sulganskiy states: “The West is rational, the East is wise; the West is vastness, the East is depth; the West lived through action, while the East lived through dreams and hopes. From imagination and hope, myths are born, and later philosophical systems are formed from popular myths. Popular myths are the source of philosophies. If prominent people in the West are activists, then in the East they are philosophers. Scholars have found not only deep philosophical systems in Eastern myths but also the origins of all philosophical currents and the Indo-European mythology. Compared to the West, several centuries earlier, the East developed teachings about the evolution of all living beings on Earth.” [Eshanqul J. 2019]

We drew attention to the fact that the origin of myth and mythopoetics, which possess a binary nature and have been successfully used in the great works of world literature, actually exists within our own national creative thinking. Indeed, literary studies of the 20th–21st centuries demand the substantiation of concepts such as archetypes, plots, motifs, mythological images, mythemes, mythologemes, myth creation, and mythopoetic chronotope. Especially in literary works from the 20th to 21st centuries, the artistic model of the universe differs from the spiritual and aesthetic worlds of previous literary periods. In this context, the mythopoetic artistic model of the universe is based on philosophical aspects, which necessitates interpreting national literature in a comparative mythological context to understand the general laws of the relationships between the universe and humans, as well as the social processes occurring in society, by considering socio-historical and spatio-temporal dimensions.

Such a process that shapes mythopoetics can be observed not only in Turkic peoples’ literature but also in Latin American literature, Russian and Western literature, and the literature of Eastern peoples. The transformation of myth plots in artistic creation, when the writer understands the creation of the universe and humans and presents it as an artistic model, can be accepted as a method of artistic reform of human and social development. The artistic reflection of existing

myths through representation and the reworking of mythic motifs form the basis for creating an authorial myth. For example, the ancient Greek myth of Sisyphus was transformed by the French writer Albert Camus in his essay “The Myth of Sisyphus,” while the contemporary Uzbek writer Khurshid Dostmuhammad fully represents the myth of Sisyphus in his novel “The Wise Sisyphus.” The motif of futility of action in the myth and the essay manifests differently as the motif of human intellect and labor.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

If the synthesis of plots, motifs, and mythological images in literature creates a unique artistic perception of the world—a mythological model—then the interpretation of this mythological model of the world forms the basis for the development of mythological scientific thought. Concepts such as archetypes, mythemes, mythologemes, myth-creation, and mythopoetic chronotope shape the scientific perspectives on mythopoetics.

Appeals to myths are characteristic of all periods of human society, and this process is evident in all literatures, especially becoming more active in the 20th century. In our opinion, the reason for this lies in the hegemonic nature common to many countries—when one country is invaded by another, or a nation is conquered as a result of political conflicts, not only individuals but entire societies lose their freedom. The beginnings and conclusions of these problems are symbolically expressed by many writers through myths. Such mythologized and synthesized processes can be observed in Western, Russian, Afro-American, Turkic literatures, as well as in Uzbek literature.

If we consider the 20th century as the most contradictory period in the development of human society, it was precisely during this century that revolutionary changes occurred in the fields of science, education, art, and literature. Based on the topic under study, it can be said that mythologized motifs in literature, especially Russian literature, have been actively analyzed. For this reason, many Russian folklorists and literary scholars have focused their research on myths and mythopoetic issues.

Russian folklorists and literary scholars such as V.M. Wundt, Ya.E. Golosovker, M.I. Steblin-Kamensky, A.N. Veselovsky, A.A. Potebnya, V.V. Ivanov, V.N. Toporov, A.F. Losev, B. Malinovsky, E.M. Meletinsky, O.M. Freydenberg, and A.L. Toporkov studied issues related to myth

and mythopoetics, including myth and religion, myth logic, the poetics of mythological plots, symbols and myths, myths and ancient literature, and in the 19th century, the theory of myth in Russian philology focusing on ancient Slavic myths. Meanwhile, foreign scholars such as Z. Freud, C.G. Jung, R. Barthes, M. Douglas, C. Levi-Strauss, and V. Turner researched topics like mythology, symbols and ritual, taboo, totem and taboo, the soul and myth, and archetypes.

When analyzing works devoted to mythopoetics in world literary studies, it is evident that many studies were created in the 19th century based on Western and Russian literary theories. German mythopoetics theorists Friedrich Schelling and brothers August and Friedrich Schlegel established the “School of Mythology,” grounded in the philosophical concept of “natural religion.” This school significantly influenced the study of mythopoetics, especially the development of syncretism in fiction. The Grimm brothers’ 1835 publication “German Mythology” proved that the “School of Mythology” became a fully established scientific school dedicated to mythopoetic research. Schelling and Schlegel believed that the revival of national literature occurred when writers creatively used mythology as a primary source.

Using the comparative method, the Grimm brothers explained similar processes through common ancient mythology found in the folklore of various peoples. The “School of Mythology” developed in many European countries: in Germany by A. Kuhn, W. Schwarz, and W. Manhardt; in England by M. Müller and J. Cox; in Italy by A. de Gubernatis; in France by M. Bréal; in Switzerland by A. Pictet; and in Russia by A.N. Afanasyev, F.I. Buslaev, and O.F. Miller.

The “School of Mythology” synthesized various theories in its own unique way. In the West, modern studies of religion were initiated by Max Müller (1823–1900). In 1856, he published *Comparative Mythology*, and in 1870, *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion*, works that opened the way for the study of other religions and gained significant attention. He lectured on the history of religions at the prestigious University of Oxford. In his work *The Sacred Books of the East* translation series, he was the first to use the term “religious studies.” Müller and his contemporaries considered philology crucial in the scientific study of religions and argued that the true essence of religion could only be understood through linguistic research.

In Russian literary studies, works such as A.N. Afanasyev’s *Poetic Views of the Slavs on Nature* (1866–1869), A.N. Pipin’s early works from 1856 on the principles of the “School of Mythology” (*On Russian Folk Tales*), and A.N. Veselovsky’s *Comparative Mythology and Its Method* (1873) were produced.

The comparative study method used by the representatives of the “School of Mythology” served as a foundation for the formation of comparative-historical literary studies and ritual-mythological schools. At the same time, the “School of Mythology” played an important role in the development of literary studies and folklore studies: alongside the study of myths from the ancient period, it examined the myths of ancient Hindus, Persians, Germans, Celts, and Slavs; it contributed to the active collection of folklore works from various peoples; theoretical issues were elevated to a higher level; the foundations for comparative studies of mythology, folklore, and literature were established. At the same time, novels that employed mythopoetics with high artistic skill emerged.

“... mythology once again became a main theme in literature, leading to the emergence of the movement called ‘neomythologism,’ which for the first time scientifically studied the relationship between myth and literature. It became clear that renewal in literature through myth, expanding its possibilities and elevating it to a new level, could not occur without myth.”

Notable works of the 20th century’s advanced literature such as *Ulysses*, *The Magic Mountain*, *Doctor Faustus*, *The Castle*, *The Trial*, *The Plague*, *Pedro Páramo*, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, *Sartoris*, and *The Rage and the Noise* demonstrate this revitalization and expansion of myth in literature [Sarimsakov B. 1988]. In Uzbek literary studies, issues of myth and mythopoetics have also been thoroughly explored [Imomov, K. 1990]. The importance of myths has also been extensively studied in Uzbek folkloristics and fiction literature.

“... The role and significance of ancient myths in the emergence of oral creativity itself is incomparable. According to the scientific research of Doctor of Philology, Professor B. Sarimsoqov, myth forms the basis of folk oral creativity. Myth is not classified as a type of artistic creativity because its level of artistry manifests at a very low stage. Therefore, myth cannot be part of the

content of folk oral creativity. ... Diffusion processes in the exact sciences have been the main factor in the emergence of folk oral creativity genres from myths". The phenomenon of diffusion was also highly valued by Uzbek folklorist and literary theorist Prof. B.I. Sarimsoqov:

"In folkloristics, the term diffusion is used to describe the structural, semantic, and functional changes that occur in the nature of a genre, motif, or image as a result of it entering into, blending with, or merging into another genre, motif, or image." [Madaev, O.] If we apply the literary scholar's definition in practice, first of all, myths—and on their basis legends, and legends in turn preparing the ground for the creation of fairy tales—have been scientifically proven by Russian folklorists such as V.Ya. Propp, E.M. Meletinskiy, and Z.P. Sokolova to have directly originated from myths.

The mythologist scholar E.M. Meletinskiy defines myth as follows: "Myth is a means by which a person conceptualizes the world both outwardly and inwardly. In a certain sense, myth is the product of primitive thought." In the book titled *Alisher Navoi and Folk Creativity* by the prominent Navoi scholar Natan Mallaev, the oral literature of Eastern peoples—fairy tales, epics, legends, and myths—has been extensively studied in relation to the works of the great Uzbek thinker Navoi.

It is worth noting that this work was created in the 1970s during the 20th century and shows the influence of socio-political pressure and ideology because that was the nature of the era. We believe that folklorist scholar Natan Mallaev was aware of the political accusations made against the world-famous Russian folklorist and literary scholar Vladimir Yakovlevich Propp. After the publication of Propp's 1946 book *The Historical Roots of the Fairy Tale*, the scholar was accused of anti-Marxism, idealism, and of having religious ideas, leading to his dismissal from the Academy of Sciences. In the journal *Soviet Ethnography*, an article titled "Against Bourgeois Traditions in Folkloristics (Regarding Professor V.Ya. Propp's Book *The Historical Roots...*)" was published, accusing the scholar of mysticism (belief in God), "distorting and falsifying the true picture of social relations," and even alleging that Propp's book did not reference the works of Maxim Gorky.

Alisher Navoi and Folk Creativity is an interpretation by Natan Mallaev of the harmony

between the great thinker's works and folk creativity. To avoid accusations of nationalism, the literary scholar masks his well-founded scientific reflections, opinions, and conclusions behind a veil of social conformity. Nevertheless, this work remains a source that reveals the great Alisher Navoi's literary art and has served for more than half a century.

An important aspect of this source is that it also provides information about the ancient mythology of Central Asia and Iran: "Various sources have preserved certain samples and traces of ancient Central Asian and Iranian mythology. The majority of myths that originated in ancient Central Asia and Iran, as in the myths of Indian, Greek, and other peoples, are characterized by the struggle between good and evil, light and darkness. People created myths of the land of happiness and the land of unhappiness. It was as if in nature there existed a land where great and beneficial forces—Sun and water—were eternal, and a land where disaster-causing forces—darkness and calamity—were eternal. Greek myths about Daedalus and Icarus's wings, the Babylonian myth about Gilgamesh seeking the plant of immortality, and others were also born as expressions of ancient people's aspirations for happiness and prosperity, health and endurance." [Madaev, O.]

The author analyzes the historical formation of mythological images in Central Asia and Iran, highlighting that they have always been in opposition to each other, each possessing uniquely powerful images. He emphasizes that their roots lie partly in Zoroastrianism, with some elements found in the *Avesta* and other religious texts.

According to *Bundahishn*, there are two worlds: the world of good and the world of evil. Ahura Mazda (Hormuzd) leads the world of good, while Angra Mainyu (Ahriman) leads the world of evil. Happiness and misfortune, life and death, abundance and famine are dependent on the struggle between these two forces and its consequences," the author explains. It is important to note that the battle between good and evil powers is embodied in myths connected to the sun god Mithra, the earth and fertility goddess Anahita, the first human Kayumars, Yima (Jamshid), Gershasp, as well as the dark and unfortunate symbol Ahriman (Ahriman), demons, dragons, jinns, and others.

German and French philologist and religious scholar Max Müller emphasized that the names of

gods in the sacred Hindu texts, the Vedas, are related to natural phenomena. For example, he noted that “Agni” means “fire” and “Dyaus” means “sky” (heaven), and that from these words come the French word “Dieu” (Latin Deus) and the Spanish “Dios” (God). Müller also explained that in almost all religions, the names of gods originally referred to natural phenomena, especially fire, which evoked a tendency to attribute supernatural qualities to natural forces. He acknowledged that due to language changes, all sacred concepts and beliefs in religions originated.

N. Rakhmatullaev, who analyzed some aspects of mythopoeics using the examples of archetypes and mythologemes, defines mythopoeics as follows: “Mythopoeics is the writer’s vital creative system, intrinsically linked with their personal inclination toward creating ‘neo-mythological’ texts and interpreting mythological characters. Mythopoeics studies the transformation of myths, mythological images, and motifs; it examines the styles of assimilation of myths by artistic literature, the inclusion of archaic mythological elements into literary texts, and the various principles of their participation in the works of writers belonging to different literary periods.”

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