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## MYTHOLOGICAL

### IMAGES IN AZERBAIJANI FOLK POETRY

### IMÁGENES MITOLÓGICAS EN LA POESÍA POPULAR AZERBAIJANA

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#### ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to definite the structure of the mythological characters in the poetical system of the folk poem. Based on the progressive theory principles, collecting works of the Azerbaijan, Russian and world folklore-study the investigation was made on the principles grounded on the historical-comparative and theoretical-typological investigation methods. The scientific, theoretical, practical results of the investigation are very useful especially for the specialists investigating the poetical structure of the folk poem and for the philological faculties and the folklore educational courses. It was found that in the formation and creation of the world the mythological Goy (Sky), Yer (Earth) and the creation pantheon belonging to the under-Earth worlds and spirits express the nature, ancestor and other cults with different mythical characters. The functional semantics of these forces with creative, protective and marginal characters in the gene-poetical system of folk poem change according to the genre elections. The folk poem gains the symbolic meaning separately in traditional Turkic idea and Islamic context which have the specific mythological characters in its lyrics.

**Keywords:** Song, character, mythological, symbol, ritual, cult, semantics, genre, mood.

#### RESUMEN

El objetivo de este trabajo es definir la estructura de los personajes mitológicos en el sistema poético del poema popular. Sobre la base de los principios de la teoría progresiva, la recopilación de obras del estudio folclórico de Azerbaiyán, Rusia y el mundo, la investigación se realizó sobre los principios fundamentados en los métodos de investigación histórico-comparativo y teórico-tipológico. Los resultados científicos, teóricos y prácticos de la investigación son de gran utilidad especialmente para los especialistas que investigan la estructura poética del poema popular y para las facultades filológicas y los cursos de formación folclórica. Se encontró que en la formación y creación del mundo el mitológico Goy (Cielo), Yer (Tierra) y el panteón de creación perteneciente a los mundos y espíritus subterráneos expresan la naturaleza, los ancestros y otros cultos con diferentes personajes míticos. La semántica funcional de estas fuerzas con personajes creativos, protectores y marginales en el sistema genético-poético del poema popular cambia según las elecciones de género. El poema popular adquiere el significado simbólico por separado en la idea tradicional turca y el contexto islámico que tiene los personajes mitológicos específicos en sus letras.

**Palabras clave:** Canción, personaje, mitológico, símbolo, ritual, culto, semántica, género, humor.

## INTRODUCTION

In the poetical system of Azerbaijan folk poem, the functionality of the mythological characters has the significant importance according to the context of these texts and the definition of the first idea sources. In this direction in Turkic mythological thinking studying the structure and function system of the characters in the national cultures attains the special actuality in the investigation of the theme.

The investigations about the topic have been carried out in the direction of the functional-semantically points of the mythological characters in Azerbaijan, Russian and world folklore-study. Some scientists are outstanding in Azerbaijan folklore-study such as Abdulla (2001); Baydili (2004), and others focus more in Russian literature-study. Also Cassirer, and other Europe authors elucidate the genesis problem of the mythological characters on the base of myth and mythological thinking specification in their investigations. The investigation of the problem in Azerbaijan folk lyric has been studied specially about traditions of the ceremonial folklore Abdulla (2001), and the style peculiarities of folk poem, the investigation of the poetics of the different genres. In general, the mythological character structure of the folk poem has not been investigated in details in the mentioned directions in Azerbaijan folklore-study.

That's why the main aim of this paper is to definite the structure of the mythological characters in the poetical system of the folk poem, to study the semantically context based on the first idea system and to investigate the character functionality in the frame of the lyric genre. The main methods used are historical-comparative and theoretical-typological investigation.

## DEVELOPMENT

The songs standing on the base of each nation's folk culture in all cases belong to the traditional artistic structure and functionality in the frame of the ethnic-cultural system. These songs are forming the whole system with its dynamics, the formation of texts, rhythm, expression forms and figurativeness in its particularity which immortalizing the life, culture and history of this or other ethnos. In the mentioned system the poetical peculiarities – characters, artistic description and expression means, etc. being closed to folk traditions, this or other ceremony rituals it carries the concrete – programmed character.

The folk poet is surrounded with archaic, mythological-ritual, classic, cultural-historical models in the structure of the mythological and poetical modeling. The myth activity and at the same time the poetical views, the formation of the World, chaos-cosmos confrontation, the first creature

elements beginning from the restoration of the cosmos take place in the archaic modeling-poetical system. The mythic-poetical modeling of the folk poem is based on the creature pantheon to the complex of different thinking, thoughts and religious believes. In the archaic period the primitive man accepting himself as a part of the nature has formed the rich thought system of Allah and spirits pantheon. The initial thought, the fathers surrounded by the religious believes, nature, Goy (Sky) God cults got firmly established in Turks' life and rituals, in their believes as the ancient time out-look, meeting with the new religious faiths they tried to protect their ancient thoughts.

Before Islam on the base of the ancient Turkic religion there was Goy Tanri (Sky God), Devotion outlook. God-Tengri is accepted as the "the greatest", "extraordinary power" in the endlessness of the Sky in the Goy Tanri (Sky God) belief of Huns. The layers of the cosmos as Sky, under the Earth, Earth are given in the mythological thought as the second gods, to say exactly, "iye" (cult), in its contour created in the protective holiness. Near God, in His order the Earth, under the Earth, "iye"s of the Sky world part into the different mythological creatures with its mythological functionality and with its place.

These "iye"s (cults) assembled among the Goy (Sky) God – protecting (Umay, Ana Maygil, Agh Ana, Ayisit/Ayzt), under the Earth (Erlik, Al garisi, Garabasan), Goy (Sky) "iye"s (cults) (Sky, Sun, Moon and stars), on the Earth "iye"s (cults) (the mountain, the hill, the stone-rock, the tree-plant, ground, water and so on), etc. The folk life, the ceremony rituals, including the content and expression source of believes and faiths come directly from the functional-mythological figurativeness of Goy (Sky) God cults. In this context the mythological roots of the folk poem and the first religion, belief and thoughts of the ancient Turks in the poetic system take the important place.

The planting songs, majority of the tillage ceremonial rituals about the ancient labor process have been established on the calling, wishing to the cults in the restoration of the cosmos parted on the holiness of the earth, sky, underground. In the ancient tillage ceremony there are initial thoughts such as songs sung by the people dancing around the fire, or the calling the cults of the earth, sky in the content of the rhythmic movements:

Gara goy,

Ag goy,

Goy goy,

Yaz ver,

Yuz ver,

Yaz ver. (Nabiyev, 1993)

**(Translation: The black sky, the white sky, the blue sky, give the spring, give hundred, give the spring).**

The expression of the Goy (Sky), Yer (Earth), Yer uzu (Earth face) has been given on the base of the colors in the text of the song. The underground of the Earth being the position of Yer (Earth), the devil emotional strengths, their provisions, the clothes are expressed with the black color, but “the middle world” - the place where the people settle down are expressed with the white color in comparison with the underground of the Earth – black color.

It has been found interesting examples about the calling of the Earth cults in collecting materials on the sayings told in the rituals of “the catching the spirits”. Acting the calling of the spirit the informant collecting the definite amulets such as the coal, the stone, the needle, the stick and touching the ground begins to sing:

Yer, yer, gujumu ver,

Boz okuzun gujunu ver.

Gara bendin gujunu ver,

Elim uste gujunu ver,

Hu... hu... hu... hu... (Barthes, 1957).

(Translation: Hey, Earth, give my strength, Give the grey bull's strength, Give the strength of the black dam, Give the strength to my hand).

The alike example of the same mythological text is protected in the seasonal rituals of Tatar Turks. They usually sing the following song about returning the strength from the Earth – from the earth cults – after the field cropping:

Yer, yer, gujumu ver,

Bir yashlik tayin gujunu ver,

Altin elma rengini ver,

Alti atimin kuvvetini ver,

Altmish araba chavdar ver,

Altmish araba bugday ver,

Altmish araba bulgur ver,

Altmish araba dari ver,

Ver, ver, hepsini ver,

Yer! Yer! (Chetin, 2004).

(Translation: Earth, earth, give my strength, Give me the strength of a bale, Give the golden apple color, Give the power of my six horses, Give me sixty carts of rye, Give me sixty carts of wheat, Give me sixty carts of cracked wheat, Give me sixty carts of millet. Give, give all of them, Earth! Earth!)

From the group of protecting cults Umay, Ag Ana, Ayisit, among others, mythological characters are connected to the semantically different functionality in folk believes and faiths. In the mentioned cults the female spirit strengths protect the children, the pregnant women and in general, the creatures (Humay), country, dwelling (in the belief system Ana Amygil – Bodun Inli – Altay). They bring the welfare and distribute the abundance (Ayisit-Ayzit), God also gives the creative power (Ag Ana) to Ulgen. One can meet examples about the cult (divine) Umay in the poetic system of Azerbaijan folk poem. The divine described in the form of the bird is given in the poem texts in the same figurativeness:

Men ashikh, yanar geder,

Derdime sanar geder.

Omrum bir Humay gushu,

Yol uste gonar geder.

(Translation: I am an ashug, My grief will be counted. My life is a bird of Humay, it will be on the way).

The protecting semantics coming from the mythological function of Humay ruling the increasing of the babies, children as a result has protected the same content in today's life believes (if the bird flies on someone's house, or stands in front of the door, or the bird's faeces falls on somebody's head or on any things, it is considered as a symbol of the luck). The motifs in the folk tales and legends such as definition of kings among the people or perching of the bird from the ruins on the poor man's shoulder, etc. come from the historical-mythological content of the character Humay (Umay) which is with the good spirit. In an example met by us in Shaki folklore the luck, wishing happiness in the same content takes its source from the belief of Humay bird's shadow symbolically:

Yigilib toya gelen

Gohum-gardashi bu beyin,

Jumleniz edin dua

Khosh kechsin ishi bu beyin,

Ustune kolge salsin

OI Humay gushu beyin. (Abdulhalimo, et al., 2000)

(Translation: All relatives of this bride-groom who have come to his wedding, Pray for him, let him have a good day, let Humay bird have its shadow on him).

Umay/Humayin being a female divine protects the birth, pregnancy and on the other side being figurative as the Love God is in the centre of attention. The information about the famous song "Sari gelin" had got from the inhabitants of the region Zangilan, also from the older women of the region Kalbajar, in their speech the sang that song with the word "Humaya". In a lot of information "Sari gelin" (the blonde bride) is connected with the Sun's daughter Humay. In the mythological texts and legends, the description of Humay with the yellow-golden feathers are identified in associate with the Sun's rays. May be in this meaning the character of the song has joined the extra informative. It is not accidental that symbolizing of the birds as the unity of love are being protected in the wedding ceremonies of many nations (the tradition of flying the doves by the newly married couples).

The character "Mother Fatma" not being included into the conditional classification mentioned in above shows itself in different forms of folk poem with the wide mythological figurativeness. In these texts grandmother Fatma is a well-wisher, protective creature. She sings lullaby for babies, tries to join lovers, but in witchcrafts she hinders the harm forces. It is seen in folk songs like the next.

Ezizim Fatma nene,

Gashlari chatma nene,

Isteyi isteye ver,

Gunaha batma nene. (Ismayilov, 2005)

(Translation: My dear granny Fatma, your eyebrows are joint browed, give the wish who desires, don't sin).

But also in witchcrafts.

Agrab-agrab akhinja,

Chakhmagini chakhinja,

Agrab oldu bir kishi,

Bagladi gurdu-gushu.

Suleyman peygamberin bichagi,

Fatma nenenin gushagi,

Uf... uf... uf... (Abdulla, 2001)

(Translation: When the scorpion flows, it strikes the lock, the scorpion became a man and tied the riff-raff. Suleiman Prophet's knife is granny Fatma's waist-band)

And in lullabies:

Elma atdim yuvarlandi ninni,

Geldi beshige dayandi ninni,

Fatma anamiz sevib getsin ninni,

Oglum uykudan uyandi ninni. (Buyukokutan, 2005)

(Translation: I threw the apple and it rolled under the cradle, let our mother Fatma love my son, my son has awoken).

Let's mention that in the legends and rumors the character mother Fatma having the protective mythological peculiarity, sitting on the sky and knitting the carpet (in mythological thoughts the rainbow is given as the color of the yarns of granny Fatma's carpet) is generalized with the influence of Islam culture to transformed Fatmey-Zahra (Prophet Muhammad's daughter) in many believes the well-wisher spirit of Turkish Fatma to Fatmey-Zahra in Islam religion. But the interesting point is that being pressed in historical transference the character mother Fatma has been described in a negative appearance in song texts belonging to Islam rituals.

Hasaram, husaram,

Yumurta vermiyenden kuserem,

Yumurta verene oglan olsun,

Vermeyene giz olsun,

Adi da Fatma olsun,

Gashdari chatma olsun,

Bakhti da gara olsun. (Nabioglu, 2005)

(Translation: I'll feel hurt from that who doesn't give an egg to me, let her have a son who gives an egg, but let her have a daughter who doesn't give an egg, and let her name be Fatma, let her eyebrows be joint browed, let her fate be black).

*"In the traditional believes of Azerbaijan Turks according to the archaic meaning Umay is a mythological motif belonging to its cult. Due to the investigations the name "granny Fatma" has appeared connecting to the name of Prophet Muhammad's daughter Fatma. In the logic of the mythological thinking the connection realizing between the mother Umay motif and it has been covered to the mythological cover in Islam tradition!"* (Beydili, 2004, p. 214)

In the plane of God-Human the other form of mythological figurativeness connected to the beliefs is the participation of harm spirit cults in mytho-poetic system of folk poem. In mythological structure, poetical system of folk poem the evil forces are the followings, such as "hal ana", "Albasti", later in other levels demonological characters – devil (Satan, jinn) which had spread widely connected to Islam mythology. "Al/Hal" carrying many peculiarities according to the descriptive and functional connecting to the complex mythological Ulu Ana (Great Mother) is the chthonic natured character wide spread in mythological thoughts of Turkic nations. Calling as "Hal anasi", "Chay nenesi", "Al arvadi", "Albasti" among the nation the mythological character has taken place in many mythical believes as the one who lives in the bottom of the water, having the long, mixed, dirty hair, the great and hanging breast, the enemy of the pregnant women and babies. The overturn coming from the chthonic nature of the character in many legends gives the information about "Hal anasi" as the description of a beautiful woman. Realizing some believes about the pregnant women in Azerbaijan life before and after birth (to spit the onion and put it in front of the bedroom of the pregnant or a woman recently confined, to put the cap on a woman recently confined, to put a knife or a dagger under the pillow, to protect an egg in the bowl, to fire a rifle, etc.) is the expression of protection style from the mythological character in the prayer-ritual form. In folk poem a group of witchcrafts have formed according to the just the address to "Hal anasi", to drive out the spirit "Al".

Falin fal olsun,

Fermanin khosh olsun,

Hinin dili,

Chinin dili,

Lal olsun.

Abbasin geden yolu,

Gal olsun. (Abdulla, 2001)

(Translation: Let your fortune-telling be true, let your order be happy, let the Chinese language be mute, let Abbas's way be permanent)

However, there are differences in the mythological context connected to the Sky cults form Goy (Sky), Felek (Fate) and thought and belief to the cosmic substances. The cult Goy (Sky) expressing the middle position of the space tripartite here (Sky, Earth, under Earth) connects the separate intuitive thinking in folk poem. Differentiated in 7,9 stage of the sky changes according to the east and west branches of Turkic tribe thoughts. In this system each stage of the sky is differed with its God-cult. The War God Kizagan Tenri is located on the 9<sup>th</sup> stage of the sky, Mergen is on the 7<sup>th</sup> stage, the Sun, Fire are on the 7<sup>th</sup> stage, Ay Baba is on the 6<sup>th</sup>, Kuduy Yayinchi is on the 5<sup>th</sup>, but Paradise is on the 3<sup>rd</sup> stage (Yavuzer, 1997).

The cosmic Sun and Moon take the important place among the Sky cults, sacral mythological characters. The real cosmic functions of the Sun and the Moon as the light, heat, night in the thinking – epic folklore and folk beliefs in different beginnings (mother-the Sun, father - the Moon, sister (the Sun) – brother (the Moon), (mother-baby) are described. Previous investigations paying attention to this problem have been based on the folklore, mythology of different nations. In Greek mythology the Moon being the child of titan Hipperion and Teyya is presented as Selen, in Vietnam legends ten Suns and nine Moons created by God Ti Lyaun together with lots of stars in order to lighten the world, in Chinese legends the light creature created from the right eye of the ancient ancestor Pangun after his death, in the legends of Hindus of Latin America the husband and wife called Kran and Kra together with the Sun, in other variants it is presented as the son of the ancestor Abaangan of the tribe Guarayyu.

In epic folklore differing from the mythological texts about the Moon and the Sun in folk poem this "information" is given as in the form of "being pressed". In folk poem the Moon and the Sun are directly symbolized on the content of beauty. In the ashug poem songs some epithets such as "moony", "beautiful", "chubby" have gained repetition especially in this system. But in mourning songs rising and setting of the Moon and the Sun join the association in poetical content and this figurativeness is formed on rising and setting of both cosmic substances in the same context

Burdan bir atli keshdi,

Atin oynatdi getdi.

Gun kimi shafag sachdi,

Ay kimi batdi getdi.

(Translation: A rider passed by this place, he went on horseback, he shined as the Sun, and he set down as the Moon)

Geldi bir atli gonag,

Yer saldim, yatdi gonag.

Ay kimi bedirlendi,

Gun kimi batdi gonag.

(Translation: A rider visited us, he slept at our place, he got full as the Moon and he set down as the Sun)

In myth texts describing of the sky as the dome and the tent the Moon is also described as the chandelier of this dome.

Ay goyde chilchiragdir,

Guller yerde gonagdir.

Sorag alin bulbulden,

Yar gedeli hachandir?

**(Translation: The Moon is the chandelier in the sky, the flowers are the guests on the Earth, ask from the nightingale, when the lover went)**

In folk songs texts formation of appeals to the girls, women, especially to the bride character on the epithets as the Moon, stars ("the starry bride", "the moony bride") are sourced from the mythological thoughts expressing rising, increasing, growth of the Moon.

## CONCLUSIONS

In all cases the mentioned functionality of the mythological characters finds its explanation in "the anthropological structure" of the myths connecting the human society and its development tendencies. The context of the myth, semantics gains the new mytho-poetical meaning in the structure exchanging little by little. The creation pantheon in the poetical system of the folk poem also completes the context and form of the lyric texts in the archaic thinking of the whole world model. According to the genre structure the creation forms the differentness in dominants of cults such as God, astral and different nature cults.

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