

Survey on the Mythical Manifestations of “Yakolya and her loneliness” (Taghi Modaresi)

Parvaneh Adelzadeh & Marzieh Mousoumi Shojayi

Department of Persian Language and Literature, Tabriz Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tabriz, Iran

ABSTRACT

The myths indicate the culture and thinking of the people in the old times. They are expressing language of prehistory, speaker of valuable heritages buried inside the mountains and stones. The myths are representative of the cultural continuity of a nation and in other words its history. Every generation interprets the myths according to its needs, beliefs and ideology. Considering confining conditions like war, pain and death by the generation after coup d'état indicates that the society experiences an identity crisis. Taghi Modaresi is one of the contemporary novelists experiencing this crisis after coup d'état that seeks myth. This article tries to analyze mythical manifestations of “Yakolya and her loneliness”.

KEYWORDS: Taghi Modaresi, Iran contemporary story, myth, Yakolya and her loneliness.

INTRODUCTION

In the old times the myths were considered and now they are manifested in the artistic works by holding their old attractiveness. They never lose their power, splendid, secret and novelty. They have been gained important position in the contemporary literature. The old times are associated in our minds by talking about the myths and in contemporary literature we reach to pleasing paradox. Myth flows in every society and it is one of the main constructs of human culture. Generalization of myths is difficult due to their diversity. It is obvious that the myths of a nation by whole and detail characteristics reflect unique image of that nation. So study of the myth in general and in particular is important. The novels of the decades thirties and forties are important because of social conditions. Did the writers of these novels use myth in their works? What was the secret of the myth for these writers after August nineteenth coup d'état that they wrote their masterpieces. These questions are considered in writing of this article. Taghi Modaresi is one of the elite and sensitive writers of decade thirties that calms down his suppression after coup d'état by seeking myth and writing unique novels. “Yakolya and her loneliness” is one of these masterpieces.

The works of Taghi Modaresi have been criticized in books “blue blood on the wet land”, “Get familiarity with Taghi Modaresi” and other articles. The mythological aspect of these novels has been referred only in some articles. The importance of the myth and this unique novel has been led to the study of the mythical manifestations of “Yakolya and her loneliness”.

The myths gain new and different meaning according to time. Generally speaking, they achieved emotions and desires of enlightenment era. In 1941-1943 they were revitalized by the political purposes. But in 1954-1962 application of myth was reflected as avoiding romanticism from reality. It is natural that the writer is affected by these conditions. Complexes and disappointment cause the writer to silence and the writer seeks myth in order to find solutions in symbols and signs. Modaresi refers to Old Testament myths. God, Satan, loneliness and death are the concepts that he expresses them in his novel. The characters of his novel are the symbols of mythical characters.

Taghi Modaresi is one of the writers experienced propagandistic art in thirties decade and it is natural that he writes a novel by long lasting effect. Eagerness to perception of the spiritual values leads the writer to the metaphysical world and experiences like meeting with Satan in the mythical literature in order to visualize feeling of the alienation.

Theoretical principles

Fiction refers to imaginary works. Short stories, novels and other related genres are called fiction; so this literary term does not involve verse, tragedy, comedy and elegy. Lyrical verses like “Vies and Ramin” of Fakhradin Asad Gorgain, “Khosro and Shirin” of Nizami Ganjavi and “Shahnameh” of Firdausi are not fiction and these works are investigated in their special meaning in literature scope”(Fiction, 1997:10).

“E.M. Forester the English novelist (1879-1970) defines the story in “Aspects of Novel” as: “story is narration of the events in chronologic order like they had lunch after breakfast and Tuesday after Monday and decay after death” (ibid, 1987:10). In long story the writer tries to release short story from compression and briefness and employs novel possibilities in expanding characters and theme. Indeed long story is a bridge between short story and novel that the short story specifications are combined by the characteristics of novel and a story is written with distinguished specification.

Many writers like Henry James as the American novelist have accepted this story form. He considers it an “our perfection, beautiful and pleasant story” and refers to it as Novella.

Iranian novel is rooted in constitution thoughts. Every new historic era demands new form. Modern literary works are created by influence of social and cultural dimensions. The primary Iranian stories were written by flourishing the middle class and gradual development of the collective self consciousness and middle class readers are considered. The Persian novel was born by effort to establishing appropriate status in the political and cultural scopes and it was developed accompanying by middle class. Without considering revolution in the social relations and Iranians attitude toward life and literature in constitution period, perception of the reasons for creation of Iranian novel is difficult. In this period, doubt in current status and effort to advent new culture were replaced by silence and dictatorship. The new ideas were proposed and the scholars expressed their new ideas justifying new established middle class. Their writings were considered because of indicating people life styles under domination of ignorance and dictatorship in early constitution revolution” (Hundred years of the story writing in Iran, 2001:21).

“Mythos (myth) was used in meaning of explanation, statement and story then it was used in meaning of Historia (story, search and knowledge) and obtained meaning of “something that it is not in reality”, poetical imagination and fiction and finally “distressed and idle word”. In nineteenth century, it was used in recent meaning and the concept were analyzed accordingly, but today the Mythologists try to return to its primary meaning and usage so they use phrases like “alive myth” and “function of myth”.

The main function of myth is to discover the paradigm of religions and meaningful affairs like eating, marriage, working, education and vision”(Greece myths, 1997:5). “Mythology aids in identification of the history of civilization, uncovering implicit old social constructs and thinking and beliefs. In case of ignoring methodology, the old history should be investigated by archeology. Mythology identifies the primary foundations of human civilization and nations relations and uncovers implicit findings of archeology. In the primary native societies by alive mythical themes, the mythology is used not only for uncovering of the human history of thoughts but also for comprehension of his customs and ceremonies” (Iran mythical history, 2006:6).The writers experienced propagandistic art in the past and they tried to create eternal works. The political literature is replaced by literature considering human values. It can be referred to “Yakolya and her loneliness” by Taghi Modaresi. There is a close relationship between this novel and Old Testament and human being problems have the same theme and the history is endless battle field for God and Satan. So the writers were inspired by the legends and Old Testament stories. The title of the works indicates their writers’ challenges and they are about battle between God and Satan. After Modaresi many writers wrote stories with concepts of Old Testament and philosophy. This trend was common among the writers so that the writer had to write about Old Testament and allegory” (Hundred years of the story writing in Iran, 2001:341-342).

“Modaresi needed to archetype and unfamiliar prose for expressing his historic and philosophic contents; thus he referred to Old Testament and used its narratives. The writers like Tabari had employed mythical and Old Testament stories for expressing social issues. But Modaresi uses Old Testament narratives that the God is God of anger and revenge not God of kindness and forgiveness and he uncovers eternal truth. So he finds an appropriate form for his story. The myths gain new meaning according to time necessities and different concepts of life are interpreted, generally specking they take form of emotions and desires of enlightenment era. In 1941-1953, the myths were restored by the political aims but during 1954-1962 myths were employed for releasing romantic from realities. The scholars were distressed and they did not believe in any value and they were aimless so they felt insecure and loneliness and they sought dreams, legends and child hood memories to find the solutions. The strangulation in the society and individualism invited the writer to indifference and seeking pleasure. Some scholars were popularized for applying mythical aspect to solving the problems rooted in the social and historical conditions and covering them in mystic and considering them as eternal pains of human being. According to Roland Barth in a bursiousius society myth means a speech without political contents that it is fitted for mythology of this period of Iran contemporary literature. Yakolya and her loneliness is one of these concepts. Modaresi refers to Old Testament stories to regain the lost beauty and eagerness and eternalize fear and solitude and personalize love forever. Every event has been occurred in the past and there is no new event in this world” (Hundred years of the story writing in Iran, 2001:343-344).

Mythical narratives structure in Iran

“The mythological value of myth is preserved even by inappropriate translation. The nature and concept of myth is not rooted in its style and verbal music or in any combination that it offers but the value of a myth is in the story that it is narrated.” (Identification of Iran myths: 1996:45) From these surrealism works, it can be concluded that in process of borrowing from myths only the story conditions are transferred not manner of narration and details. It is probable that in mythical narratives, the vertical direction is powerful than horizontal one. A few mythical narratives are passed from verbal culture filter and change their form into the written form and preserve their verbal combination and poetical explanation. In other words, the real interactions are common in different narration of a mythical story that they construct the story situation in general. Of course it should be explained that the target text receiving these reactions needs to explanation. Contemporary literature offers two different approaches toward myths. The first is self consciousness account of inactive aspect of myth and the other is account of archetype or shifted familiar narratives as consciousness and unconsciousness. Naturally in the first form, reading of the myth is considered in order to determine the relationship between myth and the text and in the second from reading an archetype clarifies the analysis path. Prop believes that decomposing the work into constructs leads to conformity in the literary scope specially where the resources of myth are less affected in decomposing into main constructs; in other hand, literature needs to react and it is glorified in these reactions according to the classic definition. Thus the morphology of the myth can be considered as the main principle of this chapter to obtain main constructs of myths of Iran.

According to expansions, Iran myths can be divided into three categories:

1-Mesopotamian myths

2-Zoroaster myths

3-Mazdaism myths

The origin of Zoroaster and Mazdaism myths is Iran plateau forming Iran mythological space and Mesopotamia myths are left from this scope. But being affected by Mesopotamian myths, it has been caused to addition of this scope to above category.

“It has been referred to the effect of Gilgamesh myth on Iran Medes culture. There are similarities between ceremonies of death of Siyavash and Mesopotamian customs” (Myths Theater, 2008:140-142-148).

Taghi Modaresi

“Taghi Modaresi was born in religious family in Tehran. He studied medicine in Tehran and then he went to America and begun to writing there. His wife is one of the American modernist novelists. He traveled in Iran several times and he was interested in Iran after revolution and wrote stories about Iran”(Record of contemporary prose, 2000:108).“Taghi Modaresi is the writer of *Yakolya* and her loneliness published in sixties and seventies. He wrote psychological short stories about ill organized life of the employees. He wrote “*Shrif Jan*” without exact structure. Like Jamal Zadeh and Alavi, Modaresi is far from artistic aspect and their stories have old texture and they are cliché because of distance from mother tongue. In these stories, all events impose anxious unfamiliarity and vagueness. He considers these characteristics as total aspect and legendary life of his characters. In story of “*Chinvad custom*” (Isfahan miscellany, 1972) an employee is resigned to go to America and before trip he goes to office to see his friends. He feels anxiety and depression and he attends as a foreigner among his friends. The story enters to surrealism space: Mr. Adal the old boss of the office appears like a symbol of death; a dead that has passed from *Chinvad custom*. The immigrant employee is like a person who goes to final journey specially he has received a funeral permit for solving his army services problems.

Other stories of Modaresi are weaker than “*Chinvad custom*” from structural and transferring concepts view points. He writes about oldness and anxiety of mad individuals. In “*A Rainy Night*” (Sokhan,1965) and “*Back Room*” and “*Speakers and Hearer*”(Isfahan miscellany, 967) he offers an old perspective from vague and anxious future of the employees that pretends to being lucky. These miserable individuals feel insecurity and loneliness and lose their human identity and become mad, they could not build relationship with each other like talking of the prayer with mad woman, and the characters of *Yakolya* and her loneliness are romantic philosophers that the novel mythical space makes them acceptable.

But in *Sharif Jan* and other short stories that today’s realities are considered characters being supernatural is obvious”(Hundred years of the story writing in Iran, 2001:668-669).Modaresi concurrent to Bahram Sadegi influenced Iran story writing in decades sixties and seventies. In the first work, he abolished the story uniform structure that it was common from Jamal Zadeh period.

He was interested in modern styles of story writing and he made imaginary space in his stories. This trend was shift from reality to dream.

“Taghi Modaresi became famous by *Yakolya and her loneliness* (1955). This novel was selected as the best mythical story after coup d'état from *Sokhan* journal in 1956. In his novels he tries to regain the lost eagerness, pain and sorrow by allegories of Old Testament.

His second novel (*Shrif Jan*, 1978:78) is unsuccessful fanaticism realism novel about opposition of an aristocrat family to consequences of land reformation. Modaresi wrote short stories about ill organized life of the employees; the events of “Chinvad custom” are occurred in vague and unfamiliarity and perspectives of misery of the employees and their vague and anxious life pretending to being happy are offered in stories of “A Rainy night, “Back room” and “Speakers and Hearers”.

Among articles of Modaresi it can be referred to “failure of the employees’ families” and “survey on modern Persian story writing” (Sadaf, 1998).

He appears again in 1981 after a long break. “I began to study psychology in 1968 and I studied ten years and for four and half year I was analyzing myself. Return to my past led to writing “Absent Men” published in America. After revolution when emigration to America was increased I attended in Iran atmosphere and I wrote “Pilgrimage Customs”.

The (*Absent Men*, 1989:77) is about an Iranian traditional family in the fifties decade, the story begins before my birth and continues to next decades. I wrote this novel according to “Sounds” novel. The events and tone of the story is not tone of the narrator and it is refecation of the past events”.

The result of referring to the past is a novel about an aristocrat family trying to preserve its situation. The old rancor of Heshmat Nezami and Azgdari families by own characteristics reminds families of Akardiou and Boendiya of Marquez “hundred years of loneliness”.

The content and concept of Modaresi works

Each work of Modaresi relates to one stage of his life so his works have separated contents. *Yakolya and her loneliness* is his successful novel that accounts human life main challenges of the world, human sins and disobedience. He employs symbolism in this story. His second novel is about shifting traditional life in Iran in fifties and sixties decades. All events are narrated by a child. In the stories after Islamic revolution the effects of war on rich and traditional families are accounted. He points to the reciprocal effects of individual and society in critical period”(The record of contemporary prose, 200:109).

Mythology and Taghi Modaresi

“Mythology has been gained attention since 1953. The literary mythologists considered symbolism for avoiding politics. They structured contemporary events in old time and place. *Yakolya and her loneliness* is one of these novels. This novel is repetition of history, love, passion, beauty, sin ,God anger, Satan deceive, kings plots and women witchcraft and etc. The events are occurred in Israel .*Yakolya* the daughter of Jerusalem king falls in love with a shepherd and she makes friendship with Satan and she is banished. The king kills the shepherd and ties infamy bells on her foot and expels her from Jerusalem. The girl falls down near Abaneh River and cries. The Satan appears and talks about the world. Satan tells about his domination on the king of Israel. “Mikah” the king of Israel, “Asaba” the cousin of the king, “Azar” the worrier son of the king, “Isabel” the proud and beautiful queen, “Yuram” father in law of the king and others are captured by Satan. According to the story Mikah brings a beautiful woman called “Tamar” from tribe “Bani Amon” in returning of war. The God gets angry and brings storm and illness and Tamar runs away and the god calms down but the life is continued without beauty, pleasure and love and human becomes sad and lonely. The story of *Yakolya and her loneliness* is the story of human loneliness and his desire of demanding beyond love and diversity. Even he is glad in pleasure and he seeks optimal reality. He wants to go beyond his boundaries and in this journey only God and his kindness could help him. In this story Modaresi gets disappointed in belief in powerful force and complains about God aids. His story is battle field for God and Satan:

“Why you are distressed. Do you want to console you?

Yakolya looks hesitantly at Satan and Satan continues:

-that day I and “He” were fighting and he threw me on the earth. Who created you? He and I created you. He did not know about the secret that I put in you. He did not know what does human want on the earth. Why does he banish you from me? Can you say why your love is incompatible with love?..I talked him about a world that we are hiding behind it and the human lives in trusted way. But he needed to look. Like a stone cutter He cut a stone and gave it tongue to learn his name and pronounce his name only his name. But it had a secret. The human was not a creature that becomes thirty near the river and in other case he dies. When he knew he poured a droplet of black liquid and then the human accustomed to to inferiority. He showed me when there is a threat. Oh, *Yakolya* what did your love show him? You hung on it in the sunset and went to desert with him .*Yakolya* put her head on Satan breast and cried” (Survey on the modern story from style and structure perspective, 2001:72-74).

Study the mythical aspects of “Yakolya and her loneliness”

A mysterious voice says:

-call

-he said:

What do I say?

-all the human beings are plant and their beauty is like a desert flower.

-the plant and flower are dried since The God spirit is blown them (Yakolya and her loneliness, 1964:1).The quality of life of a nation is affected by social, economic and civil situations. The personal history is bound with national history. Solitude and suppression after coup d'état led to creation of the considerable works in contemporary literature. “Yakolya and her loneliness” of Modaresi is one of these works. Mythical novel based on Old Testament myths are full of Jewish mythical symbols. Modaresi uses them as mythical symbols and sometimes he ignores them. God, Satan, fear, loneliness, death, sin and fame, battle of God and Satan, water, fire, sky, stars, sea, moon and mountains are mythical symbols used by Modaresi. He continues according to Jewish beliefs and he calls God as the God of anger and sometimes calls him “He” thought that all story characters aware of God. The king believes in God and he dislikes love because of fear of God but he is alone. Azar the commander and son f the king says: oh father, God is with us and he preserves us” (Yakolya and his loneliness, 1964:17).Amon feels God with his beliefs and advises the king.

Conclusion

Myths indicate human being existence .Myth is belief in the foundation and confines of the world and human life beyond our understanding. Myths tell about goddesses by power beyond our understanding and material world. They say about godeses like human and they behave like human. According to myths although the goddesses have supernatural power and their behaviors are unpredictable, they could destroy usual and common orders. They lead to subjectivity of spiritual life. All of them are manifestation of myths beauty. The writers who experienced coup d'état sought myths to find the solution. Modaresi is of these writers that uses myths in Yakolya and her loneliness. In 1941 when the social life became unbearable, the inner life gained importance and the anxiety and seeking shift in the world were indicated in optimistic Romanticism works. By culmination of the strangulation and disappointment among scholars the eagerness of decades thirties and and forties was replaced by disappointment. The writers were under stress and this trend led to mystic and solitude and optimistic philosophy and attention to myths so that every amateur or experienced writer uses allegory. Modaresi is writer of this period. Yakolya and her loneliness is one of the masterpieces of the contemporary literature that employs myths. His story content is from Old Testament and he uses God, Satan and loneliness in elegant way. Human being eternal loneliness is manifested in characteristics of Yakolya and her loneliness. Love, beauty, pleasure and sin are manifested in characters like Tamr (representative of Satan), shepherd (Satan).Modaresi uses other symbols in his theme. It can be referred to moon, fire, sky and sea. The main theme is from Old Testament. Among novels after coup d'état Yakolya and her loneliness is important. This novel was chosen as the best novel in 1953. Modaresi was successful in writing mythical novel. Yakolya and her loneliness has been introduced and discussed in European press.

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