

MYTH IN THE WHITE STEAMSHIP

Макалада изденүүчү Ч.Айтматовдун «Ак кеме» повестиндеги мифтердин реалдуу турмуштагы ордун жана көркөм чыгармадагы анын функциясын илимий талдоого алган.

Ачкыч сөздөр: фольклор, миф, мифология, легенда, коом, адамзат, глоболдашуу.

Chyngyz Aitmatov's work has some elements that are unique specifically to his creative process. His work drew on folklore, not in the ancient sense of it, rather, he tried to recreate and synthesize oral tales in the context of contemporary life. This is prevalent in his work, in nearly every story he refers to a myth.

One the best examples of Aitmatov's mythology in his novel *The White Steamship*¹. In this novel the myth of the Horned Deer–Mother. In the long exposition we become acquainted with the situation in the village and with seven people- the boy and six adults- who live there. The small community lives in terror of Orozkul, the local petty tyrant, who brutally beats his barren wife whenever he gets drink and abuses and humiliates her father Momun. The boy has been deserted by both of his parents, who divorced, left the village, remarried and established their new families in which there is no place for him. His mother went to live in the distant city where she found a job in a factory, while the father works as a sailor on the Issyk Kul Lake. As a result, the boy lives with his grandfather and his second wife, a malicious old woman who persistently harasses the boy for having been abandoned. Contrary to the traditional Kyrgyz view which respects elders as repository of wisdom, Momun is not appreciated, in spite of being good natured and always ready to help, he is belittled and made the butt of jokes. The third household in the village consists of Seidekmat, a lazy young man whose only ambition in life is to avoid any kind of work or confrontation, and his wife.

His grandfather, tells him during the long winter nights, and by the majestic natural point slaughtered by their enemies. The only two survivors were a boy and a girl. Caught by the enemy tribe, they were about to be thrown into the river from a high cliff, when the Horned Deer- Mother appeared and saved them. Like Romulus and Remus, who were fed by she wolf, the children who became the ancestors of the Kyrgyz grew on the Horned Deer-Mother's milk. She protected them from wild animals and human hunters and led them all the way from Siberia to the Issyk Kul region where their descendants have lived ever since. The Kyrgyz Adam and Eve married there and had seven sons and seven daughters. Whenever the girl, was in labor, the Horned Deer-Mother would come to help, bringing a cradle on her horns. All Kyrgyz woman in later ages prayed to the Horned Deer –Mother to grant them an easy delivery. Life under the protection of the totem animal lasted for many generations, until greed and pride gained the upper hand, leading the people to begin kill maral for their horns. The animals were trying to hide from ever-growing number of hunters, but as even inaccessible cliffs could not give them shelter, they left the country and have not been seen there since.

The boy's own story reflects his two wishes: to be reunited with his parents, and to escape the situation in the village. He often goes to the summit of the Guard Mountain and, through the binoculars grandfather Momun gave him as a present, observes the mountains and valleys which surround him, as well as the Issyk-Kul Lake, which from such a distance looks like a dream world. On its surface he sees a white steamship coming and going every day. Its beauty and power fascinate the boy, leading him to imagine that his father works as a sailor on that ship.

¹ Айтматов Ч. Белый пароход. – Ф., 1970.

In the boy's vision, the steamship becomes a conscious living being and a part of myth. He then imagines that he could turn into a fish with a human face and swim down the river all the way to the Issyk-Kul Lake. His father would then take him out of water, he would become again his normal self, and they would go home together.

The importance of the myth of the Horned Deer-Mother is underlined by its central position in the novel. It tells about the origin of the Kyrgyz people and their coming to their present homeland. In ancient times, it is said, the Kyrgyz lived in Siberia, on the banks of the river Yenisei, which was then known as Enesai. i.e., in Kyrgyz, the "mother-river"¹. Different peoples in the region were in constant war against each other, and, as a result, the whole Kyrgyz tribe was at one point slaughtered by their enemies.

When three marals suddenly appear in the woods across the river from the village, both the boy and the grandfather believe that the Horned Deer Mother has returned to her people and that life in harmony with start anew. However, on that very day Momun arouses the anger of Orozgul, who then beats his wife again and dismisses the old man from his job. In order to appease Orozgul, the grandfather is forced into the position where he has to shoot and kill one of the marals. He does it in order to save his daughter and grandson from further mistreatment, but instead he triggers the tragedy. Momun drinks himself senseless as a result, while the rest of them butcher the meat, roast it on a barbecue and have a party. When the boy, ill and feverish, who has been sleeping during these events, finds out what has happened, he is totally paralyzed and unable to decide what to do. It seems to him that his nightmares and the actual events merge in a horrific way. The balance between reality and myth has been lost, so it becomes clear that it is not possible for him to continue to live in such a world. The only thing he can do is to try to save himself inside his own personal myth. So he jumps into the freezing river in a desperate attempt to escape the horror by turning into a fish and swimming to his father.

Aitmatov's version of the myth of the Horned Deer-Mother is not simply taken over from traditional sources; it is, in fact, the product of his reworking of several folk myths which follow a similar storyline but differ in many details. In one of the versions, two brothers named Kara-Murza and Asan went into the mountains to hunt marals and found in the herd two children, a girl and a boy, with antlers on their heads. They killed the boy and brought the girl back to their chief, who married her to his grandson. She later gave proof of great wisdom, so people called her *Muiuz-babiche*². She also cursed the hunters who killed her brother and, as a result, they were left childless. On the other hand, a servant-girl who drank the water *Muiuz-babiche* washed her head with got pregnant by that act and gave birth to a son named *Dzhelden*³ ("from the wind"), who became the forefather of one of the Kyrgyz class. Other traditions tell that the two hunters did not kill a boy, but a white maral, then took home the girl with tiny antlers on her head and married her to a son of their third brother. After giving birth to a baby boy, she disappeared into the mountains for a month, and when she came back she brought with her a young girl, a daughter of *Kaiyp* (or *Kaiberen*), the good ghost who protects wild animals. The girl, who was later called *Oluiat-baibiche*⁴, married the *Muiuz-babiche*'s son, and the young couple became the ancestors of the Kyrgyz. In another version, which belongs to the so-called 'taboo folktale' type, the horned girl told her husband after the marriage ceremony that he has to warn her before entering their *yurt* by coughing or making some other noise. Her request puzzled him for years, until one day curiosity got the upper hand. He returned home, having decided to take a look at her through the hole on the back wall of their *yurt*. His surprise was great when he saw inside only a female maral. By the time he managed to get in, she had already disappeared and was never seen again⁵.

¹ Poliakova p.12

² horned mother

³ from the wind

⁴ saint mother

⁵ Abramzon 281-84

Other myths link Kyrgyz ancestry to wolves or wild dogs, rather than to deer and marals. One such story tells how a daughter of a khan went with her forty maids to gather wild fruit. On their return to the village they found everybody dead, killed by an enemy tribe. Not only humans, but also all the animals were massacred, with one red dog remaining alive. As the only male left from the previous generation, he became the ancestor of the new Kyrgyz nation by impregnating the forty maids. The myth claims that the very name of the nation is derived from that event: in *Kyrgyz kyrk* means “forty,” and *kyz*, “virgin”¹.

Aitmatov shaped a single narrative combining the myth of the Horned Deer-Mother with stories about the migration of his people. Many Kyrgyz legends and epics recount how they moved from South Siberia to the region around Issyk-Kul lake and the Tianshan mountains which they inhabit today². Both archaeological evidence and historical records by Chinese and Persian authors confirm that the Kyrgyz used to live in the area between the Yenisei and the Irtysh rivers, from where they migrated in several successive movements between the thirteenth and the eighteenth centuries³.

Even after the dispersal of the marals and the demise of the Horned Deer-Mother, her spirit is believed to have remained to hover above Issyk-Kul and watch over her people. The position of the outpost in which the action takes place is also significant. It occupies the liminal space between the ‘civilized’ land and the wilderness, or, in other words, between villages and cities where ordinary reality rules, and mountains and forests in which totemic animals live. Thus, in symbolic terms, it is a space where common and mythic realities meet and communicate, opening many dimensions of insight. Characters like the boy and his grandfather, who are more interested in spiritual and aesthetic things, have their eyes turned to the mountains; whereas those who are primarily attracted by material goods, which means everybody else, look in the opposite direction. In WS Aitmatov makes the acceptance of myth in contemporary society psychologically believable by attributing mythic consciousness to those of his heroes who are either very young or very old, and so in both cases especially open to the work of myth.

In *White Steamboat* Aitmatov makes the acceptance of myth in contemporary society psychologically believable by attributing mythic consciousness to those of his heroes who are either very young or very old, and so in both cases especially open to the “work of myth.”

In the first case, the reason is the child’s non-differentiation between reality and imagination; in the second, it is the memories that form the greater part of the mental processes of the old man. They both live in a very close proximity to the mythic world, which is opposed to that of the adults, locked in its utilitarian, animistic, totemistic and shamanistic religious positions were, as we have seen, in the heart of the traditional Kyrgyz worldview, and they are all present in the novel. Animism sees animals, plants, natural phenomena, and even inanimate objects as living, feeling and thinking beings. The boy, who is growing up in the outpost with no other children to play with, makes friends instead with rocks and plants. He gives them names, invents games for them, and pretends to have conversations with them. Thus there is a ‘wolf’ rock, a ‘tank,’ and a ‘lying camel’; among the plants, the stinging burdock is the enemy he often fights with, the bindweed has the smartest and happiest flowers of all, whereas the shiraljins are loyal friends among whom he takes cover when he feels hurt⁴. During the harsh winter months he is worried about the trees in the forest who “get terribly frightened” standing all alone in the night exposed to the hard frost.

On the other hand, the killing of the totemic animal symbolizes betrayal of the holy covenant, and is a deed equivalent to self-destruction. The horrible scene of Orozkul’s chopping off the deer’s horns stresses the brutality and sacrilege of such an act. It implies the destruction of all

¹ Abramzon p.288

² Zhirmunskii p. 35, 49

³ Zhirmunskii 35, 49

⁴ WS 9-10; 10-11

human ideals and the inauguration of a reign of brutal power. The Horned Deer-Mother came for the second time to help people, and again fell as a victim of human cruelty.

The story about the Horned Deer- Mother is thus an ecological myth expressing a world – view of humanity as an integral part of nature. Throughout it h is a Aitmatov insists that humankind needs to establish harmonious coexistence with nature without striving to set itself over and above it. Life on earth“ harmonious cycle that humans can join but not change”¹.By hurting nature we also hurt ourselves. Grandfather Momun understands that well and cares profoundly for the forest and the animals that live in it, the boy is also totally immersed in the natural world, making friends with rocks, grass and flowers.

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Ч. АЙТМАТОВДУН ЧЫГАРМАЛАРЫНДАГЫ АДЕП-АХЛАК ИДЕЯСЫ

Макалада заманыбыздын залкар жазуучусу Ч. Айтматовдун чыгармаларындагы адеп-ахлак идеясы изилдөөгө алынды. Адамдын жашоодогу орду, анын улуулугу, бири-бири менен болгон мамилесин, табигатка болгон көз карашын ачып берүүгө аракет жасалды.

Ачкыч сөздөр: Адам, адамгерчилик, абийир, өмүр, өлүм, тарбия, жакшылык.

Улуу замандашыбыз – дүйнөлүк масштабдагы жазуучу, кыргыз элинин залкар адамы Ч.Айтматов көп кырдуу чыгармачылыгында дүйнөлүк адабияттагы жаңы багытты ачып, анда элдик даанышмандык, адам улуулугу, акыл эс сыяктуу баалуулуктарды философиялык жана психологиялык өңүттөн изилдөөгө алды. Анын чыгармаларында улуттук өзгөчөлүк, учурдун актуалдуу көйгөйлөрү, адамдын рухий жана адептик касиеттери, акыйкат жана адилеттүүлүк маселелери башкы орунда турат. XX кылымдын улуу жазуучусу, маданияттын сактоочусу жана гуманизмдин чечкиндүү коргоочусу болуу менен ал дүйнөлүк адабиятты арттырып жана биздин мекенибиз – Кыргызстандын образын адамзаттын руханий кенчине айландырган, дүйнөдө биринчилерден болуп маданий дөөлөттөрдү сактап калуунун жана кыргыз тилин жана өз маданиятын кайра жаратуунун зарылдыгы жөнүндө айтып чыккан.

Заманыбыздын залкар жазуучусу Чыңгыз Айтматов өзүнүн жашап өткөн өмүрүндө патриотизмге, гуманизмге, толеранттуулукка жана оптимизмге жык толгон чыгармаларды жараткандыгы жалпыга белгилүү. Анын чыгармалары көптөгөн тилге которулуп, дүйнө элине тараган. Демек, бул жазуучу көтөргөн проблемалардын актуалдуулугунан, анын талантынын дүйнөлүк деңгээлинен кабар берет. Чыңгыз Айтматовдун чыгармачылыгына мүнөздүү өзгөчөлүк фольклор, терең философиялык ой толгоолор, адам жана анын тегерегиндеги нравалык-этикалык маселелер.

Чыңгыз Айтматовдун өмүрү – анын жазган чыгармалары менен тамырлаш, тагдырлаш. Жазуучунун өмүр жолу алгач саясий тоталитардык режимдин каардуу күндөрүнөн башталып, Улуу Ата Мекендик согуш мезгили, андан соң советтик ураалаган доор, эгемендүүлүк жылдар жана жыйырма биринчи кылымдагы өнүгүүнүн космостук деңгээлге чыккан глобалдашуу мезгилдеринен туш келди. Буга ылайык ар бир коомдук учур Айтматовдун чыгармаларында көркөм-философиялык аспектиде чагылдырылып келди. Ал

¹ Olcott 225