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THE POETICS OF MYTHIC CONSCIOUSNESS: WORD, MOTHER, AND CREATION IN THE CREATIVE WORK OF MAHIRA NAGHIGHIZI

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Abstract. In recent years, mythopoetic research in world literary scholarship has undergone a renewed surge of interest, as the enduring presence of archaic mythological worldviews in modern literary masterpieces has generated considerable scholarly attention and given rise to new literary-philosophical perspectives. The intersection of myth and poetry continues to be actively studied as a significant arena of research from both national and comparative literary-theoretical standpoints. This article aims to investigate the poetics of mythic consciousness in the creative work of Mahira Naghighizi – a prominent representative of twenty-first-century Azerbaijani poetic thought, an Honored Teacher, laureate of the “Golden Pen” award, public figure, and poet-professor – with particular focus on the artistic system of the Word, Mother, and Creation archetypes from a mythopoetic perspective. Selected poetic examples from the poet's various collections have been analyzed using the mythocritical method, as well as C.G. Jung's archetypal theory, M. Eliade's concept of mythic creation, and the views of several Turkish scholars on water cult. The research demonstrates that in Mahira Naghighizi's (Huseynova's) poetry, the cosmogonic function of the Word operates as a fundamental principle of mythocosmogony; the image of the Mother undergoes transformation into the archetype of “White Mother/Earth Mother/Humay Mother”, thereby acquiring a sacred-mythic significance. Furthermore, the poetic sublimation of the Water mythic cult, the artistic reflection of the Fate archetype, and the embodiment of the genetic-archaic traces of shamanism in poetic examples clearly emphasize the continuity of the Oghuz-Turkic mythic memory within the contemporary artistic system. The analysis reveals that twenty-first-century Azerbaijani poetry continues to make new contributions to its study within the context of world mythopoetic tradition, confirming that it offers rich poetic material for monographic research in this field.

Key words: mythopoetics, archetype, Mother image, Water cult, cosmogony, Mahira Naghighizi, Azerbaijani poetry.

Introduction. In contemporary literary-theoretical thought, the investigation of myth's poetic function holds particular scholarly significance. From the second half of the twentieth century onward, C.G. Jung's archetypal theory, M. Eliade's concept of mythic creation, and G. Bachelard's studies on the symbolism of elements have established the principal theoretical direction of mythopoetic analysis in world literary scholarship. This theoretical approach is also gradually developing within Azerbaijani literary studies, with the mythopoetic structure of the national poetic heritage being re-evaluated through valuable new methodological perspectives.

The period spanning the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries represents a distinctive phenomenon in Azerbaijani poetry – a return to national-moral values and a renewed expression of archaic mythic memory in the contemporary artistic language. Mahira Naghighizi – one of the prominent poets of this period, author of more than twenty collections of poetry, Honored Teacher of the Republic of Azerbaijan, laureate of the “Golden Pen” award, public figure, and professor – has transformed herself through her verses into a poetic vessel of national-moral values. Raised from childhood in an atmosphere of folk tales, bayatis, lullabies, the art of ashiq poetry, and the dastan tradition, the poet's artistic worldview encompasses the deep strata of Oghuz-Turkic mythic consciousness.

The aim of this article is to investigate the artistic expression of mythic consciousness in Mahira Naghighizi's poetic system – particularly the remythologization of the Word, Mother, and Creation archetypes – using the mythopoetic method of analysis. The selected poetic examples from the poet's

collections “My Mother”, “Pour Water Behind Me, Mother”, “The Wisdom of the Word”, and other works serve as the analytical material. Jung's theory of the collective unconscious and archetypes, Eliade's concept of eternal return and cosmogonic myth, as well as Bachelard's symbolism of water and fire, and the research of İnan and Türkyılmaz on various archetypes, constitute the theoretical-methodological foundation of this work.

The research demonstrates that Mahira Naghighizi's creative work is a luminous example of the continuity of mythic memory in the contemporary literary environment, and presents rich scholarly material for monographic research in this field.

Theoretical and methodological framework. The theoretical foundation of this research draws upon C.G. Jung's archetypal theory, M. Eliade and Akman's cosmogonic myth concepts, the water cult studies of İnan, Akman, and Türkyılmaz, as well as G. Bachelard's research on elemental symbolism. The theoretical propositions of the scholars mentioned provide the scholarly basis for interpreting the mythopoetic structure of Mahira Naghighizi's creative work – the archetypes of Word, Mother, Water, Faith, and Fate.

Main text.

The Cosmogonic Function of the Word

To understand the mythopoetic structure of Mahira Naghighizi's creative work – a poet who continues the tradition of “fidelity to national-moral values” in contemporary Azerbaijani poetry – one must first examine her relationship to the concept of “word”, which is among the most essential factors to consider. Her aphorism “The Word is power! The Word is wisdom, meaning, and logic” (Huseynova, 2012, p. 5), while appearing at first glance to express devotion to the artistic word, harbors within its deep semantic layer a distinctly mythopoetic essence. According to M. Eliade's theory of cosmogonic myth, in archaic thought the word/utterance is the primordial instrument of creation – the world comes into being through the word, and exists by means of the word (Eliade, 2000, p. 268). It is precisely in this context that Mahira Naghighizi's treatment of the word as “power”, “wisdom”, and “logic” reveals her profound intuitive sense of its mythic cosmogonic function.

As the poet herself has noted, “a word left unspoken in the heart – burns, kills, takes life”:

It burns, scatters my ashes to the sky,

The word I have pressed and kept within my heart.

It does not kill – it slowly takes my life,

The word I left unspoken in my heart. (Huseynova, 2012, p. 8)

In this poetic fragment, mythopoetic moments emerge not in “naked” form, but cloaked in a deep artistic-aesthetic veil. Two fundamental mythopoetic concepts resonating with Jung's theory of the collective unconscious come to the fore here. First, the concept of birth: the word that has fallen into the poet's cosmogonic womb must inevitably “come into the world”, must “be born” – for according to the dialectics of the Oghuz-Turkic thought system, creation is a ceaselessly existing process. Second, the concept of creation passing through death: every act of creation necessarily entails death. The word “scattering ashes to the sky” and “slowly taking life” – this is precisely the poetic expression of the death-birth dialectic.

In one of her journalistic articles, Mahira Naghighizi notes: “My Great Creator created man through the word.” This idea expresses that her worldview and her thoughts on life, the world, humanity, and society are infused with divine values; that, as in ancient Oghuz-Turkic thought, Myth and Religion coexist in divine harmony. In this sense, Mahira Naghighizi's system of thought does not remain at the level of narrow philosophical fragments, but encompasses the boundaries of the truths of existence. This is why her poetry reflects wholeness, completeness, and eternal truths.

Thus, Mahira Naghighizi conceptualizes the word not as a simple verbal phenomenon, but as a cosmogonic being possessed of magical-mythological power – one whose every birth gently takes the life of its creator, invisibly sublimating their very existence into the artistic word.

The Mythic Transformation of the Mother Archetype

C.G. Jung identified the “Great Mother” archetype as one of the most powerful archetypes of the collective unconscious and demonstrated that it carries universal character across all world mythologies (Jung, 1968). In Mahira Naghighizi's creative work, the Mother image may justifiably be understood as the poetic expression of this universal archetype within a national-mythic framework. For research reveals that in M. Naghighizi's artistic imagination, the power of the mother she evokes acquires cosmic dimensions:

*The universe is illuminated by your light,
My heart is kindled by that fire – my mother. (Huseynova, 2006, p. 23)*

According to Bachelard's “Psychoanalysis of Fire”, fire in archaic thought bears an ambivalent nature – both creative and destructive (Bachelard, 1938). In Mahira Naghighizi's verse, however, this fire is born from the mother's heart – meaning the Mother herself becomes the cosmogonic creative force. The attribution of light, radiance, and fire as emanating from the Mother directly connects the poet to the “White Mother” archetype of Turkic mythology – the primordial creator figure, the image of the ancient woman.

The identification of the mother's smile with the sun represents yet another fascinating manifestation of this archetype:

*If only a smile were to alight upon her lips,
It would be as though the sun fell upon Shahdag. (Huseynova, 2012, p. 14)*

This stanza, resonating with the motif in the Azerbaijani fairy tale tradition where the embodiment of feminine beauty causes flowers to fall from her lips when she smiles, artistically expresses the triad of Sun//Smile//Creation. Calling her mother “the mother of all mothers”, the poet elevates her from human hypostasis to the universal “Mythic Mother” archetype. This image in her poetry is a metaphoric figure standing between Earth and Sky, ordering the cosmos:

*You are the summit of the highest mountain,
You are far more ancient than this old world.
You are as beautiful as an angel descended from heaven,
You are the mother of the world itself, Mother! (Huseynova, 2007, p. 12)*

Within the framework of the concept of “sacred space”, Eliade interprets the mountain peak as the axis mundi – the axis of the world, the point where heaven and earth converge (Eliade, 2000). Accepting the mother as the creator of this summit fully reveals her sacred significance within the Earth Mother archetype.

The Poetic Sublimation of the Water Cult

In Mahira Naghighizi's creative work, images related to water bear a distinctive mythopoetic significance. The great Turkish scholar A. İnönü provided scientifically valuable foundations for the deep reverence that Turkic peoples hold for water. In his research it is noted that “the Bashkirs would bring their new brides to the water's edge, speak words such as 'water passed down from ancestors, water passed down from mothers,' and cast a piece of the bride's possessions into the water for good fortune” (İnönü, 2007, pp. 55-56). This fact demonstrates that the sanctification of water is a genetic belief embedded in the deep layers of Turkic peoples' mythic memory, transmitted from generation to generation. Türkyılmaz's research also supports this view: the sanctification of water by the Turkic peoples is distinguished by a number of fascinating and original aspects (Türkyılmaz, 2013, p. 86). According to Eliade and Akman, “immersion in water represents a transition from old life to new life, from death to birth, and also a return of the soul to the material world” (Eliade, 2000; Akman, 2002, p. 2).

It is precisely this ancient mythic belief, revealing motifs of shamanism, that is reborn in Mahira Naghighizi's poetry wearing a distinctly personal poetic guise:

I shall find good fortune and luck,

Pour water behind me, Mother!

I shall emerge into the light,

Pour water behind me, Mother! (Huseynova, 2007, p. 11)

The surface meaning of the poem is simple – a child departing from home asks the mother to pour water behind them. But in the implicit semantic layer of this poem by Mahira Naghighizi, a mythopoetic content is concealed that can only be uncovered through deep analysis. The lyrical hero does not wish to be separated from the mother – this is profoundly difficult for them. Nevertheless, they must leave home and fulfill their life's mission. The solution is found in the mother's pouring of water behind them. This water is the poetic expression of a mythic protective spirit: the mythic guardian whom the White Mother dispatches with her child – an angel who will protect them from evil, from misfortune, from all dangers.

May there be peace and safety,

May the road be auspicious,

May there be remedy for every sorrow,

Pour water behind me, Mother! (Huseynova, 2007, p. 11)

By infusing the metaphysical functions of water – peace, good fortune, remedy – into the poetic fabric of this poem, Mahira Naghighizi skillfully translates the national mythic memory into the contemporary artistic language. In this respect, the poet's creative work reflects a living poetic proof of A. İnan's scholarly propositions.

The Faith Archetype: The Poetic Pillar of the Mythic World

In Mahira Naghighizi's creative work, faith occupies a special place as the most significant poetic marker of myth. The very core of the poet's entire artistic-aesthetic system is constituted by the faith archetype. However, this archetype – unlike in other poets – is not confined to a universal religious-philosophical sphere: its initial and final point is the mother. This originality represents the most significant aspect of the specific character of Mahira Naghighizi's mythopoetic thought.

In the poet's inner world, all branches of faith – faith in the earth, faith in the word, faith in God, faith in the future – converge around the image of the Mother and draw their source from her. In this regard, the Mother is not merely a mythic creative force, but also the pillar of faith, the sacred point of support. The most powerful aspect of the “Great Mother” archetype in Jung's theory – its function as shelter, support, and primordial source of trust for all – fully affirms itself in Mahira Naghighizi's poetic system:

The universe is illuminated by your light,

My heart is kindled by that fire – my mother. (Huseynova, 2006, p. 23)

The illumination of the universe by the mother's light demonstrates that faith has acquired cosmic dimensions. For the poet, faith in the world, faith in life, faith in people, faith in beauty, faith in justice – all are connected to this primordial source of light: the mother. Resonating with Bachelard's proposition that “fire is the primordial energy of life”, in this artistic image faith comes alive not as an abstract religious concept, but as a mythological truth burning like fire, born from the mother's heart and very being.

Notably, Mahira Naghighizi's faith archetype also manifests its unity with mythic memory. In the poet's unconscious, shaped since childhood in an environment connected to oral folk literature, faith always exists as a living, active, creative force. This faith, harmonizing with national-moral values and Oghuz-Turkic cosmogonic thought, shapes Mahira Naghighizi's poetry into a whole, complete, and internally harmonious artistic system.

The Artistic Reflection of the Fate Archetype

In Azerbaijani oral and written literature, the Fate archetype – the personification of destiny, the turning of the world – occupies a distinctive place as one of the universal images of mythic thought. Mahira Naghighizi revives this archetype in her poetic works, imbuing it with individual-lyrical nuances:

*It blocks my door and stands in wait,
It strikes wound upon wound.
It plots ruse, trick, and trap,
This fate does not grow weary. (Huseynova, 2012, p. 144)*

This Fate image – a poetic projection of Jung's “shadow” archetype – is the artistic expression of the oppositions of light/darkness, good/evil, creation/destruction, cosmos/chaos in Mahira Naghighizi's cosmogonic thought. That Fate “plots ruse, trick, and trap” in the poem demonstrates its role as a symbol of chaotic (disordering) force, the mythic destructive power that is the antithesis of cosmogonic order.

Conclusion. Thus, from our research it becomes evident that Mahira Naghighizi's creative work represents the most consistent and nearly wholly complete poetic expression of national-moral values and archaic mythic memory in contemporary Azerbaijani poetry. The poet's artistic world, drawing sustenance from the deep strata of Oghuz-Turkic cosmogonic thought, skillfully conveys to the reader the remythological function of that tradition in the contemporary poetic language.

The research yields the following conclusions:

First, the core of Mahira Naghighizi's poetic system is constituted by the cosmogonic function of the Word. For the poet, the word is not a simple verbal phenomenon – it is the primordial instrument of creation, a being possessed of magical-mythological power. This approach directly establishes her as an heir of Oghuz-Turkic mythic thought.

Second, the Mother archetype in Mahira Naghighizi's creative work emerges from human hypostasis to become the contemporary poetic expression of the “White Mother/Earth Mother” archetype. Adorned with cosmogonic images such as light, radiance, fire, and the mountain summit, the Mother image represents both the creative mythological force and the pillar of the poet's entire system of faith.

Third, the poetic sublimation of the Water cult fully resonates with the scholarly propositions of A. İnan, Eliade and Akman, and Türkyılmaz. Mahira Naghighizi not only preserves this ancient Turkic belief in her poetic thought – she imbues it with new artistic breath, reactualizing it for the contemporary reader.

Fourth, the Faith archetype runs through the center of all these mythopoetic structures – the artistic crystallization of the deep trust that Oghuz-Turkic mythic consciousness places in humanity, the world, and the future constitutes a specific characteristic living in the poet's works.

Fifth, the Fate archetype functions as the poetic expression of the oppositions in the poet's cosmogonic world model – good/evil, creation/destruction, chaos/cosmos – and completes the wholeness of Mahira Naghighizi's mythic world image.

In general, Mahira Naghighizi's poetry vividly reveals that the national mythic memory not only survives in the contemporary literary environment, but has acquired new artistic-aesthetic possibilities. This creative work simultaneously demonstrates the organic connection of contemporary Azerbaijani poetry with the world mythopoetic tradition. The research creates a solid foundation both for future monographic studies in this field and for the study of contemporary Azerbaijani poetry in an international context.

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