

Khanty Novel: on the Problem of Archetypal Semantic Code (On the Example of E. Aipin “Khanty, or Star of the Dawn”)

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Abstract: in the article contextual features of Khanty novel are examined in the context of world mental conception of small-numbered nation Khanty, which lives in northwest Siberia. On the example of the novel “Khanty, or Star of the Dawn” by the classical Khanty author E.A. Aipin functioning of mythological allusions in authorial texts are studied, their archetypal semantic code is determined.

Key words: Khanty mythology • Khanty novel • Mythological thinking • Live epic tradition • Mythological allusion • Archetype • Quote • Interpretation

INTRODUCTION

Relevance of studying the archetype content and mythological constituent part of Khanty novelist Eremey Aipin's novel “Khanty, or Star of the Dawn” (1990) is determined by the fact that this problem is poorly investigated, especially in the context of authorial texts.

It should be said, the E. Aipin's novel has been captivating scholars' attention since the moment of its release. For the most part scholars highlighted the beginning of the novel: V. Rogachev called “Khanty” “a novel-epopee about nation's destiny” [1], whereas G. Danilina explores the novel through the prism of “epos expressive potential”. Particularly, it is stressed, that “novel composition is determined by the epic artistic intent” and Aipin lays emphasis “not on personal inner experiences of characters but rather on the parts of their personality related to kinship, patriotic feelings” [2]. This viewpoint is shared by E. Butin who in his article “Oath-breaker” writes: “Aipin's novel “Khanty” - is an epic writing. It is, at the same time, true encyclopedia of history, of modern life, psychology and moral-and-ethical principles of Khanty” [3]. In the book “Literature of Tyumen region. Book for teachers” compiled by T. Rogacheva, the novel is analyzed not only as epos, but also as documentary novel [4]. In the article “That's how the myths are born” A. Vashchenko stresses the connection that exists between ethnic literature and

mythology. But the main thing, according to the scholar, is that the myth becomes “the art language” of Khanty literature [5]. “Social multilingualism” of the novel was also accentuated by O. Lagunova, who, furthermore, touched upon the issues of archetypal contents of the text at figurative and thematic level [6]. N. Tsymbalistenko considers the myth in Aipin's text as a “conceptual archetype of consciousness, a component of Khanty prosaist's style of artistic thinking” [7]. The Khanty novel was object and foreign researchers [8]. Thus, the genre component of the Khanty classic's novel and its relation to folklore and mythology was the focus of researcher's attention. But, at the same time, the novel was never studied from the perspective of the myth and poetical content before.

Methodology: Within the framework of our research we propose to study archetypal content of the Khanty novel at the level of mythological allusions. We suppose that appeal to mythological allusions in the Aipin's novel, identification of their functional contents will allow to discover deep meanings of the author's text.

Basis Part: Aipin's novel is filled with mythological images and motifs which are artistically reproduced and restructured by the author in accordance with his ideological goal. The understanding of the meaning of the novel “Khanty, or Star of the Dawn” by a reader of

another ethnicity will be complicated by the fact that Khanty mythology serves not to exercise ornamental function, but constructs the basis of pagan worldview and world perception. Therefore the mythology in E. Aipin's novel is "dissolved" in images and narrative structure, being present as "foreign word" (M. Bakhtin). In fiction literature quotes, reminiscences and allusions are traditionally referred to "foreign word". We will focus our attention on allusion which is understood "as the hint at someone or something, presumably known to the reader" [9]. We single out the allusion from the text and then return it back into the text. But this allusion has already become enriched with associations, additional semantic shades absolutely individual in relation to the text in which they will be present. The myth is "included" in Eremey Aipin's text by means of allusions. Genetically literature of the Khanty goes back to early epic folklore, in particular to mythology. Modern Khanty literature hasn't lost its connection with folklore: folklore and mythological images and plots are still often reinterpreted by prosaic writers through the prism of art. The author transforms them by means of literary devices and thus, enrich their content with new dimensions. "Survivability" of folklore and mythology of small-numbered nations of Western Siberia (the Khanty and Mansi) is determined by preservation of their ethnic environment [10]. Mythology influences formation of mentality, moral ideals and nation values. Folklore and mythology influence creativity of the Khanty prose writers. In Aipin's artworks, for example, mythological allusions in fact create "a text within a text", at that, both can be understood only in conjunction with the other. E. Aipin, furnishing his works with author's narration, restructures mythological images and motives in accordance with the new historical-and-cultural and artistic-and-aesthetic context. Allusions serve to creation of mythological "subtext".

The prologue of the novel is presented by the Khanty parable about the Ascended Man. Reproduction of the parable and comparison of the main character Demyan to the Man's who's made an Ascension actualizes cultural and mythological context in E. Aipin's novel, thereby broadening the novel narrative borders. The name-image accented by numerous repetitions - "The Star of the Morning Dawn" - is the recurring allusion this novel. The regularity of repetition of the archetypal (for Khanty's culture) Morning Daybreak Star image allows to draw a conclusion on its purposeful use by E. Aipin. Apparently, such narrative feature of the Khanty novel stems from the tradition of folklore narrations: in

fairy tales, legends repetitions (figurative, semantic and syntactic) are often met. Repetitions in folklore texts are of formula character and are intended to facilitate their full digestion and comprehension of their meaning by the listener. Stylistic device of repetition is widespread in the traditional Khanty songs. Semantic repetition for the Khanty is informative: repetition not only strengthens representation, but also gets into the listener's subconsciousness, forcing him to live through and process the new information. Therefore repetition in E. Aipin's novel, certainly, goes back to oral poetic tradition. Repetition of the Daybreak Star image plays a constructive role in the novel. Lagunov K. in the article "there is only one step from love to hatred" ties the title of the novel and the symbolical description of a rising star with the legend about the Ascended Man and with image of the main character - Demyan [11]. The parable about the Ascended Man, the mythical and poetic image of the Daybreak Star appears in E. Aipin's narration twice - in the prologue and in the epilogue. The true life journey in E. Aipin's novel is "the way up" - "isn't it the meaning of Earth Life?" [12] asks the hero of the novel. Repetition of the parable is not only conceptual and composite "loop-around" of the novel. It is used for a reason: the first lines of the novel evoke and tune in certain zones of ethnic consciousness in the author's clansmen, whereas the final chapters awaken certain subconscious, mental feelings and sensations. The author consciously uses the method traditional for folklore in the art text to activate the perception of his clansmen at the subconscious level. The E. Aipin's novel "Khanty, or Star of the Dawn" contains several storylines: the central one is the lot of the main character - the Khanty hunter Demyan and there are others sub-plots telling the stories of Isadora, Koska Maly and Ephem Sedoi. Story line of the novel are connected by the general motifs: the motif of murder, the motif of life and death. The plot-forming motif of the road-way in the novel is omnipresent and its conceptual content is determined by epic tradition of the Khanty: traditionally the plot of legends centers around the journey of a character - the space expands, motion of the character becomes the main measure of the way, the borders dividing external and internal, proper and someone else's are set throughout this motion. The principle of space structuring in Eremey Aipin's arouses the allusion of epic space in the folklore text: Demyan's way lies outside, as he leaves the camp. The main character Demyan goes to visit his children at a foster home (1st chapter), pays visits to acquaintances and relatives, meets new "relatives" - seismologists-oil prospectors, then comes back home (29th chapter).

Demyan's way from home to the district-center and back is, in essence, circular motion. We deem this a mythological allusion of cyclic motion repetition. Demyan's movement in circles it is full of recollections, author's remarks. Memories and songs which accompany Demyan during his trip appear in the novel not randomly. It is determined by the culture of the Khanty who traditionally settled on extensive territories. To pass the way time, they sang their personal songs, or songs of their relatives and friends. They were not just songs, but "the songs of fate" [13]. The road-story of E. Aipin's novel, in our opinion, differs from road-stories typical for the world literature. According to the Khanty's beliefs, the man is neither "owner" nor "creating force" of the world. But the man has duties in this world. And his main duty, according to the Khanty's ethics, is to be responsible for everything. The author's idea of life way of each person corresponds with patrimonial Khanty laws of: life journey of everyone who calls himself human is constant responsibility and moral obligation [14]. A person is valuable due to fulfillment of those obligations. Moreover, in the E. Aipin's novel the image of road goes back to the mythological image of the "road-song": "Demyan goes and together with him the song goes. It was the song" [15]. The artistic metaphor "road-song" in E. Aipin's novel can be "deciphered" only in the context of the traditional pagan ideas of mythological space. The mythological space in the traditional epos is always filled with sounds - sounds of nature, sounds of any musical instruments [16]. It can be bumps of a shaman's tambourine, melodious sounds of a jaw harp-homusa or stringed dombra [17]. We believe that appearance of the image of the Khanty violin (narkasjukh) in E. Aipin's narration is not casual. In this E. Aipin's description certain mythological allusions can be observed: in archaic times musical instruments were often identified with celestial bodies (a violin-narkasjukh- the Daybreak Star -Demyan). The image of the chosen stringed instrument (a violin) in the E. Aipin's text is also not random. The Universe, according to mythological views of the Khanty's is a world vertical consisting of Lower world, Upper world and Mild-world. The Axis is the constant in this vertical, it is similar to strings in many ways - they are tightened from heavens to earth, from the man to the stars. Thus, according to the mythological ideas, function of musical instruments in cultures of small-numbered nations of the North isn't reduced to pure aesthetics. In cultures of the northern people musical instrument is a part of the world order harmony- hence, a shamanistic ritual is impossible without

tambourine. By means of "playing" on a tambourine, a shaman falls into the state of trance and, thus, gains the ability to communicate with spirits, moving throughout the worlds. This or that musical instrument and, especially, the process of production of sounds with the help of it, is perceived by northern pagans in an absolutely specific manner: with their help man enters "relations of transformation and identity with the mythological world" [18]. Thus, only through mythological context it becomes possible to understand the unusual metaphorical image in the E. Aipin's novel - the image of the "Demyan-violin" [19].

The image of Demyan is an artistic incarnation of Khanty mythological ideas, which are the discovery of the living soul in everything by Demyan, his belief in brotherhood amongst all people, responsibility for other people's lives and pain related to death of another human being. The idea of kinship becomes the core of his life. This idea is rooted in mythological times when Man and Nature were one. Each of the Khanty men carries this feeling inside. Since ancient times the Khanty deemed the earth sacred, belonging to all living things concurrently and nobody has the right to usurp it. Demyan's efforts to save the kinship are directed to resurrection and repetition of the mythological past, the time, "when all were kindred - as people, so animals". By means of allusion the author refers us to mythological heroes whose deeds are quite often intended to establish "kinship" with the whole world through marriage. In this the basis of the Khanty's existence shows itself- to respect others except yourself.

Cardinal points of the world, in particular, the West and the East also represent mythological allusion in the E. Aipin's text. Author associates Demyan's image with Light, with the Morning Star, with the East whereas heroes-"strangers", "outsiders" are marked by West side in the novel. Let us note that in the E. Aipin's novel the heroes are westbound most of the time in the novel and most of the action takes place at sundown. Obviously, the western direction has certain meaning in the novel. The northern nations identify the notion "East" with Daybreak, which is the precursor of sunrise. The small nations of the North, the Far East and the Ural associate the East with purity, continuation of life and rebirth. The northern men "prayed to Daybreak" for wellbeing [20]. The West side, at the same time, was traditionally associated with "death and the world of the dead" among the "primary" culture nations [21]. Let's not forget that the gods of war of the pagan pantheon of the northern people inhabited the West side. In our opinion, cardinal points of the world (and, especially, the "West side"), in Eremey Aipin's novel are mythologized and act as meaningful details.

It seems quite clear that, in general, E. Aipin based the imagery of his novel on the epic tradition of the Khanty. First of all, it is evident due to the bigeminy principle. Binary oppositions of the novel are: life-death, goodness-evil, war-peace; they are essential for the representation of the novel conflict. In folklore and mythology the specified binary oppositions are absolute – the good is good and the death is death. But E. Aipin's in his artwork intentionally refuses to accept absoluteness of these concepts. In the modern Khanty prose writer's novel these concepts achieve philosophical dialectism and content paradoxicality: life comprises death, goodness gives birth to evil. The author depicts this paradox of life through conflict of the Khanty hunter Demyan with outsiders-oilfield workers. Thoughtless life of these people who live only in a moment is a life devoid of life, death of Man in the man. The shift workers characters represent the motif of War Peace in the E. Aipin's novel. The Great Patriotic War is retrospectively present in the pages of the novel. "War" at the beginning of E. Aipin's narration is represented by the images of veterans - the post office clerk Kurpelak Galaktion, the old hunter Fedor and Korneev. But then "another" war appears in the novel. This "another" war, according to the author, is absence of peace, lack of mutual understanding between people regardless of their nationalities and social status. This is the war which Demyan confronted in the Ugraland. All his life remain on one plane only- the Plane of peace. It is important for him to live in harmony with the World and in peace with everybody.

Meeting a "hero-stranger" is a classical plot in epic folklore. E. Aipin "constructs" the conflict of the novel on the encounter of the Khanty hunter with the "outsiders"- oilfield workers. Aipin enacts a tragedy in his novel - because of the beautiful horns the "outsiders" oilfield workers kill Demyan's only doe - Pestrukha. The author zooms in on the scene of Pestrukha' murder, emphasizing that the deer's killing was similar to a homicide. Let us make a reservation that non-ritual murder of a deer and a human being is expressed by one lexeme in the language of the Khanty; that is, a murder of a deer is equivalent to a murder of a man. Demyan grieves for the loss of the doe as he would've for human death. At the end of the novel Demyan realizes that he has lost not only Pestrukha: the core of his life and the life of his clansmen was destroyed – the idea of likeness of all living on this Earth is destroyed. This realization constitutes the basic internal conflict of the E. Aipin's story. The novel ends with Demyan's death. But his leaving, according to mythological views, is essentially not death. According to

the mythological views of the Khanty, physical death cannot sever the perennial chain of life. According to the traditional pagan views of the Khanty, death as annihilation does not exist in the nature. Therefore, in the novel by E. Aipin Demyan doesn't die in the usual sense and his life continues, but, thenceforth, in his clansmen memories. Thus, semantically, the main character of the novel can be considered as a modern version of mythological heroes [22]. The legend of The Ascended Man introduced at the beginning of the novel tunes the reader in to the space of mythological time and perception of events through "mythological" prism. Demyan's death is the confirmation that he as the person has stricken roots in the life of his nation, can exist only in mythological space and time. The author doesn't call Demyan's "departure from life" as death. By means of allusion E. Aipin leaves the hero within the myth where death, in our sense, does not exist. Thiswise, Demyan's death at the symbolical level transforms into the memory of his relatives: the Memory kept the character going, just as the idea of universal unity of all living things and he will continue to live after the demise of his physical shell, but from that moment on in memory of his clansmen. Thereby the author approves immortality of his character in the episode Demyan ascends to the sky like a "Star of the Dawn".

CONCLUSION

In conclusion it is necessary to mention that Eremey Aipin enriches the content of his novel by means of mythological subtext. E. Aipin's artwork "the Khanty ..." at the figurative and motif levels is filled with mythological imagery. Through mythological images and motifs the author reflects archetypal content of characters, especially it is true of the main character. Besides, the mythological is of constructive character in the works by Aipin, - it links different elements of the novel into one composite structure. Thus, by means of mythological images, motifs and hints E. Aipin deepens the meaning of the novel, at the same time, making its structure more complex.

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