

**ROLE OF MYTH AND LEGENDS IN  
THE PROSE OF *ERKIN SAMANDAR*****Social Science**

**Keywords:** Erkin Samandar, “Tangri qudug’i (God's well)”, folklore novel, myth, legend.

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**Abstract**

The article analyses the role of myths, legends used in the stylization of Erkin Samandar's novel “The Well of God”. The role of folk prose highlighted in the forming the plot of realistic novel. Characters portraits comparatively studied in folklore with its alternatives. The author's novel “The Well of God” depicts the mythological predictors infiltrating visible, imaginary angelic images, dreams and other motives. The article says that Erkin Samandar skillfully incorporated into his novel the exaggerated images of the epic, the character of giant people and folk symbols. Also analyzed the similarities in the prose of Erkin Samandar to the images in the epics of the “Gurogly” (Grave’s son) series, including the symbols in the epics such as “Arab Tangan”, “Birth of Gurogly”. It has been investigated, that the novelist used the plot of the epic “Asil and Karam”, which is widespread among the Turkic people. In short, the myths, legends, images, artistic depictive means, motives were the main means for ensuring the art of the novel “The Well of God”.

**Introduction**

The synthesis of oral and written literature is one of the ancient traditions. The Uzbek people have a rich and colorful folklore and written literary heritage. “The study of the process of interaction between literature and folklore from a historical point of view leads to the idea that the nature of bilateral relations depends on the level of ideological and artistic development of written literature” [4, p.37]. Although Uzbek classical literature has a thousand-year history, it has always been inextricably linked with folklore. Because “... the harmony of oral and written traditions, the synthesis of folklore literature is not only a unique phenomenon in the spiritual life of peoples, but also one of the positive factors reflecting the diversity and richness of artistic thinking of different peoples in the past and now” [15, p.3]. Khorezm region of Uzbekistan stands out with its ancient written literature and rich folklore. Especially during the years of independence, dozens of novels were presented to readers by the creators of the oasis. In the field of prose, writers such as Erkin Samandar and Komil Avaz have achieved great success in this field. It should be noted that in all these novels, the principles of reference to folklore, the development of the art of the work using its various aspects are clearly visible. Hamid Olimjon, a talented writer, wrote the following about the relationship between literature and folklore almost a century ago: “Folklore will be of great importance for the development of Uzbek literature, its language as a vernacular, simple and deep and finally for the popularization of Uzbek literature” [9, pp.182-183].

Indeed, the role of prosaic works in the development of Uzbek novels is enormous.

“In the works that give the best example of the use of folklore, the elements of folklore permeate the whole plot and composition of the work, become a driving force to the ideas expressed in it, give wings to the thoughts of the protagonists, and become a great ideological and artistic support” [13, p.140].

In the last half century, a number of studies have emerged on the relationship between novels and folklore [2, pp.19-22; 14, pp.62-66; 1, pp.60-66; 10; 12].

The leading representative of Khorezmian novelists is Erkin Samandar. He presented several of his novels to readers during the years of independence. Among those novels, “Tangri qudug’I” has a special place.

This novel, which reflects the history of the Khiva khanate in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, was published in 1966 [6].

The novel is artistically and aesthetically perfect. The language is simple, colorful and educated. This novel by Erkin Samandar is a turning point in his work. The system of events in the work is compositionally integrated, the plot is interesting. Myths, legends and even mythological motifs were used in the work. The proverbs, parables and phraseological expressions in the literary text make a suitable impression. The portrait of the images is reminiscent of the patterns in a folk epic. All these qualities served as the main factors in the development of the novel's art, ensuring its popularity.

### **Main Part**

The author brings to the work the prophetic patrons of mythology, visible, imaginary angelic images, through which he creates mysterious scenes in the flow of events, leads the reader into a whirlpool of events. One of the characters in this category is Bibinur Ena, the other is Shamsiddin Khoja, a prophet with divine power. Shamsiddin can understand people’s heart, can see their internal organs, can tell who the thieves are and where they are. He is sponsored by Bibi Nur in that point. Bibinur forbids Shamsiddin to fortune-telling. But at the same time, realizing that a great theft had taken place and that innocent young men had been executed for it, Shamsiddin broke his promise by not following Bibi Nur’s instructions. After Shamsiddin reveals the secrets of the theft, his evil enemies take the prophet to the place of wolves and tie his hands and leave him. Coincidentally, the khan’s minister, passing through this place, encounters the convict and frees him. Surprisingly, when the freed young man is brought to the ground, drinks water, and comes to his senses, he stands up and says that there is a human bone, a sack, and something yellow in it under this seat and it is a sin to sit here. Minister Muhiddinbek dug around the place to find out the outcome of this statement and was surprised that all the information turned out to be correct.

As Erkin Samandar introduces the image of a prophet into the novel, he begins to reveal many of the wonders of the palace, the invisible wonders of life, various mischiefs with his strange prophecies, leading the reader into mysterious corners. Muhiddinbek brings Shamsiddin to Khiva. He reveals his mysterious properties to the khan. At that time, Arab Muhammad Khan was presented a beautiful “bachcha”, but his whereabouts and identity are unknown, and the “bachcha” was under the spell of magic. The prophet looked at the “bachcha” with a khan's gesture and said: - The gift to you is from another country. His father was a wise man. He is busy with looking for his daughter” (P.98).

The fortune teller asks to tell the other details only to the khan himself. When the request was granted and the two were left alone, he said to the khan, “They have given you a gift as a boy, but he ... is a girl”. The khan is silent. Since he did not even know the name “bachcha”, the ruler named him Anusha.

He keeps the prophet in the palace. When he uncovers the thefts in the khanate, he becomes one of the sages of the palace and begins to live here.

Throughout the series of events, the writer makes more and more effective use of the “prophetic” qualities and again turns to the mysterious aspects of mythology. In the folk epic there is a concept of “dream motif”, which is found in the folklore of all nations. According to the Russian scientist B.N. Putilov, the protagonist of the epic encounters various warnings as a sign of events in the future in the process of nightmares [16, p.106]. As in life, dreams in the artistic text are primarily informative. These messages come from real-life dreams in the form of two types of art, emblems and symbols, and in the form of open information. But the dream in any work is artistic because it is closely connected with reality [7, p.238]. The writer refers to future events through a dream motif.

While living in the palace, Shamsiddin had a dream. In his dream, the khan's sons, Habash and Elbars, ride on two elephants and enter the Ark Gate. In the Habash's hand, two black balls appear. He throws them to Elbars. Then the balls are thrown to a dog nicknamed Borizod. The dog growls when it sees them. Shamsiddin realizes that these are eyes, not balls. The eyes belonged to the khan. When Shamsiddin explained the details of the dream to Muhiddinbek, the minister wondered: How could the khan perceive this dream event. Telling a dream leads to a quarrel between father and sons, and the khan accepts it in the same way. It's better to keep it secret, he says. The prophet, on the other hand, thought that not warning the khan would be a betrayal. But the minister postponed it to protect the prophet. Meanwhile, the minister was slandered and killed.

The fortune teller now decides to leave the place and finally meets the khan and tells the dream story. The khan hears him and asks for his interpretation. After Shamsiddin recited the interpretation, the khan handcuffed him and threw him into prison.

The novelist again turns to mythology in the matter of prison. Shamsiddin, who is in prison, sees Bibi Nur in a dream. So the sponsor is upset. At that moment, a horseman appeared on top of the prophet, took the handcuffs from his arms and legs, and drove him out into the city through the underground passage.

The image of Shamsiddin forms the basis of the novel's plot. From his prophecies, the events continue to be sometimes confusing and sometimes smooth. His first dream is now beginning to come alive in life.

When Shamsiddin was released from prison, he became a farmer and made a living for a long time.

One day Bibi Nur appears in front of the eyes of Shamsiddin. Faced with revelation, he makes his way to Khiva. The writer now associates the symbolic gestures with the magic of the well of God.

Shamsiddin came to Khiva at night and looked at the well in the light of the lantern, and blood appeared instead of water. Shamsiddin lowered the lantern into the well and stared intently, astonished to see a pair of eyes floating on the surface of the blood.

The point is that the novelist, while describing the historical events of the time of the Arab Muhammad Khan, seriously reworked the events that took place through artistic thinking. Through various traditional motifs, the assassination of his father by the khan's two sons, Elbars and Habash, unfolds on the basis of those ancient motifs. The two patriarchs committed an uncharacteristic evil in the eyes of their fathers, eventually destroying him physically and occupying the throne.

While the story of the assassination of the Arab Muhammad Khan is not narrated by the writer in the form of a simple story, its real causes are gradually revealed through various mythological scenes, symbols, and gestures of dreams. In this regard, the prophet Shamsiddin Khoja acts as the main character. His image was created in folk art thousands of years ago and is a vivid example of stylized images.

The plot of the epic "Asil and Karam", which is widespread among the Turkic peoples, was written thousands of years ago by the poet Unsuri, who lived during Beruni's period. According to E.E. Bertels, Beruni translated three of the poet's epics into Arabic [3, p.24].

The plot of the epic, written by Unsuri, has now come through the epic "Asil and Karam", whose main hero Karam appears as a prophet. When the king brought him to the man who had been put in the coffin to test him, he told him that the "deceased" was alive [17, p.82].

Consequently, the image of the prophet has existed in folk art since the time of primitive life, and the novelist “rejuvenates” this step-by-step mythological image. Because ... it is impossible to imagine any great example of written literature created by mankind so far without myth, without the participation of myth [7, p.78].

Erkin Samandar draws attention to different directions when referring to mythological scenes. Khan is informed of an assassination attempt by his children. But he doesn't expect that from his sons. Even when Abulgagi tells his father about his brother's evil intentions, he rejects his offer.

The author supports the belief that a father will never kill his son. At this point, another mythological scene draws the reader's attention.

Arab Muhammad Khan creates a dog named “Borizod” by mixing a very cunning and wild wolf called “Yildirim” with a local dog and makes the special servants in the palace feed it. As the dog grows older, hates the prince Habash worse than the demon, who is growing up together and even once, he almost kills Habash. He barely manages to escape.

The novelist already warns the reader that dog fighting is not in vain. Later, Borizod's deeds are narrated. After the khan is assassinated, it always follows in the footsteps of the loaded chariot of the khan. In describing this event, the writer recalls the belief that “dog is faithful”. At that moment, Borizod met his father Yildirim. They get into fights with each other. Look, Yildirim recognizes his offspring, showing his strength by rolling his son in a single push. He could have crushed Borizod, but ... knowing that he was his son, he refrained from doing so.

By this the author of the work means that even an animal does not allow its son to die. However, the dog does his doglike habit. In the last fight, Borizod kills Yildirim. The author points out that through this scene, the Elbars and the Habash are repeating the dogfight.

If Erkin Samandar brings a detail, he will not forget its final result. We mentioned above that Borizod hates Habash. Eventually the dog attacks Habash to kill him, but they rescue him when it bites one of his hands. But then the dog is rabid, and as a result, Habash is also diagnosed with rabies. The novel deals with the wisdom of action. Both brothers will be punished according to their deeds. Elbars is buried alive. Habash is imprisoned in an iron cage for rabies and burned alive.

The fate of father-killers always ended in tragedy. These events fall within the scope of synthesized folklorisms.

The scenes in the novel are mixed with a mythological image. Habash entrusts the shooting of his father's eye to a soldier named Fazliddin. He does not do this because the soldier is the khan's believable man. But the verdict is firm. He was forced to commit this bloody act. When the

khan opens his eyes with his hand, his head is reflected in the ruler's eyes in the shape of a bear's head. When Fazliddin carried out this heinous order, that bear never left his sight in agony. When he looks in the mirror, his head is visible, and as soon as he puts on the mirror, his head turns into a bear's. His head shook incessantly and he began to walk into the woods. Fazliddin was the son of Muhiddinbek, a former minister who saved Shamsiddin from the clutches of wolves and was executed as a result of provocation. Shamsiddin Khoja decided to treat this innocent young man and influenced him spiritually:

- Fazliddinbek, we let a tiger to eat that bear, we got rid of it. He touches her shoulder. The young man suddenly felt relieved of the pain. The presence of such scenes in a realistic novel does not make it a fairy tale, because the details are based on some logical argument. In addition, this category of people, who have a magical cure for psychic effects, are still encountered in life.

The image of Shamsiddin Khoja plays a key role in the development of the events of the novel, connecting the series of events, leading the reader into the world of various wonders.

The most vicious figure in the work is Kurbanhaji, who spit on the salt of Arab Muhammad Khan. Shamsiddin Khoja does a great job in revealing his secrets. In turn, Kurbanhoji does not sit quietly. He sends a murderer as a dervish to kill the Khoja.

The author of the work turns this assassination for the better through another prophecy of Khoja.

When the dervish comes to the Khoja, he lies. Then Shamsiddin Khoja invites him to sit closer. As he approaches, he touches his knee. The dervish fainted and began to die. Then the master presses his finger to his forehead. The dervish comes to life again.

"Now tell me, who sent you," asks Khoja. The dervish admits that he was sent by Hajj Kurban. The writer begins to unravel the mysterious details of the novel's events through Khoja's various prophecies. While Khoja was living in a remote place, the name of the place became Shaykhabad. He gathers the prophetic sheikhs next to him. They expose the intrigues of the enemy.

As long as the creator describes those prophecies, the events are not completely overwhelmed by myth. He emphasizes that prophets are also people in life. That is why they also do farming, bring water to arid lands, and plant gardens. In the end, everyone is enslaved.

Prophetic individuals with natural abilities are common in history. Only their natural talent and ability is presented wrapped in a legendary shell. Some of such individuals devote their lofty abilities to goodness, and some to evil.

Both categories are mentioned in the novel. One of them is the image of Ibn Badal. This person is a witch; the writer paints his portrait like this: “his hairless head is round like a watermelon. He has no eyebrows or eyelashes like his beard, a mustache, a flat nose, and squinty eyes ...” (- P. 346). The witch loses the memory of Nigina, the five-year-old daughter of Bukhara official Murtazobek. Nigina becomes a victim of greed. Kushbegi’s mistress Kalonbek is ordered to kidnap the girl and then kill her. But Kalonbek, seeing the beauty of the girl, brought her to Ibn Badal with the intention of selling her for much money when she grows up. They took the girl who has lost consciousness and memory through magic to Khiva and sold her.

Shamsiddin Khoja felt that he had been bewitched as soon as he saw her in the palace of Arab Muhammad Khan, and realized that her name was also different, and that he had always wished to treat her. Eventually, Khoja cleans her memory from dust and brings her back to her house. However, the appearance of the girl at home could have hastened Kalonbek’s death. As a result, the girl's fate is again in danger.

The writer justifies another incident here. After Shamsiddin Khoja removed the witchcraft from the girl, Ibn Badal’s ability to cast a spell also faded. As a result, he loses all income. In this way, the creator also wants to show the essence of the mysteries associated with magic, emphasizing that one of them can break the other.

Erkin Samandar skillfully incorporates into the realistic novel the exaggerated images of the folk epic, the portraits of giant-like people, folk emblems. The author paints a portrait of Jummi non yemas (Jummi – who doesn’t eat bread): “Jummi’s bald head is like a big watermelon, his face is full of flesh, his bones are slender, reminiscent of a branched tree, and his woolly hands are long and thick. After he drank a bucket of water and a tandoor of bread, he got the nickname *non yemas*” (P. 43).

The definition of Jummi non yemas is much closer to the image of some negative images in the Gorogly epics.

The image of Arab Rayhan in the epic “Arab Tangan” is described as follows: “Arab Rayhan shot and killed a horse, took it out of its skin and buried it under the ashes. He took the meat and put it in his mouth. It was as if he was throwing firewood into a sack. After eating the meat of a horse, he went in search of water. When he saw that there was water in a pit, he drank the water to the bottom, then went into the hollow of the mountain and lay down [8, p. 135]. During the events of the work, the author gives a lot of exaggerated portraits about giant people who belong to the category of alpine heroes: “The Alpine Lion had not seen him for a long time; he was a brave man with a giant on each shoulder. It was passed down to him from his father. Hernias Sharif is a man who bends down from the highest door. He is not fat, the shoulders are wide, and when he walks, his feet dig into the ground (8, p.168). The portraits of some of the young men are given in the form of Gorogly: “Khojamberdi is a soldier whose horse knocked

down and shook the ground, and there was a giant sitting on each shoulder” (8, p.196). In the epic “Birth of Gorogly” the portrait of the protagonist is drawn as follows: “When they look, there is a majestic young man on a horse, whose eyes are bright, who can easily lift a bull on each shoulder” (8, p.55).

If we compare these images, many similarities in their appearance are revealed. While the novelist enlivens the image of the young men in the play with an epic image, he aims to embody such qualities as courage and bravery of the Khorezmian youth through figurative expression. Any statement is within the scope of naturalness and is warmly welcomed by the reader. The portraits created by the writer do not deviate much from reality. Therefore, the activity of the images is reliably displayed.

The skill of embodying a human portrait in the novel is very high. Writer describes the image of another man, who looks like Jummi non-yemas, more interesting: “There is almost no one who doesn’t know Bokibiy kazak. Both its appearance and its internal symptoms are unique. His neck is like a thick carrot, his head is round, his mouth is an inch, his mustache is like a ram's horn, his ears are big like a tablecloth and his nose is like a red carrot. He eats forty eggs in one try. Drinks two buckets of water. He eats a tandoor of bread, drinks two or three buckets of water and goes to the sand for a week. This eating is enough for a week. When he arrives, he will unload another tandoor and the money he earns will be hardly enough for these two tandoors” (8, p.44).

Probably such people lived in those times. The writer cannot be accused of exaggeration. He describes Bokibiy’s subsequent adventures in such a way that the reader believes that this image is full of courage and open-heartedness. The artist was also able to express his linguistic features in a unique way. Individuals with such giant man appearances are common in fairy tales and epics.

As Erkin Samandar embodies each image in a popular way, the reader is intrigued by it. The work of these images creates satisfaction in the reader. The writer enriches the evils of negative images, the good deeds of positive images with interesting details. According to him, good is good and bad is bad. He can express his confidence in the fate of the tragedy of the wicked in the scenes.

The image of the wedding given in the novel is also expressed in the color of rhymes, as in fairy tales. An example of this is the image of a wedding in the district “Olovli (with fire)”. The owner of the wedding advises his mother in this regard. Then his mother said, “When the roosters of Olovli crow, those who are far away will hear it, if they have dug forty kilns. Prepare an oven for me, too. Thanks to for your father, prepare an oven for him too. Take forty sheep from the herd, take ten cows, take a mare, bring five camels to the gate now, and I will take out my chests” (8, p. 196).



## Conclusion

This advice on wedding prearrange is reminiscent of the custom of giving a 40-night wedding preparing pilaf in the 40 pots with 40 ears, just like in fairy tales. By the way, it is not in vain that the number forty is mentioned more in the text. The history of the emphasis on the number forty at weddings is very long, and the number forty, which originally meant plural, greatness, plurality, commonality, later became part of various phrases and concepts and gradually became a tradition. The number “forty” was once the largest number in the count [11, p.137]. Therefore, the “forty” performed at weddings means luxury, splendor, and abundance. The writer, on the other hand, was well acquainted with these ancient ceremonial rituals and was able to narrate the old woman’s speech literally through local color. These images are also based on stylization.

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