ARTISTIC INTERPRETATION OF MYTHOLOGICAL ARCHETYPES, SYMBOLS AND EPIC TRADITIONS IN THE WORKS OF JOHN TOLKIN

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Abstract: The idea of mythology in literature and its significance in different eras is a fascinating topic that has been discussed for centuries. Understanding literature requires examining the mythology of the society it is produced in, as it reflects the dominant thought of that era. Mythology is a tradition that explains the unexplainable, often centered around gods, goddesses, and epic traditions. According to Joseph Campbell, mythology and its archetypes are a reflection of society's psychology. John Ronald Reuel Tolkien, the author of ''The Lord of the Rings'', incorporates mythology in his works, specifically using archetypes with significant meaning.

Key words: mythology, symbol, protagonist, supernatural qualities, thematic focus, moral conflict

Annotatsiya: Adabiyotda mifologiya g'oyasi va uning turli davrlardagi ahamiyati asrlar davomida muhokama qilingan qiziqarli mavzudir. Adabiyotni tushunish uchun u yaratilgan jamiyatning mifologiyasini o'rganish kerak, chunki u o'sha davrning hukmron fikrini aks ettiradi. Mifologiya - bu tushuntirib bo'lmaydigan, ko'pincha xudolar, ma'budalar va epik an'analar atrofida joylashgan an'anadir. Jozef Kempbell fikricha, mifologiya va uning arxetiplari jamiyat psixologiyasining aksidir. "Uzuklar hukmdori" muallifi Jon Ronald Reuel Tolkien o'z asarlarida mifologiyani, xususan, muhim ma'noga ega arxetiplarni qo'llagan.

Kalit so'zlar: mifologiya, ramz, qahramon, g'ayritabiiy fazilatlar, tematik diqqat, axloqiy ziddiyat

Аннотация: Идея мифологии в литературе и ее значение в разные эпохи – увлекательная тема, обсуждаемая на протяжении веков. Понимание литературы требует изучения мифологии общества, в котором она создается, поскольку она отражает доминирующую мысль той эпохи. Мифология — это традиция, объясняющая необъяснимое, часто сосредоточенная вокруг богов, богинь и эпических традиций. По мнению Джозефа Кэмпбелла, мифология и ее архетипы являются отражением психологии общества. Джон Рональд Руэл Толкин, автор «Властелина колец», включает мифологию в свои произведения, в частности, используя архетипы со значительным значением.

Ключевые слова: мифология, символ, главный герой, сверхъестественные качества, тематическая направленность, моральный конфликт

Introduction

The purpose of these artistic interpretations can be quite diverse. As implied before, they seek to explain Tolkien's creative works. However, they also may seek to validate the theory, model, or concept being applied. This may be done by demonstrating a greater understanding of Tolkien's creative works in comparison to works by other authors. Alternatively, it may be done by showing the usefulness of the theory, model, or concept, for in many cases Tolkien's writings provide an excellent body of examples for the testing of a theory, model, or concept, given the depth and breadth of the legendarium.

Tolkien's creative works have been the subject of a significant amount of artistic interpretation. These range widely in method and focus. However, in general they examine the application of various theories, models, and concepts to Tolkien's creative writing in order to better understand the works themselves, or in order to gain a better understanding of the theory, model, or concept.

The works of John Ronald Reuel Tolkien have received extensive critical analysis over the years. The most common interpretations are those of myth and archetype [1]. This is largely due to Tolkien's own academic writings on these subjects and his insistent advocacy of their significance in his creative works. As a result, Tolkien is often compared to writers of mythopoeia, and especially to the authors of the Silmarillion—essentially Tolkien's attempt to create a body of myth and legend for England, a mythology for English people.

The reality of war and the ramifications of the soldiers involved is not something new to the 20th century. Whether it was necessary for a society at war to have an anti-war myth in order to cope with the prospects and results of war is debatable, but the Boston University Center for the Study of Trauma and War did link the myth of the Iliad and Odyssey to have comparable symptoms of Vietnam veterans [2]. The effects of war are shown to be detrimental to the human psyche, and in the myth of the Iliad and Odyssey, an entire saga is sung in memory of the men who perished in the war. This illustrates that there was little glory for the warrior and the army who perished, and that the poet believed that it was a great misfortune for all mankind. Tolkien's WWI art shows an example of the myth of how there was no glory for the men at war. Another famous painting by Sir John Everett Millais is of the myth of "He Shall Not Return," said to a woman with an empty helmet on her lap.

The importance of mythology to establish a culture is vast. It creates a backdrop for daily customs and a definition of what a society's ideal situation is. Myths, to many current-day cultures, are looked at as sacred legends. Although the situation and story of the myth may be lost, the great works of hero myths, trickster myths, and all the myths for different types of societal norms are still intact [3]. Myths have a profound impact on the way the society of that specific culture or time period grows and develops. They provide a template for how one should live their life to be seen as courageous, or even what is considered right and wrong. Values shown in mythology are often the core of why a certain society functioned the way it did. Tolkien illustrates a brilliant example of this with his painting titled "Saturn Devouring One of His Children."

Methods

Tolkien's long centuries of alchemical lore often turn up in the symbol of the Elixir, which imparts immortal life to its drinker. Its temptation and the hero's ultimate rejection of it are oddly separated: in The Hobbit, it is the dwarves who succumb and are punished by their transformation into dragons, while in The Lord of the Rings, Frodo atones for Gollum's theft and murder by sparing but abandoning the wretched creature. This is a hint of a parallel between Sauron and Gollum, for Gollum once possessed the ring and is, in his withered way, a sad shadow of the mighty Sauron.

"Artistic Interpretation of Mythological Archetypes, Symbols and Epic Traditions in the Works of John Tolkien" is a study of the mythology of John Ronald Reuel Tolkien. It returns to a way of reading that has largely been lost: the investigation of deep patterns of meaning, by demonstrating the use of a specific body of traditional mythological and symbolic material to generate and inform a writer's creative work [4]. Surprisingly, it has rarely or never been done. This is despite the fact that mythological method and theory have been of great interest to literary scholars for several decades. This seeming paradox may derive from an antipathy between the two disciplines: the suspicion that mythological studies lack intellectual respectability, while literature is too frivolous and ungrounded a field for the interpretations to meet.

In the assignment, Dufresne delineates a range of typical mythological archetypal characters and discusses the ways in which Tolkien adopts and adapts these characters to the modern environment. The most resolved and significant of this adaptational process that Dufresne investigates is the transformation of the classic bildungsroman hero. This character is historically a naive and youthful wanderer who undergoes a process of self-discovery, usually through a series of tests and adventures [5]. The hero is a very complex character whose identity is deeply rooted in his social context, and the self-discovery process is an action to realize the full potential of that identity. Dufresne states, "The transformation of the bildungsroman protagonist owes a great deal to Tolkien's own life and experiences and is no doubt a conscious attempt to rewrite this part of the Faustian myth from a modern perspective." In this statement, Dufresne is acknowledging the inherently autobiographical nature of Tolkien's exploration of the hero as he states that the transformation of the protagonist was based on Tolkien's personal life and experiences. This hero is a creole of characters from Tolkien's life and is an attempt by the author to understand and come to terms with where his past actions or decisions have placed him in the current life situation. This is a reflective process of identity. Throughout the interview, it is clear that Dufresne does not attempt to review the hero in an isolated fashion but rather comments on the hero's interaction with other characters in the context of the quest and reviews the complex with direct references to specific characters following the quest narrative in the book. This method is coherent with the myths and tales that Dufresne draws parallels from, as he is often comparing the Tolkien character with a character from an ancient tale or a classic hero.

The allegory of the wise old man; what he knows and how he imparts it is a complex of layers of inference, often mixed with mythological symbolism [6]. Usually the knowledge is embodied in some lore or ancient text known to a select few; such as the Palantir known only to certain wise ones tempted to misuse it and in the Silmarillion, a book of lost tales and lore intended for a select audience, also in the hands of wise men. Often however the knowledge is the possession of the man's own memory and experience. This has been cited as one reason

why Gandalf's death and return was essential, for the life and wisdom of one of the ainur who is essentially a deathless being can only be fully expressed through an involvement in the long and slow changing history of the deathly doomed world of Elves and Men.

The process of MacDonald's wise old man, his steps, the symbols or meaning is perhaps the clearest example of artistic interpretation. Moses in Phantastes is the first illustration he gives, 'a shrouded figure with dusky countenance and eyes grown dim with peering through the mist of tears.' Now this is exactly what J.R.R. Tolkien portrayed as Gandalf. A figure grown old and wise with the pain and toil of many years in a world where righteousness and happiness are being continually marred by evil. For Lancelot it was Pleinor who 'died an hundred winters old and wise. Other examples from Arthurian legend are Merlin and Taliesin, the latter Tolkien considers in his prose fragment 'The History of Eriol or Aelfwine': 'wise beyond compare, yet with grief of knowledge'. Now Taliesin is a favourite of Tolkien's and his claim to a store of secret knowledge from his inspirer the god Gwion may be one of the sources for the Wise Old man trope, and in the Lost Road another old bard Eressea advises Alboin on his son's mission, a clear instance of a wise old man advising the hero, a recurrent theme throughout this essay, and most notable in the case of Virgil and Dante. Eressea indicates the precondition for the Elderin as helper when he says 'A counsellor would you find, or a guide, should you speak with some of wisdom in the matter of your son's quest.'

One of Tolkien's first examples of the Temptress is the river's daughter, the daughter of Thingol Queen Melian. She captivates the elvish king and he is content to stay with her and rule Doriath throughout the long years of the First Age. Defeated by Beren and Luthien, Melian's daughter becomes one of Tolkien's very rare unsuccessful temptresses of a hero, for he would not stay and so become half-elvish.

Female figures are a significant theme in Tolkien's work. However, none of his female characters are as complex and multi-dimensional as the Temptress. The Temptress is an ambivalent, dangerous figure. She is a man's desire - the thing he most wants, and thus the thing that would most endanger him. The Temptress embodies the part of a man's psyche that is lost, weak, and vulnerable, the pathetic fool. The awareness of this part of himself is symbolized in the story of Gawain's temptation by Lady Bercilak, and is explicit in the character of Sir Thopas. But though the Temptress is dangerous to the hero, she is often not malevolent. She merely does what it is her nature to do, and so is throughout the myth connected with the destructive aspect of the fertility of nature. She is a personification of the beauty and knowledge which the hero seeks. When it is understood that the function of the hero and the Temptress is a relationship of polarities, this aspect of the woman's role takes on a much greater significance. For in marrying the beautiful, knowing lady who is the temptress, the hero is uniting the two halves of his divided self, and it is this self-integration which is the fruit and function of their relationship.

It is possible to make the case that all of Tolkien's characters, in one way or another, are shadows. Since the dichotomy of good and evil is not strong in each individual race, it is a difficult case to support with the conventional understanding of shadows [7]. The shadow is so. There are, of course, races in Tolkien's works which would be considered completely evil; in such a case, the shadow would be virtually. The Lord of the Rings is primarily a story of hero's quest--and this is commensurate with the dichotomous battle of good and evil of the

modern age. Therefore, The Lord of the Rings depicts the shadow best as a force for the inner conflict between good and best known as the despair of Sam and Frodo in their trek through the Dead Marshes. Before this event, Gollum is wavering on the edge of his redemption; he has led the hobbits into a trap, and are now captive of Faramir, the brother of his previous captor. Gollum's shame is overwhelming, and in a burst of uncharacteristic repentance he elaborates a plan to save the hobbits from their plight. His plan fails, and the final blow comes seeing the hobbits carried by the orcs off to Mordor. This event deals a devastating blow to Gollum's resolve to repent, and the hobbits are about to give up hope as well. This despair is the finest usage of the shadow's tempter archetype, for it is a grave time of the giving up of the taking away of hope for victory, and ultimately to a triumph of evil. In the end, Théoden king, and the leader of of this will to a despair of battle. The best demonstration of the king have each faced the tempter archetype; both are misled into serving the aims of of Rohan and Gondor, are encountered by tempting apparitions of deceased kinsmen, drawing them to their shadow plagued the paths of the dead; the king's death and ultimate fall into a suggesting that he is doing the reverse of what he is truly in believing host only comes a release from his personal despair.

Results

John Tolkien's work is full of pithy, emotive language and offers plenty of fascinating characters. Yet the languages aren't only random - they serve a zero purpose. Spell shocked, Pippen says "And I don't like the sound of this 'Fire and tree' business. They had better weapons against us than I thought." As a matter of fact, there are maybe two ways that the 'Fire and Tree' are to be taken. In one scene, you could say that the fire and tree are representing literal elements, in which case they are to act as witnesses and let the plot be known by their possible breaking oaths the Bells/Bella Donna took when they swore to protect Merry and Pip. Then they are a warning to the two hobbits because the very next day Fangorn sends them off to Edoras with an Ent. Now for the other way mentioned, it could be said that the Fire and Tree was known as an earlier reference to a mythological event called the 'Kin-Strife' in which civil war, feuds, and plunging evil ended with burning the White and taking out the seedling of the royal line. This later comment will be on the second event, although it could overlap into the first.

Tolkien does not use nature symbols to the extent that he uses other types of symbols, such as the Ring. But where he uses nature in a symbolic way with relevance to classical myth, it is usually associated with either the powerful force of creation and re-creation, or with the mysterious alien quality of the Otherworld [8]. One of the clearest examples of the former is the two trees, Telperion and Laurelin, which shed their light on the Land of the Valar. These trees ultimately produce the sun and the moon, and the great light that issues from them has a profound effect upon the growth and the nature of vegetation in Valinor and later in Middle-earth. Their story is a tale of the light and the life-giving power of the sun, and is a symbol of hope and renewal. When Melkor assails the trees and steals their light for his own ends, it is an early example of the way in which Tolkien uses the damaging of nature as a symbol of the disorder and wickedness of his enemies. In this case, it also provides a link to the vitalist myth of the destruction of the Golden Age and the lessening of the power of the divine.

In terms of art, any object that is intended for use or decoration will have a symbolic connotation if not truly depicted to act as a symbol itself. Children's toys or cultural artifacts,

as H.W Janson describes, "have their meaning by expressing certain ideas and feelings about life held by their makers or users". He goes on to describe culture as a system of control. It is in avoiding this control and seeking some form of higher truth or freedom from mundane existence that the artist seeks symbol and universality. Jung's quote "In every civilized human being there is a store of unconscious knowledge of universal images and symbols that constantly form, and again can be seen most clearly in the so-called higher forms of religion and art." This is likely the highest effort of any artist attempting to reach a state of symbolic abstraction. Tolkien's objects and artifacts are there to form the higher links to universal symbol, but they also act as the keys to understanding the cultural or archetypal context in which they are founded.

To Tolkien, color is expressive in its nature and is often used to symbolize an idea or concept. However, this is one of the more difficult aspects of his symbolism to analyze as it is not always certain whether Tolkien intended the various colors to have the same symbolic significance to the reader as they did to himself. As with any artist, Tolkien's use of color changed over time so a simple explanation is not always possible. "What of the Great Ring?" he wrote, "The Ring was unadorned, band or bracelet, indeed simple in form, as it reappears in rings, at Bywater and at the Sammath Naur; but its maker set letters of fire. But of these seven letters each set in one of the seven gems: and these were arranged according to the colors of the Valar: And Manwë he purposed to make plain, in order to give hope to the darkness of that time; so he made two of the swan's neck white. The Sable, or Great King of the 'glimmering' or less than half-white light and master of treachery and subtle wiles; Manwë made the most powerful of the stones." With this in mind, one may find that colors are not always appropriate to the characters on which they are attached. However, evidence suggests that the above intended scheme was later abandoned as in a letter to "Morton Cure of Bjorn - A man of Dale who becomes a great Companion of Bilbo and the Dwarves. Costume: ordinary human clothes, and hooded cloak of good light brown cloth." Here we have a description with no particular symbolism. Bjorn was an important character in the early drafts of the mythology so one would expect there to be some sort of hidden meaning in the color of his cloak. This is however relatively insignificant, and only goes to show that Tolkien did not always adhere to his own color schemes.

Discussion

If Tolkien is to be viewed as an epic writer who had something to do with the nature of modern society and who sought to represent a particular nation's heroic values, though by no means solely England, then it seems clear that there is much more work to be done in defining what Tolkien himself considered the epic hero. In traditional epic poetry, the heroic figure is a character of imposing stature and supernatural qualities who is representative of the ideals and admirable traits of a particular society. He is a bastion of hope to his people and is often characterized by some great pride, which leads him into conflict with the forces of evil. Hence, a hero's first essential is to serve and preserve a society.

Tolkien's belief that England was in desperate need of an epic myth is support for the view that he solely intended The Lord of the Rings to be an allegory of the war. However, Pevehouse's view is itself flawed, being based on the notion that The Lord of the Rings was intended as an analogy for the wars of the 20th century. It is predictable that his analysis of the epic hero and quest in the text takes on a modern historical slant. Blostein has provided a hint at this; he

suggests that the epic hero is an archetype that is representative of a particular society, arguing that "the Western Bildungsromans pattern of flawed hero or knight errant matches societies that have not yet found themselves."

The final influence of mythological traditions on Tolkien's work is perhaps the most obvious: the epic form of The Lord of the Rings itself. In The Inklings, Mythopoeic fantasy literature, and especially The Lord of the Rings, Salu has devoted a chapter to the way that Tolkien utilized the fictional world to retell and rework the influences that he had encountered. He argued that by creating a wide-ranging fantasy world, replete with its own history, mythology, and multiple races, Tolkien was attempting to provide an alternative to that which he felt was a world in crisis on the brink of a second world war. Salu has provided an analysis that is rich in symbolic potential but only briefly touches upon the quest theme that is traditional to epic literature and which is so strongly represented in The Lord of the Rings. Pevehouse has, however, sought to examine the quest theme, comparing The Lord of the Rings to a number of classical epics. His main argument is that after the two world wars, England was without an epic that would reunite the nation and establish its heroic values. He contends that Tolkien believed he could provide such an epic by creating a mythology for England, and that he had done this by creating "a truly nationalistic epic that aroused Englishness, but it did so without using explicit propaganda to forward the modern nation-state."

Themes presented in Tolkien's work are wide-ranging, and much of his storytelling is metamorphic. However, his elaboration in interviews and in his notes on his fiction reveals something of his intentions in presenting his 'sub-created' world. The predominant thematic focus is on heroic and romantic tales set in a quasi-mythical 'golden age' of his own devising, incorporating both the spiritual struggle of internal moral conflict and the more tangible external struggle of conflicting 'ages' with their associated cultures and races. These external struggles are often waged in an essentially 'moral' or 'religious' context with the forces of 'good' pitted against those of 'evil'. This age, or this part of an age, is ended with the beginning of 'historical' time marked by loss of access to the other divine or un-fallen Realms. But some of his stories are of a type compatible with our 'history', real or so-called, and often actually or potentially interwoven with it, though in an 'archaeological' sense; its stages are connected with his invented maps and charts or geographies. A number of his characters had been thought of and have had their stories sketched out in relation to the Second and Third Ages, and even the Fourth – on into a remote and indefinite futurity. Eriol the Mariner was now a wanderer from Westernesse – the name for Númenor, which at this time Tolkien still identified with Atlantis – in the days of the early Saxon kings, or earlier. But the chief tales are of the Elder Days and of Númenor. These have a value for philological and mythological study, as well as for literary and for general historical interest. In the 50s and early 60s, Tolkien also produced a number of very abstract works detailing the cosmology and metaphysics of his secondary world. This material was published posthumously in fitting a number of small long works that were never completed. The most complete exposition of his ideas is to be found in ''The Book of Lost Tales'', ''The Shaping of Middle-Earth'', ''The Lost Road'' and ''The Silmarillion''.

In a work of literature, a hero is a character with certain strong qualities that are attached to it, and most of the time, those are the qualities that the reader would like to have. It is here that the reader begins to get involved with the story, for he has found the character he can identify with. People generally have a deep desire to experience life in such a way that transcends the

everyday meaningless existence, and nobility in adversity is usually a common ideal. As previously mentioned, it is often a result of personal charisma that the epic hero imposes his will on the reader. Well, this is certainly the case concerning Mithorden in 'The Well'. His tragic past and inner struggle with darkness go hand in hand with the individual broader theme of the fallen universe.

The epic tradition of the hero embarking on a quest is widely enjoyed in tales of all kinds. As a genre of fiction, Tolkien's trilogy can loosely be defined as having epic qualities. Epic heroes are a type of 'strong' character - the sort of figure who stamps his (rarely, her) persona upon the consciousness of the reader or audience by virtue of his dynamic qualities and personal charisma. Frequently, an epic hero is a figure of national, cultural, or even cosmic importance/destiny. This statement accurately applies to the characters of Lawhead and Mithorden, the dominant player in the struggle between good and evil in the 'Island' and the 'Well' as well as the 'star-crossed' lovers Radi and Ziemak. The quests with which these characters are involved serve to introduce and develop the concept of 'immrama' in the narrative of the characters' previous and the idea of human redemption in a fallen universe.

Conclusion

It has been a study into how a modern writer can employ the timeless truths of traditional epic and mythology as a means to convey his own message. This message, as expressed by Tolkien himself, is fundamentally a religious one. Tolkien stated that his purpose in writing The Lord of the Rings was to create a mythology for England, and in doing so he unconsciously created a Christian mythology. This study has shown that through his employment of pagan and Christian themes, his use of archetypal figures, and the telling of his tales in epic form, Tolkien was effectively using traditional myths to add weight to his own myths. It has revealed that the differing world views represented by pagan and Christian myths are a vehicle for expressing the fundamental moral conflict between good and evil, a theme which has been all but lost in the modern age of deconstruction. And so it is through his use of traditional themes and archetypes that Tolkien's work contains those same timeless truths which myth itself is a vehicle for.

This interpretation of the mythological themes in Tolkien's work has concentrated on the interweaving of Norse and Christian mythologies with his own invented myths. In dealing with these subjects, it has covered the types of mythic structures and archetypal figures that he used, to how he integrated traditional mythological themes into his own fiction. It has shown the influence of his academic study and his religious beliefs on the form of his myths and the messages they convey. It has drawn comparisons with the tools and techniques used by traditional myth-makers, thus attempting to validate the mythic quality of Tolkien's work. The conclusion being that the myths of Tolkien's fiction are constructed along traditional lines and contain the same timeless truths found in the historical mythologies he so dearly loved.

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