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International Conference «Humanity in the Era of Uncertainty»**MYTHOPOETICS OF THE BORDER IN THE NOVELS BY
G.YAHINA**

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Abstract

For the first time in the aspect of the problem of uncertainty the article reveals the mythological images and motifs in the novels of famous Russian writer G.Yakhina, such as “Zuleikha opens her eyes” (2015), “The children of mine” (2018), “Train to Samarkand” (2021). The article aims at understanding the processes of identification and differentiation through the study of the mythological layer in the artistic content of novels. In G.Yakhina’s works, the features of magical realism are observed and due to this a special picture of the world, existing not only in the context of separate national literature but in culture as a whole, is created. It is stated that mythological images in G.Yakhina’s works like spirits which are applied to by Zuleikha, Semrug bird (“Zuleikha opens her eyes”), Volga river topos (“The children of mine”), Greek mythology characters (“Train to Samarkand”) create mythological overtone as a form of the border; they are significant in the aspect of continuous creation of symbolic meanings. Mythological content in the novels by G.Yakhina is deep and polysemantic; it leads to a more complicated and keen understanding of universal experiences and moral values, which are valuable both for understanding personal fate of the heroes and for revealing the identity and national character of different ethnic groups: Russian, Tatar, Volga region Germans.

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1. Introduction

Formed in the 1990-2000s G. Yakhina's creativity as well as creativity of other Russian modern writers is connected with the appeal to the tragic pages of our history: I. Abuzyarov's "Korilnaya song" and "Post", Sh. Idiyatullin's "Ubyr". In her novels "Zuleikha opens her eyes" (2015), "The children of mine" (2018) and "Train to Samarkand" (2021) G. Yakhina strives to reveal the character's psychology who is in unbearable for human existence conditions, reveal the power of spirit and the depth of inner experiences, which undoubtedly leave noticeable print in the memory and moral-esthetic experience of a modern reader. According to Ibragimov (2018), G. Yakhina, I. Abuzyarov, Sh. Idiyattulin's works are focused on the Russian reader; they contribute to cross-cultural dialogues and in this sense their meaning in modern Russian literature is undoubted.

One of the most complicated and controversial novels of the Russian writer is "Zuleikha opens her eyes".

Among the works there are different aspects of ideological-psychological content and poetics of a well-known work by G. Yakhina, a special place is taken by Sultanov's (2016) article "The representation of the past as a dominant factor of self-identity in the literature of post-soviet period". The novel by Yakhina is studied through the prism of the notion *historical memory as a factor of national identity*. According to Sultanov (2016) in literature of Russia the dominance of memory over history brings to the fore the witness or the memory holder in the quality of authoritative actor. Along with A. Ganieva's story "Salam to you, Dalgat!" drawing the attention to "destruction of established values", "the ill-being of modern Dagestan" (p. 304), Yakhina's (2018a) work presents artistic "experience of reconstructing the history of the XX century from the point of view of a human sentenced to silence" (p. 305). Sultanov (2016) reveals the dominance not of the canon of collective memory, but a "subjectivity and affection of individual memory" (p. 307). Semantic space of the novel is based on the interaction of implicitly interdependent *memory* and *oblivion*. This very dialogical perspective of artistic story makes G. Yakhina's novel a worthy work of the Russian literature of the post-soviet space.

Along with this "Zuleikha" novel, its main heroine, her spiritual life and external event line of the novel more than once became the object of condemning criticism: e.g. in Khabutdinova and Zhuchkova works, and others. According to Khabutdinova (2016) Tatars did not have any pagan traditions, the author is not familiar with the life of Tatars, many details and plot situations do not correspond to the historical truth. In her review of G. Yakhina's novel Zhuchkova (2020) also suggests some statements, which do not let one consider this work as an example of sentimental mass literature. Thus, the researcher thinks that the overlapping of Tatar and Russian mentality and their distortion take place [right there]. Following M. Khabutdinova she thinks that believing in Allah, Zuleikha could not conduct pagan rituals, be familiar with mythical spirits, the spirit of cemetery (zirat iyase). The work shows the differences between national character of a Tatar woman Zuleikha and the Russian worldview. As Zhuchkova (2020) emotionally says, both Tatars and Russians suffer from the overlapping of Tatar and Russian context, and Russians – all Russian characters (except Ignatov) are shown as cruel and impudent, without honor and conscience. None of the Russians (except Ignatov) do not see human in the representatives of other nations (p. 575). Such "offsets" and borrowings from M. Bulgakov's works ("your own and someone else's word"), the lack of

psychological depth in portraying Zuleikha, her inner world (“Zuleikha is totally deprived of psychology because she is sewn of the patterns of sentimental novel”) – all these characterize G. Yakhina’s work not from positive sides for a high literature. Thus, according to the critic’s concept, the work is exactly at the intersection of "high literature and mass literature" as one of the vivid trends of the modern historical and literary process (Zhuchkova, 2020, p. 577).

By now some attempts in the critics and literary studies were made to comprehend the genre nature of the novel “Children of mine”, marked by the richness of the text with reminiscences and allusions (on German classics and folklore, D.R. Tolkien’s works) (Yuzefovich, 2021). The role of chronotopic images in creating peculiar to magical realism poetics belongs to a model of the world, combining ordinary and fantastic, natural and supernatural (Nabiullina, 2019). Yuzefovich (2021) claims that Volga separating steading from Gnandental is not our ordinary Volga, but a magical flow between the worlds, keeping the memory of the human and hiding the spirits of the dead.

There were many disputes about the last novel by G. Yakhina (“Train to Samarkand”) in the Russian cultural community: she was accused of plagiarism, there were disputes about why the action of the novel was attributed to 1923, when according to official reports, the starvation in the Volga region was overcome, and so on. One can see a lot reviews to this novel in the Internet, but there are no serious works devoted to the “Train to Samarkand” novel.

2. Problem Statement

For the first time on the material of three novels by G. Yakhina, the author studies the ways of modeling the artistic image of the world in literature that implements the phenomenon of cultural borderlands. It is stated that in the works of Russian-speaking authors there is the tendency associated with the construction of a peculiar picture of the world in the context of not only one national literature, but also in the scope of culture as a whole (Burtseva, 2008). A common feature of the creative method of a number of Russian-speaking authors is the focus on the traditions of Latin American magical realism.

In relation to works of art, the concept of "magical realism" was used in 1923 in the article by the German researcher Franz Roh "On the problem of interpretation by Karl Haider. Remarks on post-expressionism" (1923). In 1931, E. Zhaly stated that the role of magical realism is in finding in reality what strange, lyrical and even fantastic is – the elements due to which ordinary life becomes affordable to poetical, surrealist and even symbolic changes (Sharshun, 1932).

But the term was widely used only in the 60-s of the XX century, when Latin American literature was experiencing a real boom (creativity of H.L. Borhes, A. Carpentier, G.G. Markes). Speaking about the reality of Latin America Alejo Carpentier touched upon the magic phenomenon, the relevance of ritual forms and various cults.

Fraser (1998) writes that two principles lie in the basis of the magical thinking: “The first says: like produces like or the consequence looks like a reason. According to the second principle things that come into contact with each other continue to interact at a distance after the direct contact ceases”(p. 114).

In the works of the researchers of the last XX century, the term “magical realism” is used when referring to the works of the modern literature. The fact that magical realism is not a monopoly of the Latin American novel, but acts as a general trend of the world literary process and is expressed, in particular, by

L. P. Zamora and W. Faris. The worldwide trend of writers turning to magical realism is dictated not only by the innovative energy that the new method carries, but also by the fact that magical realism gives an impulse to re-establish links with those traditions. For some time they were in the shadow of the restrictive principles of the mimetic boundaries of realism of the XIX and XX centuries (Zamora & Faris, 1995).

Tendencies peculiar to the works of the XX-early XXI century in which the authors strive to express and artistically comprehend mythical and magic model of the worldview and connect the elements of fantastic with the facts of historical reality, refer us to the “theory of magical realism”. Elements peculiar to this direction, we see both in the creativity of foreign writers (A.S. Rushdi, J. Apdayk, T. Morrison, M. Pavich et al.) and in the creativity of the Russian writers (J. Mamleyeva, I. Abuzyarov, S. Aflatuni, Ye.V. Abdullaeva, G. Yahina et al.).

3. Research Questions

One of the ways of representation of the existential dualism in G. Yakhina’s novels becomes mythological images and motifs. This layer of the writer’s works content has not still attracted the scientists’ attention. Meanwhile, it is significant both for comprehension of artistic and esthetic nature of the Russian literature and for describing the ways of creating inner borders in the texts and the processes of continuous creating of symbolic meanings associated with them.

The novels of G. Yakhina, especially "Zuleikha opens her eyes" and "The children of mine", are so imbued with the "spirit" of the fabulous and fantastic, which allows us to speak about the amazing originality of the Russian-language prose, close in its content to the mythopoetics of the works by Ch.Aitmatov, Yu. Shestalov, Yu. Rytkeu. On the other hand, fantastic layer lets us better understand the cultural identity of the heroes of the novel, for instance, in the novel “Zuleikha opens her eyes” and “The children of mine” through the description of the spirits in which the heroine believes, its connection with the Tatar ethnic group is underlined. Zuleikha’s mythological views model the world of her inner experiences (feelings of fear, hopelessness, etc.), as well as the values and moral ideals that are characteristic of her native people.

4. Purpose of the Study

For the first time in this work an attempt to study mythological layers of artistic text addressed to the problematic and the poetics of border is taken. The aim is to reveal associated with mythological codes in G. Yakhina’s novels the processes of identification and differentiation.

5. Research Methods

The concept of the conducted research is influenced by the works which present the study of “magical realism” as a creative method and special artistic system, characterized by the combination of real and fantastic beginnings. This includes the complexity of the narrative, a reliance on the mythological worldview, the presence of different genre elements, special chronotype within one work (Borev, 2001; Carpent’yer, 1984; Fraser, 1998; Roh, 1923; Zamora & Faris, 1995).

Theoretical and methodological base of the research is made of the works by national and foreign scientists, devoted to meaning-forming functions and poetics of the border (Poetics of the frame and limit, 2006; Frame and border, 2006). In the analysis of the completing function of the frame, Rymar' (2006a) concludes that senses created by the borders, claiming for the high degree of universality, remain incomplete and in a certain extent non-certain because they are realized not in particular phrases but in dialogic interactions between separated parts of the work. Lotman (1996) calls the border as a *hot* point of semi-formative processes, the place of a constant dialogue. The border is a mechanism of translating the texts of foreign semiotics into the language of *ours*, the place of transformation of the *external* into *inner*. This is a filter membrane which transforms foreign texts in such extent that they are suitable to the inner semiotics of semiosphere, nevertheless, remaining alien.

The premise and basis for raising the question of a mythological subtext as a form of border, having *definitely-undefined semantics* (Rymar', 2006b) is the contradiction of two types of consciousness and two ways of functioning of the signs in culture: descriptive and mythological (see Lotman & Uspenski, 2001).

6. Findings

6.1. The "wet chicken-egg" dichotomy in G. Yakhina's novel "Zuleikha opens her Eyes" and the problem of uncertainty

The most important frame for comprehension of the problematic and poetics of G. Yakhina's novel is made by the opposition wet hen – an egg, which functions as an allusion in the text. For the first time the mention of pejorative nickname of Zuleikha, which she hears from her evil mother-in-law, occurs in the very beginning of the work: "Wet hen – jebegen tavyk – was she first called by Ghoul." (Yakhina, 2018a, p. 7).

Let us appeal to some Tatar and Russian proverbs about the hen, which create *allusional context* of the work:

The hen sees millet in her dream, if does not eat, it will see it again.

For a blind hen all is millet; egg teaches the hen.

Hen is not a bird, a quitter is not a human, the chatterbox is not a host.

The hen has also a heart.

Brick by brick, and the house gets big.

The hen does not sing as a rooster etc.

As we can see in the examples mentioned in most cases a hen is contrasted with rooster as a more meaningful and beautiful bird. In the proverbs (A hen is not a bird, a quitter is not a human, the chatterbox is not a host or the hen does not sing as a rooster) it is directly said about "double" character of the hen's position among other birds. Given definition, "wet" exactly outlines the "double" nature of humiliation of Zuleikha. Externally not attractive image of the hen – Zuleikha – near to such epithet becomes uglier and repulsive.

The most important element creating the field of uncertainty in the novel is the story of a doctor Leibe. As well as Zuleikha, Leibe is in the world of tragic humiliation, the peculiar expression of which is alive and fantastic egg, which settled on the doctor's head and became his alter ego for a long time: "the

egg and professor were happy together. Their life was peaceful and calm - as a billiard ball directed by a skillful hand inexorably rolls into the pocket” (Yakhina, 2018a, p. 21).

As we can see from the mentioned above, dichotomy egg – wet hen enriches the novel by “new” semantic details. It connects the heroes different in the sense of origin and nationality. Thus, through this dichotomy we better understand both Zuleikha’s fate, who in spite of challenges faced goes through the way of rebirth like a Semrug bird and the doctor’s Volf Carlovich. Release from the obsessive egg by the latter (as well as in Zuleikha’s case – release from the nickname “wet hen”) returns the hero to his real human nature and destination.

One should also point that dichotomy mentioned is transparent in the novel. In its own way, those heroes who are connected with the life and fate of Zuleikha and Leibe go into it. First and foremost this refers to Yusuf: the idea of the egg occurs in the moment when it has just already came into being thanks to doctor Leibe: “In the sunset I saw [the baby] much better. The head is big like a man’s fist. <...> The stomach is round – like an egg” (Yakhina, 2018a, p. 23).

Another episode included in the chapter “Where?” also presents an interest. In particular, it tells about the way Zuleikha saves “a little red-breasted bird” from death, which decided to build a nest on the roof of a stationary train of the very train by which Zuleikha like other immigrants was sent on a penal route. To save the bird Zuleikha hit the train’s roof by a long and a strong board. “She followed the bird with her eyes, returned the board to its place, and dusted off her hands. <...> - If it loses the nest – there will not be any eggs, - explained she briefly. – It will look for its nest the whole summer” (Yakhina, 2018a, p. 34).

Included in the dichotomy mentioned the image of red-breasted bird and an egg lets us connect the heroine’s fate with a bird, left its native home (nest) unwillingly and its buried children (an egg).

Thus, the dichotomy “wet hen – egg” is not a fixed but a changeable structure, which gives the novel depth of potential content. The appearance of the Semrug bird, symbolizing the beauty, power and freedom, actualizes a powerful mythological layer (urman, idea of spirits, such as zirat iyase), enriching it with universal meanings. On the other hand, he emphasizes the sense of unity of Zuleikha with the world of nature, with a bird as a symbol of human soul, which can be strong, ready for transformation, like it happened with Zuleikha.

It is fair to claim that throughout the story, the dichotomy – wet chicken-egg-exists as an antithesis to the image of the Semrug bird, symbolizing the opposite meanings – the strength of spirit, nobility and beauty of Zuleikha. For the first time we get to know about it in the chapter with an unusual name “Shakh-bird”: the story of Semrug is told by Zuleikha to her little son: “No one could see the Semrug – no animal, no bird, no human.” (Yakhina, 2018a, p. 43).

To state the antithesis *wet hen – noble bird Semurg* – helps stable, “strong” composition of the novel (K.K. Sultanov): mythological, fairytale story of a bird follows the heroine’s fearful vision: she sees “revived Ghoul”, who as usual humiliates Zuleikha, calling her dirty. Two chapters “To live” and “Shakh-bird” given as a contradiction to each other are contrasted. From this point of view it is also interesting that in the chapter “To live” Ghoul exactly forgets to mention “favorite” Zuleikha’s nickname (*wet hen*), but thinks of another one, also dirty word, but much more humiliating and bad in pronunciation. Experiencing fear and humiliation, being at last at the very “bottom” of the strongest feelings (“Zuleikha seats on the

floor close to her son, hides her nose in her palms and whines like a puppy”), Zuleikha like Semrug, flies (Yakhina, 2018a). She becomes strong, wise, opening to a new life.

6.2. The delineation of space in the novel "The children of mine": the motif of the border

The border between the farmstead where the greater part of life of the hero's life Yacob Bach, the former schoolteacher and German colony Gnadental is the Volga river. It is endowed in the novel with the fullness of being and appears as a kind of independent force that lives its own life. For instance: “The Volga has turned into a long snake, winding in small rings on the ground” (Yakhina, 2018b, p. 86). The river agrees with that Bach writes in his fairy tales and following the wind and the rain repeats “with every wave hitting the shore: yes! Yes! Yes! ...” (Yakhina, 2018b, p. 86). The river is personified, included in the canvas of the narration in the very dramatic situations, active, changeable, “eventful”. This is a cross-cutting reference image of the novel, symbolizing the passage of the time in the life of the novel's characters (“When the snow laid like a blanket on the steppe and forest, and the Volga was covered with spots of the first ice, Anche was born» (Yakhina, 2018b, p. 155) and the course of story. Besides the connection with the nation's life and the fate of an individual, the topos of the river reveals its involvement in the cyclical change of seasons and days, which leads to changes in the qualitative characteristics of the water element at different moments of the narration.

The Volga divides pictured world into two semantically contrasted spaces: “own” and “alien”, “external” and “internal”, “particular” and “universal”, concrete-historical and timeless. The right riverbank is a magical, enchanted world, dependent in its existence on natural-temporal rhythms. The counterbalance to this self-contained locus is the life of the village on the left river bank, in which the world's cataclysms (revolution, civil war, collectivization) bring a vector and signs of the "end of the world", indicating the destruction and loss of the ordered space, the triumph of chaotic forces over it. In the novel, the ambivalence of the water element is revealed as a borderline, acting its preserving, protective function and saving the house of Bach from the alien world - storms and adversities that fall on Gnadental. Then in contrast, this is opening the way first to the aliens who destroy the Universe of Bach, and later to his children, leaving the Farm to the big world.

The polarization of these worlds from one space into another is marked in the motif of crossing the border. The most important events in the life of the hero and the stages of his spiritual growth are connected with this, first and foremost the awakening of fatherly feelings and the realization of personal responsibility for the fate of his daughter Anche and the adopted son of the Kyrgyz Vaska. These are the moments of the greatest emotional and psychological tension created by the polarity of the categories of *own* and *alien*, experienced by the hero of the existential horror of open space, generated by a rigid butt frontier between *inside* and *outside*.

The Volga as a borderline often becomes for Jacob Bach, who is forced to go to the other bank, the most responsible part on his way, full of difficulties and fraught with dangerous situations. Thus, at that moment when the Volga started “slowly wave it ice cover” dividing Bach from the dead and not buried according human tradition Clara and left alone in a big empty house Anche, he bravely goes along the broken river, overcoming fear with an effort of will.

There was a shudder under his feet – and then the ice broke, exposing the grainy interior, and hundreds of blue sparks flashed on its chips, and from the opening crack heavy, emerald-black water peered. Without having time to be afraid, Bach leaped through the crevasse and strode on, leaving behind the rustle of ice, the splash of water, and the gurgling of crumbling ice fragments. (Yakhina, 2018b, p. 278)

The function of the Volga chronotope as a factor of identity of Volga Germans, expressing not just an external, ethnic connection, but also an internal, physical-vital and emotional-psychological unity of people living on the banks of the great river, is particularly highlighted: "... There is "feeling of a big river" from childhood in every Gnadentalian, as well as all Volga inhabitants: wherever he is – in the forest or in the steppe - his organism can accurately determine the direction and even with his eyes closed find the way to the Volga. The scientists could not define whether a particular organ or as special brain zone is responsible for this <...>. " (Yakhina, 2018b, p. 301).

The Volga in the novel is also the element of water, which forms some sort of from of an archaic beginning, from which the life starts and goes back. This is intermediate-universal, connecting sphere that arises between contradictory and opposing principles: past and present, time and eternity, being and non-being, beyond, surface and depth, cyclic recurrence and linearity, and finally, between the dead and the living, the hero's "I" and "not-I"». Going beyond the borders of the earth's space, Jacob Bach finds for a while a different existence and becomes a witness of what is beyond his world. A vertical axis dive is related to a movement that unfolds its linearity. The spontaneity of such a movement, its independence on the human's will, who is deprived of an ability to choose, are remarkable: "The water was carrying Bach down, little by little, little by little, lower, lower. He gave up and went forward. . <...> Bach was carried further. Disappointed and mad about merciless water, which does not give him an opportunity to be with his important people, he closed his eyes and wandered blindly" (Yakhina, 2018b, p. 345). Fluidity symbolizes the continuity of movement, becoming and disappearing.

Bach's journey along the bottom of the Volga, during which he meets a lot of sunken things, books, classical statues and empty houses, dead animals and people, including Udo Grimm, Tilda, Hoffmann, has its own teleology. It becomes a special way of studying the existence, whole and united in its inner contradiction. Joining the secret life of the universe, the hero of the novel understands what is hidden from other people living above on both banks of the river. They live without knowledge. "Not knowing what? That this river is full of death? That its bottom is covered by the dead, the water consists of blood and death curses? Or vice versa – full of life? So much that even those who have finished their journey in it are spared from destruction? That this river is cruelty? The cemetery of the weapon and last testimonies? Or vice versa – real mercy? Patient mercy, covering by the wave and carrying away with the current all wild, cruel and barbaric? About that this river is just a deception? An imaginary beauty that hides an unexampled ugliness? Or, vice versa – just a truth? Pure, carefully preserved truth – for over the centuries waiting for those who open their eyes fearlessly walks along its bottom?" (Yakhina, 2018b, p. 450).

The topos of the river as a border zone differs in the novel by the dynamism of its manifestation. Its semantic continuum is determined by plot-compositional, symbolic-metaphorical and world modeling functions.

6.3. The frame function of the reminiscences and allusions in Guzel Yakhina's novel "Train to Samarkand"

In the novel "Train to Samarkand" by Guzel Yakhina, which appeared in March 2021, one can determine a lot of mythological codes. The author defines the book as a novel-journey and "red eastern" in which the fate and characters of little vagabonds of different nationalities (Tatars, Chuvash, Mari, Bashkirs, Kalmyks etc.), refugees, security officer, basmachi are presented.

Garland of wagons with hungry and ill children followed by the train chef Deev and commissioner Belaya, 4000 miles, at its core, a garland of metaphors that refer the reader to the Bible and mythology. The train departs from Kazan, follows the Volga region, the Kazakh steppes, the Aral Sea, the Kyzylkum desert, the mountains of Turkestan to grain Uzbekistan.

In the new novel by Guzel Yakhina the artistic word becomes a sort of panhistoric: it synthesizes both a modern cross-section (the novel recreates the atmosphere of 1923) and archaic one. Meanwhile, it strives to demonstrate principal incompleteness and a wide mythological layer. The author's appeal to Greek mythology and the plots of Old and New Testaments testifies to her desire to bring elements of a timeless nature to the modern multicultural space, having timeless character.

The identified mythological and biblical codes that form the basis of collective memory indicate the cultural and spatial openness of the novel's text. Through allusive inclusions, Guzel Yakhina conducts a cross-dialogue of times, she demonstrates the plasticity of her worldview, which is in the process of constantly recreating her own *self*.

In the structure of the novel are primarily recreated the biblical codes. In "garland" the shelter is found both by "own" children, which are taken by Deev and "alien": street children and foundlings. On their way they are picked by compassionate Deev, who broke the rules. "Not a train, but a Noah's Ark" – says one of the sisters of mercy Fatima (Yakhina, 2021). By the end of the novel, the reference to the book of Existence, which tells about salvation of Noah, his family and animals from the flood, becomes vivid.

According to the Old Testament the God saved Noah because of his righteousness, and it was he who was destined to be saved from the wrath of the Lord. The comparison of the train with Noah's Ark makes it possible to understand that everyone can find a way to salvation. Even Deev with someone else's blood caked under his fingernails. In this context Deev-atheist, saving children, saves himself.

The waters of the Aral Sea become God's grace for all who are in the "garland". "The surface of the water spread wider and wider across the red autumn steppe - the whole place was flooded. And the blue flowed over the ground-closer to the railroad, closer, and closer still-as if the rails were drawn to the water" <...> The children looked silently at the eternal waters of the Aral Sea. These minutes were dense and sweet – such are not forgotten..." (Yakhina, 2021, p. 458).

In the Turkic Aral means island. Right here, according to one of the legends, the Noah's Ark ran aground. It is the waters of the Aral Sea that purify both the bodies and the souls of those who were in the train.

One more biblical plot is actualized in Yakhina's novel is the walking of Moses in the desert.

A parallel is acceptable: Deev – Moses. "The sand was playing with Deev: firstly hid the rails, leading to hills, from him, and after those along which Deev came to the desert. <> The sand was a host

here...” (Yakhina, 2021, p. 461). Walking in the desert Deev and children was the way to the Land of Promise.

Yakhina unites the past with the present. One immediately remembers the executions, which were sent on Egypt by God: turning the Nile water into blood, the invasion of midges, diseases etc. In the terrible 1920-s the same happens in the Soviet Union, where a sea of blood flows, cattle and people die... In these circumstances Deev who is supposed to save 500 children in spite of all difficulties, is shown.

Similarly to the case of Noah it should be pointed that Moses was the chosen one of God, and the atheist Deev does not know prayers, but knows how to ask for children. And that, whom in he does not trust, by the hands of enemies, he sends manna to the petitioner, not for him but for the children.

It seemed that Yakhina purposefully turns wide-known biblical plots, relating them to Deev. We are faced with a person who does not correspond to the function of a chosen one. More than once she revives in the memory of the hero episodes from his past (the murder of defenseless women and children, in particular) aiming to make it possible to understand that everyone can find a way to salvation. Each of the heroes, especially Deev, passes a not easy way, firstly, a spiritual one, and the measure of humanness is the value of life. In the Turkestan desert, it was not Deev who saved the children – the children saved Deev.

Deev’s way is also the way of Odysseus. Within the entire novel Deev reminds dodgy hero of Greek mythology, not only by his insistence on getting food for the children, but also by his cunning. Moreover, he meets plenty of enemies during the grueling Odyssey: these are Cossacks, Basmachi, thieves, security officers, diseases, fears; the main enemy was, of course, hunger. The hunger can be overcome due to those whom Deev calls enemies: Cossacks who bring provision, chalk, vinegar etc., basmachi who do not just feed children but lay the rails (“While Deev was wandering on the sands, Bure-bek watered and fed his children with rice and even miracle-berry. For several days Bure-bek and his fellows were digging sand and tying a railroad track... then they defeated the Reds in a battle and even cut their heads off”) (Yakhina, 2021, p. 461). These are people whose hands are all in blood, as well as Deev, saving children they save their souls.

In Yakhina’s new novel different views on the universal values are combined, a plenty of biblical and mythological codes are revived. Each adult carries his own truth. Thus, Belaya in the past “belitsa” (a woman, living in a monastery but not tonsured), meets the revolution with open arms, stands firmly on her feet and knows what to do. When Deev was grieving for the dead, she firmly said him: “kindness requires courage. \diamond If you deliver two-thirds, you will be a hero. This will be a real kindness – completed one” (Yakhina, 2021, p. 321). She becomes the epitome of the present of Soviet Russia, but she is infertile. This is the sign of that such Russia does not have future. As well as Zagreika, who looks at Deev like a little dog, has no future, crippled by the latter, blinded, he crawls “on the rails back to the north in search of his brother» (Yakhina, 2021, p. 497).

Each hero’s movement is related to this way, which is prepared for them: Deev has already experienced the mystery of death, having passed through the desert, deserved salvation and now can save the others.

7. Conclusion

Therefore, mythological images of the novel “Zuleikha opens her eyes” and flexible in its content the dichotomy (egg – hen – Semrug) form polysemantic beginnings in the narration, they form a new field of uncertainty in the text. Additional, “new” senses with the help of which in the reader’s consciousness there is a displayed unique and in the meantime complicated, internally contradictory image of Zuleikha. The story of Semrug bird highlights the beauty and the inner power of the heroine, capable for change, destructive processes in Zuleikha’s and doctor Leibe’s psychology are related to the dichotomy “egg – wet hen”.

In the novel “The children of mine” motif complex of the border, connected with the Volga image is used for thematic fronting and construction of “doubling of the world” and the space of “inter-existence”. The differentiation of two spaces (right and left banks of the Volga) strengthens the importance of the border’s image between two worlds in the structure of horizontal chronotope of the novel. As a space of “inter-existence” the river topos neutralizes the existential, spatial-temporal, spiritual and moral etc. oppositions and correlates with vertical axis of the model of the world. The topological factor of the border correlates with its symbolic code, corresponding to the principle of semantic dualism of the poetics of the work.

In the novel “Train to Samarkand” ambivalent function of reminiscences and allusions involved in the processes of identification and differentiation of characters is vividly seen. On the one hand, biblical and mythological codes used by the modern author reveal universal beginnings, on the other hand, make contribution to the formation of a syncretic model of being, consisting of everyday, ordinary, existential and mythological events.

The system of mythopoetic motifs connecting the level of problematics of the works with the level of poetics evolves in the novel work of G. Yakhina, testifying to the spiritual search of the writer and attempts to create a metaphorical project for reconciling the contradictions, arising in the discussions of a Small human with a Big story.

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