

# Bahram Sadegi's "Malakut" Mythical Aspects

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**Abstract:** The myths represent culture and thinking of the people in the past. As an expressing language of the prehistory period, they talk about valuable heritages buried inside the mountains and caves. The myths are narrators of cultural continuity and in other words history. In every period, the people interpret the myths based on their needs, beliefs and ideologies. War, pain and death experienced by the generation after coup d'état indicate that the society encounters with identity crisis. Bahram Sadegi is one of the contemporary novelists experiencing this crisis after coup d'état that seeks myth to remedy his pain. This paper tries to investigate the mythical aspects of "Malakut" by Sadegi.

**Keywords:** Bahram Sadegi, Iran Contemporary Story, Myth, Malakut.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Myth is a complex cultural reality that it is investigated based on the different viewpoints. This definition that myth narrates spiritual and holy events occurred in the past in the beginning of the universe is more complete than suggested definitions. In other words, myth narrates the story of the creation of supernatural creatures and universe and parts of reality (like creation of island, plants and human behavior). The main duty of myth is to discover paradigms of religions and meaningful affairs of human being like eating, marriage, work, art and education" (5).

## II. THEORETICAL PRINCIPLES

### Definition of myth

"Mythos (myth) was used in meaning of explanation, statement and story at first, then it was used in meaning of Historia (story, search and knowledge) and obtained meaning of "something that it is not in reality", "poetical imagination and fiction" and finally "distressed and idle word". In nineteenth century, it was used in recent meaning and the concepts were analyzed accordingly. Today the mythologists try to return to its primary meaning and usage so they use phrases like "living myth" and "function of myth". "Mythology aids in identification of the history of civilization, uncovering implicit old social constructs and thinking and believes. In case of ignoring mythology, the old history should be investigated by archeology. Mythology could identify most of the primary foundations of human civilization and nations relations and uncover implicit findings of archeology. In the primary native societies by living mythical themes, the mythology is used not only for uncovering of the human history of thoughts but also for comprehension of his customs and ceremonies" [1].

"Most of the contents of the myth reflect the human inner world, the secret contents that are in old nations' unconsciousness and sometimes they appear as dream. Since dream is a window on dark night of human being inner, night is beginning of the universe that human is unified with wholeness at night. Dreams are appeared as childish wishes, fearful and sometimes in innocent and unpleasant way and it is not surprising that mythical dreams were interpreted as the messages of goddesses" [2].

Dream is a complex phenomenon like myth and it has a symbolic language since dream and myth are rooted in unconsciousness and it discloses the secrets by symbols of dream and myth. According to Sigmund Freud myth is

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dream of a nation and it is result of human being dreams during thousands years and dream is an unstable personal myth rooted in visionary person unconsciousness.

Young calls the dreams “paradigm” by the same theme of myth. The soul of the slept person leaves his body and creates fantastic and visionary contents by the materials in his unlimited reservoir of his unconsciousness [9].

The basic, essence and time of myths “It is difficult to say about place and time of myth. Some unfamiliar groups created myths in old times and the myths were transformed by passing of times. The myths like cultures are combined with each other and bring a new myth and their time and place are changed. This transformation is manifested in Iranian myths. At first the old stories were narrated orally then they were changed into written form. The written myths offer images of the period that not only history but also archeology could not interpret them. Myths do not belong to particular period, in this regard Iran mythology has different periods”[1].

The secrets as living texture of myth “According to the latest specifications, there is a relationship between myth and symbols as the building primary materials. In Mir Cha Eliadeh opinion symbols cannot be separated from myth and studied as essence and abstract concepts. The symbols are only developed as narratives in convergent and interactional spiral expansion and they are transformed in unexpected way. It is possible to discuss about finding symbolic relevance and hope. The human language consists of signs as unique materials and the relationship between defined cause and effect and equivocal symbols. According to Lui Strous, this distribution is progress of meaning that motivates a secret feeling and thought and leads to superiority of the human being. The secret refers not only to other than verbal denotation but also to other meaning except its primary concepts. Mystery is distinguished from semiotics due to polysemic and semantic properties and its unlimited richness” [3].

### Mythical Fiction

“The mythologists show their enthusiasm to romanticism by legendary personification of the history forces. They seek the lost paradise in the myths and depict human being as follower of natural eternal laws that he is independent of history and they ignore historical differences by emphasize on the common traits and talk about human rules in general. These writers intend to achieve a philosophical and literary generalities by accounting eternal issues like solitude, sin, love, anxiety and death and they wish to pass from history”[2].

The Iranian writers who experienced the past propagandistic art sought to creation of eternal works. The political literature was replaced by the works accounting human eternal values. Eagerness to perception of the spiritual values led to metaphysical and secret experiences like meeting Satan in literature in order to visualization of alienation. Every generation interprets myth according to its needs and ideology. Considering confining issues like war, pain, sin and death indicates experiencing fundamental crisis affecting on society. When a society is threatened by inner and outer threats it refers to its identity to find solutions. The political solutions could not solve the problem so roots and consequences are questioned.

It can be referred to “Yakolya and her loneliness” by Taghi Modaresi and “Malakut” by Bahram Sadegi, there is a close relationship between these works and Old Testament. The difficulties of human being have had the similar causes and the history is considered as battle field for God and Satan and the writers are inspired by legends and Old Testament stories. The titles of both novels indicate the challenges of their writers. Both works refer to old content of the battle between God and Satan. After Modaresi and Sadegi many writers sought Old Testament for finding the contents for their stories” [8].

The myths gain new meaning according to time necessities and different concepts of life are interpreted by myth, generally speaking they take form of emotions and desires of enlightenment era. The myths were restored by the political aims in 1941-1953 and they were employed for releasing romanticism from realities in 1954-1962.

The scholars were distressed and aimless, they did not believe in any value and felt insecure and loneliness and sought dreams, legends and childhood memories to find the solutions. The strangulation in the society and individualism invited the writer to indifference and seeking pleasure. Some scholars were popularized for applying mythical aspects for solving the problems rooted in the social and historical conditions and they considered them as eternal pains of human being. According to Roland Barth myth in a bureaucrat society means a speech without political contents that it is fitted for mythology of this period of Iran contemporary literature [8].

### History of Symbolism and Myth in Iran

Although Iranian believes in pre Zoroaster period have been continued only in Zoroaster and Hindu traditions but most of the Old Iranian myths can be restored from these traditions. An image offered for old world consists of flat and calm

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land without sea. This calmness was disturbed by entering human being. According to the old nomad tribes, the Iranian and Indian myths are concentrated on the battles with nature. Drought, precipitation, thunderstorm and sun shine were reflection of universe reactions. But the primary myths cannot be explained as a form of worshiping of the nature; some goddesses were reflection of abstract thoughts like goddess of victory while some goddesses were described by human traits. In old Iranians opinion divine affairs were not far from human experiences. The religious ceremonies were held on the mountains not in the small temples. The goddesses were in all parts of the universe, Ater the son of god lived in the sky, space and fires of the houses. The human life and his ceremonies required direct contact with divine creatures. The ceremony consisted of hymns for creatures, sky, sun and stars and fire (hymns for fire). The Iranian myths refer not only to universe battles and abstract concepts and characters related to ceremonies but also to the protagonists like king, champion and the old physician. All of these viewpoints have been described in the old myths of the Zoroaster about human, society, universe and saints and Indians have preserved some of them" [4].

### **Bahram Sadegi and His Works**

"BahramSadegi was born in Najaf Abad of Isfahan and studied medicine in Tehran and received PhD in medicine from university of Tehran in 1967. He published his best works in decade forties in Tehran magazines. He was not interested in publishing his works and his stories were collected by the name of "Sangarva Gomgomehi Khali" in late sixties decade by selection of the publisher. The story of "Malakut" was published in book called "Mah" at first and then it was published in as independent book. Sadegi could not write valuable stories in decades seventies and eighties. He was ill and suffered from mental disorder at the end years"[6].

"BahramSadegi wrote his best works in 1970s. He explained aspects of suppressed scholars morality based on modern literary experiences for the first time. These works showed the subjective world of the scholars. He became famous by publishing of "Sangarva Gomgomehi Khali"(1970).[5].His best stories were published in this book. After 1970, the books of Sadegi announced end of coup d'état and beginning of his story writing. The critics consider his death as a shock in the fiction writing in Iran.

Creativity of Sadegi can be found in fictions of "Mehmanenakhandedar share bozorg", "Hafiyat" and "Khabekhoon". The calm life of Rahman Karimis disturbed by entering a guest from village. Disdained Rahman who becomes irritated by everything begins to threatening his guest about difficulties of living in the city but his struggle clarifies his idle life and finally when the guest returns to the village he commits suicide by eating antidepressants.

In "Afiyat" the frailty of a hot evening in the only bath of the small city is visualized in artistic way so that the reader feels that he is in a tedious remote city. The men and women are waiting for bathing for long time then the writer explains the events under the showers in comic way. Alternative images of halls and showers cause to waiting and anxiety. The dispersed scenes are related so that a uniform image of the story theme is offered. It seems that an incident imposes a secret to daily events leading to disappointment and anxiety. At first everything seems calm but Sadegi's world is transformational, suddenly the water is stopped and the people are placed in comic position. The important incident is death of the man sitting in the hall among people. The story are deepened and it shows death and life. "Khabehe Khone" seeks the relationship between the writer and protagonist. It is narration of narrative trend like in most of the modern stories. "Gh" wants to write the shortest story. The protagonist enters to the story himself and in other words the writer enters him in his life. The reality and imagination (real world and fictional world) are interwoven in the continuous and vague fabric. The narrator talks about protagonist of one of his stories. The protagonist kills the tall man and the writer is unified with him such that the murderer is tall man. In other stories, Sadegi imitates his primary works. In the story of "Shab be Tadrij"(Jahne Noo,1966)the reader is regretted. Sadegi reports his childhood without novelty by old and talkative prose"[8].

"Sadegi contemplates about the mystery of existence and social crises and creates poetical atmosphere that futility and vagueness is dominated on it. People follow unknown rules, since they are in incomprehensible conditions and suffer permanent fear. This condition affected on Sadegi and he lost his hope and he experienced the fate of his characters and considered disappointed aspects of life.

He disliked those who offered excuse. He did not fall in traps and he did not misuse his art for his ambitions. He consumed drugs because of illness and finally he died in December of 1984" [8].

Bahram Sadegi style "Concept and content are seen in Sadegi's works but he acts beyond conceptualization in his best stories. Attention to structure and form distinguishes him from other conceptualized writers. Technique is important for him and he considers life as a fiction and interprets life from own spectacles. He employs tools for comprehension and

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expression of fictional life. Although he pays attention to life and death and common people but life and death are not so serious for him like Hedayat and his characters are neither comic nor tragic and they are ridiculous and pitiful.

The common people encounter with uncommon situations. As in "Afiyat" or "Malakut", the characters like Mr. Mavadat and his friends are common people that they trap in Doctor Hatam trap because of attachment on life and pleasure and suffering from obsession and temptation. (Most of the Sadegi's stories like "Vasvas", "Kalafe Sardagom", "Sangarva Gomgomehe Khali", "Bacamale Tasof", "Gyeremontazereh" and "SarasrHadese" are from this category). Most of the events are occurred due to contradiction between normal life of the characters and uncommon situation that they encounter with them.

At first the structure of Sadegi's stories seems simple but they have specifications that distinguish them from others. This structure is proportionate with contents of his works.

His style places him among modern writers. He emphasizes on the structure of the story, importance and priority of technique, involvement in life and reality and expressing paradox and combination of subjective and objective realities. But due to his unique style considering his work according to special style is difficult. He cannot be categorized according to symbolism, subjective story, psychology and modern realism. He does not seek dream and imagination like Hedayat and consider subjective symbolism and personal psychology like Chobak, Sholehvar or Golshiri; he never pays attention to the relationship between contemporary person and historical and cultural myths. The style of Sadegi is not placed in above categories.

The main account of Sadegi is subjective involvement and his characters are placed continually in subjective and objective situations. Although most of the Sadegi's stories are not confirmed by subjective story styles but they pose subjective and unreal states"[7].

Social status after August nineteenth coup d'état and its effect on Bahram Sadegi works "In 1958-1959 the social status was shifted and a new movement was begun. During 1953-1958 Iran literature experienced disappointment and the writers sought legends and myths and tedious and blameful ideas were repeated in the literary works. Most of the writers were disappointed and they thought about death and seeking pleasure was main challenge of the scholars. Literature was replaced by pessimistic philosophy, love and sensual stories and the cultural fight between literary attitudes was continued. The writers sought solutions in the past and they culminated during 1960-1970. Since 1958 the social crises were reduced. "Social forces leave the past nightmare and seek solutions and they find painful truth from past vagueness and indignation". In 1958 Sadaf quarterly wrote: "It is time to remove old abscess from heart and mind of the

scholars and now we are in valuable and sensitive period". In 1960, Andisheh Va Honar magazine wrote: "seven years passed in silence and most of the classes were disappointed...new social status has brought possibility of more activities". The end of this decade was a turning point in Iran fiction writing and the era of flourishing was begun. The events of 1960-1970 continued after revolution in fiction writing in Iran. Different magazines were published by influence on story writing and writers. Sokhan magazine changed its attitude by publishing works of Bahram Sadegi from 1956 and it continued to publish articles of Abdolrahim Ahmadi from 1960 and established its domination on Iranian readers"[8].

"New generation begins search on the censored and infertile cultural context. The writers publish their works with difficulty and by own cost. But enthusiasm among people solves the problems. The new generation tries to create innovative and new figures based stories. Form and manner of the storytelling gain importance. The creative writer of this decade considers form by the aim of creation of a fiction with accurate and powerful structure. Formalistic literature finds appropriate context for growth. It can be referred to Golestan, Farsi and Masoud Zavarzadeh.

Most of the young disappointed writers begin to establish a relationship with the society and they think about releasing realities from legends and pay attention to common and forgotten people. For new generation the time of sensitive scholars and old allegories is over. The young writer tries to regain his lost identity and since family is the close context for him so he writes about his child hood and analysis of the past gains importance for him. These stories are not interesting due to ill structure and emotional description of the oppressed. The writer tries to influence the reader but the hasty writers achieve their goals by exciting the reader and they employ emotional and sympathy elements and attract the despised people. So literature passes this period and continues its progress in 1960-1970"[8]. The scholars reacted to decline of Mosadeg by disappointment, pessimism and return to traditions. They had suffered pressures after coup d'état and they sought myths and legends for finding solution. Sadegi is writer of this period that employed myths in his works.

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## III. CONCLUSION

Myths indicate human being existence .Myth is belief in the foundation and confines of the world and human life beyond our understanding. Myths tell about goddesses by power beyond our understanding and material world. They say about goddesses so that they are human and behave like human. According to myths although the goddesses have supernatural power and their behaviors are unpredictable, they could destroy usual and common orders. Subjective and spiritual life gains objectivity by myth. These are manifestations of beauty of myths. The writers who experienced coup d'état sought myths to find the solution. Bahram Sadgiis, one of these writers, that employs myth in his "Malakut".

In 1941 when the social life became unbearable, the inner life gained importance and the anxiety and seeking shift in the world were indicated in optimistic Romanticism works. By culmination of the strangulation and disappointment among scholars the eagerness of 1940-1950 was replaced by disappointment. The writers were under stress and this trend led to mystic and solitude and pessimistic philosophy and attention to myths so that every beginner or experienced writer used allegory. "Malakut" by BahramSadegi is one of the famous novels in contemporary literature that employs myth in artistic way. Sadegi in his short life of story writing wrote other short stories but Malakut placed him in the first position among the writers. "God", "Satan" and "death" are the main themes of this story. Malakut is a solution for the writer pain. The story begins on Wednesday midnight that Satan penetrates in Mr. Mavadat and it continues to Thursday morning that everybody dies. The story is expanded by nostalgia, monologue and myth. Each character is a symbol. The "unknown person" is symbol of God that he is near us. "Dr. Hatam" is angle of death and he tries to take life of people. "M.L" is symbol of a human by will and confinement. He runs away from death and causes to trouble for Dr. Hatam. Sadegi uses Christian myths. Presence of God, death and hope in coming of savior are rooted in Christian myth. The success of Malakut indicates that Sadegi was successful in writing mythical novels and he has referred to mythical manifestation of Satan, God and death in artistic way.

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