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THE CONCEPT OF STEPMOTHERHOOD AND ITS INFLUENCE ON NEGATIVE CHARACTER

Annotation

This article explores the concept of "stepmotherhood" - the recurring portrayal of stepmothers as antagonists in folklore and fairy tales - and its role in shaping negative character archetypes. By analyzing the Western tale of Cinderella alongside the Central Asian folktale Zumrad and Qimmat, highlight the shared and divergent ways in which stepmother characters are depicted, serving as symbols of familial conflict, moral decay, and social values. Both stories reinforce the idea that non-biological family members can be a source of threat and competition, impacting cultural perceptions of family structure, loyalty, and morality. This comparative study offers insights into how these tales reflect and shape attitudes toward family dynamics and step-relations across cultures.

Key words: stepmotherhood, concept, psychological, culture, stereotypes, character, archetypes.

КОНЦЕПЦИЯ МАЧЕХИНСТВА И ЕЁ ВЛИЯНИЕ НА НЕГАТИВНЫЕ ХАРАКТЕРИСТИКИ

Аннотация

В данной статье рассматривается концепция «мачехи» - повторяющегося изображения мачех как антагонистов в фольклоре и сказках – и ее роль в создании отрицательных архетипов персонажей. Анализируя западную сказку «Золушка» совместно со среднеазиатской народной сказкой «Зумрад ва Киммат», мы подчеркиваем общие и разные способы изображения образа мачехи, которая является символом семейных конфликтов, нравственного упадка и социальных ценностей. Обе истории укрепляют идею о том, что небологические члены семьи могут быть источником угроз и конкуренции, влияя на культурные представления о семейной структуре, лояльности и морали. Это сравнительное исследование дает представление о том, как эти сказки отражают и формируют отношение к семейной динамике и отношениям в разных культурах.

Ключевые слова: Мачеха, концепция, психология, культура, стереотипы, характер, архетипы.

O'GAY ONALIK TUSHUNCHASI VA UNING SALBIY XARAKTERGA BEVOSITA TA'SIRI

Annatsiya

Ushbu maqolada "o'gay onalik" tushunchasi – o'gay onalarning folklor va ertaklarda takroran antagonist sifatida tasvirlanishi va uning salbiy xarakter arxetiplarini shakllantirishdagi roli o'rganiladi. G'arbiy "Zolushka" ertagini Markaziy Osiyo xalq ertagi "Zumrad va Qimmat" bilan bir qatorda tahlil qilib, oilaviy ziddiyat, axloqiy tanazzul va ijtimoiy qadriyatlar timsoli bo'lgan o'gay ona obrazlarining umumiy va turlicha tasvirlangan usullarini ta'kidlaymiz. Ikkala hikoya ham biologik bo'lmagan oila a'zolari tahdid va raqobat manbai bo'lishi mumkin, bu oila tuzilishi, sadoqat va axloq haqidagi madaniy tasavvurlarga ta'sir qilishi mumkinligi haqidagi fikrni mustahkamlaydi. Ushbu qiyosiy tadqiqot ushbu ertaklar oila dinamikasiga va madaniyatlar o'rtasidagi munosabatlarga bo'lgan munosabatni qanday aks ettirishi va shakllantirishi haqida tushuncha beradi.

Kalit so'zlar: o'gay onalik, tushuncha, ruhshunoslik, madaniyat, bir tahlitdalik, qahramon, arxetiplar.

Introduction. Throughout world literature and folklore, the stepmother figure frequently occupies a negative role, embodying cruelty, jealousy, and malice. Unfortunately, archetype has become so entrenched in storytelling that it serves as a universal symbol of familial threat, reinforcing anxieties and stereotypes about non-biological family members. The concept of "stepmotherhood" encapsulates this recurring image and the underlying themes associated with it. Through comparative analysis of Cinderella and Zumrad va Qimmat, this paper examines how stepmotherhood reflects societal values, reinforces familial norms, and shapes children's perceptions of family roles and morality. The concept of stepmothers is a recurring theme in folklore and fairy tales across various cultures, often embodying negative traits and serving as antagonists to the protagonists. This motif is particularly prominent in both English and Uzbek tales, where stepmothers are frequently depicted as cruel and

malevolent figures. The portrayal of stepmothers not only reflects societal attitudes towards women in positions of authority but also serves to highlight themes of jealousy, rivalry, and the struggle for power within family dynamics.

The popularity of these tales, passed down through generations, suggests that the stepmother archetype serves as more than just a plot device; it is a vehicle for expressing complex cultural attitudes toward family structures, loyalty, and purity of lineage. Based on the ancient views of Central Asia, the concept of "stepmotherhood" was enriched with positive stereotypes. By examining these tales, we can better understand the societal implications of stepmotherhood and the psychological effects it may have on children and adults alike.

The Concept of Stepmotherhood and Its Influence on Negative Character.

The theme of stepmothers in folklore and fairy tales is rich and multifaceted, offering insight into cultural attitudes towards family dynamics, gender roles, and moral lessons. Let's delve deeper into this topic by exploring historical context, specific tales, psychological interpretations, and cultural significance.

The archetype of the wicked stepmother can be traced back to ancient civilizations. In many patriarchal societies, women were often valued based on their ability to bear children and maintain family lineage. Stepmothers, particularly in a context where they were not the biological mothers, could be seen as threats to the inheritance and status of biological children. This perception likely contributed to the negative portrayal of stepmothers in stories, as they were often depicted as usurpers or rivals.

The concept of "stepmotherhood," where stepmothers are depicted as inherently evil or antagonistic figures, is a recurring theme across various historical and cultural narratives. A few sources delve into its origins and manifestations across different societies. For instance, in the Brothers Grimm's tales, such as *Cinderella* and *Snow White*, stepmothers are often portrayed as jealous or power-hungry figures who mistreat their stepchildren, positioning themselves as villains who challenge the innocence of young female protagonists. "The second wedding was hardly over before the stepmother showed her true colors. Her new daughter was so lovable that she made her own children seem even more unpleasant by contrast; so she found the girl insufferable. She gave her all the rough work about the house to do, washing the pots and pans, cleaning out Madame's bedroom and those of her stepsisters, too" [1]. Scholars suggest that these portrayals reflect societal fears surrounding family disruptions and the redefinition of maternal roles. The evil stepmother trope is heavily associated with both envy and ambition, traits deemed unfeminine and dangerous in traditional societies, thus reinforcing a moral lesson against such behavior. When we do a comparative analysis of the concept of stepmotherhood in English and Uzbek fairy tales, we find more similar stereotypes in them. But looking at history we can see the opposite. Despite the fact that in recent years, the concept of stepmotherhood in English and Uzbek fairy tales is almost the same - with negative characters such as the evil woman, the lady of darkness, and the stepmother, in the middle ages Uzbek children's literature was enriched with narratives. The notion "Stepmother" is regarded as one of the positive and kind characters.

In medieval Europe, for example, the institution of marriage was often transactional, with women marrying for economic stability rather than love. This created tensions within families, especially when stepmothers entered the picture. The fear of losing affection and resources to a new wife could lead to jealousy and competition among women, themes that are prevalent in many fairy tales.

Another honorable guide of the people in medieval of Central Asia, which has educational value for young and old, is hadith. The national traditions of the original Uzbeks are shown in the hadiths. "A'ishah said 'Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas and 'Abd bin Zamah disputed amongst themselves about the (relationship of the) son of the slave girl of Zam'ah and brought the case to the Apostle of Allaah (ﷺ). Sa'd said 'My brother 'Utbah enjoined me that when I came to Makkah I should see the son of the slave girl of Zam'ah and take his possession for that is his son'. 'Abd bin Zam'ah said 'He is my brother, the son of my father's slave girl having been born on my father's bed'. The Apostle of Allaah (ﷺ) saw his clear resemblance to 'Utbah. So he said 'The child is attributed to the one on whose bed it is born and the fornicator is deprived of any right (lit. the fornicator will have the stone). Veil yourself from him, Saudah. Musaddad added in his version

"he is your brother 'Abd" [2]. From this hadith, it can be said without a doubt that stepfather or stepmother is a meritorious status. In fact, raising an orphan and taking care of him is highly glorified among us (Central Asian people). And of course, people who patted orphans on the head were considered to be the most patient and compassionate people. From time immemorial, parents and grandparents have brought up their children with hadith narrations. A child brought up with the concepts of the supporters of creation from childhood will have roots in the concepts of national pride and cultural immunity.

Zumrad va Qimmat and the Central Asian Perspective on stepmotherhood The tale of *Zumrad va Qimmat* provides a similar portrayal of the stepmother figure in a Central Asian context. In this story, *Zumrad*, the kind and beautiful daughter, suffers abuse at the hands of her stepmother, who favors her own daughter, *Qimmat*. The stepmother's actions are driven by jealousy and a desire to elevate her biological child, mirroring the stepmother's favoritism in *Cinderella*. This tale, however, introduces specific cultural values regarding family honor, loyalty, and the dangers of selfishness. The stepmother's negative traits in *Zumrad va Qimmat* are intensified by the cultural emphasis on family loyalty, a value particularly strong in Central Asian societies. Her favoritism toward *Qimmat* and her mistreatment of *Zumrad* lead to morally disastrous outcomes, suggesting that family members who prioritize self-interest over loyalty bring harm not only to themselves but also to those around them. *Zumrad va Qimmat* thus reinforces the Central Asian belief in the importance of collective family well-being over individual desires, portraying stepmotherhood as a threat to social harmony.

Key Themes in *Zumrad va Qimmat's* Stepmother Characterization: favoritism and Disloyalty: The stepmother's favoritism toward *Qimmat* emphasizes the cultural dangers of disloyalty within the family. Her actions lead to moral decay, showing that disregarding family bonds for selfish purposes is socially reprehensible. Symbolism of Moral Corruption: The stepmother in *Zumrad va Qimmat* symbolizes not only personal malice but also a broader moral corruption that threatens the stability of the family unit. Family and Social Order: In Central Asian narratives, maintaining social order and family honor is paramount. The stepmother's disruption of these values serves as a cautionary tale about the consequences of selfishness and betrayal within the family. Comparative Analysis of stepmotherhood in *Cinderella* and *Zumrad va Qimmat*. Both *Cinderella* and *Zumrad va Qimmat* depict the stepmother as a symbol of moral decay and familial threat, yet each tale reflects its cultural context in distinctive ways. In *Cinderella*, the stepmother's cruelty stems primarily from personal jealousy and favoritism, while in *Zumrad va Qimmat*, her malice carries implications of disloyalty and dishonor within the family unit.

Conclusion. The concept of stepmotherhood is a powerful literary and cultural motif that spans both Western and Central Asian folklore. In tales like *Cinderella* and *Zumrad va Qimmat*, the stepmother character functions as a cautionary figure, embodying negative traits that pose a threat to family unity and social harmony. These depictions have lasting effects on cultural perceptions of stepfamilies, with the "wicked stepmother" becoming a symbol of mistrust and negative stereotypes across both literature and social beliefs. Cultural studies reveal that while the trope is nearly universal, each society incorporates its own anxieties, norms, and moral teachings into these characters, making them versatile yet deeply rooted in shared human experiences. Through this analysis, it is evident that stepmotherhood reflects deep-seated cultural anxieties about family roles, loyalty, and the integrity of familial bonds.

These narratives not only serve as cautionary tales but also reflect evolving societal values regarding gender roles and familial dynamics. As contemporary adaptations continue to challenge traditional portrayals, they invite us to reconsider the complexities of women's experiences within family structures. Ultimately, the figure of the wicked stepmother remains a compelling lens through which we can examine enduring issues of power, identity, and morality—reminding us that stories have the power to shape our understanding of human relationships and the intricate web of emotions that bind us together.

Based on the psychoanalytical analysis, it can be said that while the European and Central Asian peoples interpret the image of the stepmother in almost the same way today, in the long history of the Central Asian nation, the image of the stepmother is a very compassionate and generous person. The conclusion is that when we see stepmothers in our daily life, we should not evaluate them in the scope of universal stereotypes, but we should support them in their meritorious work and motivate them to be more persistent.

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