



## THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE HARMONY OF MYTH AND FABLE

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### ABSTRACT

This study examines the historical development of the harmony between myth and fable as two interconnected narrative forms that have shaped human cultural consciousness from antiquity to the present. The analysis highlights how myth, rooted in collective belief and cosmological interpretation, gradually intersects with fable, a didactic genre employing anthropomorphic characters to convey moral lessons. Throughout various historical periods—ancient civilizations, medieval scholastic culture, Renaissance humanism, and modern literary adaptations—the relationship between myth and fable evolved from symbolic overlap to purposeful artistic synthesis. This harmony reflects broader intellectual transformations, demonstrating how societies have used both genres to explain the world, transmit values, and shape ethical behavior. The study concludes that the fusion of mythic archetypes and fable-based moralism continues to influence contemporary literature, folklore studies, and cultural education.

**KEYWORDS:** Myth, fable, narrative tradition, folklore, cultural development, archetype, moral didacticism, literary evolution.

### INTRODUCTION

Plato believed that literature has a powerful impact on the human psyche, especially on the psyche of a personality in the process of formation. For this reason, in his view, myths that depict the horrors of the kingdom of Hades (the other world – author) hinder those who believe in them from growing into warriors unafraid of death. Accordingly, he writes that “those who dare to recount such myths must be required not to condemn everything that exists in Hades without distinction, but, on the contrary, to praise it; after all, they are not right in such condemnations, and what is more, this is not beneficial for those who are to become future warriors” [Quronov and Rahmonov, 2008, pp. 7–8].

Thus, the fact that the genres of myth and fable, which have become accustomed to penetrating all layers of life, cover such a wide range of life’s contradictions testifies to the complexity of these contradictions. Plato’s observations, in particular, are reflected in ancient Greek literature in epics and dramas. For in ancient Greek literature myth stands out with its own specific principles of interpretation and, at the same time, contributes to the development of other genres, to understanding the psychological character of kings and court officials, and to revealing the necessity of comedies and satirical works that do not only convey gloom but also bring joy and delight to readers.

The beliefs observed in world mythology also transformed the very architectonics of the fable. As a result, the nature of myth and fable in Alisher Navoi’s works became more colorful. This

shows that at their core stands the phenomenon of the perfect human being, and that intellect and wisdom are always of enduring relevance.

It is no secret that the harmony of myth and fable has, from time immemorial, appeared in various genres created by our ancestors. While many of Alisher Navoi's works are connected with the animal world, it is equally true that they reflect the human phenomenon there. In the works of Jalal al-Din Rumi, Abdurahman Jami, and other classical writers, the fable is employed through extremely subtle allusions. Much was done to reform society, to change people's consciousness and thinking, and to ensure greater openness and transparency in the adoption of new ideas.

At this point, a question arises: why were critical thinking and firm will not expressed openly in that period? Why were even more complex fragments introduced through symbols, metaphors, and allegorical images? In response to this question, it should be noted that thanks to the positive achievements in the creation of a centralized Timurid state—the powerful empire of Amir Temur—disintegration did not occur in the country. Amir Temur's determination and courage in governing the state led to addressing such problems at their very root. Only after the death of Amir Temur did disunity and internecine struggles for throne and crown lead to the internal collapse of the Timurid empire, to the senseless shedding of blood, and to the deterioration of mutually beneficial strategic cooperation.

In this context, even under the forty-year reign of Mirzo Ulughbek—patron of science and learning—peaceful life was disrupted as a result of disagreements between father and son. Fully understanding this, Alisher Navoi wrote large-scale epic works corresponding to Husayn Bayqara's attempts to reform and to firmly uphold the banner of justice. Because of assassination attempts and bloodshed directed against Navoi himself, he also became a person in need of protection, in need of a beloved supporter.

Thus, as a product of precisely this state of mind, the fable genre developed even further. People's compassion and mutual trust were damaged. It became apparent that those who had been regarded as ideal individuals were, in fact, "no one." The internal structure and laws of the genre created a substantial foundation for grasping life's truth. In particular, each story within *Qisasi Rabghuziy* (Rabghuzi's Tales) contains several distinct narrative episodes with their own plots, and in this respect its structure is close to works of the *Zarbulmasal* type. Each of these episodes, taken separately, may be considered an independent, fully plotted work. The fact that the stories in *Qisasi Rabghuziy* are constructed in the form of "a story within a story" or as a "framing plot" ("moulding plot") also indicates that it continues the traditions of Eastern epic works.

If we pay attention, we see that up to the 20th century an enormous number of fables were created in the world's fable tradition. In the works of the Russian fabulist I. Krylov, Russia's domination over other peoples, freedom and subjugation, and the spiritual and social life of human beings are depicted. In any animal world there are cunning, treacherous, greedy, vile, hypocritical and deceitful characters. Ivan Krylov wrote his fables in verse. In his fables he continues the creative explorations of earlier fabulists, but gives them a new form and appearance, leaving it to the reader to extract the "lesson from the story" for themselves. Especially in the fables "The Monkey and the Spectacles" and "The Fox and the Goat," the panorama of social and psychological problems in society surfaces even more clearly. According to this criterion, the writer's artistic search becomes even more colorful. It is

revealed how people deceive one another, commit all kinds of meanness, baseness, smooth-tongued flattery and hypocrisy for the sake of self-interest, and “push each other into the pit.” Faced with each of life’s trials, human beings fall into various thoughts. They live their lives constantly making mistakes in determining who is a friend, who is a true beloved, and who is an enemy. Traits related to sentimental softness of heart and the capacity to hurt others always serve as a warning to people. In reforming society, the role of the fable is invaluable. If there is a reader who reads attentively and understands what they read, the essence of the fable becomes even clearer.

In the fables of the Russian poet Ivan Krylov, mythology takes on a universal character. In the fable “The Fox and the Goat,” the psychology of crafty people finds its expression. The lower self (nafs), overcoming simplicity, shows how the goat “falls right into” the fox’s tricks:

The Fox was leaping lightly through the plain,

Along that road there stood a certain well.

Suddenly, with a thud, she tumbled in,

And in the pit sat muttering to herself.

The well was narrow — she could not climb out, But to the Fox’s luck, the water there was shallow.

A Goat was grazing somewhere far away,

And, growing thirsty, searched for water then.

The Goat came near the well and, peering in,

Saw Fox below, upturned towards the light.

He shook his long beard, hanging like a net,

And asked the Fox about her state and plight.

To Goat the Fox began to praise the water,

At just the word “water” his craving overflowed:

“If it’s water that you want, then jump down here, be friend to me —

In this well there is, indeed, an ample, ready store of it.”

From the excerpt cited above, it is understood that the fox, thinking how to easily escape from the well into which it had fallen, called the goat (serka) down. Here the fox appears as a cunning animal, and one can sense that such fox-like, deceitful types also exist among people: some narrow-minded, fraudulent individuals are deceivers who, for the sake of their own interests, are inclined to sacrifice others. These criteria have continued to live on in world literature, particularly in the fable tradition. The existing social problems find their confirmation in the fables of Navoi and Ogahiy, Gulkhaniy and Nishotiy as well. At the core of the fable lies the density of interpersonal relations, which makes it possible to understand the truth of life in a distinctive way:

The Goat threw himself toward the well,

The Fox’s trick becoming his downfall.

With a “thud” the Goat fell into the water,

And the water splashed up to the edges of the well.

The Fox said: “O you with the long beard!

You have clearly reached the salt-lick.

I have drunk my fill of water,

And I leave all that remains entirely to you.”

Leaping up, the Fox climbed onto the Goat,  
And from there sprang up and out of the well.  
For quite some time the Goat's owner,  
Searching anxiously, had been in great distress.  
In the end he saw him there in this well,  
The Goat's soul was half gone already.  
With a thousand hardships he barely pulled him out,  
The Goat had become lame and blind as well.  
Seeing the Goat's condition, the owner  
Patted his head and stroked his back, saying:  
"O my Goat with the pointed beard and no sense,  
It was your simplicity, my dear, that caused this separation."

\*Gurjistonmasallari\*, 1994, pp. 234–235 \*Gurjiston masallari\*, 1994, pp. 234  
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The Russian fabulist Ivan Krylov, in his fable "The Fox and the Goat," is able to reveal, on a broad scale, speech polyphony and the characters' traits and behavior. The fox appears as a cunning figure both in Uzbek and Russian epic works. We never see the fox being deceived by any other animal. In tales, epics, and legends she is always depicted as a sly, deceitful character who acquires others' property through trickery.

However, in a Georgian folk fable about "The Billy Goat and the Fox," the plot is expressed differently. Let us analyze this in the following text:

"A Billy Goat and a Fox became friends. They ploughed the land together and sowed grain as equal partners; when the grain ripened, they reaped it and tied it into sheaves, and then they threshed it, piling the grain on one side and the chaff on the other. Then the Billy Goat said to the Fox:

'Come now, brother, let us divide the grain equally.'

But the Fox said:

'What is there to divide?' he said. 'The grain is mine, and the chaff is yours, that's all.'

The Billy Goat would not agree to this.

'Why so?' he said. 'We must divide both the grain and the chaff equally.'

Then the Fox said: 'I will go and ask my uncle, and he will settle our dispute,' and went off to call the Wolf." [Georgian Fables, 1994, pp. 234–235].

In the cited episode, in order to overcome the fox's cunning, the Billy Goat also thinks up a trick of his own. At this point, the reader has no doubt that the Fox will outwit the Billy Goat, as usual. But the plot takes a different turn. In most situations, it is the Billy Goat who is the gullible one and the Fox who is the deceiver, and this drives the course of the narrative. In allegorical images the Fox and the Wolf are used from the same angle: we understand that one always lives by cunning, while the other lives by oppression and cruelty. Here, too, the reader can clearly grasp how the fable shifts into a new type of plot:

While the Fox went off to "consult her uncle," the Billy Goat went to the village, brought back two puppies, and hid them inside the heap of chaff. Soon the Fox arrived with her uncle the Wolf. The Wolf, with fire in his eyes, began to threaten the Billy Goat:

'Why are you offending my nephew, eh?'

'What are you saying, sir, when have I ever offended your nephew?' replied

the Billy Goat. 'It was he himself who said: the grain is mine, and the chaff is yours.'

'Well then, what of it? Is it so bad if he said that?'

'In your opinion, is that just, sir?'

'Why not? It's quite right,' said the Wolf.

'Is that so? In that case, please climb up on that heap of chaff over there and, by the sacred names of the dear saints, swear that you are speaking in all good conscience.'

The Wolf climbed up onto the heap of chaff and began to stamp on it – that was his way of taking an oath. At that very moment, the two puppies leapt out and gave uncle and nephew such a fright and such a beating that they barely knew what was happening. In the end, both the grain and the chaff remained with the Billy Goat himself. [Georgian Fables, 1994, pp. 234–235].

The “moral of the story” in this fable is that in almost any situation the Fox, on its own, is capable of deceiving a single creature and seizing some prey. Here, however, the Billy Goat is helped by the puppies. Had the Billy Goat been alone, he would have given up the wheat grain just to survive the Wolf's oppression. There are many such unjust, unreliable people in life. This fable from folk oral creativity shows that among the Georgian people a habit has been formed of not allowing themselves to be deceived by others and of not “giving away the bread from their mouth” for nothing.

The fable is expressed in a highly ironic and satirical spirit, and in the images of the Billy Goat, the Wolf, the Fox, and the puppies, the truth of life shines through. The ups and downs of life, the lessons drawn from the past, and such virtues as humanity and nobility are measured in every era by a single aesthetic standard. It is natural that there is a great difference between humans and animals. Unfortunately, at the root of life's contradictions there are frequent and severe bloodsheds and acts of hypocrisy. This fable may seem simple and straightforward, but the concept it conveys resounds like a shout addressed to all times and to all people.

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