

30

Presentation date: July, 2021
Date of acceptance: August, 2021
Publication date: September, 2021

ON THE TRAIL

OF A PLOT OF RITUAL ORIGIN: "SEEING-OFF TO THE OTHER WORLD"

EN EL CAMINO DE UNA TRAMA DE ORIGEN RITUAL: "DESPEDIDA AL OTRO MUNDO"

Kamala Islamzadeh¹

E-mail: kemale_67@mail.ru

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2343-232X>

¹ Baku State University, Azerbaijan.

Suggested citation (APA, 7th edition)

Islamzadeh, K. (2021). On the trail of a plot of ritual origin: "Seeing-off to the other world". *Revista Universidad y Sociedad*, 13(5), 289-296.

ABSTRACT

Rituals are a phenomenon of great cultural significance and they have set guidelines in the development and evolution of human societies. Its objectives are varied, however, some are common to all peoples, such as personal protection rituals or rituals to bring abundance, although their manifestations are not always the same. The objective of this article is to discuss one of the most controversial rituals of antiquity: "the killing of the old" or "seeing-off to the other world". This ritual included on one hand the ancestral cult to elderly and on the other hand elements of sacrifice. Although various peoples performed this ritual differently, it is essentially the same and involved giving up the elders who became a burden to a tribe. The rudiments of this ritual are still preserved both in stories, legends and concise and laconic phrases. It is very interesting that when talking about this barbaric and cruel ritual, popular narrators direct it to didactic and educational purposes. The examples considered in the article highlight moral problems and emphasize the respect for the elderly. Referring to the antique and modern historical sources the author tries to reveal the historical aspects of the plot. Special attention is also given to the moments based on the different peoples' ethnopsychology during the analysis of the folklore samples. Each motive of the plot and their variants inherent in different cultures are studied, also contradictions of the nature of the central character is related both to the demiurge and to the trickster features.

Keywords: Traditional plots, rituals, seeing-off to the other world.

RESUMEN

Los rituales son un fenómeno de gran trascendencia cultural y han marcado pautas en el desarrollo y evolución de las sociedades humanas. Sus objetivos son variados sin embargo, algunos son comunes a todos los pueblos como pueden ser los rituales de protección personal o los rituales para traer abundancia aunque sus manifestaciones no siempre son iguales. El objetivo de este artículo es debatir uno de los rituales más polémicos de la antigüedad: "el asesinato de los viejos" o la "despedida al otro mundo". Este ritual incluía, por un lado, el culto ancestral a los mayores y por otro lado, elementos de sacrificio. Aunque varios pueblos llevaron a cabo este ritual de manera diferente es esencialmente el mismo e implicaba renunciar a los ancianos que se convertían en una carga para una tribu. Los rudimentos de este ritual aún se conservan tanto en cuentos, leyendas y frases concisas y lacónicas. Es muy interesante que cuando se habla de este bárbaro y cruel ritual los narradores populares lo dirigen a propósitos didácticos y educativos. Los ejemplos considerados en el artículo resaltan los problemas morales y enfatizan el respeto por los ancianos. Refiriéndose a las fuentes históricas antiguas y modernas, el autor intenta revelar los aspectos históricos de la trama. También se presta especial atención a los momentos basados en la etnopsicología de los diferentes pueblos durante el análisis de las muestras folclóricas. Se estudian cada motivo de la trama y sus variantes inherentes a las diferentes culturas, además se relacionan las contradicciones de la naturaleza del personaje central tanto con el creador como con los rasgos del tramoso.

Palabras clave: Trama tradicional, rituales, despedida al otro mundo.

INTRODUCTION

The typological features of peoples' worldviews, traditional plots expressing the economic, political, cultural relations between the different societies have been the focus of researchers' attention for centuries. In this sense the folklore studies emerged as a result of researches carried out in this direction. It is known that folklore is a national sphere of people's artistic thinking. Folklore reflects poetic thinking, artistic imagination, peoples' knowledge, wisdom, creation and it is the most valuable mental property that always develops and gets richer. The Azerbaijani folklore is varied and there are a lot of genres in it. Azerbaijani people created wonderful folklore samples that reflect social diversity of life (Qizi, 2016).

The origin of numerous plots that delight by likeness of motives, similarity of their sequence are quite different, where some of them were originate in rites. Rituals in the ancient primitive societies were considered to be an integral part of the tribe's life, solution of their problems and regulators of their everyday life, where mythological worldview prevailed. A ritual performer's authority and influence on the society is connected precisely with it. The primitive tribes who did not allow the natural flow of future and preferred its planning carried out rituals to that end.

Among the different rituals of ancient peoples, geronticide is one of the most controversial. According to Brogden (2001), the study of geronticide (killing elderly people) relies on an analysis of the social context in which old age is perceived and experienced. The violent death of the elderly – geronticide, senecide, and often patricide and matricide, whether at the hands of oneself or of others, willingly or unwillingly – is a social phenomenon, an outcome of social evaluations of the older person's worth. Ageing itself is an inevitable process and is not a problem, nor is it equivalent to illness. A crude demographic determinism which sees the elderly as a problem is misconceived.

However, there are examples of ancient people who considered their relatives to be rivals in the struggle for survival and sacrificed the elderly member of tribe for the well-being of young generation. This ritual, in turn, gave rise to a very interesting widespread plot in the world peoples' folklore which will be the main focus of this research.

DEVELOPMENT

The traditional plot "Killing of the old" that was shown in the different modifications in the many peoples' folklore was registered under the number 981* in the "Index of international tales plots" by Andreyev (1929). Actually this plot is given under the name "Why the old should be killed?" in this index. The description of the plot is: "**A son**

hid his father in the cellar in spite of the order about killing of the old. During the hunger he gave his son advice and helped him out of trouble; since then the old haven't been killed" (p. 71). Rustamzadeh (2013), who compiled the catalogue of the plots of Azerbaijani tales on the basis of the system by Aarne-Thompson described the same plot under the name "Killing of the old".

Both in European, Slavonic, Middle Asian and Azerbaijani folklore tradition this plot is shown in two forms: 1) as a tale 2) as a legend (Rustamzadeh, 2013). In the first case the plot is varied, colorful, expressive, and language potential is widely used in it. In the second case the plot is compressed, concrete and isn't rich with descriptive and expressive means. In such examples the number of characters is limited.

For example, in Azerbaijani folklore the variant of this plot is used as a legend, and its content is the following: "*It is said that, in the ancient times when parents were old, their children put them into a basket and carried them to the forest where they left them at the mercy of wild animals. A certain son put his mother into the basket and went to the forest, too. On the way to the forest his mother dropped white flowers that she had gathered before. When they reached the thicket, the son left his mother there and wanted to go away. His mother said to him: -Sonny, go along the path covered by the white flowers in order not to lose your way in the darkness. The son was as if woken up by his mother's words, he was ashamed of his action and returned home with his mother"*.

There are different variants of this plot in Azerbaijani tales such as: "Vile custom", "Iskender", "The cruel padishah", "The padishah's order" (Abdulhalimov, et al., 2000, p. 157), etc. In spite of the different details in these tales the motives used in the description of the plot are repeated. Boundless fantasy, improvisation of people's mastery moves the events of plot and the concrete forms of these motives can be traced. It demonstrates the new tales caused by the motive, its potential and function. Putilov (1975), wrote about the role of motive in formation of the plot: "*Motive is an element that constructs a plot, but it isn't its component. In a sense epic motive programs and causes the development of plot. This development is implied in the motive"*. (p. 149)

In all the sources dealt with the subject the motive of killing of the old according the ancient customs or ruler's order is present but the methods of killing are different: to throw into the sea, to throw from the mountain, to leave on the rock at the mercy of wild animals etc. The other motive is the breach of this custom by son. The reasons of it are differently shown in the tales: boundless love to the parents,

parents' hint has an effect on the son, the son thinks that he will suffer the same fate, the parents worry about their son though he is going to kill them, etc. There are also different variants of the places where the son hides his parents: in the special pit for baking, in the house, in the well, in the dug-out (in the Russian variant).

The relevance of the parents is demonstrated according to different difficulties depending on the version of the story: the country or people are in grave danger (dragon cuts off the water; hunger- in the Russian variant); it is necessary to carry out a very difficult task, to find the picture of the girl reflected in the water, to determine which of the same horses is a mother and which is a baby-animal; to drill holes in the marble stone etc.). Precisely after this motive old mother or father who was on the static position goes on the active one. He or she plays a decisive role in overcoming difficulties and solving the problem. Actually this character is a manifestation of archetype of a wise old man in this plot. This is the character that uses the centuries-old experience, knowledge and observations.

The archetype "a wise old-man" has a dual, contradictory character and acts sometimes as a cultural hero, but sometimes as a trickster and he is sentenced to death. The reasons of the order to kill old men are the following: they keep getting in the way, hinder everybody during the haste, sometimes war. However, when the old man solves the problem and realizes his regulator function at the end of the plot the negative mask is replaced by the positive activity of helping and that is why the custom of killing of old men is repealed.

This plot is included into all catalogues, there are a lot of examples in the different peoples' folklore connected with it. These facts make it possible to think about the real historical basis of this plot. On the primary stages of the social development, on the way to the civilization at the urging of wild natural laws, in the struggle for survival it was necessary to get rid of old representatives of tribe. Sick, weak, old people couldn't take part in hunt and didn't have their portion in food store. Besides sick, feeble old people needed care. Then, survival was only possible with the extension of the removal of some members of the tribe that aimed at the general interest of the entire group. Hence, the elders were considered a burden to the tribes and prevented them from fighting against the cruel natural forces.

The custom of "killing the old men" is inherent not only to specific people but also to all humanity (with some exceptions). Actually, it was also inherent in the behavior of animals in the instinct of self-preservation and preservation of their cubs. Animals are known to kill a sick animal

so as not to infect others. For example, it can be observed among ants and among bees. R. Kipling, who knew very well the life and habits of animals, describes in his tale "Maugli": according to the laws of the jungle, the wolf Akela who failed during the hunt had no right to rule the pack. He was sentenced to be killed by the other wolves in the pack.

Although there are some general instincts of similarity between animals and people, man is a single conscious being, and his evolution confirms his superiority. At a certain stage of development, human society learned to over-produce and save it to supply itself and provide for the future. People were guided by knowledge related to natural forces and learned to protect themselves. They realized that they had to take care of the old, respect them and not kill them, although some tribes continued the established custom that took on other forms and meanings. There are such facts in some historical sources. For example, the famous historian Herodot (1972), telling about one of the Turkish Massagets tribes, talks about the heroic mother Tomiris. He described the custom related to the elders: *"If someone grew old, the relatives would gather together, cut him up as a sacrifice and eat his meat with the meat of other sacrificial animals. However, if someone died of illness, they would not eat it, they would bury it and at that time they considered it a disgrace despite the age of the deceased, since he could not be sacrificed"*. (p. 79)

Strabon in his work "Geography" wrote about the Caspians attitude to the old: "when the Caspians parents were over 70, they left them hungry behind the locked door till they died of starvation (Strabon, 1964, p. 488). Then the author continued: *"they left their corpses outside and then watched from far away: if the corpse was eaten by birds, they considered it to be happy; if the corpse was eaten by wild animals and/or dogs, they considered it to be less happier; and if a corpse wasn't touched, they considered it to be unhappy"*. (Strabon, 1964, p. 491)

Strabon noted other tribes' similar customs. Leaning on Onesikrit the scientist he wrote: "That is why they put the old, weak, sick people at the mercy of dogs called "grave-digger" in their language. The territory outside of the walls of the capital of Baktriya was clean, but in-side it was full of human bones. Alexander liquidated this custom" (Strabon, 1964, p. 488). *"According to the Derbiks' custom men who were over 70 were killed and eaten by their relatives. The old women were strangled, but they weren't eaten. Generally, the Derbiks didn't eat female beings, neither women nor animal, bird. The men who died before 70 were buried"*. (Strabon, 1964, pp. 490-491).

The famous Buryat scientist of folklore Khangalov presenting the legendary text about abolition of the custom "Killing of the old" connected it with the history of people, primitive life of ancient ancestors. Hunting was the main occupation of the Buryat. When looking for the new hunting places they often changed their places. At that time the old were a burden to them. Khangalov also described the act of killing of the old. This custom is translated from the Buryat language as "to swallow fat". Shyogolev who was sent on expedition to the desert Gobi in 1978 described that the Mongol carried out the ceremony "Killing of the old" in the XX century. The old who weren't able to bear such nomadic life were killed at their request.

All features of that rite were preserved. Thus, "the killing" ("seeing-off to the other world") was carried out by the youngest granddaughter. The main tool of the rite was a pastern of sheep or goat. The youngest granddaughter pushed the pastern into the grandfather's throat and it caused suffocation. This information shows that at some tribes this wild rite crossed the rite of sacrifice. Some tribes moved away from this rite themselves, but some needed strange interference. For example, at the Baktriya (the ancestors of the modern Afghan and Tadjik) this wild rite was liquidated by Macedonian king Alexander who joined their territory to his lands and subjugated them.

There are some signs in the historical sources that help to determine turning of this rite into the sacrifice. Herodotus and Strabon's notes show that during those periods there were a lot of different widespread diseases, natural disasters, wars; the level of medicine was too low and so length of human life was very low in comparison with nowadays. Thus, if anybody lived till the age over 70, the tribe thought that God rewarded him for some services, and considered him to be chosen and deserved God's favor. Such people were sacrificed and eaten by their relatives, because they wanted to live long too. They wished to get portion of their health, happiness and longstanding. The following passage from the Russian tale "The gold jug" may be a hint at eating of the old: *"Once upon a time there lived a very rich man in a certain country. He was very greedy. He had three estates. He had eaten the old from the two estates and proceeded to the third one"* (Korolkova, 1969, p. 288). It isn't known the exact meaning of "had eaten"- whether it has metaphorical or gastronomical meaning but the structure of the sentence makes one think.

It isn't right to search for the reasons of the rite "Killing of the old" in the cruelty of the primitives. This rite is connected with their religious views and belief in the life after death. They were sure that person joined the holy world after the death voluntarily. Thus it is the rite "seeing-off to the other world" formed on the crossing of religious

views, utilitarianism and cult of ancestors. In the Kallash's (1889), article "The position of the unable old in the primitive society" are given comparative materials that help to understand the Slavs' rite "seeing-off to the other world". According to this author it is supposed that the Slavs' rite "drowning of the scarecrow" reflects the killing of the old.

In the dastan (story) "Dede Korkud" the chapter "Deli Domrul" that is an archaic type of dastan contents in the hidden form the social attitude to the old as superfluous, unwanted beings. Though this chapter is based on the international plot # 899 "Life in exchange for life", some episodes and characters' words demonstrate indifference to the old. In this chapter the angel of death Azrayil said to Deli Domrul by order of God: "If you want to live, you must bring a soul by of soul". Deli Domrul appealed to his parents, but both of them declined to do it and said: *"The world is sweet, the life is sweet"*. Then Deli Domrul appealed to his wife with the same request. She said: *"What life do your treacherous parents have that they refuse it? I call the earth and the sky to witness! I call God to witness! I sacrifice my life for you!"* (Zeynalov & Alizadeh, 1988, p. 83)

The daughter-in-law considers her parents-in-law to be treacherous, and it is clearly. Turkic parents were ready to sacrifice and it was one of their main features. So Deli Domrul's parents' indifference to their son's problem roused her ire. But from the standpoint of modern moral norms Deli Domrul's appeal to his parents doesn't conform to Turkic mentality at all. Deli Domrul required his parents who had brought him up to die instead of him. Such doing contraries to the whole spirit of "Kitabi-Dede Korkud". The phrase "Mother's right, God's right" sounds repeatedly in the different chapters of the epos. Gazan Khan did the utmost of his power to get his mother back. He was ready to sacrifice everything for his mother. It testifies to the Oghuz's greatest respect to their parents. On the contrary when God gives Deli Domrul and his wife 140 years and takes his parents' life in exchange, he shows neither pity nor sorrow as a son.

Abdulla (1999), explains the situation when Deli Domrul (and also Admet in Greek myth) asked his parents for their life: *"Slaves, captives, servants, grandees, ordinary people aren't re-membered. What is it? Is it the democracy of the ancient world? It may be!"* (p. 217). How can this situation be explained? It's known that according to the semiotic principles if any episode is on the level of sentence, phrase, word or even hint, hence there is connection between these problems.

In Deli Domrul's treatment of his parents are traced the moments that are associated with the plot "killing of the old". Deli Domrul appealed to his old parents, not to his

wife, to sacrifice their lives as he thought that they had already lived their lives. Admittedly the custom “killing of the old” isn’t in the chapter on the described stage but its traces show themselves in rudimentary form in the plot “life in exchange for life”. The daughter-in-law called the parents “treacherous”; at the end Deli Domrul was awarded and his parents’ lives were taken, but his parents’ refusal reflects the negative attitude to this event in the text of this chapter.

Most scientists studying chapter “Deli Domrul” and analyzing his talk with his parents are under the influence of the text, subject of the chapter, so they reproach the parents or they think that Deli Domrul’s request for his parents’ lives is contrast between new and old-old must be replaced by new. For example, Abdulla (1999), writes about the chapter “Deli Domrul”: *“The motive of opposition (fathers and sons-K.A.) ... is solved in a very specific form-neither tragic culmination nor removal of intensity. Solution comes from outside. The highest forces take Deli Domrul’s parents’ lives and thus opposition is removed”* (p. 232). Deli Domrul’s parents’ refusal of their son’s request is connected with pre-islamic views by Sultanli (1971). The scientist traces connection between this episode and motive “to avoid the death” in the legends about Dede Korkud (Sultanli, 1971). It is known that in Islam death is considered to be inevitability, but at the same time it doesn’t mean the end of the life. It is accepted as the continuation of life in the other form. Thus contempt to death contradicts Islam.

Ajalov (1983), tries to explain Deli Domrul’s parents’ refusal from the mythological point of view: *“Really from the standpoint of content and function their death can’t replace Deli Domrul’s death, so it isn’t accepted from the standpoint of mythological logic. According to this logic only death of young being who can continue generation and whose productive potential is very high can cause revival of nature”*(p. 232). The motive “Life in exchange for life” is the old view from shamanism. *“Life in exchange for life is necessary to save a sick man. This life accepts all sick man’s sins, deceases and spins round the sick man’s head (there is still a phrase “to spin round somebody’s head” “to accept somebody’s decease” in the Azerbaijani language that preserve the traces of that belief”*) (Beydili, 2004, p. 69). For example A. Inan in his work “The history of the old Turkic religion” notes that the Kazakh and Kirghiz use the word “aunlayin” in the meaning “to spin round somebody’s head”(Beydili, 2004, p. 69).

Apropos, the international plot “life in exchange for life” was also used in Greek mythology. *“Admet forgot to make a sacrifice to God Brima, so he was sentenced to death. Appolon appealed to his old parents, but they didn’t agree*

to sacrifice themselves for their son. His wife Alkestra agreed to die in order to save her husband. Arkestra bade farewell to her relatives, children and appeared before the death. The God of death took her life but Admet’s guest Hercules heard about his friend’s misfortune, fought with the God of death, defeated him and saved Alkestra” (Sultanli, 1971, pp. 73-74). Sultanli (1971); and Abdulla (1999), compared the Greek myth with the chapter “Deli Domrul” and put forward very interesting ideas about parallels Admet-Deli Domrul-Hercules.

It must be emphasized that there are also some data in the historical sources about respectful attitude to the old. For example, there is the following information about population of Albania in Strabon’s work. The Albanians respect old people very much.

It is related not only to parents but also the other old people. They take care of the deceased and if they aren’t remembered it is considered to be a sin. They bury all their property with them, so the Albanians live very poorly as they have no parents’ property (Strabon, 1964). This shows that this custom isn’t universal.

At the end of the 30th in the XX century Trits Paudler studied this plot in the oral literature of the European peoples, but his research was just a collection of the tales, legends and materials about “Killing of the old” in the whole. He didn’t touch upon the historical, social and psychological aspects of the problem, its connection with this rite (look: *Aus Volkserzählungen von der Abschaffung der Altentotung von Fritz Paudler. Helsinki, 1937*).

Comparison of the example of the other peoples’ folklore that reflect the plot “Killing of the old” makes it possible to come to interesting conclusions. The variants of the plot used in Russian, Ukrainian, Byelorussian oral literature were reflected in the index of comparative plots of the Slavonic peoples’ tales. 6 Russian, 10 Ukrainian and 4 Byelorussian tales created on the basic of this plot are registered in the index compiled by Barag, et al. (1979).

Veletskaya (1978), who studied the examples of Slavonic peoples’ folklore analyzed the plot “killing of the old” and historical, ethnographical, religious, poetical aspects of the problem in her monograph “Pagan symbology of the Slavonic archaic rites”. She supposed that the rite “seeing-off to the other world” is connected with the cult of ancestors. Kislyakov (1970), in his article dedicated to the Tadjik legends spoke about killing of the old and compared them with the similar examples of the Asian and European peoples. As stated above this custom was at the Baktriya, who are considered to be the Tadjik and Afghan’s direct ancestors. Hence the plot “killing of the old” in Tadjik folklore isn’t accidental. Kislyakov (1970),

supposed that the custom “sending the old to the other world” couldn’t be together with the cult of ancestors on the same historical stage.

Veletskaya (1978), doesn't agree with this idea and substantiates her position: *“this custom was as an element of the social structure during the period when common weal depended on normal activity of nature as the society was engaged in agriculture. Natural disasters caused social disasters. It was considered that protective ancestors' souls were connected with nature and were able to rule the nature. People believed in protective ancestors' strength and it made them send their messengers to the other world. The society hoped that they could help them to rid themselves of troubles. The most terrible disaster was hunger as a result of long lack”*. (p. 59)

In the variant of tales collected from Galicia it was ordered to drown the old because of lack caused by drought. In the other lite variants, the reason of killing is hunger.

It is very interesting that in the tales the shelters where the old are hidden (barn, well for grain, threshing barn etc.) are connected with agriculture. Hence the rite “sending the old to the other world” is connected with the agrarian cult, or with the rite of sacrifice, or with the cult of ancestors.

If the discussion is about the rite, naturally it must have precise executive rules: age of the old that must be killed; concrete person who carries out this rite, the tool used for it, means and weapons, method of killing etc. In the Azerbaijani and Slavonic tales “basket” is mentioned as means in which the old are seen off to the other world. Basket is an important element of the rite. The Azerbaijani proverb about the old decrepit people says: “The back of his/her ear smells of khalva (the special kind of sweets that is cooked during the commemoration for the dead). The Russian proverb says: “It is time to put him/her into the basket” or “It is time to put them on the sledge”. In winter the Russian put the old into the basket, then put the basket on the sledge and left it in the snow. The other Russian proverb says: *“If you leave your father in the basket, you should wait for the same situation”*. (Veletskaya, 1978, p. 55)

As stated above sometimes parents weren't killed and there were different reasons of it. There is an original form of this reason in the Ukrainian tales: The grandson sees his father putting the grandfather into the basket and asks him to bring this basket back, because he will need it in the future-he will put his old father into it, too (Veletskaya, 1978, p. 54).

The folklore examples show that this rite is retrogressed. The son had to kill his father under the pressure of surrounding people. Now this rite isn't social necessity or social order. He had to put his father into the basket unwittingly, as the people said: “It is time to put your father into the basket”. The main purpose of the tales isn't description of this rite, the main purpose is deliverance from this rite. Now we see not the rite but its rudiment.

The conflict of contrasts in folklore causes its expressiveness and keenness. In these examples the wise old are contrasted with the callow youth. The conclusion of the examples is about the wise, experienced old people whose wise advice, experience, world outlook must be used in government, and it makes one remember the ancient Roman orator, politician and Cicerone's (1975), words about “senate” (106-43 B.C). In Latin this word formed from “senex” that means “old”. In the ancient times “senate” was one of the authorities in Rome. It may be understood as “Council of Elder”. It consisted of the old members of the most influential families of Rome. Cicerone said: *“If you read or hear about events in the other countries, you will know that many great states were destroyed because of the young and were reconstructed with the aid of the old”*. (p. 12)

D. N. Zelenin, F. Volkov, V. Chaykovskaya studied the rite “killing of the old” and its reflection in the folklore plot. Comparison of Slavonic folklore examples and Azerbaijani tales reveal both unexpected similarity and distinctions that are based on the national originality, customs, traditions, way of life, and mentality. For example, let's compare two variants of the Russian tale “The gold jug” and Azerbaijani tale “The padishah's order”.

Both in the Russian and Azerbaijani tales the order “to kill the old” comes from the ruler or master. In the Russian tale the son didn't leave his father in the forest and hid him. In the Azerbaijani tale the son didn't throw his mother into the sea. His mother prevented it, she showed concern for her son in spite of everything. She said: “Sonny, go along that path in order not to lose your way”. Her son was staggered and hid his mother in the tendir (a special pit for baking). In the Russian tale the son dug a dug-out and hid his father there.

Both in Russian variants and Azerbaijani examples the young must carry out different commissions by order of their ruler or master. Most of these commissions are specific for any people, that is to say it is different and original. For example, in one variant of the Russian tale the master orders: *“Anybody who is going to my place must be neither in the cart nor on the horse, neither on the seat nor on foot, neither dressed nor naked”* (Korolkova, 1969,

p. 288). The old father guesses this teaser: *“One should sit on the goat back to front, conduct it with its tail, and put on fishing net instead of shirt”* (Korolkova, 1969, p. 288).

In the other commission the master wants the present that ‘both is and isn’t’. In connection with this trial the old father advises his son to give a bird to his master. When he gives it to him, he should let go of the bird (Korolkova, 1969).

The third commission is repeated in both Russian variants: to extract the gold jug from the pond. The old father explains to his son that the jug isn’t in the pond, it is on the top of the tree that is on the bank of the pond (Korolkova, 1969; Kretova, 1977). During the comparison one can see that commission in the second variant of the Russian tale “The gold jug” and the commission in the Azerbaijani tale “The padishah’s order” coincide with each other.

In both tales the young fellows must determine which of two horses that are the same color, is a mother and which of them is a cub. But the solution of the problem is offered according to certain people’s quick wits, intelligence, and deep observation. In the Russian tale the old man says: *“The sprightly horse is young, the leisurely horse is old”* (Kretova, 1977, p. 145). In the Azerbaijani tale the solution is more interesting and is based on the deep observations of the ancient Turki who lived in harmony with nature and regarded the horse as their brother. *“On his mother’s advice the fellow put the feed in front of the horses. The other animal’s cubs ate before their parents, but foals ate after their parents. The fellow said that the horse that approached the feed first was the mother.”* (Abdulhalimov, et al., 2000, p. 157)

CONCLUSIONS

Being a fact of the objective and subjective reasons, existing, unfortunately as the historical reality for a long time, the ritual “killing the elderly” gave a rise to the eponymous plot. Spreading of the plot in the different parts of the world informs about existence of this rite in different settlements.

Although society got away from this rite during the process of evolution towards civilization its injury apparently manifested itself for a while. Emotional state caused by combination of such psychological states as sense of guilt, remorse, sin, regret was reflected in the appropriate plots by storytellers of the further generations.

In all the examples created by people commission is addressed to their heart, conscience. Though tales are based on fiction, there are a lot of truth and dignity in their texts. The function of the tale with happy ending is not only to entertain readers but to teach and to train. Readers and listeners learn a lesson from tales and heroes of tales are examples for them. Though the plot “Killing of the old” is

as if echo of the ancient primitive custom, it was worked up and spread all over the world in order to evoke the greatest respect for the old and care of them, to use their intellect, wisdom and experience.

REFERENCES

- Abdulhalimov, H., Aliyev, O., Aslan, V., & Gafarli, R. (2000). *Anthology of Azerbaijanian folklore* (Vol. 4: Sheki folklore). Sada.
- Abdulla, K. (1999). *The dastan in mystery or ulterior Dede Korkud*. Elm.
- Ajalov, A. (1983). Roots and mythological symbology of chapter Deli Domrul. In, *Problems of Azerbaijanian philology*. (pp. 222-236). Elm.
- Andreyev, N. P. (1929). *Index of tales’ plots on the system by A. Aarne*. State Russian Geographical Society.
- Barag, L. G., Berezovsky, I. P., Kabashnikov, K. P., & Novikov, N. V. (1979). *Comparative index of plots. Eastern-Slavonic tale*. Nauka.
- Beydili, J. (2004). *The book Dede Gorgud*. Onder Publishing House.
- Brogden, M. (2001). *Geronticide: Killing the Elderly*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Cicerone, M. T. (1975). *About old age, friendship and duties*. Nauka.
- Herodot. (1972). *History in nine book*. Nauka.
- Kallash, V. V. (1889). Position of the incapable old in the primitive society. *Ethnografic Review*, (2), 45-73.
- Kislyakov, N. A. (1970). About the ancient custom in Tadjik folklore. *Folklore and Ethnography*, 71-82.
- Korolkova, A. N. (1969). *Russian people’s tales*. Nauka.
- Kretova, A. I. (1977). *People’s tales of Voronej region*. Voronej University.
- Putilov, B. N. (1975). Motive as a plot-forming element. In *Typological researches on folklore. Collection of articles in memory of V.Ya. Propp* (pp. 141-155).
- Qizi, O. S. H. (2016). The problems and tasks of the contemporary Azerbaijani study of folklore. *Bulletin of Tomsk State Pedagogical University*, 2(167), 61-65.
- Rustamzadeh, I. (2013). *Index of plots of Azerbaijanian tales* Elm-Tahsil.
- Strabon. (1964). *Geography in 17 books*. Nauka.
- Sultanli, A. (1971). *Articles*. Azerbaijanian State.

Veletskaya, N. N. (1978). *Pagan symbology of Slavonic archaic rites*. Nauka.

Zeynalov, F., & Alizadeh, S. (1988). *Kitabi-Dede Gorgud*. Yazichi.