

THE POSITION ROLE OF THE EPIC POEM IN AZERBAIJANI LITERATURE

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Summary

The replacement of the cult of nature as a result of historical conditions and development actually brought up interest and attention to real events in the epic mind, achieving the expression of the happening events and human relations along the dynamic plot line as a necessary creative task prompted the writers to think in this direction. The periods of formation, development and creativity of the epic poem as a whole are systematically involved in the study, while the existing ideas and conclusions formed around the epic poem are summarized and considered from a principled point of view, conclusions are reached that do not lose their significance even today.

Key words: Azerbaijan, epic, poet, history, poem, genre.

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1. Introduction

The continuous development evolution of poetic art throughout history has also created an important basis for its subject and content, genre-structural features. If in lyric poetry certain poetic chants and impressions acquire the lead, proceeding more from individual feelings and emotions, in the examples of verse and epic poetry, the event and plot plan refer to the broad truths of life, active intervention in events in society is of interest as a noticeable creative fact. In epic poetry, too, such an aspect gradually reaches a level that will attract attention. As Azerbaijani poetry has kept its genre richness for centuries, it has gone through a gradual path in terms of topics and issues.

2. Main text

Studying the path of development of Azerbaijani poetry culture, literary critic Kamil Huseynoglu came to such a conclusion by looking at the problem based on poetic examples emerging in wider geographical boundaries: "Azerbaijani classical poetry, distinguished by its genre diversity and high artistic merits, is one of the leading branches of medieval eastern poetry established within the framework of Muslim culture" (*Huseynoglu, 1996, p. 3*).

As the author specifically emphasized, the richness of the genre was defined as an invariable and stable creative resource for historically formed Azerbaijani poetry. It is possible to closely observe these merits in the lyric, rubai poetry, and in the course of the development of epic poetry. In the work of the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle "Poetics", there are ideas that have retained their value and significance even for today on the regulation of relationships within literary types and genres. In this regard, a number of features are noticeable that attract attention in the reasoning touched upon the connection of epic works and epicness as a sign

with other genres (literary species as a whole). In his notes on the epic, Aristotle compared it to the tragedy genre of the dramatic type and concluded: "Epic poetry followed tragedy as a study of seriousness, with the exception of its important meter; it is distinguished from the tragedy by its simple size and narration, in addition, they differ in volume: tragedy tries to place its events in one day as much as possible or to go as short as possible, while epic is not limited by time and this differs from tragedy. But let's also say that in the early days it was done in tragedies as well as in epic poems" (*Aristotle, 1974, p. 53*).

As can be seen from these considerations, the formation and development of literary types and genres is closely related not only to literary and artistic practice and creative traditions, but also to the dictates of existing socio-historical conditions. Undoubtedly, the principle of determining epicness as a decisive factor in the definition of genres is distinguished by its special significance as the conclusion of the scientist's serious observations, sufficiently substantiated scientific conclusions and theses.

In the studies that reveal the exceptional position of the epic poem in the Azerbaijani literature, important characteristic points such as the history of its creation and its connection with social and historical conditions are brought to the fore. It is with this factor that the plots and images in folklore texts, myths and images gain an active position in the formation of an epic poem, reaching a mature level, that it seems natural and convincing in a certain sense. Professor Azade Rustamova in her valuable research entitled "Ways of development of Azerbaijani epic poem" (XII–XVII centuries) evaluates this characteristic feature as a legal creative experience not only for the literature of the peoples of Azerbaijan, the near and Middle East, but also for the literary and artistic experience of all the peoples of the world and comes to the final conclusion that "...as in all ancient nations, the first core of the classical epic poetry of Azerbaijanis is made up of stories and myths" (*Rustamova, 1975, p. 15*).

Of course, as it is clear from this characteristic reasoning, the replacement of the cult of nature as a result of historical conditions and development actually brought up interest and attention to real events in the epic mind, prompted the owners of the pen to think in this direction as a necessary creative task to achieve expression along the dynamic plot of events and human relations occurring in front of the eyes.

As is known, attention and interest in the epic poem made the poet seriously think since the first times when he came to the world of art, raised vital and human problems in his epic works written on various and colorful topics, put forward ideas and thoughts that freedom and independence are an invaluable blessing for all humanity, regardless of religion, nationality and race on different continents and countries of the world. Deep philosophical judgments, great faith in the future, ideas that instill an optimistic mood in his poems have a strong influence on the spiritual world of the reader. As in his lyrical works, at such moments, the poet's aesthetic ideal is calculated as an attempt to penetrate deeply into the essence of serious life issues and problems.

Of course, in the course of such a study, the socio-literary, socio-historical background and conditions in which individual works were written were not ignored, and the analysis and generalizations were mainly aimed at evaluating the samples that were a product of that period from the point of view of objective and principled art criteria.

The periods of formation, development and creativity of the epic poem as a whole are systematically involved in the study, while the existing ideas and conclusions formed around the epic poem are summarized and considered from a principled point of view, conclusions are reached that do not lose their significance today. The characteristic reasoning that we give below fully reflects the most important features of epic poetry in this regard: "An epic poem is a generalized description of life events; epic poem is an artistic presentation of natural and social

events within a certain plot; epic poetry (at the stages of its further development) is a means of figuratively narrating the human character with all its fullness and contradictions. Any nation, regardless of whether it is large or small, has its own history of epic poetry. The difference can only be in the level of development, genre features, degree of quality" (*Rustamova, 1975, p. 8*). These considerations also reflect in detail all the concepts and components included in the concept of epic poetry.

It is necessary to pay special attention to a number of characteristic moments when commenting on the issues of the subject and mastery that the Azerbaijani epic poem has achieved and acquired in a specific period of time. It is known that in the epic genre, the artistic reflection of the events of life and society within a certain plot takes the main place; the poet narrates the event that happened from the outside, writes down a story far from himself. There is a certain distance between the time of the event and the narration. And this expands the possibilities of comprehensively reflecting the human character, his spiritual and spiritual world, connections and contradictions with society and time. In most studies on the epic genre, attempts to connect the development and evolution of the poem as a literary genre with significant changes in the life of society, intra-society human relations, new trends and approaches are clearly manifested. The poem, which is one of the oldest and most popular genres in Azerbaijani and world literature, has undergone a great development as an example of epic poetry. From Homer's "Iliad" and "Odyssey" to Khagani Shirvani's "Tohfatul Iraqeyn", the first Azerbaijani poem, and later, the new possibilities of the genre have enriched it. Just as Nizami Ganjavi's "Khamasa" preserved the status gained in world literature, created a rich tradition by elevating it to a high peak in terms of plot, composition, ideas and images. It was from here that the poem was the leading genre in Azerbaijani poetry for a long time. In later periods, the poems of A.Tabrizi, M.Fuzuli, S.Tabrizi and others formed a stage with their innovation. M.Fuzuli's poem "Leyli and Majnun" closes the chain of poems written on the topic of love with its originality and idea among hundreds of works written on this topic. Being a poetic form with a plot, imagery, combination, the poem has been updated from time to time, changed in form and content. "Oriental poem" written by M.F.Akhundzade on the occasion of the death of A.S.Pushkin enriched the genre in terms of content, idea and form of expression. The period of searches in terms of the topic and problematic of the poem continued in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The fact that the poem retains this hegemony for several centuries and is one of the leading genres of literature, first of all, as it follows from tradition, also indicates its universality. The possibilities of this genre, which is reflected in the unity of epic, lyrical and dramatic elements, have expanded and enriched more and more. Prominent literary critic highly appreciated the possibilities of the poem and wrote: In creating character, a poem can use the experience of prose, the divine possibilities of lyric, the ever-moving beginning of drama. Even passionate journalism is not a minor element of the poem. In addition, when evaluating the world and the condition of people, the poem looks for new criteria, in this sense it is closer to philosophy. Not only historical events, society and its separate classes, but also the history of public thoughts and ideas are important for the poem (*Yusifoglu, 1998, p. 41*).

In particular, since the beginning of the 19th century, the horizons of the new poem are determined by the works of Mahammad Hadi, Huseyn Javid, Hajikarim Sanili, Jafar Jabbarli, Ahmad Javad. It should be said that since the beginning of the last century, the poem entered a new stage of development. At this stage, M.Hadi's "Alvahi intibah", H.Javid's "Azer", J.Jabbarli's "Qiz qalasi", A.Javad's "Sesli qiz", H.Sanili's "Aran kochu", "Turut gachaglari", "Namus davasi" poems change in terms of social content, and the form of expression is also updated. With the creation of poems by Samad Vurgun, Mikayil Mushfiq, Suleyman Rustam,

Rasul Rza, Osman Sarivalli, Mirvarid Dilbazi, Ahmad Jamil, Mammad Rahim and dozens of other poets, this genre enters a new stage of development. M.Mushfig's "Buruglar arasinda", "Azadlig dastani", S.Vurgun's "Komsomol poem", "Talistan", "Mughan", "Zanjinin arzulari", "Zamanin bayraqdari", "Bakinin dastani", etc. dozens of poems defined the place and position of the genre in poetry. In the Second World War of the last century, the epic description of the events expanded the possibilities of the genre, and many poems describing heroism were written. M.Rahim's poem "Leningrad goylerinde" attracts attention in terms of the development of the internal possibilities of the genre (description of feelings and emotions, depiction of epic events, etc.). It is from this period that the renaissance of the poem begins; this genre is enriched in terms of content, form, style of expression, style, intra-genre development models, plot, and imagery, and it is also renewed. The prominent literary critic Yashar Garayev, who studied this stage, seems to be completely justified in such a conclusion. He wrote that poetry takes its big steps with poetry. The objective factors that condition the modern process of poetry do not remain unaffected to the fate of even today's poem.

At this stage, the poem undergoes a great change of form and content in terms of genre; drama, lyricism and epicness are best reflected in the poem. This change changes and re-forms in one way or another, from the topic and problematic, to its composition (epigraph, prologue, structure, artistic detail, etc.), even to its components. From time to time epicness and lyricism alternate each other in the poem, the transition from quantity to quality has revealed its new forms. Sometimes in the poem, epicness surpassed lyricism, and sometimes lyricism surpassed epicness. Lyric poem, epic poem, poem-monologue, poem-document, documentary poem, poem-reportage, associative poem, poem-appeal, historical poem, modern poem and dozens of genre forms have moved from the classical framework to a new direction. All this made literary criticism think about the modern poem or the modern stage of the poem, and conclusions were made about its modern state in separate articles and reviews. What we said above indicates that the poem benefited from its historical path of development and entered a new stage.

Undoubtedly, the selection of the poem as a literary genre as an object of study and discussion of controversial and need for clarification in scientific and theoretical thought begins to take on a more active and intensive character since the 50s and 60s of the last century. Of course, there were many literary and social factors that gave birth to it. On the one hand, this was related to similarities in the genre's poetic-structural characteristics and description methods, noticeable transitions and substitutions, plot and composition, on the other hand, in newly created works presented under the name of poem, it was noticeable as an aspect that appeared during the reflection of reality, which was directly related to the non-expectation of the requirements of the genre. Once upon a time, professor Mikail Rafili, having expressed his opinion that historically established literary genres, while maintaining a certain form of conservatism, are subject to change depending on the requirements of the time, came to the following conclusion: "This is no ordinary repetition. Certain formal features in the structure of the artistic work are repeated in the works of different writers in different historical periods. We can see this in the composition and genre of the work. In this way, it preserves certain general formal features along with the change due to specific historical conditions of literary development" (*Rafili, 1958, p. 216*).

The discussion and polemics about the poem in the pages of the central press, a very prestigious literary publication for that time, were also of great importance, taking into account its strangeness and paradox. The universal structure of the poem as a genre, gaining new artistic merits, the main qualities gained in the creative process in general become the subject of broad

discussion in the scientific-theoretical thought of Azerbaijan in the second half of the 70s of the last century. Firstly, the opinions voiced in the discussions on “Poem: searches, perspectives” jointly held by the Department of “Modern Literary Process” of the Institute of Literature named after Nizami Azerbaijan Academy of Sciences, “Criticism and literary studies” department of the republican Union of Writers, and “Literature and Art” newspaper, holding a special round table about the poem on the pages of “Azerbaijan” magazine, poet A. Kurchayli and critic A. Aghayev's dialogue under the title “Possibilities of poetry and the demands of time”, etc. are important in terms of continuing and developing the historically existing creative traditions, modern situation, and solving the future perspective tasks.

In these discussions, the actual exchange of views on the real state of the genre of the poem and creative searches was due to natural necessity. In the conversation about the poem, the main subject of discussion is the trends in the development of the genre, the search for modern topics and crafts. It is true that in these discussions, there were still those who complained about the inability to create monumental poetic works about the work and work of the heroes of the day, but in general, attention was also paid to the lack of character and lack of material in our poems.

Critic A. Aghayev expresses the need to start a special conversation and discussion about the current state of the poem genre. He draws attention to the fact that some of our “current” poets either did not know the requirements of the genre of poetry, or deliberately did not follow it. According to the critic: “The poem in its character is closer to the dramatic genre; conflicts, characters, events, era, time, space... Without them, the poem is unthinkable. “Bildirchinler” by poet Garay Fazli was published in last year's (we are talking about 1976. – Y. H.) 8th issue of “Azerbaijan” magazine. Although this is called a “poem”, in fact, it does not meet the known requirements of the genre. Let's remember our classic poems for a moment. Let's not go far. S. Vurgun's “Komsomol poem”, “Aygun” can be an example for us.

It is also known that there is a process of certain qualitative changes in genres, including the genre of poem. For example, poems without interesting plots, poems-monologues have also appeared in modern Russian and Soviet poetry” (*A. Kurchayli and A. Aghayev's dialogue, 1977*).

Since objective observations are made with reference to real facts and literary examples in terms of creating a unanimous idea about the points that attract attention and interest in the structure of the poem genre in the dialogue, in the search for ideas and artistic directions, all the details of the landscape are brought to a wide analysis and gain significance. The critic Shirindil Alishanov draws attention to the fact that attempts to connect poetic genres with the real situation and directions of its development are caused by ignoring the general pattern of development of artistic thinking and expresses his attitude to the processes taking place on the union scale; The general picture of the modern Soviet poem, as well as a number of recent works in our poetry, provide rich material for talking about the new trends in the development of this genre (*Alishanli, 1988, p. 160*).

In terms of analyzing and summarizing the qualitative indicators of the poem during the war and its subsequent creative stages, the literary critic R. Azizov in his monograph “Expanding horizons of poetry” comes to the following conclusion about the characteristics that stand out in the poetic-structural features of the poem genre: “The poem achieved success in the field of reflecting reality in a dialectical way - with all its contradictions and complexity, taking the most important, leading socio-political issues of the time in a strong connection with the spiritual world of the Soviet man, in general, began to move away from the rhetoric, external decoration, and monotonous topics that appeared in poetry in the previous years, its scope expanded even more, and its philosophical-aesthetic scope increased” (*Azizov, 1985, p. 3-14*).

The literary generation that came to literature in the 40s of the 20th century was nurtured in the womb of such an original way of the poem. At a time when lyricism and epicness are in synthesis and closer to each other, it is up to this generation to take advantage of the classical tradition and conduct new creative searches. The search for form and content in the creation of poems by Nabi Khazri, Adil Babayev, Huseyn Arif, Sohrab Tahir, Balash Azeroglu, Nariman Hasanzade, Gabil, Fikret Sadig, Fikret Goja and others has led to the creation of new original poems. Literary critic R.Yusifoglu, who appreciates the poetry of the period, sounds right: "Indeed, it is legitimate for a new literary idea to seek new forms for itself, just as each era has its own unique dress. Over the years, due to the influence of social and political events, both the subject range of the poem has expanded and its artistic form has changed. Poets sought a form suitable for the theme, which, in turn, led to a significant change in the structure of the genre" (*Yusifoglu, 1998, p. 45*).

Undoubtedly, the role of the new generations who came to poetry was not small in the renewal of the poem as a genre in terms of topic, problematic, genre, and structure. In particular, the innovations introduced to the genre of poetry in the 60–80s contributed to the strengthening of the position of the poem. It is also known that the poem was accompanied by ups and downs depending on the time and historical conditions. In this respect, it is necessary to distinguish the 30–40 years of the last century. Poems with plots arising from the context from the ideological trends of the time describe the problems that make society think. It is true that poems were dedicated to individual labor heroes during this period, but there were not a few poems dedicated to national-spiritual and moral problems. During the World War II and the post-war creative period, the literary forces that came to poetry often turned to the poem genre and created works reflecting heroism. As these poems are diverse in terms of genre, they are also diverse and multifaceted in terms of topics and issues. At the same time, the distance of time that went through the war also differed in the content of the poems, their psychological depth and the concept of the hero. In these poems, lyricism and epicness and drama are often combined under one umbrella, extremely new, original plates and events were described. The critic Sh.Alishanli expressed the nature of the poem landscape of the period in the following way: "Making generalizations on the example of one or more heroes, saying about the general characteristic of a particular era was the main place in our lyric-epic, epic poems, but in our modern lyric-epic poems, where lyricism is more preferable, a certain plate of circumstances and times is described and the attitude of the lyrical hero to the events, his psychological analysis, the associative structure of his thinking emerge as a new quality in the structure of the poem. The "self-expression" of the lyrical hero becomes the main carrier of the appreciated idea, his thoughts play a certain plot role in the poem" (*Alishanli, 1988, p. 61*).

It is no coincidence that over time, the poems that arose in the same period were close to each other not only in terms of theme, but also in terms of lyrical hero, epic descriptions, pictorial originality of events, as well as artistry.

3. Conclusions

Contradictory and contradictory socio-political, socio-economic processes, most importantly bloody wars and wars, revolutionary revolutions, which took place in the 20th century, opened wide horizons for epic creativity. It became the main artistic goal and intention to depict the characteristic aspects of the time, many important aspects that arise in human psychology and inner-spiritual life in this process. Like other literary types and genres,

among the main factors determining the creative possibilities and development level of the poem genre, conflict and character are noticeable as important components in the poetic searches of the twentieth century. From this point of view, it is possible to closely follow the characteristic nuances that overlap between the leading tendencies and trends of the mentioned period and the creative possibilities of the poem genre.

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