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POETICS OF “KOROGLU”

EPOS AND THE INCARNATION OF ITS FORMULAS IN MODERN POETRY

POÉTICA DE LA EPOPEYA “KOROGLU” Y LA ENCARNACIÓN DE SUS FÓRMULAS EN LA POESÍA MODERNA

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ABSTRACT

Since the beginning of the 19th century, European scientists have been interested in the study of folkloric traditions because, to a certain extent, they are correlated with the way of thinking and acting of peoples. Among folk genres, epics have always been very attractive, and in the case of Azerbaijani folklore, although there are numerous samples, the epic of “Koroglu” has always had special relevance. Consequently, the Koroglu epic has not only been the subject of research by scientists, but has also have attracted the attention of modern poets, who have been influenced by its forms and aesthetics. Thus, the objective of this work is to analyze the manifestation of these formulas and patterns in modern Azerbaijani poetry. For this, document analysis was used as the main research method, which allowed us to verify that, although the oral and written transmission of the Koroglu epic has been carried out for thousands of years, even today it is relevant in poetic expression.

Keywords: Azerbaijani folklore, epic genre, Koroglu dastan, modern poetry.

RESUMEN

Desde comienzos del siglo XIX los científicos europeos han estado interesados en el estudio de las tradiciones folclóricas dado que estas, en cierta medida, estas se correlacionan con la forma de pensar y actuar de los pueblos. Entre los géneros folclóricos las epopeyas han sido siempre muy atractivas, y en el caso del folclore azerbaiyano, aunque existen numerosas muestras, la epopeya de “Koroglu” ha tenido siempre especial relevancia. Consecuentemente, la epopeya de Koroglu no sólo ha sido objeto de investigación por los científicos, sino que también ha atraído la atención de los poetas modernos, los que han sido influenciados por sus formas y estética. Así, el objetivo de este trabajo es analizar la manifestación de esas fórmulas y patrones en la poesía moderna azerbaiyana. Para esto se usó como principal método de investigación el análisis de documentos, lo que permitió comprobar que, aunque la transmisión oral y escrita de la épica de Koroglu ha sido llevada a cabo desde hace miles de años, incluso en la actualidad esta es relevante en la expresión poética.

Palabras clave: Folklore azerbaiyano, género épico, dastan Koroglu, poesía moderna.

INTRODUCTION

Folk literature, also called folklore or oral tradition, the lore (traditional knowledge and beliefs) of cultures having no written language. It is transmitted by word of mouth and consists, as does written literature, of both prose and verse narratives, poems and songs, myths, dramas, rituals, proverbs, riddles, and the like. Nearly all known peoples, now or in the past, have produced it (Thompson, 2017).

According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc (2017) folklore studies began in the early 19th century. The first folklorists concentrated exclusively upon rural peasants, preferably uneducated, and a few other groups relatively untouched by modern ways (e.g., gypsies). Their aim was to trace preserved archaic customs and beliefs to their remote origins in order to trace the mental history of mankind. Thus, folklore as an expression of traditional knowledge is primary evidence used by an analyst to produce findings and generalizations about tradition as process (Honko, 2013).

As pointed out by Qizi (2016), 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. In the case of Azerbaijan, there is no exact date of beginning of collection of folklore material, though some samples of the different folklore genres have been preserved in the ancient manuscripts, anthologies, and written monuments. Because of that, Azerbaijani folklore is varied and there are a lot of genres in it .

Among traditional folk genres, as in other cultures, the epic has special relevance. According to Reichl (2021), the 'idea of the epic' has been elaborated since the beginning of Western literary criticism in Aristotle's Poetics. With the Homeric poems as models, Aristotle stated that the epic is representational (*mimētikē*) and narrative (*diēgēmatikē*), in metre (en *metrō*) and of a certain length (*mēkos*); like tragedy it is a representation of heroic action (*mimēsis spoudaiōn*). With variations and specifications Aristotle's definition has survived until today. Thus, an epic poem is by common consent a narrative of some length and deals with events which have a certain grandeur and importance and come from a life of action.

However, although epics are considered as romantic texts containing fantastic elements, they are realistic at the same time. This realism manifests itself not in the way the themes are presented within the epics, but in the way that epics reflect the general acceptable behavior and everyday-life of the society. In other words, the events which occurred in an epic's plot may have extraordinary

characteristics but these extraordinary events are due to the exaggeration of events in real life (Duman, 2020).

Among the epics transmitted by Azerbaijani people (Kitabi-Dede Gorgud, Koroglu, Gara Malik, Gachag Nabi, Gachag Kerem, Gara Tanryverdi, Samed bey, Gandal Nagi, etc.) Koroglu's epos is specially popular. This saga expresses the spirit of Azerbaijani people, and is of great importance as a logical continuation of the epic "Dede Gorgud". In the words of Héy'et (1990), "*he Koroglu dastan is the most precious work of Azerbaijani oral popular creativity. Here the good characteristics peculiar to our people -heroism, love of the fatherland, respect for other peoples, humanism, friendship, brotherhood, hospitality, and other characteristics- have found their rhetorical statement*" (p. 70). It is no coincidence that during the study of the epic, its poetics has been widely discussed. In particular, the poetic language of the epos, its artistic qualities, technique, rhyme system, rhythmic harmony, stylistic and phonetic indicators of the observed alliteration melody are widely analyzed in Azizkhan Tanriverdi's book "Poetic language of "Koroglu" (Azizkhan, 2015).

Due to its cultural significance, it is undeniable that the Koroglu's epic has influenced Azerbaijani as well as foreign writers, however few works have been done in this regard. Taking this into account, the objective of this work is to discuss the influence of the poem "Koroglu" on Azerbaijani modern poetry, as well as the methods of using these poetic formulas.

DEVELOPMENT

The most obvious characteristic of folk literature is its orality. In spite of certain borderline cases, it normally stands in direct contrast to written literature. The latter exists in manuscripts and books and may be preserved exactly as the author or authors left it, even though this may have happened centuries or even millennia ago. Through these manuscripts and books the thoughts and emotions and observations and even the fine nuances of style can be experienced without regard to time or distance. With oral literature this is not possible. It is concerned only with speaking and singing and with listening, thus depending upon the existence of a living culture to carry on a tradition. If any item of folk literature ceases to exist within human memory it is completely lost (Thompson, 2017).

About this, academician Söyegov (2004), commented that the first poem from the "Koroglu" epics was published in English in 1834 by Sir Alexander Burnes, in his book published in London. Let's read together the Russian translation made in 1849 from the English translation of

the poem, which was recited as a poem by our viewers in the early 1830s:

Bedev keeps the horse for three days, four days,
They sleep on the back of a ram,

If he dies of starvation, they will not sleep for three months,
Bedev rider, Koroglu in iron dress!

I shore up an Arabian horse on the day of the battle,

This day I live under his shadow.

With him I kill in the fights of the hero.

Here's an Arabian horse, armed with an iron shield, Karuli!

Since then, the poetics of the "Koroglu" epos and the originality of the poetic language have always attracted attention. The language of the poems in the saga is simple, harmonious and clear in terms of structure and content. Forms of expression derived from the living vernacular, and the national spirit occupy a central place in the poetic passages. In most of the poems it comes across the features of a living spoken language. These poems embody all the subtleties and richness of the vernacular taking into account all these features. Because of that, Jafarov (1999), praised the language of the epos highlighting that has rich linguopoetic expressions.

This, of course, refers primarily to the means of artistic expression that maintain the stability of the saga due to its sound in the verses. Azizkhan Tanriverdi in his book of poetic language "Koroglu" made an extensive analysis of the possibilities of expression of the saga through the prism of literary criticism and linguistics, but our goal is to determine the place of the means of expression molded in the saga in our modern poetry. In this regard, the couplets and verses that make up the majority of the poems in the saga are perfect examples of folk art. In addition, they instill feelings of historical heroism, and in some expressions there has been a process of aphorism and molding. From this point of view, the perfect forms of the saga have been used in modern poetry as will be shown in the next examples.

One of such stereotypes is quoting from the saga of Islam Sadiq (1995), "Do you know about Eyvaz?", which is a couplet written under the title. The poet writes:

Seasons of life are different,

I see a bar on the autumn branch.

Winter brings grief,

From the summer, from the summer Do you know?

Chanlibel passed into the hands of Khotkar,
Kefdedi next to forty thousand delicate.

The flood flows from Kirat's eyes, the flood,

"Do you know about Eyvaz?"

Let's compare this narration of Islam Sadiq with the narration of Khoja Aziz in the "Durna Teli" part of the "Koroglu" epos. "Khoja Aziz said (Tahmasib, 1974):

Aries Koroglu, let me tell you,

From Eyvaz do you know

Let me lighten your dark heart,

From Eyvaz do you know

Does the brave draw gratitude from the brave?

Pasha orders the executioner.

Where is Demircioglu, that famous Ahmed?

From Eyvaz do you know?

And with Khalili (2005), which is also one of the poets who used the mold. The poetess, who lives as a refugee and lost her father and brother in the war, asks:

Brother, I turned to you,

Mountains, do you know my brother?

My heart is full to tell whom,

Tell me, do you know my secret?

I miss you too, of course,

Cut off from the hijra and endure the knee.

The fountain is far from my eyes,

Do you know the flowing age?

The general content of Khalili's poem "Yerindami" echoes the general content of the poem "When Eyvaz was brought to Chanlibel" by Koroglu Arab Reyhan. In the saga: "Loneliness helped Koroglu, Chanlibel remembered the madmen. He wanted to see them at this difficult time. He looked again and saw a group of cranes coming from Chanlibel's side, his heart pounding. He pressed the reed to his chest, took it and said (Tahmasib, 1974):

Five cranes from the sky,

Are our provinces in place?

Nice twists and turns,

Are our provinces in place?

Also, after being expelled from her ancestral homeland, Khalili (2005), wants to share her longing for the homeland, which is the pain of all refugees, with birds flying in the sky and snow-capped mountains in the distance. In order to increase the artistic quality of the poem, to make the style of expression clearer and more meaningful, he uses ready-made templates in "Koroglu" such as:

Flying birds, flying birds,

Are our seats in place?

Birds embracing the moon sky,

Are our seats in place?

My mother and sister are left crying,

Dressed in white, black ties.

Snow-capped mountains,

Are our provinces in place?

Other example is the leitmotif of Fakhraddin Aliyev's poem "Go to the enemy column" (Yeriyin dushman ustune) published in the Azerbaijani magazine was also quoted from Koroglu's address to the madmen in the "Durna Teli" part of the saga. The poem goes (Aliyev, 1999, p. 140):

Come on, my heroes, is the time of zeal,

Walk,

Walk on the enemy

This find similarities in "Koroglu" (Tahmasib, 1974):

Well, I'm crazy, hoydu,

Walk on the enemy!

As can be seen, the plot line, purpose and expressions of both poems repeat each other. The difference is that the poem is written in the form of a couplet; and in Koroglu in the form of a sung poem. On the other hand, in Islamzadeh's poem (2010) "To this sword ...", in the verses "Let there be light, let there be light", the expressions "Let there be light, let there be light" are a repetition of the expressions of Koroglu after he was deceived by Kechel Hamza in the mill (Tahmasib, 1974).

Because you've become a miller,

Let the call come, Koro lu!

You gave Kırı, you took Dürü,

Side by side, Koro lu!

After Eyvaz was captured in the "Durna Teli" branch of the saga, Nigar khanum took three strands from her hair and pressed them to her chest and said, "Mountains,

what are you doing, Eyvaz ?!" Garay Melikoglu as a quote "Mountains, what did you do to Eyvaz ?!" Eyvaz and his wife modernize their grief and bring it to the present day (Tahmasib, 1956).

Mountains on the throne,

Mountains, how are you Eyvaz?

Mountains that won three heroes,

Mountains, how are you Eyvaz?

... I'm Nigara, I sigh,

I pour the stone into the rivers.

I will build a tower-bar in its place,

Mountains, what are you three Nazis ?!

And in the poem of Malikoglu (1992):

There was a reed on the battlefield,

There was a sword, there was a scythe.

Once upon a time there was Eyvaz,

Mountains, what did you do to Eyvaz ?!

The castle remained in Chanlibel,

My country was fragmented.

Those mountains became jackals,

Mountains, what did you do to Eyvaz ?!

Once again, we have witnessed the use of the same speech patterns in the verses of the poems we have compared. All this confirms the wide range of poetic examples of the "Koroglu" epos in modern poetry, along with determining its place among Azerbaijani poets. But also, stabilized speech patterns that have passed from the saga to our modern poetry have acquired new functions. Poetic expressions such as "Do you know about Eyvaz?" Or "Because you became a miller, let the call come, Koroglu" are becoming proverbs.

Shovket Daglar gizi's couplet "Necoldu" is similar to Koroglu's couplet addressed to Bolu bey in the "Koroglu and Bolu bey" branch of the saga as can be seen next:

You said it would go away in time,

You are ashamed of the devil, of strife, of evil.

Sometimes you ruled over the lake,

What are the brews that hold Koroglu?

(Tahmasib, 1956)

And in the couplet of Daglargizi (2010):

We longed for spring,
 We would decorate the bride's share.
 The old men drank messenger tea,
 What beautiful moments that look like eyes?

Azerbaijani revolutionary poet Khalil Rza was visited by his wife Firangiz while he was sleeping in the Lefertovo prison in Moscow. During the separation, Firangiz khanum's sad looks and sad words shake the poet, and he sees Nigar's loyalty in Firangiz khanum's image. The poet remembers Nigar's appeal to Koroglu (Tahmasib, 1974):

How to care for household items,
 My wounded heart is cold?
 To an empty cradle covered with dust,
 There was no sweet lament

Nigar wanted a child from Koroglu, whom she loved with all her heart. This love sounded like a manifestation of divine love because of the love of being a mother. Nigar's love and affection overcame the hardships of time. Seeing this devotion and kindness, the poet tried to express Firangiz's grief with the style of poetry recited by Nigar khanum. In the deep layers of this love, there is a kinship, a unity, or rather a connection that can be lived and felt:

"How to take care of the house,
 My wounded heart is cold?"

I turned to the fading violet,
 What kind of return home without you?
 (Ulutürk, 1993)

All these examples show that the poetic language of the Koroglu epos has always attracted Azerbaijani poets, and new poems have appeared in our literature under the influence of the couplets and verses given in different branches. In particular, heroic songs have become a traditional choice, provided the creation of character in terms of glorifying courage, bravery, struggle. From all this we can see that the poems in the saga, in addition to being artistically perfect, have a great influence, distinguished by the diversity of poetic words.

CONCLUSIONS

Examples of poetry in the "Koroglu" epos and the language of these poems are one of the richest sources of modern Azerbaijani poetry. The couplets and verses analyzed in the paper show that although many years have passed since the creation of Koroglu's epic saga, it retains its artistic influence and are still felt deeply by people. As a result of all this, the images and motifs of the "Koroglu"

epos are widely used in the works of poets representing Azerbaijani poetry of the independence period, but also in more modern times.

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