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XX CENTURY AZERBAIJANI POETRY: CLASSIC TRADITION AND SEARCH FOR INNOVATION (1920-1930) **POESÍA AZERBAIYANA DEL SIGLO XX: TRADICIÓN CLÁSICA Y BÚSQUEDA DE INNOVACIÓN (1920-1930)**

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ABSTRACT

In the first decades of the Soviet political regime, the search for new themes, genres and styles in Azerbaijani poetry became the object of analysis in the field of tradition and innovation. In the context of researching the topic, attention has been paid to scientific and theoretical issues related to the problem of free poetry. In this work the theoretical aspects of the problem were evaluated focusing on the free poetry of Rasul Rza and Mikayil Rafili. Typical examples of their work on the problem were analyzed arriving at the conclusion that Azerbaijani poetry had a rich stylistic variety in the period in question. Also, the leading position of the period and environmental factor in the basis of stylistic diversity was emphasized. In the process of analysis, a number of important scientific and theoretical sources related to the research topic were addressed.

Keywords: Azerbaijani literature, poetry, classical tradition, innovation, style.

RESUMEN

En las primeras décadas del régimen político soviético, la búsqueda de nuevos temas, géneros y estilos en la poesía azerbaiyana se convirtió en objeto de análisis en el campo de la tradición y la innovación. En el contexto de la investigación del tema, se ha prestado atención a cuestiones científicas y teóricas relacionadas con el problema de la poesía libre. En este trabajo se evaluaron los aspectos teóricos del problema centrándose en la poesía libre de Rasul Rza y Mikayil Rafili. Se analizaron ejemplos típicos de su trabajo sobre el problema y se llegó a la conclusión de que la poesía azerbaiyana tenía una rica variedad estilística en el período en cuestión. Asimismo, se destacó el protagonismo de la época y el factor ambiental en la base de la diversidad estilística. En el proceso de análisis se abordaron una serie de importantes fuentes científicas y teóricas relacionadas con el tema de investigación.

Palabras clave: Literatura azerbaiyana, poesía, tradición clásica, innovación, estilo.

INTRODUCTION

Literature is a specific form of aesthetic perception of the world based on the beauty laws of the figurative perception and is a great idea and a means of moral education. Literature enlighten aesthetic feelings and forms its worldview. Fiction that embodies reality through literary means, at the same time, influences actively modifying effect to beauty and life, determines perfection according to ideal laws and changes. Azerbaijani literature has a great history. The history of Azerbaijani oral folk literature dates back, at least, three thousand years. However, the history of written literature began to take shape after the spread of Islam in Azerbaijan, and classical artists, mainly over poetry, created beautiful verses from each other and presented to future generations (Akhmedova, 2020).

According to Adilov (2021), scholar-researcher Aliyeva (1987), mentions that Western orientalists became interested in Azerbaijani literature in the 16th century, but the works by Azerbaijani authors were translated in the 18th century for the first time. Classical Azerbaijani poems were either in Persian or Arabic because of the political-social issues of that time, however, the introduction of these works as samples of Persian literature is the falsification of realities. Hence, isolating the history of Azerbaijan from all Turkic history and culture has always been the main goal of national purposeful policies. Also, during the Soviet period, a significant number of cultural events were either completely hidden from the people or presented in a distorted form. Therefore, after the restoration of Azerbaijan's independence, there has been an enlivening in the field of objective research and promotion of the national culture history (Suleymanli, 2021).

As pointed out by Namazova (2017), during the formation of the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan, the most widely spread form of artistic consciousness was poetry, and its various forms and genres were appealed to in the literary activity of the artists. In the works of Mohammed Hadi, A.Shaig, J.Jabbarli, Ahmad Javad, Aliabbas Muznib, Umgulsum, Amin Abid, David, Aliyusif, Ibrahim Shakir, Celal Sahir, Mohammed Umid Ganjali and the dozens of other talented poets the reflection of freedom, liberal ideas were spotted and based on the national mindset. In addition to the sense of independence, these poets' works also draw attention to the motives for saving the homeland from the enemy. The patriotism and liberty were a priority in their creativity.

Later, as it is known, the Soviet political regime seriously blocked the natural development of Azerbaijani literature, including poetry, and caused it to turn in another direction in terms of ideas and content. Undoubtedly, the political

power of the proletarian dictatorship guided the country's cultural policy and conditioned the adaptation of literature to non-national sentiment. However, despite all the complexities of the time, the search for theme, genre, style and modernity in poetry continued. It is noteworthy that these searches are conducted in the field of both content and form. In particular, the formation of poetic patterns - free poetry-, which are different from traditional divan literature and folk poetry, coincides with this period.

Given the above, the objective of this work is to analyze the evolution and development of free poetry during the period 1920-1930 in Azerbaijan and to accomplish this, the article highlights the works of Rasul Rza and Mikayil Rafili, two transcendental authors of the genre in the nation.

DEVELOPMENT

It is known that a new form of poetry called *verliibr*, which in French means *vers libre* - free poetry (Ivanyuk, 2008, p. 56), was formed in Azerbaijani poetry during these years. Undoubtedly, the formation of free poetry can be considered as one of the serious steps in the history of national poetry. In particular, the possibilities of free poetry in the development of new topics and problems, the simplification of the literary language were great. By applying this form, the literature was renewed both in terms of content and form.

Free poetry, as its name suggests, «freed the language of poetry from poetic «grips» and» troubles». In the discovery of content, ideas and problems, «thought came to the fore, the style of expression was liberated - power passed into the hands of thought» (Mammadova, 2004). However, it should be noted that this process did not take place simply. Because in the mentioned period *«the beginning of the stage of free poetry was the logical result of the centuries-long process of internal liberation in Azerbaijani poetry»*. (Habibbeyli, 2017)

Despite all the ideological pressures and obstacles, during this period *«poetry expanded its thematic horizons, achieved a difference in the use of expressive and visual means in the style palette»* (Huseynov, 1996). Despite all the ideological pressures, the search for form and style of poetry was undoubtedly realized by the demands of the time (Aliyeva, 1987).

The creative examples of Rasul Rza and Mikayil Rafili play an important role in the formation of free poetry in Azerbaijani poetry in the twenties and thirties of the last century. It was in the example of their work that the form of free poetry gained the right of citizenship in Azerbaijani poetry and later became one of the main styles of literature.

During this period, Rasul Rza's poems, written in a free style, played a significant role in a new direction of national poetry. The works written by the poet in this style *"attracted attention not only with the sharpness of ideas and artistic taste, but also with the unusual, free, innovative rhythm, style and weight"* (Nomadic, 1963).

Rasul Rza's poem "Plane" is one of the most valuable examples of his first creative period and it is no coincidence that the author named one of his published books after this name. In this a great patriotic sense is manifested as can be seen next (Rza, 2005, p. 27):

I have the right to stand so proud.

I am rooted in this land.

According to Salmanov (1980), a critic who wrote a foreword to the poet's "Selected Works", with these verses Rza (2005), *"expressed his confidence in the deeper themes of his poetry, the eternal values of his creative principles"* (p. 9). It should be noted that the poet's self-confidence did not leave even in the most difficult periods of the Soviet political regime and gave impetus to the creation of such works that contradict the principles of political ideology.

Rasul Rza's relatively large work "Wings", written in a free form of poetry, is one of the unique artistic examples of his poetic pursuits. An example of this is shown next (Rza, 2005, p. 125):

I was a baby-

Wrestling, cheerful.

I was a baby

then I.

I saw a lot in my dreams

curly angels.

From the endless heavens

they would call me.

Sometimes on the wings

flies,

flies,

I flew.

I would open a thousand and one doors

in the horizontal blue.

One of the most striking features of the poem, which the poet dedicated to his mother, was the vivid expression of the romantic pathos that was not typical for the poetry of those years. Although the poem "Wings" contained points

that resonated with the general principles and trends of Soviet poetry, the work was far from traditional rhetoric. Here, the inner-spiritual thoughts of the lyrical hero were revealed not in the realities of the day, but in the background of the romance of life. Another noteworthy point was the parallel manifestation of syllables and free poetry in Wings. This parallel is observed in many poems written by the poet in the first period of his career.

In general, the composition, freedom, rarity, inconsistency, as well as the unpredictability and originality of the rhymes in the works of Rasul Rza, who was considered the "head teacher" of the school of free poetry in Azerbaijani literature (Mammadova, 2004), were completely new for the poetry of that time. Undoubtedly, this was not limited to the novelty of the form and getting rid of the dependence on rhyme, which greatly facilitated the expression of ideas in the poet's poems.

According to Salmanov (1980): *"Despite certain antiquated pressures, free poetry as a strong branch of Azerbaijani Soviet poetry has developed in the creativity of its best and consistent supporters, gained the quality of national identity, strengthened the organic connection of national poetry with living, living traditions. The complex interrelationships between tradition and innovation are becoming clearer and more prominent in the development, theory and practice of this poetic phenomenon"*. (p. 124)

It is impossible to disagree with these considerations, which correctly characterize the qualities of innovation in terms of content and form of free poetry. Of course, there were those who came to the memory of free poetry in the twenties of the last century and created works in this style to look modern. Undoubtedly, the role of the ideological propaganda of the regime in this issue was undeniable. However, Rasul Rza never approached free poetry from this criterion, on the contrary, he worked hard to make it one of the important directions of national poetry.

Khalilov (1980), rightly noted: *"Rasul Rza is not one of the poets who followed a stereotyped path. First of all, as a poet loyal to the progressive traditions of classical Azerbaijani poetry, as well as Russian and world poetry, he always looked for new forms of expression, artistic means, and speaks with his own original features"*. (p. 32)

As an artist, Rasul Rza's free poems, which *"have their own style, their own creative principles and therefore their own school"* (Ismayilova, 2011, p. 8), are also in the forefront in terms of enrichment of literary and artistic language, word creation - neologisms. This was due, on the one hand, to the poet's patriotic mission and, on the other hand, to the poetic possibilities of free poetry. In this sense, it was Rasul Rza's works written in the style of free

poetry that played a guiding role in the fate of the next generation of poetry.

The poetic researches about Rafili (1930), in the creation of a new poem in Azerbaijani poetry in 1920-1930 are also noteworthy. As Alakbarli (1998), rightly points out: *“one of the authors of free poetry experiments in Azerbaijani literature was Mikayil Rafili”*. (p. 64)

Published books of poetry by Mikayil Rafili and works published in the press help to create a certain image of his poetic work. The poetic examples included in the author's books “Window”, “Crane” and “Lyric Poems” show that, unlike most poets of the time, he was inclined to innovation, trying to bring a new path, style and direction to literature.

The author's books include “Free Poetry”, “History Has a Cruel Law”, “Window”, “Last Spring”, “Continent”, “Truth”, “Heroic Song” and many other poetic works. Although these poems differ in meaning and content, they have much in common in terms of style. This partnership is also evident in the field of tradition and innovation.

Mikayil Rafili's poem “Free Poetry” is one of the poetic examples in harmony with his creative style, as can be seen next (Rafili, 1930, p. 38):

It's been five years

I did not see

lydesi

My dirty, flowery scarf

I collected

Khan plane tree village.

In the following lines of the poem, written in the original artistic style, the author continues his poetic thoughts and writes:

I'm not in pain, I'm in pain:

It's been five years

I did not solve

Lovingly five years ago

My beautiful fiancé at the age of fourteen

White linen

Rubandini.

It is interesting that at the beginning of the poem, the poetic thoughts, which are more lyrical, take on a social direction in the following verses. While recalling his past with a sense of nostalgia, the poet tries to assess the

changes in society against the background of more technical developments.

It should also be noted that the author was more interested in the form of free poetry than in the content, he wanted to give a certain direction to the literary process by creating a poetic example different from traditional poems.

Mikayil Rafili's poem “History has a ruthless law”, written in an original, unique style, is important in terms of revealing the essence of the life of the human race in the struggle, in short, the credo of life. According to the poet, crying, whistling, complaining about the difficulties of life is not a moral quality worthy of a person, in order to survive, one must fight, fight, and, despite all the difficulties, move towards the intended goal and ideals. It is as a result of continuous, purposeful struggle, that a person can achieve his dreams and ideals. Let's see an example of the above (Rafili, 1936, p. 12):

“To live,

Long live

He knows.

Collide

Unable

People

It is crushed, destroyed ...

Life,

Life demanding

It belongs to Him”.

In the following verses of the poem, which has a deep philosophical content, the poet summarizes his poetic conclusions and completes his thoughts on life, life and the world as follows (Rafili, 1936, p. 13):

Clash - sweet,

To live - deep.

Collide - live

Deep and deep.

On the other hand, Mikayil Rafili's poem “Window” attracts attention as a product of lyrical, romantic poetic food (Rafili, 1936, p. 67):

Gilavar is a little quiet today,

Leaf vibration

can't be heard ...

But the city, the big city

Midnight

It just happened

Does not sleep.

Then, the poet tries to complete the living scene created by the romance of the night in a poetic style (Rafili, 1936, p. 67):

A corridor

Open network

From the window.

My mind is stuck like a thread

a shining dagger ...

The big city in front of me

A window ...

As another example of creativity, Mikayil Rafili's poem "Last Spring" is dominated by a sad lyricism. In the poem, the author does not describe the coming of autumn, but only reflects the inner-spiritual turmoil, impressions and thoughts created by this chapter (Rafili, 1930, p. 22):

I'm a flying one

Man,

I also have the blood of my heart,

There is an excitement of wanting to live.

Although tears in my eyes,

My dear friend

He slammed out of the window like a child

I would not listen

The evening Turk ...

However, it is also important to highlight that in Mikayil Rafili's poems, lyrical thinking and humorous style combine and complement each other. This aspect, which manifests itself in the poet's work, ensures the vitality and readability of the poems. In this sense, the four-line poem "Continent" is noteworthy (Rafili, 1936, p. 14):

The world is beautiful, people are ugly ...

I know such a friend:

He doesn't look at his friend's heart, he looks -

My old, fresh suit.

Although the elements of conjuncture clearly observed in the works of other artists of the period are observed in the poems of Mikayil Rafili, his tireless search for new themes

and styles has preserved the modernity of his poetic works. It should be noted that similar motives are found in the works of most writers of the time.

Interestingly, in addition to writing free poetry, Mikayil Rafili also conducted research to determine its theoretical principles. His article "The first word about free poetry" is typical in this regard. He wrote (Rafili, 1929, pp. 75-76): *"Free poetry is a synthesis of Verharn's revolutionary, militant poetry, Walt Whitman's belief in the future happiness of human society, his optimistic and cheerful poetry, and Mayakovsky's publicity. The peculiarity of this new Turkish poem is the composition of the works of these three great poets. ... We have begun to struggle for a new, greater international literature. We turn our faces not to Fuzuli, Nasimi, Vagif, Mirza Fatali, Hussein Javid, but to Verharn, Whitman, Jules Roman, Mayakovsky and all the world classics. Second-class literature is not necessary for the proletarian class and the future socialist society. We want to create a cultural, high literature"*

These considerations reveal in all respects Mikayil Rafili's attitude to the issue of tradition and innovation as an artist.

CONCLUSIONS

As can be seen, Azerbaijani poetry as a whole had a rich stylistic variety in the period in question. Undoubtedly, the leading position of the period and environmental factor in the basis of stylistic diversity should not be denied.

The work of Rasul Rza and Mikayil Rafili plays an important role in the formation of free poetry in Azerbaijani poetry. Many distinctive shades of the work of both artists formed the basis of the artistic style in the poetry of the later period. The richness and diversity of Azerbaijani romantic poetry in the period in question stems from the free form of poetry on the one hand, and the influence of the semantic factor on the other.

During the creation of the first examples of free poetry in Azerbaijani poetry, important research was also conducted on the theoretical principles of this form of poetry, and the problem of tradition and innovation was brought to the fore in these studies, which caused serious discussion and debate.

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