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SABIR RUSTAMKHANLI'S

CREATIVITY IN THE CONTEXT OF HISTORICAL TIME

LA CREATIVIDAD DE SABIR RUSTAMKHANLI EN EL CONTEXTO DEL TIEMPO HISTÓRICO

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ABSTRACT

The article examines the factors that led the distinguished Azerbaijani poet Sabir Rustamkhanli to delve into the genre of historical novels. It is demonstrated that the writer has traversed an extensive path towards the creation of historical novels, with evidence in his artistic thinking of a prior formation before tackling this genre. In his early poems, the poet, through small poetic expressions in history, progressively dedicates more works to the historical theme. Through these poems, Rustamkhanli describes and exalts events from different eras and moments in history from a citizen's perspective. The fate of Ganja Gate and the creation of the image of Javad Khan, subject to the strict control of Soviet ideology and censorship, come to life in a literary manner. The poet's vision of history becomes increasingly systematic over time, shaping historical and social consciousness in poems dedicated to the national existence of the people. His literary activity also stands out for his firm civic stance and prominent role in the late 80s national movement, playing a crucial part in shaping national consciousness. The "Book of Life" stands as a literary and social milestone that significantly contributes to shaping national social consciousness.

Keywords: Creativity, social processes, historical thought, national memory.

RESUMEN

El artículo examina los factores que llevaron al destacado poeta azerbaiyano Sabir Rustamkhanli a incursionar en el género de la novela histórica. Se demuestra que el escritor ha transitado un extenso camino hacia la creación de novelas históricas, evidenciándose en su pensamiento artístico una formación previa antes de abordar este género. En sus poemas iniciales, el poeta, mediante pequeñas expresiones poéticas en la historia, dedica progresivamente más obras al tema histórico. A través de estos poemas, Rustamkhanli describe y exalta eventos de diversas épocas y momentos de la historia desde una perspectiva ciudadana. La travesía del destino de Ganja Gate y la creación de la imagen de Javad Khan, sometidas al riguroso control de la ideología y la censura soviéticas, cobran vida literaria. La visión del poeta sobre la historia se torna más sistemática con el tiempo, configurando la conciencia histórica y social en los poemas dedicados a la existencia nacional del pueblo. Su actividad literaria destaca también por su firme postura ciudadana y su participación destacada en el movimiento nacional de finales de los años 80, desempeñando un papel crucial en la formación de la conciencia nacional. El "Libro de la vida" se erige como un hito literario y social que contribuye significativamente a la configuración de la conciencia social nacional.

Palabras clave: Creatividad, procesos sociales, pensamiento histórico, memoria nacional.

INTRODUCTION

Azerbaijan has a rich cultural landscape which have been shaped by its extensive and varied history, evolving in a distinctive and multifaceted cultural heritage. Azerbaijan is located geographically at the crossroads of Eastern Europe and Western Asia, so it has been exposed to diverse influences fostering a rich tapestry of traditions, customs, and artistic expressions. In the territory have coexisted various ethnic groups including Turkic, Persian, and Russian populations, each of which has left its cultural legacy. Ancient roots of Azerbaijani culture trace back to prehistoric times, which is evident in archaeological discoveries like cave paintings, artifacts, and architectural remnants. Furthermore, historical affiliations with the Persian and Russian empires, coupled with its strategic location along the Silk Road trade route, further enriched its cultural diversity. This convergence of influences is evident in Azerbaijan's folklore, music, dance, literature, and visual arts, presenting an amalgam of indigenous, Islamic, and European elements (Gasimov, 2017; Nevins, 2020; Salazar, 2017).

Among artistic manifestations, literature is a special case. Azerbaijani literature encompasses a wide range of literary genres including poetry, prose, drama, etc. Poetry is particularly valued in Azerbaijani literary tradition, being prominent the classical poetic form known as "divan". This form of poetry often explores themes of love, nature, and spirituality (Hamid, 2023; Isaxanli, 2014). Notable Azerbaijani poets include Nizami Ganjavi, Fuzuli, and Khurshidbanu Natavan whose works have had a lasting impact on the country's literary landscape but also the world. In addition to poetry, it can be found in Azerbaijani literature a rich tradition of prose with novels and short stories as significant genres (Kisi, 2022; Rasulova, 2022). Prominent authors in this field are Mir Jalal, Jalil Mammadguluzadeh, and Anar Rzayev which have made substantial contributions to Azerbaijani prose, addressing in their works social, political, and philosophical themes. Moreover, Azerbaijani literature has a strong tradition of theater, with playwrights like Jafar Jabbarly and Huseyn Javid having left a lasting legacy in the realm of Azerbaijani drama.

In a more recent time one of the most influential Azerbaijani writers is Sabir Rustamkhanli. As an author he was marked by the awakening of National thought in the 1960s, a pivotal era in Azerbaijan's public life and literary scene, so his works bear the imprint of national and social processes that coincided with his formative student years. His exploration of literature and art as a correspondent and head of the department at the "Literature and Art" newspaper led him to delve into the historical depths of thought. Sabir Rustamkhanli became prominent in Azerbaijani literature

due to his significant contributions as a poet, playwright, and public figure. His literary works often address social and political issues, reflecting the cultural and historical context and showing a huge ability to capture the essence of Azerbaijani life. Rustamkhanli's works are known for their poignant exploration of human emotions, societal challenges, and the quest for justice. Additionally, Rustamkhanli's involvement in public service and his efforts to promote Azerbaijani culture further solidify his prominence in the nation's literary and social spheres. The notorious academician Isa Habibbeyli recognized the patriotic essence of Rustamkhanli's endeavors writing: "successful performances in these large-scale forms, his fair position clearly emphasized that a new type, National-minded, democratic-spirited, mature patriotic young and creative personality emerged in Azerbaijan on the example of Sabir Rustamkhanli" (Habibbayli, 2021).

Considering the above, the objective of this work is to pay tribute to the writer's work, especially examining the factors that led the distinguished Azerbaijani poet Sabir Rustamkhanli to delve into the genre of the historical novel. For this, some of his most notable works are briefly analyzed, as well as the opinion of prominent intellectuals on the matter.

DEVELOPMENT

The most important factor that brought Sabir Rustamkhanli to the historical novel is his poetic work. In his poetic work, along with the poet's career towards the past, national history, the possibilities of description of the past were expanded. Since the first years of his creativity as a poet, the motives of national memory occupied the main place. In fact, this memory began to manifest itself from the first creative examples of the young poet. In his poems "On the Yardimli roads" (1964), "Holy customs" (1965), "Memorial Train" (1968), "If you want to know" (1968), "The Trouble of the Summit" (1969), etc., the author praised the land where he was born and grew up. In the poem "holy customs" "he goes down in history and adheres to the traditions of his grandfather and calls him to live:

Holy customs grew me,
I need to live with his love.
My father met several enemies,
Sword in one hand, bread in another one
(Rustamkhanli, 2004, pp. 18-19)

It was not by chance that the poet suddenly went to the past of his people, boasted of his fame and courage, as a sign of the blood memory of his thought at that time. The poet contemplates the past of his homeland; in his past

there are great heroes who wrote epics. In Rustamkhanli's poetic work, historical thinking is somewhat concretized and Ganja gate becomes the eternal image of the poet in the form of archetype. Ganja gate not only focuses the poet's historical consciousness on the past, but it also becomes a way to convey today's messages. The poem "Salam Ganja gate" was written by the poet at the Ganja gate in Gelati monastery near Kutaisi, Georgia. Telling Hello, Ganja Gate, my brother abroad, the poet speaks like a living with a door that was driven out of his homeland eight centuries ago. Falling snow, rain, even "your hands have not lost track on the door." The poet addresses the history and gives the date of the fall of this door to come here. The poet associatively remembers the past; now there is neither the founder David, nor the door thieves", but the Ganja gate lives. The poet's saying "Door thieves" comes from the fact that history shows it as it is. The gates of the city were not sealed. The enemy, who used the Ganja larva, entered the city and took the Ganja doors to Tbilisi as loot. The poet's lyric excites me when I see the Ganja door, he looks at it not as the most precious thing of the country, but as the motherland itself, speaks to it and breathes:

(Peace and blessings of God be upon him).

In your stone ear
the sound of millions of bells,
And the door is small.
You are my heart
miracle of my soul.
I do not know when I opened it
to whom do you belong?
To the face of disaster,
and thou shalt cry...

(Rustamkhanli, 2004, p. 50)

The poet's homeland: the fire of passion is understandable; and from time to time our historical heritage, cultural monuments have been painted on us from different parts of the world. Khalil Rza Uluturk who connects Rustamkhanli's commitment to the history of the people and the current state of the people comes to the right conclusion: "at the same time, and most importantly, because he knows well the past of his people, does not tolerate the present disasters and fights to open the way to a bright future" (Uluturk, 2004, p. 4). It is absolutely true that Rustamkhanli takes

his creativity together with history and modernity. Their stories attract attention because they can reveal more deeply the meaning of modern events. In this sense, S. Rustamkhanli always appealed to history, to the memory of blood, with the aim of deeply understanding the events of modern life, establishing a connection between history and the present and building a bridge.

Historical memory in Sabir Rustamkhanli's poetic work since the late 70s, social functionality was gaining social content while getting sharpened appealing to events and personalities playing an important role in the history of the people. In the book of poems "ganja gate" (1981), "Thank you, my mother tongue" (1983), "Blood Memory" (1983), the national spirit and thought sounded a bit harsh and publisher. In the poem "Thank you our native language is called" the holy language of the gods, men from the heavens, men from the light, the hero language of the spouses of the Alps." For him, his native language is "the conqueror of the light of the flags of the world's gatherers", sometimes called it "the language of expatriates wandering around the countries", and the tongue that speaks proud things. "The poet speaks this language, and he never leaves it alone, without help. For the poet, this language is Turkish. It is important to notice that in the early 80s, the poet's knowledge of Turkish as his mother tongue was due to his good knowledge of history and restoration of historical injustice:

Speaks, opens the spring of life,
The world I flew out of his bosom.
Antennas of my heart,
And the tongue that speaks proud things,
In the Battle of sword scrapped Scarecrow,
I had a flag on my head.
When my land is divided into two
This language became my indivisible land.
(Rustamkhanli, 2004, p. 85)

Other important works by S. Rustamkhanli's are "The most beautiful song of the country" (1982), "Because our soul is boundless" (1982), "The Voice of Gopuz, the prayer of the shaman" (1982), "The creators of history" (1983), "The prayer of my mother" (1983), etc. Every moment of millennial history, every stone and wall of the country reminds the poet of the past of his homeland. When the poet speaks of the Motherland, he refers to Azerbaijan. Daglig

Altai poet Bilal Dimanova wrote “The Voice of Gopuz, shaman’s prayer” poem thinking in the greater social area and the entire Turkish world is shrinking. Bilal Dumanov considers the song sung by him as “the breath of God alone” and “the prayer of his mother alone” close to himself. When he hears his voice, “the blood cries”, “the love of the Gundogan” and “the love of the March” sound comes. The Turkish nation is a great nation, it has many branches, and one of these branches is the Altai Turks. “With the prayer of the shaman, with the voice of the gopuz” recalls ancient history.

In addition, the names of history and antiquity great country, Dada Gorgud, Khatai are often mentioned in Rustamkhanli’s poetry, and these names encourage the poet to live between history and today. In his poems written from modern life, the poet necessarily adds something from history. The poem “Our fear of death” (1988), addressed to Sumgait teenagers is dedicated to known events. “Thanks, not forgotten, on that face of a hundred years, a song “I lost!” poet, who still remembers history is proud that the spirit of young people who waving the flag of real renounces of the fear. The poet once again shows that one can’t put the soul of the people in a cage, squeeze it, that soul will necessarily show its past.

CONCLUSIONS

Sabir Rustamkhanli is a prominent figure in Azerbaijani literature and being celebrated for his significant contributions as writer but also as an intellectual and politician. His literary works delve into the social, historical, and political landscape of Azerbaijan offering poignant reflections on human emotions, societal challenges, and the pursuit of justice. Rustamkhanli is renowned for his ability to weave tales that captured the essence of Azerbaijani heritage but at the same time addresses universal themes that resonate with readers worldwide. This way, Rustamkhanli’s literary works serve as a testament to the power of storytelling to bridge cultural divides and foster a deeper understanding of the human experience. His enduring impact on Azerbaijani literature and his ability to inspire readers to explore the depths of their own humanity solidify his position as a cherished figure in the world of letters but beyond his literary endeavors, Rustamkhanli’s engagement in public service and his advocacy for Azerbaijani culture underscore his influential role in both the literary and social spheres of the nation.

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