

AZERBAIJANI CHILDREN'S LITERATURE AND FOLKLORE

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SUMMARY

In the history of the artistic thinking of the Azerbaijani people, the oral folk literature of various genres, distinguished by its capacity and strength, which has deep meanings, is one of the richest and ancient folk literatures in the world. Due to the fact that this antiquity casts a shadow over a number of mysterious points related to the history of our folklore, there is still a great need to report and investigate the scientific considerations in the current research. This source of creativity, which has been the product of the collective labor of the people for many years and has reached our modern times as a treasure of rich art pearls, arose from the moral demands of people. With an ancient history, the age of which is not yet determined, this exhausted artistic creation of the folk imagination played a major role in the various stages of development of the human race. converted to the source.

No example of folklore has arisen by chance, there is a natural necessity behind the creation of each of them. The only fact is that there are up to 4,000 images of people and animals on approximately seven hundred and fifty of the Gobustan rocks that exist today only in the territory of Azerbaijan. The results of the researches in the following years and a number of archaeological finds also show that Gobustan is a book of ordinary truths related to the earth and the land, which speaks to us in our language. However, it is not correct to consider it only as a "drawing board" or "charm" or "guiding signs" of primitive people. This has already been proven by our rich examples of oral folk creativity collected in numerous volumes and our centuries-old written literature with its ancient historical existence.

In connection with the ancient examples of folklore and the stages of the historical development of the people, it was mostly related to hunting, farming and cattle breeding. Over time, thanks to the increase in life experience, the formation of people's mental consciousness, the expansion of cognition and imagination, artistic word creation has developed further.

The rich fantasy of the human race, its creative imagination played a major role in the formation of the mythical worldview. Oral folk creativity, which is the art of words, was created separately in the early days, but later it became a product of collective creativity, combining all types and genres in a synthesis.

Key word: Azerbaijan, folklore, child, literature, form, content, episode, folk, artist, example

Research on the origins and roots of children's literature of world nations, transforming it into an independent art field, primarily helps to understand the true nature of this literature and clarify its developmental path.

However, each nation has its own folklore that corresponds to its lifestyle, psychology, and national characteristics. While the roots of children's literature in folklore may carry specific features related to the character of the people, they still maintain a number of universalities. Investigating the specific aspects of Azerbaijani folklore, in other words, exploring the uniqueness inherent in the origin of this nation's children's literature, is crucial for accurately defining its developmental path.

"One of the main specific aspects of children's literature is its reliance on high fantasies. Alongside portraying life's realities, it shines with vivid colors, discussing ideal heroism and romantic realms through dynamic plots that fuel the imagination. The lullabies, riddles, deceptions, and tales created by the people play a significant role in the origin of children's literature. Children's literature finds its foundation in this cradle." (p. 8, p. 175).

The Greeks once referred to themselves as "normal children," imparting high romantic feelings and sentiments in their myths and epics using simple language. The origin of this nation's refinement seems intriguing with the following idea: "The foundation of Greek refinement is Greek mythology, which reflects the people's fantasy and has worked in a subconscious physical form of nature and social formalities" (p. 9, p. 121).

The Azerbaijani nation has created rich literature. This literature reflects humanism and brotherhood sentiments, expressing the desires and aspirations of the people, and denouncing hatred towards enemies. This literature chronicles the sweet dreams about history, ethnography, and future, as well as the struggles

the people have conducted. Throughout the ages, the nation has raised its children with this literature, telling them tales during their difficult and arduous days, and embedding their joy, customs, and traditions into their songs and tales.

The issue of children's folklore and its connection to the people's imagination is highlighted interestingly in A. Nabiyev's research. In his work "Genres of Azerbaijani Folklore," the author's thoughts on the creation of children's songs today converted into folklore appear original.

"Day breaks, day breaks, the wrathful horse gallops a thousand times."

According to initial perception, if the sun mounts a red horse, it hurries itself and brings abundant warmth. However, there is another aspect here, and it is those types of folkloric examples that are transformed into children's literature. The figurativeness here is based on simple likening. The people liken the sudden radiance of the sun on the horizon to its mounting of a horse. That is, the sun shines brightly all at once, akin to mounting a wrathful horse. To mount a wrathful horse signifies the speed of the sun, and these are scientifically explained in A. Nabiyev's book. Children become acquainted with folk literature in their cradle. Later, these songs are replaced with lullabies, play lyrics, riddles, and deceptions.

Subtextual meanings peculiar to authentic literature, an imaginary world of images, wise and sagacious ancestral words are tailored for children. Thus, a child up to the age of 7-8 years is introduced to the mysteries of literature, immersed in an enchanting realm.

But what does a child acquire in this realm, and how does literature influence their development? To answer these questions, it is generally necessary to review the poetics of folk children's songs and the characteristics of individual genres.

It is highly likely that the first authors of the layla genre are mothers themselves. When a child is very young, a layla is sung to put them to sleep. The lyrics are very short. However, when the child is a few months old, the mother ensures that they understand something and adds words with meaning to their layla. In these songs, alongside the great love of the mother, the hardships she endures find their expression. In her first layla, the mother wants to say to her baby: be as pure as a red rose, be worthy, in other words, be human, and live an honorable life!

Teymur Elchin also created laylas for animals. In the layla of a monster, he says:

Sleep, my little child,

Grow quickly, my little one.

May your ears, eyes,

And teeth be sharp like a dog's.

May your flesh be like the meat of a ram,

If you see a sheep, tear it apart,

Grow up, monster child. (p. 2, p. 164)

So, in every layla, the parent imparts their own upbringing to their child. A human mother wants her infant to be as pure as a red rose, while advising a monster child to tear apart as it sees fit. Thus, the philosophical content of the layla genre unfolds. The poet seems to tell us through this lineage that layla serves not only to put the child to sleep or wish them happiness, but through these songs, the mother whispers profound life truths into the child's ear, laying the foundation for their future upbringing. The mother becomes the child's first teacher. Pedagogical ideas about upbringing are hidden in the deep layers of laylas.

Most children's games are accompanied by certain pieces of poetry or prose. Children's play is as dynamic as their nature. There are few silent games. That's why there are so many puns to attract attention. Children usually identify who is "sleeping" with certain pieces of poetry before the game. One group of game words is called "Duzgü".

One or two of ours

Three, four, Close the door.

Five, six, Dashalti

Seven, eight, Firingiz.

Nine, ten, Red dress. (2. p. 50)

Because of the compliance with the sequence of numbers in these verses, this genre is called "duzgu" (straight). However, many duzgu do not include numbers. Children adhere to the sequence when determining who will lie down, thus "duzgu" (to be laid) maintains its own content.

Upon careful consideration, we notice that duzgu have a specific rhythm. Sometimes there may not be logical connections or coherence between the lines, but rhythm always prevails. Since children invent these game lyrics themselves, they live through them. The spread of these poetic pieces is mainly due to their rhythm. This aspect captures the essence of our poetry's diction.

"In grandmother's house,

there is the Kaaba.

On top of the Kaaba,

there is a camel.

On the camel's back,

there is a hill.

On top of the hill,

*there is a grandchild.
From the camel's wool,
gabble Camels climb the hills.
Camels stand on the hills."* (p. 2, p. 167)

The presentation of objects in this poem according to a specific rule is a hallmark of the "duzgu" genre's integration into written poetry. Modern poets have skillfully enriched themselves with artistry originating from children's literature.

Game lyrics spread widely under the name "Children's Songs". Poets skillfully create new works using its playful, cheerful, and witty nature.

The care of the folk for the child's speech development is the source of examples creating the "misleading" genre. The folk's interest is to grasp the language and say first " of.

*"Grey horse, Grey sack,
Empty it from its head.
Take it away, bring it back,
Wet from its head."* (p. 2, p. 68)

Here, the sounds "B" and "SH" not only serve the main purpose of the misleading genre-to encourage children to be attentive to correct pronunciation and to understand words bit by bit-but also create a poetic rhythm. This tradition originating from our children's poetry still lives on today, preserving not only the form of misleading but also its content in written literature. Sometimes, poets do not aim to convey events with details but instead bring out the eloquence in discussing something extensively. At such times, the capabilities of language are utilized.

In Tofiq Mutallibov's poem "My Little Ones," another characteristic stands out:

*"My little ones, chip-chip, Chip, chip, chip, my little ones.
Oh, my sweet little ones, Spit silk, my little ones."* (p. 3, p. 234)

Listening to this poem, it becomes clear that the child calls for feeding his beloved little ones. Excellent! But what next? If the poem is written for this purpose, can we talk about its aesthetic qualities? But listening to the poem again, we see that its purpose is not limited to what was mentioned above. Here, the "ch" sounds are repeated so much that while listening to the poem, we hear a skillful imitation of the sound of the little ones. The poet opens up a long conversation about how the little ones make their "chip-chip" sounds, making an effort to inform the reader about it. Of course, this would have been an unproductive effort. Instead, the poet considered it more appropriate to use the harmony created by the repetition of "ch" sounds. The repetition of these sounds significantly contributes to the musicality of the poem. It's no coincidence that this song has gained fame as one of children's favorite songs worldwide. The poem's positive sense of freedom has brought it very close to misleading poems and children's folklore in general.

Ilyas Tapdig develops this tradition in his poem "Quilt":

The quail flew away from the garden to the forest.

Desire came out and called:

- Quail, quail, quail. He said:

- Where is your tail? Let me know, quail.

Maybe the cat snatched it,

How many years has it been quail?!

It passed under the bush know, inform, quail.

The frogs cried.

Clay, clay, quail. The ants shouted:

- Hit us, my dear, Yeke is an elephant, a quail. (2. S. 243)

In this poem, not only phonetic affinities are used. "Quilt", "tell," "elephant," "mad," "years," and "tell" (meaning the declaration) are skillfully turned into components of a poem with independent meanings like "know."

Besides incorporating these qualities into children's poetry, the misleading also began to establish itself as a genre in our poetry. After the war period, poets coming to children's literature write interesting misleads.

In folk pedagogy, the "riddle" genre holds a special place. By exercising the child's mind, "riddles" play an important role in the development of their imaginative thinking. After learning the secret of this genre, the child approaches subjects in a different way. In the early 20th century, when pedagogical ideas began to spread widely in Azerbaijan, textbooks and children's journals extensively featured both folk riddles and riddles written by poets. In the subsequent development of our literature, riddles lived on as a genre in children's poetry and gained citizenship in our poetry. One of the main reasons for the creation of this genre is that through riddles, poets create lively interaction with children. Riddles in written literature also embody all the characteristics of the folk genre. Poets strive to preserve these characteristics by adding new qualities such as coherence, concreteness, and the main attributes of the object's nature to riddles.

The second reason for the transition of riddles into children's literature is that this genre contributes to the development of children's judgment, attention, and imagination; it makes them think. The great educator K. D. Ushinsky attached special importance to riddles, writing: "I look at riddles as a simple picture

board of objects." Pedagogues also attach great importance to teaching riddles in schools. Professor A. Ribnikova considers giving riddles to children appropriate for the purpose of making them think. It is precisely these characteristics that allow riddles to live on as a genre in children's poetry. However, riddles that entered Azerbaijani children's poetry do not limit their own characteristics; they also gain new qualities in written literature.

Riddles have brought a number of characteristics to children's poetry and introduced new facets. It would be useful to review some of these characteristics. In riddles, the characteristic features of any object are listed, and it is sought after for these features. Thus, the person listening to the riddle must search for the answer, as they say, "scratch their head." This process has a positive effect on the person searching for answers, influencing their mind and thoughts, leading them to learn new things.

One of the tasks facing children's poetry is to teach children to think in images, to give them new knowledge about the material world, and to influence their worldview.

Thus, both riddles and children's poetry serve a single purpose, influencing the reader's opinion and worldview, introducing them to nature and societal events. But how does children's poetry preserve and maintain the qualities and traditions of riddles?

When a child reaches the ages of 10-11, a rich realm opens before them, mainly consisting of folklore examples created primarily "for adults," with the most reliable guide being the ashug (minstrel). The study of ashug literature is of unparalleled importance in exploring the origins of our children's literature. This syncretic aspect provides important sources for the aesthetic upbringing of children.

The special role of the ashug is evident in the survival of folk literature, especially epics and legends. The ashug is both a composer, singer, actor, and dancer. They play musical instruments, recite, dance, sing poems with their voice, perform tricks or jokes, and engage in poetry. In ancient times, they were called bard, then poet, minstrel, and finally ashug. Ashugs are divided into two types: master ashugs and performer ashugs. Master ashugs are also called elder ashugs. Artists such as Dede Yediyar (16th century), Turab Dede (17th century), Dede Qasim (18th century), Ashug Alesger (19th-20th centuries), and Dede Shamsir (Soviet period) have gained fame among the people as true folk poets.

An important aspect in the development of the ashug art is improvisation. Every ashug is an improviser. When an ashug performs, they create variations and versions. Therefore, their art is always evolving, changing, and developing.

The role of the ashug in the wide dissemination, propagation, and preservation in memory of folk literature-especially epics and legends-is unparalleled.

The educational issues, which are the main purpose of children's literature, were reflected in folklore before written literature was created. Scholars rightfully base their opinions on the experience of the great fathers of folk pedagogy, which found its expression in the oral literature of the people. Folklore can be considered a kind of historical chronicle of folk pedagogy. In various folklore genres, the philosophical thoughts of the people, their worldview, and educational issues are vividly reflected. In folk tales and legends, as well as in proverbs and sayings, it is repeatedly expressed that in the most difficult times, a person must rely on their own efforts, intelligence, and skills. Folk pedagogy has always been based on the diligent masses, valuing human labor highly. In this regard, folk tales are especially instructive.

Azerbaijani folk tales, like the tales of other peoples, carry a universal character. Traces of them can be found in the folk tales and legends of other countries, sometimes even in written literature. It is a genre that is difficult to attribute solely to one people. We encounter numerous tales similar to the widely spread "Shengulum, Shungulum, and Mengulum" tales in other cultures. Initially considered solely "Azerbaijani folktales," we see references to the tale of "Goychek Fatma," "Tulkhu and the miller Khalil" made by Charles Perrault. It is well known that Perrault drew from these tales when creating his works "Puss in Boots" and "Diamonds and Toads." However, whether he took these tales from French folklore or Azerbaijani oral literature is difficult to say, as Azerbaijani folk tales were not yet published and still lived in the oral tradition.

In this context, these facts give rise to the idea that a tale created by one people could quickly become part of the entire world's heritage. Therefore, the division of "this tale is mine, that one is yours" is less characteristic for this genre of folklore. However, Azerbaijani folk tales also have characteristics that distinguish them, making it possible to say that they are our tales based on these aspects. In our tales, there are such descriptive tools and, so to speak, tale terminologies that probably do not exist in other cultures. Azerbaijani folk tales begin with phrases like: "Once upon a time, there was, and there wasn't anyone else besides God." With this sentence, the storyteller suggests that the world was completely empty, far away, from the very first day of creation. Then the tale begins. If carefully considered, there is humor in this sentence because the child listening to the tale understands that if there was no one else besides God, then where did the characters or other figures mentioned in the tale come from?! In such cases, the storyteller uses the tools of the tale to amuse the listener.

One of the heroes of such humorous tales is the fox. In the Azerbaijani language, the word "Fox" is used as a synonym of the words "bitch", "trickster", "calyx". That's why all legends are written on the feet of the Fox and many tales are made up about him. "Fox, fox, tunkaki". "Grandfather Fox and Hajileilak", "Fox and Wolf", "Fox and Snake", "Fox's Mane" etc. such tales can be cited as an example. The main character of these tales, the Fox, wears an emamm on his head like a mullah and goes on pilgrimage and swears that he will

not touch a chicken again. Sometimes he breaks sticks and weaves baskets, sometimes he sews shoes. All these works are for one purpose. The fox finds food for himself with a new trick. It is interesting that no matter how greedy the Fox is, the animals he encounters are so naive. But in the end, the naive still win. Because that's what the people want. People never want those who build their lives on pride like a fox to be happy. Bald is not portrayed as physically beautiful in tales about Kekal. His main prowess is his mind. Bald has a strong sense of humor.

In Azerbaijani tales, the national traditions, customs, and aspirations of freedom of the people have found their artistic reflection. One end of our urban tales goes to the "Avesta" collection, which is common among the peoples of Central Asia, Iran, and Azerbaijan. "Avesta," created in the first millennium BC in the first half of the first millennium, is a collection of religious books. According to "Avesta," the world is divided into two parts. The main god, Ahura Mazda (Hormuzd), is good. Angra Mainyu (Ahriman), on the other hand, is a symbol of evil forces. Life is based on the struggle between these two forces. In a significant part of Azerbaijani tales, especially urban tales, this tradition of "Avesta" is visible.

Since the ancient man could not understand the meaning of the events occurring in nature, he often associated them with evil forces. He described the flash of lightning, forest fires, floods, as a giant, a dragon, and associated it with evil forces. Most likely, the magical tales were the expression of the dreams of man who could not escape from this natural chaos. The lack of materialistic outlook of ancient man, inexperience, but great dreams made these tales fantastic. Unable to find a way to get their hero out of trouble, the people call upon the legendary forces for help. In such tales as "Malikmammad", "Qaragush", "Shams and Gamar", "Prince Mutalib", "The Magic Ring", magic, sorcery, spells, and legendary helpers reach the taste of the heroes.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the use of children's stories almost became a literary fashion. S. M. Ganizade used the plot of the tale "Fox and the miller Khalil" in his work "Fox and Chagchag Bey". (The plot of this work and Sh. Perro's fairy tale "Puss in Boots" is almost the same.) M. Mushfiq used folklore more creatively in the poem "The Peasant and the Snake". This work was created in the thirties. Since it became a tradition to show the past and the contradictions of the class society in the works created during this period, M. Mushfiq also changed the idea direction of that tale in this way.

The epic (dastan) is a folklore genre based on its volume. It resembles a tale to some extent. However, there are many different aspects of the epic compared to a tale. An epic relates a real event, leaving an impression of historical truth. The listener believes in its reality. In contrast, a tale leaves an impression of fabrication, invention, and imagination. Of course, both genres are fundamentally based on life truths. However, compared to a tale, "invention" is more apparent in a tale.

One of the interesting aspects that attracts attention in the works of Anar based on the motifs of "Dede Korkut" epics and in M. Rzayev's story "Mother's Heart, Mountain Flower" is the transition of folk wisdom from epic literature to written literature. It is interesting because "Dede Korkut" reflects the thinking of the Azerbaijani people during the national formation period, and the initial conception of heroism in folk pedagogy. According to X. Koroğlu, Anar and V. M. Jirmunski, it is possible to say that the history of the Azerbaijani people's source, lifestyle, and style of life can serve the history of "Dede Korkut," the epic of the Oghuz Turks. (6.169) Unfortunately, so far, there have been no works on this subject for children other than prose examples mentioned above. However, for children's writers, "Dede Korkut," "Koroglu," and "Qacaq Nabi" are inexhaustible sources of subject matter.

The heroic motifs of children's literature are primarily quality, and these qualities occupy a special place in the "Koroglu" epic. One of the widely spread epics among children is "Koroglu," primarily reflecting the events of the 16th-17th centuries. Because his father's eyes were blinded by Hesen Khan, they call him Koroglu. Thus, the people combine Koroglu - the son of a man dedicated to light - with the light itself. It's as if the people want to say that although Khans have blinded the eyes of hardworking Ali's eyes, his son Rovshan will fight for the freedom of the light. The name of the Koroglu sword is Misri. Misri sword means justice carried. his it even.

The "Koroglu" epic is a robust folk epic with a well-established composition and plot. In Azerbaijan, it is known to have 22 branches. While each branch contributes an independent narrative impact, Koroglu remains the central hero across all branches, making them essentially chapters of a larger epic. Each branch reveals a different facet of Koroglu's heroism. He is not merely a strong man wielding a sword but also a skilled lover, a devoted companion, a loyal husband, and a person of pure heart and gentle soul.

The "Koroglu" epic, which Azerbaijani children read eagerly, stands alongside world literary masterpieces like "Iliad," "Odyssey," "The Tale of Igor's Campaign," "Shahnameh," "Nart," "David of Sasun," "Manas," and "Amiran." Unfortunately, we have yet to see outstanding works created based on separate branches of this epic. Despite children's keen interest in the epic, our children's literature demonstrates an unfortunate lack of attention to it. Yet, the heroic motifs of the epic could greatly enrich our children's literature.

Saying "Long live lofty dreams and fantasies," S. Vurgun envisioned enriching children's literature with folk legends. While determining the exact history of Azerbaijani legends may not be possible, we can estimate that legends were invented when people began to discern the true nature of celestial bodies and natural events. Legends are also a way to record historical events and facts. Therefore, even without fully

understanding the true nature of historical events, people have sensed their essence and created legends about specific historical events and personalities.

Children's literature not only embraces the content of folklore but also adapts its forms and structures. This is because folklore inherently contains many aspects that resonate with children's understanding and perception. Therefore, children's literature can encompass folklore in its entirety, beyond just religious myths and scary tales. In societies where children's literature has not been established, folklore plays this crucial role.

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