



THE CREATION OF THE IMAGE OF BERDAKH IN A. SADYKOV'S NOVEL "THE NIGHTINGALE WITHOUT FREEDOM": HISTORICAL LIMITATIONS AND FOLKLORIC TRADITION

Kaniyazova Jupargul Orinbaevna

Karakalpak State University, Doctor of Science (DSc) in Philological Sciences

ABSTRACT

This article examines the unique features of the portrayal of Berdakh in Abdulla Sadykov's novel "The Nightingale Without Freedom" within a historical and literary-aesthetic context. The author analyzes the influences on the formation of Berdakh's image in the work, stemming from both the ideological demands of Soviet-era literary criticism (the molds of "socialist realism" and "revolutionary-democrat") and the folkloric-epic roots of Karakalpak national prose. The article provides a scholarly depiction of the connections between the European model of the novel and the architectonics of folk epics, as well as the use of hyperbole, fixed epithets, and plot chronology in the character portraits. As a scholarly conclusion, it is noted that the artistic value of the novel is determined not just by ideological constraints, but by a synthesis of the Karakalpak people's school of epic storytelling and their national worldview.

KEYWORDS: Berdakh, Abdulla Sadykov, the novel "The Nightingale Without Freedom", socialist realism, idealization, folklore, dastan, epic tradition, historical-biographical work, national prose.

INTRODUCTION

The genre of the historical-biographical novel occupies a distinct place in the history of Karakalpak literature. Among such works, Abdulla Sadykov's novel *Bostansyz Bulbil* (The Nightingale without Freedom) stands out due to its thematic depth and artistic uniqueness. In 1987, the 160th anniversary of the great poet and philosopher Berdakh was widely celebrated. This jubilee led to the emergence of numerous scientific and critical works, as well as works of fiction. That same year, the novel "Berdakh" by writer A. Sadykov was published in the *Amudarya* magazine [1]. The novel received reviews, literary criticism, and scientific articles in the press, and it was positively evaluated in the literary year-end reviews [2]. In 1988, this novel was published as a book by the Karakalpakstan publishing house under the title "Bostansyz Bulbil" (The Nightingale Without Freedom) [3].

In creating the character of the great poet Berdakh, the author relies not only on historical sources but also on the rich folklore and epic traditions of the Karakalpak people. However, one cannot deny that the ideological demands of Soviet-era literature, the principles of socialist realism, and the constraints of censorship imposed certain "one-sidedness" in the depiction of the poet's persona. This article provides a theoretical and scientific analysis of the social and ideological limitations of the Berdakh character in Sadykov's novel, as well as the traditions inherent in folk dastan (epic) narratives – such as hyperbole, linear plot development, and the resolution of conflict – embedded in the artistic structure of the work. Furthermore, it explores how the author masterfully integrated the modern novel genre with traditional folklore modes of thought.

METHODS

Comparative-typological, historical-aesthetic, and textual analysis methods were used during the research. The character image, portrait descriptions, and plot-compositional structure of A. Sadykov's novel "Bostansyz bulbil" (The Nightingale Without Freedom) were studied comparatively with the architecture of Karakalpak folk dastans and the methodological requirements of Soviet literary science.

RESULTS

As a result of analyzing the features of creating the image of Berdakh in Abdulla Sadykov's novel "Bostansyz bulbil", the following scientific results were determined: In the novel, poet Berdakh is portrayed in a single mold as a "revolutionary-democrat" who fights exclusively for the interests of the poor and oppressed and sharply opposes khans and beks, and the absolutization of the social perspective in the literary process during the creation of the work is observed. The spiritual maturity of the poet – who was literate, attended a madrasah, and was aware of religious and secular knowledge – was pushed aside, and he was presented one-sidedly as an individual living solely with social problems. This is also related to the policy of the literary era. Likewise, by idealizing the image of poet Berdakh, the author introduces traits characteristic of an epic hero into the poetics of the novel. Therefore, although the character's internal psychological fluctuations are given, he is depicted as an "ideal hero" who never makes mistakes and has no internal contradictions. Features specific to the folklore-epic portrait system are also present. It was determined that folklore methods such as hyperbole (exaggeration), depicting characters by polarization of characters into positive and negative types, permanent epithets ("aryslan tuwǵan" [born of a lion], "jolbaris kelbetli" [tiger-figured], "ajday sulıw" [as beautiful as the moon]), and



psychological parallelism are widely used in creating the portraits of the novel's characters. Without retrospection or parallel montage methods in the work, events are narrated in a purely chronological order – from the character's youth to the end of his life, following the pattern of epic poems (epos).

DISCUSSION

In Karakalpak literary studies, there are existing researches on the creation of the image of the poet Berdakh in A. Sadykov's novel *Bostansyz Bulbil* [4]. However, these studies primarily focus on the artistic-aesthetic sources of the character, as well as questions of historicity and the nature of the literary image. In our view, when examining the process of creating the image of historical figures, it is essential to contextualize them within their broader literary environment. This is because any work of literature inevitably bears the 'imprints' of the literary era in which it was created.

It is natural that historical and biographical works written during the Soviet period and in certain years thereafter, including Abdulla Sadykov's novel "Bostansyz bulbil," exhibit one-sided approaches (such as socialization or ideological limitations) in the creation of Berdakh's image. This situation can be evaluated as follows:

Absolutization of the social perspective. In the novel, the poet Berdakh is consistently depicted within a single mold (scheme) as a "revolutionary-democrat" who struggles exclusively for the interests of the poor and oppressed people, and sharply opposes khans and beks. This was a strict requirement of the socialist realism method in Soviet literary criticism. Viewing nature, the times, and human relationships solely through the principle of "rich and poor" and "oppressor and oppressed" limited the human and broad-scale depiction of the poet.

2. A superficial approach to the religious and spiritual world. Berdakh was an educated person of his time who had received a madrasa education and was well-versed in both religious and secular knowledge. Furthermore, Sufism, divine, and religious knowledge hold a significant place in his creative work. However, in the novel, this spiritual maturity of the poet is marginalized, and he is portrayed one-sidedly as a person who lived solely concerned with social problems. This somewhat diminishes the inner spiritual depth of the character.

3. Idealization and the heroic (romantic) framework. Although the character's inner psychological struggles are presented in the novel, he is depicted as an "ideal hero" who never makes mistakes, always stands on the side of truth, and is devoid of internal contradictions or ordinary human weaknesses. Such over-idealization of the character in a literary work sometimes undermines his "liveliness" and credibility as a real historical figure. Therefore, the one-sidedness in A. Sadykov's novel "The Nightingale Without Freedom" (*Bostansiz bulbil*) is not merely the author's flaw, but the result of the literary process and censorship restrictions of that era. Nevertheless, the novel cannot be completely dismissed. This is because the author was able to reflect Berdakh's prestige among the people, the spiritual power of his poems, and the historical oppression of the Karakalpak people with great skill and national flavor. Consequently, this one-sidedness must be accepted objectively, in connection with the era in which the work was created.

Secondly, if we look at the history of the formation of fiction, particularly Karakalpak prose, it is a natural phenomenon that written literature draws nourishment from and is influenced by folkloric traditions, especially folk dastans (epics). The idealization and heroic characteristics in creating the image of Berdakh in A. Sadykov's novel "Bostansyz bulbil" indeed confirm that the genre of the novel is closely connected with the epic nature of folk dastans. This can be substantiated by the following arguments:

The idealization of the protagonist is a method typical of epic poems. In epic poems (for example, "Alpamysh", "Koblan", or "Sharyar"), the main hero is always depicted as flawless, spiritually unbreakable, fighting against dark forces, and defending justice. The image of Berdakh in the novel is also close to this mold: he is a figure who always passes the sorrows and griefs of the people through his heart, never makes mistakes, and, even when experiencing spiritual turmoil, does not stray from his ideal path. This resembles the principle of depicting a hero in epic poems rather than in the realistic novel genre.

"Defeating the enemy with a word" is a function of heroism. While in epic poems heroes protect their country from external enemies with weapons, in the novel Berdakh calls the people to struggle against violence through his word, songs, and dombra tune, in a word, through his talent. When the author places a dombra in Berdakh's hands and depicts moments of performing epic poems like "Amangeldi", he artistically infuses him with the sternness and spiritual heroism characteristic of ordinary epic heroes. That is, the poet's word serves as the hero's weapon.

3. Unity of the Plot. epic poems, the plot primarily revolves around the main protagonist, and the events are subordinated to his actions concerning external rescue, heroism, and the establishment of justice. In the novel "Bostansiz Bulbil", the figure of Berdakh also stands at the center of almost all plot lines, and his struggle against social inequality forms the ideological core of the work. This is closer to the plot structure of epic poems than to the polyphonic (multi-voiced, multi-faceted) nature characteristic of the novel as a prose genre. Consequently, the idealization of the Berdakh character in the novel is not merely a requirement of Soviet-era ideology but also demonstrates that Karakalpak national prose has not yet fully detached itself from its folk-epic roots and the school of epic poem storytelling. The author has brought the model of the 'heroic poet' ingrained in his people's consciousness into the novel genre through the forms of traditional epic poetry.

In depicting the portraits of characters in Abdulla Sadykov's novel "Bostansiz Bulbil", features characteristic of folklore, especially artistic techniques inherent in epic poem, are very clearly visible. As mentioned above, the work's failure to fully detach from epic traditions is evident not only in the characters' heroic behavior but also clearly in the author's method of describing their physical appearance and occupations."

In the portraits of the novel, one can see the following main features of the folkloric (epic) tradition:

Hyperbolization (exaggeration and magnification). In folk epics, the appearance of heroes or positive characters is depicted as extraordinary, imposing, and a symbol of spiritual power, distinguishing them from ordinary people. In the novel



"Bostansiz bulbil", the author also relies on methods of hyperbole characteristic of folk poetry when portraying the physical appearance of the poet Berdakh or Yernazar batyr. The flame in the characters' eyes, the breadth of their foreheads, and the tone of their voices when speaking elevate them far beyond ordinary everyday details to the level of epic heroes.

Portraying characters by polarization of characters into positive and negative types (good and evil). In folklore, particularly in fairy tales and epics, characters reveal their inner world precisely through their external portraits: while positive characters are always radiant, graceful, broad-foreheaded, brave, and handsome, negative characters (khans, zhasauyls [guards], beks) are depicted with gloomy, cold, ugly, terrifying, or negative details. The author has also applied this folkloric template in the novel. The negative traits in the appearance of khans and beks actually reflect their inner tyranny through folkloric stereotypes.

The use of permanent (fixed) epithets. When creating character portraits, the writer makes extensive use of traditional comparisons and epithets that have evolved in Karakalpak folklore over the centuries. For example, when depicting a heroic appearance, expressions such as "born a lion" (*arışlan tuwğan*), "tiger-like in appearance" (*jolbaris kelbetli*), and "falcon-eyed" (*qıran kózli*) are used. In the portraits of youth or women, figurative words characteristic of folk poetics – such as "face like the moon" (*ayday júzi*) and "as beautiful as the moon" (*ayday sulıw*) – frequently appear in the prose text of the novel.

Psychological parallelism and convergence with natural imagery. In epic poems, a hero's spiritual state and external changes are presented in parallel with natural phenomena (for example, the appearance of clouds or the flashing of lightning when a hero is angered). In the novel, the portrait changes of Berdakh during moments of anxiety and grief run parallel to descriptions such as the autumn cold, a desolate steppe, or the flow of a river. This is a clear manifestation of reflecting the inner spirituality of a character in a folkloric manner, in unity with the external world. Although A. Sadykov employed modern patterns of the novel genre, in sketching the external appearance (portraits) of his characters, he relied on the expressive tools of his people's thousand-year-old epic storytelling tradition. This not only enhances the national coloring of the work but once again proves how closely connected it is to its folkloric roots.

The structural and compositional framework of the novel "Bostansyz bulbil" and the principle of conflict resolution clearly demonstrate how close it is to the architectonics of epic poems. This idea can be substantiated by the following scientific facts:

1. Chronological order – the plot model inherent in epic poems. Methods typical of realistic novels, such as retrospection (flashing back), juxtaposing plot lines, or parallel montage, are practically absent in this work. The plot depicts the period from the hero's youth to the end of his life in a purely chronological order, sequentially. This structure fully replicates the plot model of Karakalpak folk dastas (for example, works narrating a hero's life from birth, such as "Garib-Ashig" and "Sayatkhani-Hamra").

2. Resolution of the conflict: spiritual victory and optimism. In epic poems, a conflict always concludes with the victory of justice, or even if the hero falls into tragedy, with the victory of their idea and spirit (in an optimistic spirit). In the

novel "Bostansyz bulbil", although poet Berdakh cannot overcome the violence of the times and endures material hardship, the eternity of his word, songs, and ideas in the people's consciousness at the finale of the work ensures the idealistic resolution of the conflict. This precisely recalls the philosophical conclusion found in dastas: "Even if the hero dies, their name remains and they achieve their aspiration".

3. Linear Plot. The conflict in the novel does not branch out into complex socio-psychological subplots. The progression of events is consistently directed along a single path – the resistance of Berdakh and the positive forces around him against tyranny. Such an open and direct presentation of the conflict is much closer to the collision methods of folkloric epics than to the classic models of the novel genre. Thus, the chronological consistency of the plot and the resolution of the conflict in a manner characteristic of epic poems serve as the strongest evidence that Abdullah Sadykov stood at the transitional stage in Karakalpak prose from the traditional folkloric mode of thinking to the European type of biographical novel. While the author adopted the form of the novel, he structured its internal logic based on epic patterns familiar and understandable to his people.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Abdullah Sadykov's novel "Bostansiz Bulbil" (The Nightingale Without Freedom) represents a unique stage in the development of Karakalpak prose – the transition from a traditional folkloric mode of thinking to the European type of biographical novel. The ideological constraints and folkloric patterns present in the work do not diminish its artistic value; on the contrary, they serve as a foundation for deeply understanding the objective laws of the development of national literary history.

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