

THE POETICS OF FAXRIYOR'S EPICS

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ABSTRACT:

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The epic poem is considered an ancient literary genre. This term is widely used both in folklore and in written literature. However, in these two types of literature the genre demonstrates certain differences. In particular, within oral literature epic poems are divided into five forms, whereas in written literature they are classified into three forms. Specifically, written epics are categorized into lyrical epics, lyric-epic poems, and dramatic epics.

The poet Faxriyor created a distinctive form within written epic poetry. Literary scholars refer to this form as the sonnet-epic.

In literary studies, a number of major monographic works have been devoted to the study of the epic, which is considered one of the relatively ancient genres of literature. Nevertheless, it can be observed that research devoted to epic poems of recent years—created in a new era shaped by independence, deeply absorbing the tones of folklore and classical written epic traditions, and harmoniously expressing the progressive traditions of Eastern and Western poetry—has not yet been sufficiently completed.

In contemporary literature, this genre, which is often referred to by the two terms doston and poem, is today also being designated by various other terms. In particular, the poem Geometrik bahor by Faxriyor, which corresponds to an epic in terms of its length, is described as a “symmetry of form,” while the work Havo manzaralari is characterized as a “symmetry of waves and commentary.” Such designations are the result of literary

experimentation. Like modern poetry, epics written in this style differ significantly from traditional epics in terms of form, content, and poetic expressiveness. In Faxriyor's works, poetic innovations within the epic genre are manifested mainly in the formal aspects of the works, whereas in the epics of Abduvali Qutbiddin the expressive dimension appears entirely nontraditional. The depiction of events and phenomena in A. Qutbiddin's work *Izohsiz lug'at* consists of various scenes of life. The lyrical "I" connects these diverse depictions of reality. The montage of different events and situations in these epics is also significant in that it aims to portray the spiritual image of the lyrical protagonists.

In the poet's epic *Ozodlik*, written as a dedication to independence, the narrative of epic events—considered a dominant feature of traditional epics—is almost absent. Instead, the concept of freedom and liberty, along with the feelings associated with them, is intensely depicted through unusual poetic devices, which creates the distinctive pathos of the work:

Freedom—my flower, we shall not fall beneath feet.

Freedom—my tenderness, like my first poem,

You are my dove flying over the Registan.

Beloved of the wind, my fluttering banner,

A clenched grief within my humiliated heart.

Freedom, a volcano within my being,

You are my father, a tumult unspoken by pain,

My memory, my home, my quilted cover—

Freedom!

At this point, it seems necessary to briefly address the study of epic poetry in literary scholarship. Until the twentieth century, works of this type were generally called *doston*, while those created later were referred to as poems. This indicates that there are also controversial views regarding the naming of the genre, and that this issue has not yet been sufficiently and comprehensively interpreted or resolved.

For example, the literary scholar Erkin Xudoyberdiyev, in his manual *Adabiyotshunoslikka kirish*, did not present the genre characteristics of epics, focusing instead mainly on the analysis of specific epics (for instance, *Farhod va Shirin* by Alisher Navoi). In another place, he also emphasized that epics should be called "poems." However, the reasons for this were not sufficiently or convincingly explained.

Similarly, the folklorist To'ra Mirzayev in the textbook *O'zbek xalq og'zaki poetik ijodi* also provides a definition of *doston*, but it is mainly analyzed from the perspective of oral folk epics.

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In the Russian–Uzbek Explanatory Dictionary of Literary Terms, created by the literary scholars N. Hotamov and B. Sarimsoqov, the epic genre and the specific features of its oral and written forms are analyzed theoretically. At the same time, it can be observed that this analysis does not pay sufficient attention to revealing all aspects of the epic genre.

At this point, it is appropriate to note the substantial research carried out by the literary scholar No‘mon Rahimjonov on Uzbek epic poetry. While most researchers limited themselves to studying certain aspects of the epic genre, N. Rahimjonov conducted a comprehensive study of epics. In his candidate dissertation *Lirik poema* and in the scholarly works he later published, he extensively discussed issues such as the internal classification of twentieth-century Uzbek epics, the correlation between lyricism and epic narration characteristic of the genre, and the problem of the lyrical hero.

The literary scholar Ozod Sharafiddinov devoted his candidate dissertation *O‘zbek sovet poemasi* to the study of the problem of conflict in epic poems. In this work, while classifying post-war epics according to their themes, the scholar also examines Navoiy and Hamza by Oybek from the perspective of conflict. In addition, the critic’s views on the theory of epic poetry are also reflected in his monograph *Zamon-qalb-poeziya*. In the theoretical study of Uzbek epics, the series of articles by S. Mamajonov entitled *Poema va hayot* is also noteworthy.

Another important work rich in theoretical reflections on the epic genre is the monograph *Hamid Olimjon poeziyasining badiiy sintezi* by N. Karimov. In the monograph *Janr imkoniyatlari*, the literary scholar U. Normatov emphasizes that the epic poem is “a song of the heart that cannot be narrated or expressed in prose.” Various aspects of the epic genre have also been discussed in the studies published in different years by literary scholars I. To‘lakov, O‘. Muhiddinov, A. Tangirov, Sh. Hasanov, and D. Quvvatova. These studies are mainly devoted to epics created in Uzbek literature prior to the stage of modernism, and in most of them it has become customary to study classical and modern epics by dividing them into three types: lyrical epics, lyric-epic poems, and dramatic epics.

Even after this classification of the epic genre, new scholarly perspectives on this topic continue to emerge in literary studies. In recent years, in particular, new ideas have been proposed regarding a new type of epic in Uzbek literature. Within the framework of these innovations, the concept of the “sonnet-epic” has attracted particular attention. The literary scholar X. Mirzayev, in his dissertation “*Hozirgi zamon o‘zbek sonetlarida milliy kolorit va umuminsoniy qadriyatlar*”, for the first time discusses the concept of the “sonnet-epic” in greater detail and titles one chapter of his dissertation “*Universal Values and the Problems*”

of Artistic Expression in Sonnet-Epics.” Thus, he introduces this term into the scholarly discourse of literary studies.

However, such a new approach to the epic genre does not appear to be entirely justified. There are objective reasons for this.

First, although the existence of a single poetic meter and established norms necessary for the epic genre became a tradition in classical literature, contemporary writers have always created epics based on the meters and forms they themselves considered appropriate. In classical literature, poets made use of the “broad field” of the masnavi form in composing epics, while the meter was predominantly the stable aruz meter; it is well known that in classical epics the masnavi functioned not as a genre but as a form. The earliest experiments in Turkic epics composed in the mutaqorib meter of aruz appeared, for example, in works following Firdavsi’s epic Shohnoma.

Second, oral epics, in addition to their traditional prose narration, were mainly shaped in their poetic narration in the syllabic (barmoq) meter. Despite differences in meter and rhythm, they were also classified within the epic genre. From this point of view, it seems more appropriate to classify epics created by representatives of modern literature not according to their form but according to their content and function. In particular, if such lyrical epics—namely sonnet-epics—are analyzed within the category of lyrical epics, it becomes easier to determine their poetic and generic features. It should be especially noted that in these epics the possibilities of the sonnet genre are used to enhance the melodic, rhythmic, and musical qualities of the works.

The poet Faxriyor also worked productively in this regard and skillfully employed the possibilities of the sonnet genre in a number of his epics. In certain parts of the poet’s epic Ayolg‘u, he resorts to the possibilities of the sonnet genre in order to enhance the musicality and melodic quality of the work.

In distinguishing epics from one another, the style of poets also plays an important role. In this regard, while discussing the творчество and style of Faxriyor, the literary scholar M. Davronova expresses the following opinion: “In Faxriyor’s poetry, thought is primary. He does not depart from life. His style is based precisely on this principle.” Indeed, as in all his poetic works, Faxriyor also seeks to draw the realities depicted in his epics from real life—from the concerns of human existence connected with society and people, from their joys and sorrows, as well as their happiness and regrets—and he largely succeeds in this.

However, the poet does not simply present a direct copy of life. Rather, in every line he attempts to create an artistic model of life.

Another distinctive feature of the epic Ayolg‘u is that in many of its interpretations there are numerous elements close to the language and sentiments of the people. Although this epic was created in the style of modernism, it is possible to observe that many elements characteristic of romantic imagery have been preserved in the work and effectively used in revealing the plot of the poem. In particular, the epic also refers to ancient totems characteristic of Turkic peoples that have been preserved among the people for centuries, such as the “blue wolf,” the “mother wolf,” and the “maned wolf,” and integrates episodes connected with their symbolism into the narrative.

Based on the above considerations, it can be concluded that the possibilities of the sonnet genre ensure the internal rhythm of the lyrical epic, the balance of images, and the predominance of the central idea. At the same time, through the methodology of modern literary studies—intertextual analysis, the structural approach, and the theory of genre evolution—deeper layers of the human psychological state and the concept of freedom in Faxriyor’s epics are revealed.

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