

The prose in the Shaki literary environment at the beginning of the XXI century (based on the creative contributions of Yusuf Shukurlu, Aynur Tamkin, and Gulara Abdulkarimova)

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The article is dedicated to the study of the prose heritage of representatives of the literary environment of Shaki in the XX and first decades of the XXI century. The article examines the elements influencing the formation of the literary talent and skills of Yusuf Shukurlu, Aynur Tamkin, and Gulara Abdulkarimova, who were born in Shaki and belonged to the town's literature world. The researcher touches on their «prose laboratory», gives a clear assessment of their creativity, and emphasizes the demand for a broader monographic study of these authors' belletristic prose collection. The fundamental purpose of this research paper is to explain the position of skilled and talented prose writers such as Yusuf Shukurlu, Aynur Tamkin, and Gulara Abdulkarimova, providing analytical analysis of their undeniable role in the improvement of satirical prose within the Shaki of the XXI century exposing the capabilities of their literary creations that have turned into an essential branch of Azerbaijani literature.

Keywords: Yusuf Shukurlu, Aynur Tamkin, Gulara Abdulkarimova, prose, writer, Shaki literary environment, satirical hero, the story.

Статья посвящена изучению прозаического наследия представителей литературной среды Шеки XX и первых десятилетий XXI вв. В статье рассматриваются факторы, влияющие на формирование литературного таланта известных в литературной среде Жусупа Шкюрлю, Айнура Тамкина и Гюлары Абдулкеримовой, родившихся в г. Шеки. Автор рассказывает и даёт чёткую оценку их прозаическому творчеству, подчёркивает необходимость более широкого, монографического исследования художественного фонда этих авторов. Основная цель статьи – объяснить роль талантливых и умелых писателей Жусупа Шкюрлю, Айнура Тамкина и Гюлары Абдулкеримовой в развитии прозы в г. Шеки первых десятилетий XXI в., раскрыть особенности их творчества посредством аналитического анализа.

Ключевые слова: Жусупа Шкюрлю, Айнур Тамкин, Гюлар Абдулкеримов, проза, писатель, литературная среда города Шеки, сатирический герой, рассказ.

Introduction. In the Shaki literary environment, prose additionally evolved alongside poetry, whilst the representatives of the literary world were using extra narrative genres in prose within the twentieth century and at the start of the twenty-first century. In the 70s and 80s, Zaman Garayev and Mammad Chalabiyev's literary creations additionally addressed the narrative genre even inside the overdue 90s of the twentieth century and the primary decade of the twenty-first century. Thrilling examples of the novel genre emerged from the pen of Teymur Khalilov, Yashar Aghayev (Galbinur), and engineer Akif Salamov. Sabir Afandiyev, Lutfali Hasanov, Mammad Chalabiyev, Zaman Garayev, Mammadiya Suleymanli, Nizami Nabiyev, Tofiq Gaffarov, Alashraf Shayan created their works in the field of prose throughout the researched period. During this period satirical-realist prose occurred in the literary pieces of Lutfali Hasanov, Mammadiya Suleymanli, Alashraf Mammadov (Shayan), Tofiq Gaffarov, Mammad Chalabiyev, Nizami Nabiyev, Sabir Afandiyev, Teymur Khalilov, Zaman Garayev, Telman Hamidli and other writers. The area of artistic creation of commented literary people manifested itself as genres often emerging as stories and feuilletons within the borders of Shaki's literary scene.

Results. In Yusuf Shukurlu's stories «Pink Jacket», «Wolf», «Conmen», «Kirva's Party», «Vodka Flight», «Cat in the Bag», «Libeksin», «Chapa», «Bridge Trap» the events, household issues, the description of the country's nature, happenings typical for the social and economic life of Shaki in the 70s of the XX century, in the 1990s and at the beginning of the XXI century are reflected and depicted by the writer's accurate observations.

The story «Pink Jacket» brings up the rules of the Soviet government and land policy in the village: «According to the laws of the Soviet government, each family could keep at most two heads of neat cows or buffalo, six heads of sheep, two hives of bees, and what else?» Woe to you if you have

more than that! – The officials of the Village Council would come and tie his head! If you are still not sent to the court, you will throw your hat to the sky with joy» [1, p. 72]. While writing these sentences, the author expressed his critical attitude towards the Soviet economic system and condemned state ownership. The story is narrated by a first-person narrator. By telling the story of «Pink Jacket», the author also introduces the readers to the issues of education and training in his environment.

In the story «Wolf» with a hunting story, Yusuf Shukurlu draws attention to the natural beauty of Bash Shabalid village, where he was born and grew up. The description of the hunting scene is relevant in terms of modernity of ideas. With the hunting scene, the author first of all wants to show that the nature of the country is rich in hunting animals. Although the work reminds us of the famous writer Abdulla Shaig's story «Koch» (i. e. migration) in terms of language and description, the illustrations are original. In the story told by a small schoolboy, the author shows his ability to create a scene that is pictorial of natural beauties at first: «It was already morning, and the loud sound of birds was filling the ears. On both sides of the road we were walking, there was small undergrowth and it seemed as if flowers of various shapes and colors had been planted on the side of the road. The pleasant scents of mountain mints were felt from everywhere» [1, p. 85], [2, p. 124].

In the story «The Cat in the Bag», Yusif Shukurlu depicts the catastrophe that a crude joke can bring upon a person. In the story, Sadulla, Ismayil, Afgan, Lachin, Farman, Choban Muhammad, and others are remembered as simple village dweller characters. Due to its unexpected ending, the story gains the effect of a novella when Lachin was shot and got killed.

In the writer's stories «Conmen» and «Vodka Flight», the shortcomings of social life, fraud, and hard-earned income found their personification in Aliafsar, Alihuseyn, Osman, Gulya, and other characters.

The narrative genre also occupies a special place in Yusuf Shukurlu's prose creativity. From this point of view, the writer's stories «Minaret» and «Yetti» are interesting.

In the story «Minaret», the author expresses his attitude toward the social layers in a different way from society members. The plot line of the work is connected with the love line between two young people – Galib and Malahat, and the attitude of the author toward the collective farm and the police system, the prosecutor's office. Things that happened to Rajab, the hero of the work, are depicted with all nakedness in the story. The various relationships of Rajab Kishi: Rajab Kishi – Mammadov, Rajab Kishi – prosecutor, and Rajab Kishi – investigator, diversify the plot of the work. In the narrative, the writer expresses his attitude toward the Soviet system, to Mammadov, the investigator, by using Ghalib's duty to «rescue» a Soviet soldier sent to Afghanistan.

The positive heroes of the story Rajab Kishi and his wife Rasima are ordinary village people. Galib is their only child. After completing his higher education, he is sent to military service in the Soviet Army. He first serves in the Irkutsk Region, and then is sent to Afghanistan. His mother, Rasima wants to ask the neighboring girl Malahat to marry her son. She tells Malahat's mother Govhar about her intention. The desire of both mothers coincides. However, the ugly people interrupt their beautiful dreams. The chairman of the collective farm, the arrogant Mamedov forces Malahat to marry his nephew Sahib. The writer could convey to his reader the identity of Mamedov, who runs the collective farm based on «humanist» Soviet laws, through the dialogue between Rasima and Rajab. This expression shows the author's attitude not only to Mamedov but also to the political regime that executed him: «“ – Wife, how can I explain it to you? I don't even know everything myself!” In fact, our situation is in the regime of communism. For example, raykon is the headmaster of the district. Whatever he wants, it happens in this region. Let's take our Mamedov as an example. As if he inherited this collective farm from his grandfather, he dismantles it, destroys it, sells it, eats it...» [1, p. 98–99], [3, p. 243]. Malahat's father, Imran, also faces a dilemma. Fearing Mamedov's insults, he reluctantly agrees to this marriage. Mamedov's nephew Sahib is a young man without morals and decency. He disturbs the villagers with his ill-mannered actions, and is beaten by «unknown guests». This incident makes Mamedov angry. He accuses Rajab Kishi of this incident and calls the investigator to the village who is also his close acquaintance. The investigator's rude attitude toward Rajab Kishi carries the attention of the reader to the arbitrariness of the militia bodies. With his words the investigator brought to attention the lack of morals of a group of people working in the militia system: «Oh, insect! Oh, swine! Who are you to beat people?» [1, p. 106].

However, the writer does not forget to generalize characteristic features of humane and hard-working people in the Soviet administrative system in the person of the district prosecutor. The prosecutor approaches the issue fairly and listens to Rajab Kishi till the end forcing investigator to apologize to the man. The dismissal of the investigator inflames Mamedov's hatred for Rajab. By that time, Galib has already been discharged from the army. He informs his mother that he is returning home. Rajab buys a sacrificial lamb for his son. But the lamb is stolen on the order of Mamedov. This situation is repeated several times. Rajab takes the rifle and stands in an ambush at night to punish the thief. Accidentally, when he opens the door, he doesn't recognize, shoots, and kills Galib, who is coming back home from the army that night. Eventually, Galib's mother Rasima loses her mind and becomes crazy after that accident.

The language of the work pleases the reader with its simplicity and smoothness. The content of the story proves the author's knowledge of the lexical layers of the language well enough. The use of dialects in his narratives enriches the speech of the characters. For example, words like «dashgura» and «beygafil» are typical for the Shaki dialect. Proverbs such as «A good neighbor is better than a distant relative» and «Walnut tree is a maiden tree» used in the narrative are necessary tools that ensure the variety of lexical features of the work.

The science fiction novella «Yetti» [4] also occupies a significant place in Yusif Shukurlu's prose writing. In this work, the author seeks to explain the concept of an «equal society» from a scientific perspective.

At the end of the XX century and the beginning of the XXI century, the epic reflection of life in the Shaki's literary environment was also manifested in the works of female writers Aynur Tamkin, Gulara Inci, Ruhangiz Rahimi, and Hadiya Shafagul.

In Aynur Tamkin's literary works, the qualitative dimensions of the artistic word leave behind the quantitative dimensions of the artistic text. The main character of the young writer's story «Lost Happiness» is a young man Matin, who grew up in one of the mountainous villages in Farhad Kishi's family and is a humble hardworking laborer. His mother Mehpara loves her son more than her life. When she learns that his son fell in love with a girl named Laman, who was born and raised in a city, she panics and at first, not desiring to entrust her son's fate to the city girl. However, Matin is irrevocable in his love. He does not want to change his mind and his choice even telling his mother: «Laman is my choice. I am not giving up this choice» [5, p. 16]. This young man's devotion to his love sets him on the path to future family tragedy. However, it is not only the steadfastness of his love that endears Matin to the reader, but also the words that he says to Laman, expressing his respect and reverence for his parents: «...I can only tell you that my parents are my life and soul, and you are the joy of my life. I will neither give up on them for you, nor on you for them» [5, p. 16].

The writer is capable of following the flow of events. The author lightens the morals and inner world of the young, inexperienced Laman's scheming, mischievous mother Leyli, and her aunt Mehtab by enlivening actions. Mrs. Leyli whose mentality and principles do not let her accept her daughter's love for Matin a villager from the remote region lives an effortless, luxurious life in the heart of the urban culture. She is against her daughter residing in the village «– Where I am, where this villager is?» [5, p. 18], she says to her daughter. «Hey girl, what business are you having there? Rural place, with a lot of work to do, a lot of chores to do. In the evenings, everyone comes home and spends time at home. There is neither place for going out nor chance for dressing up» [5, p. 18]. Through her words, the writer shows her attitude that she is no longer in favor of leading a cultured life, otherwise, she is morally vain seeking jewelry and a well-off and prosperous life. However, Laman is loyal to her love just like Matin. She tells her mother that she will not marry anyone else except Matin. Although Laman's mother Mrs. Leyli is a mischievous woman, her father, Mr. Asad is a very cultured, well-mannered person. Asad who is a highly educated engineer, is excited that his daughter loves a smart man like Matin and welcomes this potential kinship. Finally, on one of the beautiful autumn days, a young couple – Matin and Laman's wedding takes place. Everyone is happy except Leyli Mehpara's joy is beyond measure.

Against the background of this happy mother's joy, the talented writer expresses his attitude to family and societal issues with the power of his artistic talent: «Mehpara's joy knew no bounds. She

brought a bride to her home and witnessed the happiness of her son. Would the creator bless her with more happiness than this? Aren't there a few mothers whose wishes for their children to marry away happily never get realized? How many children start a family without parents, how many parents burn inside with this longing?» [5, p. 22]. A beautiful, romantic family life begins. The happy-sad, peaceful-trouble days of the young husband and wife alternate with one another. Asad now lives in Canada with his wife Leyli. His father buys a new flat for Matin in Baku. But the happiness of the young family does not last long. The family's tragedy deepens after Leyli's aunt Mehtab who lives alone in Baku and leads a vanity lifestyle, starts to intervene in the young family. She begins her destructive activities, using her niece's lack of experience, for the realization of both her envy and her dreams of going to Canada. Thanks to this woman's gossip, Laman who is deeply attached to her husband, grows cold towards him and the sincere relationship between the husband and wife becomes strained and turns into regular arguments and misunderstandings. Mehtab uses an artificial pregnancy trick Laman's «scary disease», to carry out her monstrous acts. To prevent Matin from going to the doctor with his wife to check her pregnancy who is experiencing «unpleasant» conditions, «this is not a man's business» [5, p. 34], saying that Mehtab does not agree with Matin going to the hospital with them. Adhering to the Hippocratic Oath, Dr. Azada was not fooled by Mahtab's tricks and gave them an examination document that the woman was not pregnant. Unable to achieve her goal, Mehtab shows Mrs. Laman to another «familiar» doctor and creates a fake document for the «Canadian operation» to be successful. The writer explains Mehtab's abominable act and purpose to his reader as follows: «... Of course, Mehtab was somewhat envious of his niece who got married at a young age. But this did not reveal her real intention... Mrs. Mehtab realized a long time ago that Leyli had no one but Mehtab and Laman in Baku. If Laman moved to Canada, Leyli would take Mehtab with her. Reflecting, then Mehtab would travel around the country, maybe, if she was lucky, she would find a rich husband» [5, p. 31–32]. What an abominable desire! Making someone else miserable for your happiness. Ms. Mahtab is on the verge of achieving her dreams. She has already fully convinced Matin that Laman's illness has worsened and she can be treated only in Canada. She persuaded him that if he stayed there, his wife would be in danger and he may lose his wife and baby. But the writer's plotting skill exposes this lie. Mahpara who came to see her son and daughter-in-law off to Canada, while cleaning the house, gets the analysis papers given by the Azada doctor about Laman's pregnancy, and after making a phone call with the doctor, she can keep her son away from this dangerous game and prevent him from leaving for Canada, by taking her son's plane ticket and foreign currency from her daughter-in-law's bag then tears up his passport. Things are getting tense at the airport. Unable to register, Matin returns home without Laman. Laman falls into her aunt's trap and flies to Canada. When Matin learns the truth from his mother, he suffers a severe shock. His friend Vugar pulls him out of a crisis. Laman's tragedy deepens in Canada. There are many psychological moments and situations in the narrative that affect the reader. At the top of these is the scene where Matin, who fought for his pure love for many years and reunited with Laman became a victim of evil intentions and wild passions. He whose family fell apart due to a severe crisis, goes to Ottawa to give Laman the engagement ring back and the divorce papers. With this scene, the author creates a true-life situation through the prose bringing the incitement to a climax. The author wants to say that a person can find true happiness not in a foreign country, but in his native land. The inexperienced Laman who was influenced by the «native aunt» loses her happy family life with Matin who was ready to sacrifice his life for her. The literary piece ends with Laman's unhappiness and Matin's happiness. Matin does not forgive Laman who returns to Baku to meet him and confess her faults. As a result, Laman had to go back heartbroken. Later Matin starts a family again, moves to Moscow and lives a happy life there.

In the stories «A Turkish Woman», «Delayed Confession», «Face to Face with Past», and «A Life Story», which are the products of Aynur Tamkin's epic thoughts various aspects of life are conveyed to the reader in the form of a series of tired images based on the precise observations of the writer. Aynur Temkin is well aware of the requirements placed on the language of literary works. Words with poetic content used in her works, descriptive and expressive means, proverbs and sayings, descriptions of nature, dialect, and idiomatic features in figurative language confirm our conclusion.

Gulara Abdulkarimova has a special place in the literary environment with the imaginative prose characteristic of the beginning of the XXI century. One of her most interesting works, embodying her epic views is the story «The Fate of Madina». In the story, the reader comes across face-to-face with the writer's outlook on life, her excellent knowledge of the ethnographic and folklore features of the people's household ceremonies, her ability to convincingly relate events with all their realities, and develop a plot. The author's target with this story is to show the family which is the core of society – its healthy foundation, the process of upbringing in the family, and the complications caused by the old-fashioned, conservative way of thinking.

The story is based on an interesting plot line. As the title suggests the story is about the bitter fate of an average village girl named Madina. Madina is the daughter of Mardan, one of the prominent elders of the village. She is a pure family girl. She loves a boy named Shamsaddin from the neighboring village of Toprakli. However, her mother Sarvinaz wants to get her daughter married to her nephew Nizamaddin. His father Mardan is against this marriage because he knows that his brother-in-law Targul is an old-fashioned man. On the other hand, Nizamaddin, who will be his son-in-law, is not engaged in any useful work. Eventually, the wedding takes place according to traditional customs, and the bride moves to her aunt Targul's house at the insistence of Madina's mother Sarvinaz. The tragedy of the young girl begins after that. The author conveys to the reader the content of the wedding ceremony in the Soviet era which she describes. The wedding is conducted by the ashiks who are the people's seeing eyes and thinking minds. Madina is sent to her husband's house in a phaeton, not in a fancy foreign car. The description of the national traditions in the work captivates the reader: a door-kicker, a henna-applying person, a luggage carrier, a mirror-lamp holder, a pot-opener, a bride-decorator – everyone gets their shirinlik (gifted money for a favor). These descriptions differ from ordinary ones. They confirm the author's commitment to the traditions of the people. Also, the fact of Nizamaddin pouring khurush on the bride's head bringing her to their room after going through all the rooms of the house, and the right to sit down after the mother-in-law's permission indicates the sweetness of the forgotten national characteristics.

Madina's hard days begin in her husband's house. Despite doing the most difficult housework, she cannot gain the respect of her aunt Targul. On the other hand, her husband Nizamaddin's cold attitude towards her, his coming home late at night, or not coming at all, saddens her. The cowardice of her father-in-law Alimardan, his indifference to what is happening, and his failure to take any measures as the head of the family in front of Aunt Targul's comments and gossip multiply the misery of the young bride. Day by day, she becomes miserable and fades her face. Even when she is unable to perform heavy household chores due to the influence of the baby she carries in her womb, she faces inappropriate insults from her mother-in-law and gets the label of «sick daughter-in-law». Her mother, Sarvinaz seeing her daughter's condition and realizing that she made an unforgivable mistake, brings her back to her father's house. To make the plot more complete the writer brings several important points related to Alimardan Kishi's family into the plot by intensifying the conflict. It turns out that due to his inability to raise his son appropriately, Nizamaddin gets married to a girl named Khanimzar without his parents' consent. After Madina leaves her husband, Nizamaddin brings Khanimzar home and the atmosphere in the house changes dramatically. Targul becomes the servant of the house and Khanimzar becomes the master. Under the influence of Khanimzar, Targul, the messenger, gossipier, and informer of all the people who used to roam the village head and feet, becomes a house prisoner. On the other hand, Nizamaddin, one of the main characters of the story, is deceived by Khanimzar's lies and fake caress, and officially hands over his father's house to her. After learning that her husband is sick with tuberculosis, Khanimzar deepens the well of betrayal because of the absence of desire to live with him. She sells the house secretly from Nizamaddin. The homeless family becomes thrown out of their home and humiliated.

However, Medina's parents pity them. Even though Madina is sent back to her father's house. They invite their former in-laws to live in a foster home with kindness. Mardan Kishi's humane decision is spread to the whole village and gets praised. Everyone treats them with great respect and reverence. Realizing his mistakes and with remorse, Nizamaddin engages in honest work in carpentry. However, Khanimzar's «maternity» demands do not leave Nizamaddin in peace. She demands

alimony from Nizamaddin for her son. However, after a short while Khanimzar dies in an accident as a punishment for her actions. Nizamaddin's father's heart does not agree to put his motherless son in an orphanage, he brings his son Jamaladdin to their home with Madina's consent. Madina takes care of Jamaladdin with real motherly care, even more than her son Gismat.

Developing the plot according to the stream of events, the author frees Nizamaddin from the stress of being confined to his in-laws' house. It turns out that Khanimzar buys a new house in the city after making Nizamaddin sell the paternal property transferring it to her through treachery. She registers it on her son Jamaladdin. After discovering keys and documents to the new house in her handbag the family moves to that apartment. However, in the new house, Khanimzar's absence allows Targul to carry out her heinous deeds. She forgets her daughter-in-law's and sister's favors and rekindles her old grudge against Madina. On the other hand, Jamaladdin, who has already grown up, disturbs the peace of the family by raising the issue of step-parentage between his brother and himself due to the wicked upbringing he received from his native mother. Targul justifies her grandson's wrong actions and drags him into crime. In the end, Jamaladdin is sentenced to life in prison for seriously injuring his classmates. However, after being able to get released from prison, Jamaladdin is unable to reform himself, and he kills his grandmother Targul with an axe while protesting and claiming that the house belongs to him. The death of his mother and the re-arrest of his son worsened Nizamaddin's health and sent him to hospital.

Trying to make the plot of the work more captivating, the writer also included the love affair between Alyar's granddaughter Nigar and Nizamaddin's son Gismat. After Nigar graduated from the Medical Institute and Gismat from the law faculty of the university they started a family and began to work in the neighborhood district. Madina loves her daughter-in-law more than her life, but Nigar, who has a fiery nature, does not even want to meet her because she is taking care of her father-in-law, Nizamaddin, who is suffering from tuberculosis. After Nizamaddin's death because of her husband's absence, Madina loses her mind and gets hospitalized due to a mental disorder. The story ends with a tense psychological finish. Madina who ended up in hospital bearing the injustice of life, does not even recognize her son who comes to see her.

In addition to the beauty of the content, the literary piece also has a perfect structure. According to the demand of the story genre, the author develops the plot line of the work along the line against the background of Madina's unhappy fate. The figurative language of the work is vivid and complete. The writer proficiently uses the potential of words to give the outer and inner beauty of the characters and demonstrates artistry. The verbal portrait of Madina's outer appearance and inner beauty, the protagonist of the work, is proof of what we declare: «Madina, the daughter of a brave man, was a very beautiful girl. She was a bright-eyed, pencil-browed, palm-haired, thin-bellied, and intelligent girl» [6, p. 99]. The artistic definitions determining the content of the portrait indicate the author's familiarity with the intricacies of the belletristic language. Such features are more prominent in the figurative language of the work. The figurative language of the narrative and the description of the place where the events took place allow us to say that Gulara Abdulkarimova is well aware of the peculiarities of rural life because she opened her eyes to the world and grew up in the village. She uses the following proverbs and sayings as tools that ensure the readability and effect of her fiction. Such sayings and proverbs as «Man's shoes must be at home, but he is outside», «Half of a baby snake, half of my heart», «Soft fire makes sweet malt», «If one does not die, one will not be resurrected», «When I am out of my soul, where should I go for ease», «If a slave does not know his value, he will not enter the grave» are used in the language of literary characters of the narrative.

Conclusion. The study and analysis of the literary activity of certain literary people prove that prose also developed in the Shaki literary surroundings in parallel with poetry from the 50s–90s of the XX century until the first decades of the XXI century. Along with old representatives of the literary environment Yusuf Shukurlu, Aynur Tamkin and Gulara Abdulkarimova (Inci) also created their works. As may be visible from the content of the analyzed works, social-political, domestic, and educational issues, negative manifestations springing up from the defects and disadvantages of the society were realistically reflected in the literary creations of the above-stated writers. It is comprehensible from the content of numerous works that the writers no longer hesitate to criticize the failings of Soviet society and

enriched Azerbaijani literature in terms of innovative subjects. The upbringing ideals of a person, his moral education, respect and reverence for the older generation, and healthy family issues have become the main author pillars of several literary works. It can be confidently stated that the analyzed literary pieces occupy an essential place on the pages of Azerbaijani prose whose artistic examples will have a certain positive effect on the moral education of readers.

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Поступила в редакцию 04.07.2024