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## LITERARY AND HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE USE OF THE IMAGE OF ASHIG IN DRAMATURGY IN THE 1920S AND 1930S

*The article emphasizes that the 1920s and 1930s were a period of development for Azerbaijan Soviet literature. This period was characterized by the dominance of the Soviet political and ideological system in Azerbaijan and the influence of the emerging new ideology on literature and art. The article is relevant in terms of studying the role and function of national symbols, especially the image of the ashig, in the dramaturgy of that period. The article explores the process of reconciling the image of Ashiq with the Soviet ideology in Azerbaijani drama and provides an opportunity for both national and socio-political analysis. In such a complex context, Azerbaijan dramaturgy was going through a period of search and national and spiritual values were given space in the written works in a manner adapted to Soviet ideology. The article pays special attention to the image of the ashig, one of the bearers of national identity in the dramaturgical creativity of the period. One of the important aspects of these searches was the appeal to the image of the ashig, which is the main attribute of our national spirituality. The article analyzes the necessity of addressing the image of the ashig in 20th century Azerbaijani dramaturgy. The article examines the function of the development of the image of the ashig in Abdurrahim bey Hagverdiyev "Baba yurdunda (In the Land of the Grandfather) and Mehdi Huseyn "Shohrat" (Fame) dramas. Based on the aforementioned works, the article examines the function of the ashig image, its mediating role between Soviet ideology and national values, and the socio-cultural messages conveyed by playwrights through this image. The article reveals that the image of the ashig in both works is presented not only as an artist or a representative of folklore, but also as a bearer of national values in the changing landscape of society and a spiritual leader adapted to the new era. In addition, the article also identifies the differences between the two authors' approaches to the image of the ashig. The article also explains the brief content of each work. Abdurrahim bey Hagverdiyev (1870–1933) was a great playwright and literary critic who left an indelible mark on Azerbaijan literature at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. In his works, the well-known playwright touched upon important periods of Azerbaijan history and wrote about the events that took place in the life of the people at that time. His work "Baba yurdunda" (In the Land of the Grandfather) also reflects the characteristic features of the period in which it was written. The article is useful for scientific literature, as the functional and symbolic analysis of the image of the ashig in works such as Baba Yurdunda and Shohret has not been systematically conducted. Mehdi Huseyn, another well-known representative of 20th century Azerbaijan literature, lived and created in 1909–1965. Possessing strong logic and deep knowledge, Mehdi Huseyn was known as a writer, playwright, critic and theorist. The article presents Mehdi Huseyn's approach to the image of the ashig, the plot of the drama Shohrat (Fame), the main idea, and a comprehensive analysis of the comparison of the image of the ashig with other images. Mehdi Huseyn, who exhibited various heroic images in his many years of literary creativity, directed each of them to the service of the people until the last moment of his literary activity, portraying them as people working for the future of the people. The prominent playwright, who contributed to the development and formation of Azerbaijan literature, created the image of the ashig in several of his works. The drama Shohrat (Fame) is one of these works. The article presents Mehdi Huseyn's deep commitment to national and spiritual values through his work Shohrat (Fame). The article explains that the image of the ashig presented in both works was developed in accordance with the requirements of the existing political ideological thought. The article concludes that both playwrights developed the image of the ashig within the context of national values. The article presents a new perspective on the process of reconciling national and moral values with Soviet literary ideology in the 20s and 30s of the 20th century.*

**Key words:** 20th century, dramaturgy, work, ashig, image.

**Introduction to the problem.** It is known that although the foundation of Azerbaijan dramaturgy was laid in the 19th century with the works of M.F. Akhundzadeh [13], it continued to take shape and develop in the 20th century with the works of Jalil Mammadguluzadeh [3], Abdurrahim bey Hagverdiyev [7], Mehdi Huseyn [9], Huseyn Javid [8], Ilyas Efendiyev [6], Sabit Rahman [16], Mirza Ibrahimov [14], Anar [1], Elchin [5] and other literary figures. Of course, the 20th century combines several stages. It can be said that in the 20s–30s of the 20th century, the tendency to direct folklore texts towards ideological goals was formed. Because the existing literary-historical situation did not allow for a tendency to write fictions in the style of classical literature and divan poetry. The emerging new ideological system considered only folklore acceptable and therefore, oral folk literature genres were increasingly used in the fields of poetry, prose and drama.

Although the image of the ashig was used in dramaturgical works in different ways, depending on the class and political position, it played a role of a bridge between the people and the authorities. Of course, the image of ashig and the purpose of its development were not given in the same way in all written works.

**Degree of development of the problem.** All stages of Azerbaijan literature of the 20th century have been studied by researchers from various aspects. Although dissertations on different aspects of the creativity of Abdurrahim bey Hagverdiyev and Mehdi Huseyn, monographs on the theme and idea of their works have been written, the appeal to the image of the ashig and the reason for its development have not been included. The novelty of the study is the analysis of the image of ashig in works written in the 20s–30s of the 20th century for the first time and the purpose for which it was developed in the mentioned period.

**Purpose of the study.** The purpose of the study is to explain the necessity of resorting to the image of the ashig in the field of dramaturgy in the 20s–30s of the XX century, to determine the form of development of the folklore informant in the dramatic works of A. Hagverdiyev and M. Huseyn and the differences between the examples cited.

**Research methods.** The research work was conducted on the basis of systematic analysis and and the requirements of the historical-comparative method.

**Main part. The image of the ashig in the dramaturgy of Abdurrahim bey Hagverdiyev**

The image of the ashig in the dramas of A. Hagverdiyev, one of the well-known figures of

our dramaturgy, is the embodiment of his interest in folklore. The image of the ashig in the examples of literary texts expresses the aesthetic view and worldview of the people. Through the image of the ashig in the work “Baba yurdunda” [2, 313] it seems to create a bridge between folklore and literature. The additions given from the ashig’s language add a national spirit to the work. In addition, he acts as a bearer of national identity and ideological line in his dramas such as “Yoldaş Koroğlu” (“Comrade Koroglu”) [7] and “Daşçı” (“Dashchi”) [7].

**The manifestation of the image of the ashig in Mehdi Huseyn’s work**

A talented writer and playwright of our classical heritage, Mehdi Huseyn, is one of the main figures of Azerbaijani Soviet literature. The writer, who came to fiction in 1930, tried his hand at both prose and drama. Mehdi Huseyn, who was constantly in search of modernity, devoted a place to the image of the ashig in his works “Abşeron” (“Absheron”) [9], “Qara daşlar” (“Black Stones”) [9], and “Şöhrət” (“Shohrat”) [9]. Critic Mammad Arif rightly notes “He gave the Soviet novel and dramaturgy new works in terms of ideas and art” [12]. These works also contain references to folklore themes and images. The image of the ashig created by the outstanding writer in both prose and drama acts as a carrier of the heroic spirit and national values of the people. The image of the ashig is used against the backdrop of the depiction of folk memory, folklore and historical values. Through this image, folklore returns to our memory and instills in future generations the need to take ownership of our national and spiritual existence.

**The use of the image of ashig in dramaturgy in the 1920s and 1930s**

The 20s–30s of the 20th century constitute an important, contradictory stage in the history of literature. Since the attitude towards the art of the ozan-ashug was positively received during this period, the image of the ashug was created in works written in fiction. The main reason for this was that folklore, the representative of folklore, was considered a form of struggle chosen only by the lower classes. Even the Ashug Congress, which was convened for the first time in Baku in 1928, aroused interest for this reason. Literary critic Bekir Chobanzadeh notes that “the east, which was an entertainment tool until the October Revolution, after this time takes the form of a speech, a declaration expressing the opinion of the peasant about the changes taking place in the environment and on his estate” [2, 41].

In this sense, works written in every field of literature, without exception, had to be adapted to

the principles of Soviet ideology. In dramaturgy, “preference was given to those examples of folklore in which the description of the lifestyle of the common people and hardworking people takes the main place”. To explain our ideas more clearly, let’s analyze examples of the dramas of A. Hagverdiyev and M. Huseyn.

First, let us look at the work of A. Hagverdiyev (1870–1933), one of the leading figures of 20th century Azerbaijan dramaturgy, “Baba yurdunda” (In the Land of the Grandfather) [2, 313]. Written in 1927, this drama, consisting of 5 acts, was written in accordance with the requirements of the Soviet political-ideological system in terms of its subject matter. Before moving on to the image of the ashig, let us look at a brief description of the events taking place in the work. Thus, in most of the works written until the 60s of the 20th century the use of folk literature examples was supposed to express the protest of the simple, hardworking masses against the exploiting class and its injustice. In this work, the exploiting force is represented by Jahangir agha.

Here, the village community, which was fed up by his actions, is depicted, as is the people’s protest against the agha and the injustice of his dargha (civil servant). When we start reading the work, we clearly see the benefit of folklore. As in many of our legends and tales, here too, the unjust Jahangir agha sets his sights on Gulnisa, the daughter of a peasant named Hasan. It turns out that Gulnisa will soon be engaged to Safi oghlu Iskandar. “Is it fair that I should let go of such an angelic girl? If it were the past, it would have been easy, I would have dragged her home and no one would have been allowed to open their mouths and talk. Now the times are different, the laws are different. It can’t be done. All the beautiful daughters of the villagers were the property of my grandfathers. But now, we look at them afar and swallow our saliva” [2, 316].

Seeing that his master’s mood was spoiled, Namaz, the civil servant of Jahangir Agha, quickly found a «solution» to the problem. He seduced a boy named Sadig, who was in love with Gulnisa in the village and made him kill Safi oghlu Iskandar. Trying to show himself as an honest and upright man in the face of the events that had taken place, Jahangir agha demanded that Sadig be severely punished by the bailiff.

After a short time, he manages to deceive Hasan with his wealth and get his daughter as his wife. Hasan, who has been the agha’s father-in-law for 5 years, considers himself the “rightful” person in the village community. Hasan, who once said, “Why should I drive the master’s dargha (servant) out of my house?”

[2, 324], uses the “influence” he already has to show his disregarding to Namaz. By presenting the dialogue between Hasan and the peasant Hazratgulu, the writer was showing that he was against those who wanted to oppose the people and encroach on the rights of their subjects as soon as they gained privileges in the 1920s and thus they followed the principles of the Soviet ideological system.

H a s a n: First, you should know what you’re talking about. I’m not everyone’s uncle, so you can call me Uncle Hasan. Secondly, even if you count yellow gold instead of banknotes, I will steel peel your skin. If you need an animal bed, come to me! If you have a word, tell me! Who is Namaz, what kind of person is he? You will go and take your animals out of the animal bed right now. Otherwise, if I come and see any animals there, I will shoot and kill them all!

H a z r a t g u l u: After all, what right do you have to take my animals out of the animal bed that I paid for?

H a s a n: You have paid a lot of money in vain. The person who rented you the animal bed has also hit his head on a stone. Now you will see when I come and take your animals out of the animal bed! Look how rude you are to me! Now go away!

H a z r a t g u l u: At the end, uncle Hasan...

H a s a n: There is no end. I say go, go! (Pushes him out.)

“H a z r a t g u l u (going out and addressing the villagers at the door): Oh, see, what a disaster he has brought upon us! I have counted out two hundred manats and rented the animal bed. Now he says, either go and take your animals out of there, or I will come and kill them all with bullets” [2, 330].

While events were continuing in this manner, one day Shahmar Bey came to Jahangir Agha to convey the governor’s order to the landowners. He said that «everywhere the citizens gathered together and destroyed, plundered and burned the properties of the landowners. Sometimes they kill themselves. The wind there may blow here. So you need to be nice to the people and not upset them. Otherwise, if those games come out here too, it will be difficult to cope with the people. You need to bring in the army, disperse the people with gunfire. It is not known whether the army will fire or not. Because in one or two places in Russia they have ordered the army to shoot at the villagers, but they did not, saying, we are all peasant children, we will not kill our own villagers. Yesterday I was with Ehsan Khan. I talked to him a lot about this. He also wanted to come to you today to talk” [2, 334]. Namaz, who heard the conversation, seized the opportunity and persuaded Jahangir Agha

to expel Gulnisa and his son from the house. Later, he arranged a wedding for himself with Ehsan Khan's daughter.

The reader who can follow the course of events clearly sees that the work was written under the influence of the political and ideological climate of the time. In the past, the upper class was portrayed as bloodthirsty, cruel and disregarding the morality and spirituality of the people. Therefore, the writer also portrays Hasan, a man from a simple village community, in a negative light due to his greed.

We already encounter the image of the ashig in the wedding scene of Jahangir Agha. Although A. Hagverdiyev devotes space to the image of the ashig only in this part of the work, he was able to both give a complete description of the ashig and adapt it to the requirements of the Soviet ideological system.

"Balaban (wind instrument that accompanies the performance of an ashig) player and Ashig Jafar, with a saz in his hand, taking off their chukhas stood up". They first go around the "majlis" (gathering) playing, then they play a dance tune, dance together, stand in the middle of the "majlis" (gathering) and begin playing the "arazbari". Ashig Jafar sings a yekpay (one of ashig melodies).

Ashig Jafar (sings):

I said: Hey friend, don't be so flirtatious,  
There's good and bad here.

I said: oh my friend, let the trouble that will  
come to you come to me,

She said: be patient, there is time, oh cruel one,

I said: oh rose, who is your equal?

She said: my soulmate is the nightingale.

I said: oh rose, don't beg the khar (thorn)!

She said: What should I do, my task is difficult,  
oh cruel one! [2, 340]

Several points draw our attention here. First, the writer's description of the ashig together with the balaban player indicates that he is well versed in the issues of ashig performance. Because during the performance, the ashig is in complete unity with the balaban player. Of course, the ashig can lead the "majlis" (gathering) alone, but in this case, since he is the master of himself, he presents the performance in the form he wants, not as required. Balaban, on the other hand, adds a special rhythm to the saz. Of course, the ashig can lead the "majlis" (gathering) alone, but in this case, since he is the master of himself, he presents the performance in the form he wants, not as required.

Balaban, on the other hand, adds a special rhythm to the saz. The second interesting point is that

this song sung by Ashig Jafar is based on a "gullu gafiya" (flowery rhyme). In fact, "gullu gafiya" (flowery rhyme) is the name given to the question-answer structure of ashig poems in the "gozelleme" (a romantic couplet dedicated to the praise of beauty) style, based on the "Dedim-dedi" (I said-she said) or "Dedim-soyledi" (I said-she said) principle. Ashigs consider those "dedim-dedi" or "dedim-soyledi" that occur within a verse or at the beginning of a verse to be "gul" (flowers) and often call such rhymes "gullu gafiya" (flowery rhyme), that is, "gullu goshma" (flowery goshma) [5, 115–116].

When we pay attention to the examples given, we see that the ashig melodies replace each other in a regular manner at the wedding party. In accordance with the stage of the ashig majlis, Ashig Jafar walks around the room with a saz in his hand, and after reciting the couplet "Gerek" (I should) by the 18th century Azerbaijan poet M. P. Vagif, he joins the "majlis" (gathering) and then performs with the balaban player, on the tune of the ashig tune "Karami" again performs the folk goshma "Durnalar" (Cranes – birds) by M. V. Vidadi, which is a favorite of many people. After the shikaste, the ashig plays with the accompaniment of the balaban and goes to his place. From the passage, it is clear that A. Hagverdiyev was able to fully embody the image of the ashig. That is, the art of ashig has a syncretic nature – it reflects the skills of performance, epic, dance and acting. Since the playwright is also deeply familiar with the ashig tradition, the character he creates has a mature character.

The end of the work, as in almost all literary texts written in the 1920s–1950s, results in the punishment of representatives of the upper class, their removal from their positions, etc. Jahangir Agha has now become a destitute and beggar and his son, whom he once expelled from home, has grown up and been appointed as the village chairman. At the end of the play, the playwright accidentally brings together the father with the son, who has taken the name Iskanderzade to console his mother. Iskanderzade leaves Jahangir agha, who asks his son for help, alone with his conscience and miserable life. Although A. Hagverdiyev's work "Baba yurdunda" (In the Land of the grandfather) was written in accordance with the atmosphere of the current era, the use of the image of the ashig was not done with any artificial coloring.

One of the works in which the image of an ashig was featured in dramaturgy in the 1930s was the play "Shohrat" (Fame) (1932) by the well-known playwright Mehdi Huseyn. The events in the play are a current among the collective farmers of the "Baki



fehlesi” (Baku Worker»). It is true that “Mehdi Huseyn was interested in a serious moral and ethical problem in his first drama” [6, 35]. The critic Jafar Khandan rightly writes that “a number of characters new to our literature were created in this work” [4]. Bandit Salimov leads collective farmer Imran astray and they steal and sell apples from the orchard. Collective farm chairman Rashid, his friend ashig Aziz and border guards are looking for bandit Salimov, but no one knows that Imran is in cahoots with him in this. We see the presence of the character of Ashig Aziz in the work from beginning to end. Ashig Aziz is presented as a brave and fearless character who sings folk songs, recites bayati and leads gatherings and sings songs in praise of beauty. A wedding party is being held for Rashid and Durdana. Rashid’s friend Ashig Aziz, holding his stringed instrument to his chest, sings a goshma.

“Durdana, who comes with a flirtatious gait,  
Your brow is worthy of being a bow.  
Your lover is worthy of  
Moaning at the torment you inflict” [3, 25].

The goshma, which the playwright gave in the language of Ashig Aziz, is Ashig Huseyn Shamkirli’s epilogue “Layikhdi” (Worthy) [1, 183]. M. Huseyn added liveliness to the play by replacing the names in the epilogue with the names of the characters in the work. The main events take place after this. When Rashid asks Lieutenant Vasilyev, why he came to the wedding alone, he learns that an attack is expected. Showing courage, they call out to the young men at the wedding – Ashig Aziz, Imran, Hamid, Dadash and others – and leave the place to help against the attackers. It is clear from the course of events so far that it was written in a form that suited the demands of the times in which it was written – in the form of the people’s struggle against the representatives of the exploiting class. In the work, Ashig Aziz is portrayed as a militant character. He is not afraid, even when he captured by the enemy, “he throws his chest forward and shouts loudly. Shoot, why are you staring at me, shoot, you son of a bitch” [3, 33]. The image of the ashig presented here was in accordance with the

requirements of the 20th century Soviet ideological system. The playwright has perfectly portrayed the character of the ashig with all its features. His dialogue with the border guard shows the ashig’s characteristic features (turning to folk music for help even in the most difficult moments – N.H).

Facing the bandits, Rashid and others fights and Ashig Aziz is injured. The ashiggo, who is seriously injured and feels that he is dying, thinks about his saz even at the last moment. “Rashid, do you remember my father?” When he died, he asked for his saz. I brought it to him. Just like me, he leaned on his elbows and played his saz... alas, my saz is far away” [3, 42]. As can be seen, the playwright did not use any intervention in portraying the folklore informant. The doctor is able to bring the ashig back to life, with little hope of recovery. In fact, the ashig’s salvation from death is not just a symbol of a character, but of the survival of an entire culture, the people’s words and their art. At the end of the work, Ashig Aziz recovers, the enemy is destroyed and everyone gathers for Rashid and Durdana’s wedding.

**Conclusion.** From the examples we have given, considering the reasons for resorting to the image of the ashig in dramaturgy in the 1920s and 1930s and the direction in which it was developed, we come to the following conclusion:

In the 1920s and 1930s of the 20th century, when a class approach prevailed throughout the entire literature, the main direction in the works written in dramaturgy was the appeal to folklore themes and images.

The image of the ashig in both A. Hagverdiyev’s work “Baba yurdunda” (In the Land of the Grandfather) and M. Huseyn’s drama «Shohrat» (Fame) was written in accordance with the rules of the Soviet ideological system.

If the image of the ashig created by A. Hagverdiyev was simply a folklore narrator leading a gathering, in M. Huseyn’s drama he was presented as a true folk hero, both with his saz and his bravery.

In any case, the image of the ashig in both works is preferred.

In no work the image of the ashig is given an artificial ideological coloring.

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#### **Гасанова Н. Т. ЛІТЕРАТУРНО-ІСТОРИЧНИЙ ОГЛЯД ВИКОРИСТАННЯ ОБРАЗУ АШИГА В ДРАМАТУРГІЇ 1920-Х І 1930-Х РОКІВ**

*У статті розглянуто період розвитку азербайджанської радянської літератури, який був у 1920-ті та 1930-ті роки. Цей період характеризувався домінуванням радянської політичної та ідеологічної системи в Азербайджані та впливом нової ідеології, що виникала, на літературу та мистецтво. У такому складному контексті азербайджанська драматургія переживала період пошуків, і національні та духовні цінності отримували місце в письмових творах у спосіб, адаптований до радянської ідеології. Одним з важливих аспектів цих пошуків було звернення до образу ашига, який є головним атрибутом нашої національної духовності. У статті розглядається функція розвитку образу ашига в драмах Абдуллах бек Хагвердієва «Баба юрдунда» («На землі діда») та Мехді Гусейна «Шохрат» («Слава»). Абдуллах бек Хагвердієв (1870–1933) був чудовим драматургом і літературним критиком, який залишив незабутній слід в азербайджанській літературі кінця XIX – початку XX століття. У своїх творах відомий драматург торкався важливих періодів історії Азербайджану та писав про події, що відбувалися в житті народу того часу. Його твір «Баба юрдунда» («На землі діда») також відображає характерні риси періоду, в який він був написаний.*

*Мехді Гусейн, ще один відомий представник азербайджанської літератури XX століття, жив і творив у 1909–1965 роках. Володіючи сильною логікою та глибокими знаннями, Мехді Гусейн був відомий як письменник, драматург, критик і теоретик. Мехді Гусейн, який за багато років своєї літературної творчості створив різноманітні героїчні образи, до останньої миті своєї літературної діяльності спрямовував кожен з них на служіння народу, зображуючи їх як людей, які працюють заради майбутнього народу. Видатний драматург, який зробив внесок у розвиток і становлення азербайджанської літератури, створив образ ашига в кількох своїх творах. Драма «Шохрат» (Слава) є одним із таких творів.*

**Ключові слова:** 20 століття, драматургія, твір, ашиг, образ.