

# Traces of Multicultural Values in Folklore and Written Examples

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The article consists of an introduction, three headings, a conclusion, and a list of literature. The introductory part discusses multiculturalism and multiculturalism in Azerbaijan. The basis of Heydar Aliyev's policy is the main line of multicultural, tolerant, and humanistic values. The policy of Heydar Aliyev, where human rights are considered a supreme value, not only saved Azerbaijan from civil war, but also touched upon the issues of multicultural values of Azerbaijan as a model. In the main parts, traces of multiculturalism, which include national and spiritual values that have come down from the historical sources of Azerbaijan to the present day, are examined on the basis of Azerbaijani literary examples. The direction of the research was carried out on the basis of the genres of the epic type in folklore samples. From folklore samples, research was carried out in two directions: (1) Multicultural values in legends and tales; (2) Multicultural values in epics. The main object of analysis was conducted on folklore samples and the research found its final result. The legend about Alexander was analyzed from the aspect of multiculturalism. By bringing examples of anecdotes about Molla Nasreddin, Mukhtar Imanov's research was touched upon and multicultural traces were noted in this anecdote. The direction of analysis under the second title of folklore samples is epics, where the epics "Kitabi-Dede Gorgud", "Koroglu", and "Gachag Nebi" were noted, and the main research was the epic "Asli and Kerem". In the third section of the article, the first native-language literary example is the anonymous epic "Dastani-Ahmed Harami". The epic was approached from the aspect of multiculturalism and the analysis went in this direction.

*Keywords:* folklore, Azerbaijani literature, legend, epic, narrative, written example

## Introduction

If we look at the historical sources of multiculturalism in Azerbaijan, we will see that multiculturalism has not been formed in Azerbaijan since 2010. The founder of modern Azerbaijani multiculturalism is associated with the name of the Great Leader Heydar Aliyev. On the eve of the collapse of the Soviet Union—in the late 80s and early 90s, the concept of "nationalism" was the only category of calling for unity for various groups. This political ideology, unlike European states, led to dramatic clashes in the former Soviet countries and in our region. On the eve of these years, Azerbaijan came to the brink of civil war. It was on this eve that the National Leader Heydar Aliyev returned to power again. After this return, radical changes began to manifest themselves immediately in both domestic and foreign policy of Azerbaijan. The basis of Heydar Aliyev's policy is the main line of multicultural, tolerant, and humanistic values. Heydar Aliyev's policy, in which human rights are

considered a supreme value, not only saved Azerbaijan from civil war, but even formed the multicultural values of Azerbaijan as a model. The Sumgayit incident in 1989 was one of the initial causes of the civil war. From the moment the Soviet state began to collapse, the initiative to establish the Lezghistan and Talysh-Mugan republics in Azerbaijan was put forward and the need for a positional person to lead the Republic of Azerbaijan to carry out political work in that direction arose. Sensing this importance, Great Leader Heydar Aliyev came to power in 1993 with the signature meeting of the Azerbaijani intellectual community. The Republic of Azerbaijan declared its state independence on October 18, 1991 (Abdulla, 2017). The Republic of Azerbaijan was officially recognized by a number of countries around the world in a short period of time. Thus, the newly independent state became necessary to establish political and economic cooperation with world organizations. And at the same time, as a result of Heydar Aliyev's strong policy, protecting the equality of rights of national groups belonging to different ethnic groups and creating conditions for the development of cultural diversity became one of the main conditions. In other words, the performance of the so-called act and the protection of rights had to be documented and internal strife had to be prevented.

### **Multicultural Values in Legends and Tales**

Legends are diverse in terms of subject matter and are notable for their diverse content. Those related to animal and bird names are called zoonymic legends. Those related to place names are considered toponomic. Or legends related to tribe, people, and generation names are called ethnonymic, and legends about celestial bodies are called cosmogonic legends. Legends also arose on historical figures, religion, etc. topics. Legends related to the work of Nizami Ganjavi and his heroes have been widely studied. Values such as patriotism, fearlessness, honesty, and straightforwardness are highlighted in these legends. One of the legends about Alexander shows that the great conqueror who conquered many countries decided to capture Shirvan. Alexander, who gathered his army in front of the Shirvan fortress, sent a letter to the ruler of Shirvan. The letter states that if the ruler does not obey, blood will be shed. However, the ruler of Shirvan declares that he will not surrender the country. A long and bloody battle begins. Alexander's army cannot break the resistance of the fortress. Enraged, Alexander orders a wide siege of Shirvan. He places the warriors of the wild tribes in his army in the front lines during the attack. The ruler directs the countless snakes that she has been feeding and keeping for years into Alexander's army. The army is paralyzed by the poisonous snakes. Alexander buries his treasure in the land of Shirvan. The woman asks the ruler to send her strongest warrior to fight him in single combat. The ruler comes to the battle herself. In the heat of the battle, Alexander's helmet falls off his head. The astonished ruler grabs Alexander's horn and brings him to his knees. The horn breaks and half of him remains stuck in the ground. Alexander, whose power lies in his horn, is defeated, withdraws his army from Shirvan, and returns to his homeland. The miracle in the legend only becomes apparent after this. It is said that Alexander's horn, which was broken and stuck in the ground, guarded the treasure he buried in the land of Shirvan. When people think of searching for the treasure, the horn makes the earth tremble, the treasure moves under the ground, and changes its place. It is said that the horn was also the cause of the terrible earthquake that occurred in Shamakhi... (Anonymous, 1994). In this legend, we see a vivid expression of the national and spiritual values of the people. Intolerance towards injustice, honesty, protection of the integrity of the homeland, etc. are national and spiritual qualities—values that have been deeply rooted in the hearts of our people for centuries. Although legends were once included in the epic genre of fairy tales, they later acquired their true value. It was explained that this genre, which is compact in volume, is based on an event that occurred in history. More precisely, the content of the legend is formed by ideas about a certain

historical event, historical figure, famous monument, etc. It can also be concluded from the research of Imanov Mukhtar that multiculturalism manifests itself in the epic genre of anecdotes. Thus,

We observe a unique expression of multiculturalism and tolerance in folk laughter, in jokes, which are one of the leading genres of this laughter. The hero of the joke laughs at the representatives of his own people before the representatives of other nations. The hero of the joke laughs at the representatives of other nations and other religions not as enemies, but as friends. I would like to give an example from Molla Nasreddin, one of the typical heroes of Azerbaijani jokes. There is such a joke: Molla Nasreddin sees an old Christian woman sitting and crying profusely. Molla Nasreddin asks the Christian woman the reason for her crying. The woman says that I have only one son, the white of my eyes, and he went and married a Muslim girl, and as if that were not enough, he fell in love with a Muslim girl and became a Muslim. Molla Nasreddin laughs at the woman's words and says: oh sister, there are only two Muslims in your house—you are sitting and shedding tears. But what can I do for my poor head, my There are exactly 10 Muslims in my house, no less, no more. Such Azerbaijani jokes are the product of common sense, such as being able to laugh at oneself before others. Loving other peoples as well as one's own people, respecting and honoring other religions as well as one's own religion are important human values that folklore instills and instills in us. It is our duty to protect such human values that our ancestors have bequeathed to us. (Mukhtar, 2017)

The donkey in his jokes is actually a symbol of tolerance for pain, hardship, and hunger. By using the symbol of the donkey, Nasreddin Khoja actually teaches people tolerance. One day, Nasreddin Khoja wants to teach a good lesson to the villagers who are suffering by loading their animals with heavy loads. He rides his donkey with a full sack on his back.

"Mullah, you are both on the donkey and carrying the sack on your back. What kind of job is this?" The answer to those who say, "Poor animal, he works for me day and night anyway. He puts me on his back, carries my loads, and turns the mill. After all that work, I didn't want to put a full sack on him. That's why I put him on my back." (Mukhtar, 2017)

### **Multicultural Values in Epics**

There is a serious reason to say that our national and spiritual values are widely reflected in our epics, which are genres of epic type. It is possible to see that our epics, whether love or heroic, include characters from other nations and are depicted without any discrimination. Just as our people do not discriminate against anyone based on their nationality in life, they did not discriminate in the examples of art they created in the epic genre either. They were friends to friends and enemies to enemies. Even though they suffered losses, they were often forgiving, had soft hearts, and released their ruthless enemies. This can be seen in "Kitabi-Dede Gorgud", "Koroglu", "Gachag Nabi", and other epics. In a number of our epics, they created negative, hateful images of those who discriminated against nationalities through separate characters. "Asli ve Kerem" is more famous in this regard. The epic is widespread among the Turkic peoples, and its Turkish, Uzbek, Kazakh, etc. variants have emerged. The events taking place in the epic are connected with Ganja, and in some variants with Isfahan. It is clear from the content of the epic that the events took place in the area where Azerbaijani Turks and Armenians lived close and neighboring. The images in the work confirm what is said about the Black Priest being the vizier of the Ganja Khan Ziyad Khan. The epic, which attracts attention with its interesting plot and perfect composition, also attracts attention with the artistic quality of its poems. The beginning of the work is similar to the story mentioned in fairy tales. After the vow, children, a boy, and a girl, are born to two parents. It is the desire of both parents to marry these children in the future. In the epic, the son of Ziyad Khan, the daughter of the Armenian Black Priest is born. Only when they were 15-16 years old, these young people—Mahmud and Maryam—see each other, and then a friendly friendship and then love arises. The dream of these young people, who call each other Kerem and

Asli, does not come true. The Black Priest, who received an offer from Ziyad Khan to help with wedding preparations, fled Ganja, taking his daughter with him. It is after this that Keram's exiled life begins (Lider, 2005). The Black Priest disappears from country to country, city to city, confusing Keram. The Black Priest, who deceives Keram and slanders him, never agrees to this marriage. Finally, the Black Priest, who is left alone in the face of the demands of the Aleppo chieftain and many others, agrees to the wedding, but with the clothes that Asli has bewitched, he becomes the cause of the death of both young people.

The beautiful moral and spiritual qualities of our people can be seen on every page of the epic. The creators of the epic do not tire of praising the pure, true love of both young people. The fact that Asli is Armenian—a foreign nation, and professes another religion, does not bother the creators of the epic at all. For the creators of the epic, a person, his feelings, pure emotions, and thoughts are the main thing. Religious differences and national affiliation are not decisive for them. But the Black Priest thinks completely the opposite. For many years, Azerbaijani Turks, a priest who lives with and holds a high position harbors deep hatred for this nation in his heart. The desires and wishes of the youth have no meaning for him. Hatred have erased the love of his children from his heart...

### **Multicultural Values in the First Native-Language Literary Examples**

The development of Azerbaijani literature in the Middle Ages is related to the formation of native-language literature, leaving behind the influence of Arabic and Persian literature. Thus, starting from the 13th century, the literary period that emerged with the gradual increase in the number of poets and artists writing in the native language in Azerbaijani literature, which was created mainly in Arabic and Persian on the lands of Azerbaijan, can be defined as the period of the end of the ancient period of Azerbaijani literature and the beginning of the medieval period. The first native-language literary example of that period is the anonymous epic "Dastani-Ahmed Harami".

The author of the poem was an artist who was close to the people in his spirit and taste, and deeply familiar with their customs and traditions. The work resonates with the traditions of fairy tales and epics in terms of its content, content, and language style. The poet, remaining faithful to the fairy tale style, got straight to the point and provided detailed information about the origin and nobility of his heroes. There is a deep hatred for evil, oppression, and injustice in the work. The poem is very valuable in studying the history of our literary language.

In the poem, Ahmed Harami is an evil person. He gathered bandits and blocked the road, engaged in robbery. The poet shows that there can never be a feeling of mercy and compassion in the hearts of oppressive, spiteful, and cunning people. Ahmed Harami is one of them. He is extremely cunning and cruel. The two characters in the author's work—Ahmed Harami and Gülandam—are perfect artistic characters.

The poet expresses Gülandam's moral and spiritual feelings. He skillfully glorified her bravery, pure and innocent feelings. In the poem, while Ahmed Harami is terrifying, angry, and spiteful like a camel, Gülandam is the opposite, soft-natured, noble, and sincere. At the last moment, she gathers all her courage and kills Ahmed Harami. The palace applauds this brave girl. The work expresses high love and care for noble and dignified people. (Gani, 2017, p. 106)

Traces of multiculturalism can be seen in every line and meaning of the epic. In every line of the epic, we can find every feature of the Azerbaijani mentality, the opposite of archetypes. The poet has described the moral and spiritual characteristics of the main hero of the epic, Gulandam, as a person in the foreground. The author presents Gulandam with her bravery in heroic scenes, and with her pure and sincere feelings in family scenes. As a sign of respect for fathers, who are the main archetype of the national mentality, the girl does not break her father's word. We see this in the fact that when her father wants to give her to Ahmed Harami, she does not break his

word. At the same time, she believes in Harami's trust and loyalty, which is a clear expression of purity, trust, and belief. Gulendam's pure character is revealed in Ahmed Harami's cunning face. The purity of Gulendam expressed the manifestation of the beauty of the poet's heart with her extremely beautiful and graceful appearance. The poet presents her appearance as follows:

Alır xatun Güləndamın əlini,  
Gəlir sərvı dalı kibi salını.  
Sanasan tavus idi bağ içində,  
Ya huri qızıdır uçmaq içində.  
Boyu bənzər idi sərvı, qınarə,  
Yüzü gülə, yanağı gülü-narə. (Dastani-Ahmad Harami, 2004, p. 81)

At the same time, we can see the reflection of national moral values in the epic and the full expression of the struggle between good and evil, the principle of justice. In the epic, we can also find nuances such as the transformation of the high humanistic values of the Islamic religion into the object of artistic presentation. Here, the author invites the reader to goodness, justice, humanity, straightforwardness, fairness, and faith, which constitute the basis of Islamic law, all these features show that the epic is a clear example of our first native written literature that reflects multicultural values. At the same time, in the epic, the author tries to dissuade the reader from negative qualities that are not suitable for a person and proceeds to the promotion of honesty, purity, neatness, and truthfulness. The main goal here is not to give space to the expressiveness of events, but to provide the reader with a more effective use of the moral idea in the plot of the poem.

Babayev Yagub, a researcher of native epic poetry, writes:

The poem has a strong influence of folk creativity. This aspect manifests itself in many things, from the name of the work to its plot, idea, narrative style, structure, language and stylistic features, etc. First of all, the "dastan" component in the name of the masnavi is a purely folklore element. The work is presented not by using the name of the double hero, which is typical of medieval poems, or the word "name" after the hero's name, but by using a name formed through the grammatical-semantic pairing of the name of the main character, in a manner specific to the genre of folk literature. (Yagub, 2008, p. 71)

As can be seen from this, the dastan is derived from examples of folk literature and describes itself as a continuation of morality, kindness, national-spiritual values, and national mentality that manifest themselves there in a high degree. Thus, the discovery of the diversity of internal structure and genre schemes in fairy tales, folk legends and narratives, and epics has always attracted attention as an important event, and all these aspects have created conditions for the emergence and clarification of ideas in a broader sense, as a system, regularity, and unit of technological space in the epic "Dastani-Ahmed Harami". The peoples who created epics such as "Kitabi-Dede Gorgud" and "Koroglu" have always been represented by great ideals and a world-wide state idea. Therefore, their contributions to human civilization are not limited to a certain circle, but rather a whole worldly mission is concentrated here. Ahmad Harami, Gulafrukh, Gulendam, Khoja Rustam and others form an idea of a rich cultural layer with their own character and value parameters. The place where the events take place is connected with Crimea, Baghdad, Shiraz in terms of the territory it surrounds, and at some points the name of Georgia is also emphasized. The artistic content, content and ideology, language and style features are all connected with the spirit of the people, and resonate with the traditions of fairy tales and epics. The Shahenshah said:

O my soul's money,

That you are the white and black of my eyes.  
 You are my word, my beloved,  
 You are not necessary, you say to me, my husband.  
 You are my wife, you are my soul,  
 You are my liver, my veins, my blood. (Dastani-Ahmad Harami, 2004, p. 62)

The general content, aesthetic information power, genre paradigm, sound symbolism, sound association of the epic “Dastani-Ahmed Harami”, which is of exceptional importance among the magnificent monuments of the medieval period of Azerbaijani literature, are characterized by a serious texture and, in addition to giving impetus to the development of our native literary examples of the later period, play an exemplary role and give impetus to the development of multicultural values. By reflecting the negativities in the characters of the epic, the author described the similarity of negativity in human nature with what they experience and the defeat of the negative in the face of the positive. The image of Ahmed Harami, the main hero of the epic, is a hero with negative characteristics. Thus, the poet speaks of Harami with inhuman adjectives such as “badakhter”, “black-faced Harami is a black husband”, “people of mudara” (Yagub, 2008). The author begins to describe the negative characteristics of the protagonist at the beginning of the first assembly. Thus, Harami is able to cast spells and spells, is knowledgeable in medical science, is physically healthy and strong, and in addition, the fact that Harami lives in a castle with nine people like him and engages in robbery is an artistic expression of Ahmed Harami’s greed. In the epic, Ahmed Harami is not satisfied with the wealth he has accumulated and wants to seize the treasury of the Sultan of Baghdad. On the other hand, the poet described the main character as a spiteful person in the epic to show his inner character. In addition to the negative character of spite, the fact that the description reflects that spitefulness stems from the importance given to national values emphasizes the importance of thinking about what gives rise to a negative character. Thus, Ahmed Harami’s excitement and overflowing with the feeling of avenging his lost comrades is an artistic embodiment of respect and importance for friendship. On the other hand, the fact that the poet’s hero goes to Baghdad and Crimea indicates that there were tolerant and multicultural relations in that period. Even the description of Harami going to Crimea and returning to Baghdad after forming a caravan there is a clear example of the economic ties between nearby territories and the appreciation of different cultural values. The contrasting character in the image of Ahmed Harami, the hero of the work, is an expression of the dual relationship of both the protection and the violation of multicultural values. The poet characterizes the main character’s cunning aspects, his extreme hatred and arrogance, his cruelty and ruthlessness as follows:

The intelligent, filthy, and depraved,  
 A bastard, a waste, a destitute, a sad one.  
 A burning enemy, a year-maker,  
 A gnawing flesh and a gnawing sky.  
 Who would not say, what was and what was gone,  
 Who would have heard that hatred and brought it to the mother. (Dastani-Ahmad Harami, 2004, p. 78)

The poem also provides supporting characters such as Khoja Rustam, the Shiraz Banusu, Gulafukh, Shahanshah, of which Khoja Rustam is described as a brave, fearless, courageous, and benevolent person. We encounter this characteristic in the scene where Khoja Rustam sees Gulendam tied up in a deserted place and saves her. At the same time, the artistic depiction of national moral values such as caring for and respecting women in this scene provides substantial material for analyzing this epic on the principles of multicultural values

and explaining the ways to organize the teaching of multicultural values on the epic to students. In the teaching of the epic “Ahmed Harami”—in practical classes, it is appropriate to continue the tasks for students’ independent work, as homework or project work. The following can be examples of tasks intended for the audience.

### Conclusion

No literary example belonging to the Azerbaijani Turks shows an indifferent attitude towards the religious and national values of another people. Respect and care for the spiritual wealth of a minority of peoples are clearly manifested in the legends, fairy tales, epics, folk dramas, and other genres created by our people. The role of the spiritual wealth of the people—literature, culture, and art in general—in preserving their national and spiritual values is indispensable. Proceeding from this position, it was considered appropriate to study the features of the manifestation of Azerbaijani multiculturalism in oral folk literature and interesting results were obtained. Literature, culture, and art in general play a great role in preserving the mentality and national and spiritual values of other peoples. It is precisely the organization and promotion of Azerbaijani multiculturalism in its folklore and written literary examples that are given a wide place in its folklore and written literary examples.

The research work conducted in this direction was investigated in three directions: legends and tales, epics, and early examples of written literature, and its analysis shows that in each of them, national and spiritual values that reflect the people are widely described. As in every genre of oral folk art, in the early works of written literary examples, there is no indifferent attitude towards the religious and national values of the people.

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