

THE USE OF LEGENDS IN T. QAYIPBERGENOV'S NOVEL-ESSAY "QARAQALPAQNAMA"

Inabat Allamberegenova
Kalmuratova Saxibjamal

Abstract: This article examines the role and artistic function of legends and traditional narratives in T.Qayıpbergenov's novel-essay "Qaraqalpaqnama". Particular attention is given to the writer's use of Karakalpak oral tradition, historical memory, myths, stories about historical figures, place-name legends, blessings, curses, and moral sayings. The analysis considers the legends concerning the origin of the name "Karakalpak," A.Dosnazarov, the Aral Sea, the Qızketken canal, and the motif of female heroism. The study shows that Qayıpbergenov combines historical truth with artistic imagination and transforms folkloric and historical material into artistic truth. Through these elements, the novel-essay reveals the language, psychology, worldview, ethical values, and collective memory of the Karakalpak people. Folklore therefore functions as one of the central structural and ideological components of "Qaraqalpaqnama".

Keywords: T.Qayıpbergenov, "Qaraqalpaqnama", Karakalpak literature, novel-essay, folklore, legend, traditional narrative, oral tradition, historical memory, artistic truth

INTRODUCTION

Literature is the face of a people and an inexhaustible treasure that endures throughout life. It is one of the main paths leading people toward wisdom, because literature reveals the events experienced by our people as well as the joyful moments of life.

According to Omar Khayyam, one of the prominent representatives of Persian-Tajik literature: "The meaning of a human being's coming into and leaving this world is like a drop of water joining the current of the world and, with the passage of time, turning into vapor and disappearing. Yet not all people come into the world alike. Some become wise and make a significant contribution to the development of society, while others are born and die like flies, leaving no trace of their place in the world." In this sense, in Karakalpak literature, as the people would say, T.Qayıpbergenov was a writer who comes into the world only once.

He was one of the most talented writers who introduced modern Karakalpak literature to many countries of the world. T.Qayıpbergenov was one of the prominent literary figures who contributed to twentieth-century Karakalpak literature through his distinctive novels, short stories, novellas, and essays in the prose genre. A People's

Writer of Uzbekistan and Karakalpakstan and a Hero of Uzbekistan, T.Qayipbergenov began his creative career in the 1950s. At first he was interested in poetry, and later he turned to prose genres.

In 1956, his first novella, "The Secretary" (*Sekretar*), was published. His other works include the novella "Thanks to the Teacher" (*Mug'allimge raxmet*), the collection of essays and short stories "The Notebook Speaks" (*Blaknot sóyleydi*), the novella "Cold Drop" (*Suwıq tamshı*), the novel "The Karakalpak Girl" (*Qaraqalpaq qızı*), the novel-essay "Qaraqalpaqnama", and others.

Because each of his novels and novellas depicts the past of the people, the hardships experienced by our ancestors, and their difficult lives, T.Qayipbergenov's novels occupy a highly valued place among the people. The writer's tireless work, continuous searching, and God-given talent formed the basis for the creation of such multifaceted works. The fruits of this labor are clearly visible in his writings, especially in his novels. It would not be an exaggeration to say that in twentieth-century Karakalpak literature he created a number of remarkable prose works and introduced a new genre into our literature. In particular, he created a novel in the essay genre, which became known as the novel-essay "Qaraqalpaqnama". Among T.Qayipbergenov's novels, "Qaraqalpaqnama" stands out as a notable work and as an innovation in Karakalpak literature.

The novel-essay "Qaraqalpaqnama" has a free composition and reflects the writer's personal views and life experience, his attitude toward life, and, at the same time, educational and moral ideas.

The novel makes use of legends, dialogues, monologues, and scholarly hypotheses; this method inevitably encourages the reader to think deeply. While reading it, we can envision the long history of the Karakalpak people, the path they have traveled up to the present day, and their future development.

In the novel-essay, the writer deeply reveals the language, heart, and psychology of the people, their rich treasury of words, and their philosophical concepts. He also provides some information about why he chose to write in this style. In the work, the writer's imagination is combined with historical truth, while legends, traditional narratives, and facts form the basis of artistic truth; throughout the work, the author turns extensively to folklore.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

In portraying the oral traditions of the Karakalpak people, the writer relies not only on historical facts but also on legends and traditional narratives—that is, on works of folklore. In artistically presenting folkloric facts in his work, the writer primarily conveys them through oral folk creativity and artistic imagination.

The novel-essay also makes extensive use of folklore-specific material, including legends, traditional narratives, myths, and stories about historical figures and prophets.

The use of legends and traditional narratives in literary works, as well as their closeness to real-life experience, has long been recognized in literary studies.

Legends and traditional narratives occupy a very important place in the rich folkloric heritage of the Karakalpak people. They are oral creations inherited from the ancestors, developed over centuries, and transmitted from language to language and from mouth to mouth.

A legend is a narrative about the origin of the world or of life. In the novel-essay "Qaraqalpaqnama", legends rooted in the realities of life are presented.

The novel-essay "Qaraqalpaqnama" became a new phenomenon in the novel genre of Karakalpak literature. Its stylistic artistry is one of its defining qualities. Although the plot centers on events from the writer's childhood, youth, and middle age, the work also skillfully presents other events together with the legends, stories, words of wisdom, and traditional narratives that he heard from his parents, relatives, the "kóshe biyi" (local elder or community authority), and fellow villagers.

In "Qaraqalpaqnama", the writer presents legends and traditional narratives through the words of the "kóshe biyi", his mother, and his grandfather.

The analysis follows a descriptive and textual approach. Selected legends and folkloric episodes from Qaraqalpaqnama are examined in relation to their narrative function, historical basis, artistic interpretation, and connection with Karakalpak oral tradition. The discussion focuses on how the writer combines historical facts, folk narratives, and artistic imagination in the structure of the novel-essay.

RESULTS

After reading the novel, one can see that these legends and traditional narratives formed an important basis for his creative work. It also becomes clear that the writer's parents and the people living in his neighborhood were eloquent storytellers. For example, in "The Legend Told by My Grandfather," he writes: "There are two kinds of stars that keep people from losing their way: the first are the natural stars glittering in the dark night sky; the second are elders who have seen much and lived long," my mother used to say ("Qaraqalpaqnama", p. 17).

The reason for saying this is that the passage expresses several pieces of moral advice about showing respect to those older than oneself and treating younger people with consideration.

The novel also provides a number of accounts concerning the origin of the name 'Karakalpak.' One of these appears in "The Legend Told by My Grandfather":

"By losing our elders, we are losing the very foundation of our wisdom. From now on, whoever takes an old person into the desert and abandons him shall be put to death, and his property shall belong to the state!" he ordered, and he also had water given to the army of the Persian king.

At that spring, the rulers of the two peoples became friends and, after consulting one another, presented the old man with a beautiful hat that would forever give shade and symbolize wisdom, protecting him from the burning sun..." ("Qaraqalpaqnama", p. 19). This is one of the legends widespread among the people about the origin of the name 'Karakalpak,' and many similar legends can also be found among the people. If we turn to its history, however, very different information is given concerning the origin of the name 'Karakalpak.' Nevertheless, in the novel-essay the writer portrays historical events in a legendary form.

Drawing on legends widespread among the Karakalpak people, the writer reshapes their plots through his own imagination. The novel contains not only legends and traditional narratives taken from oral tradition, but also legends and narratives based on historical events. One such example concerns A.Dosnazarov, who helped secure autonomy for the Karakalpak people. In "The Legend Told by the *Kóshe Biyi*," it is said: "In 1924, on the basis of Leninist national policy, a major national commission considered the issue of the national-territorial delimitation of the peoples living in Central Asia, and the fate of each people as a separate national community was being decided. Offended that the name of his small nation had not been mentioned, Dosnazarov suddenly stood up:

- Who has the right to forget the Karakalpaks? he said.

- They are called Karakalpaks because they live by the sea and wear black hats.

They are Khorezm Uzbeks, one voice said.

- No, they are a black-hatted branch of the Kazakhs, another voice said.

- No, the Karakalpaks are the black-hatted counterpart of the white-hatted Kyrgyz, another voice said.

- No, they are a somewhat more rugged tribe of the Turkmen, another voice said.

Then, as if coming from underground, a hesitant voice followed them:

- Is there really a separate nation called the Karakalpaks in Central Asia? it asked doubtfully.

Ignoring everyone and without even asking permission from the chair of the meeting, Dosnazarov went straight to the rostrum:

- Comrades! Friends! The Karakalpak people exist, and the great leader of the world proletariat, the wise Lenin himself, knew of their fate! The great Lenin promised that we would be granted autonomy! he said. The entire hall rose at once and repeated three times: 'In accordance with Leninist teaching, autonomy shall be granted to the Karakalpaks!'

Then Dosnazarov spoke passionately, explaining the national traditions and customs of the Karakalpak people, and performed 'Bozataw,' the sorrowful song of our past" ("Qaraqalpaqnama", p. 49). Everyone knows that A.Dosnazarov was a historical figure, but in this legend the writer seeks to enrich the historical facts further.

In transforming historical facts into artistic facts, the writer presents them not only from the perspective of those historical periods but also from the standpoint of the time in which he himself lived. In the same way, he presents a legend about the Aral Sea, which has become a global problem of the modern era. In "From the Legends Told by the Elders," it is said: "In ancient times, when different groups were only beginning to separate and form distinct peoples,"

A famous tribal leader of a community living on the shores of the Aral Sea lost his wife and was left with his only daughter. The daughter grew into an extraordinarily beautiful young woman, with a mouth like the moon and eyes like the sun.

The tribal leader feared that if his only daughter married, he would be left alone, and so he proclaimed: 'Whoever can empty the water of the Aral Sea somewhere else and drain it dry, I will give my daughter to him.' This condition made everyone think, because it was impossible for one person to empty the water of the Aral Sea bucket by bucket within a lifetime.

The only son of a poor man in that community was deeply in love with the tribal leader's beautiful daughter. The news gave him hope, and he said to his father: 'Father, from today I will begin emptying the water of the Aral Sea.' 'My son, then I will help you,' his father replied. One month passed, then two months, then a year... Father and son continued tirelessly to carry away the sea's water. Later, the man came to understand that the water of the sea could not be emptied.

It would therefore not be surprising if our ancestors, who lived along the southern shore of the Aral Sea near the lower reaches of the Amu Darya, had descended and multiplied from that young man and the girl" ("Qaraqalpaqnama", p. 123).

Through this legend, the writer portrays the drying up of the Aral Sea-a major problem of the modern era-by drawing on oral traditions widespread among the people. In this novel-essay, the writer does not limit himself only to contemporary problems or historical legends; he also provides information connected with geographical place names. For example, the novel-essay states in "From the Elders' Conversations about Local Place Names": 'I know one of the many legends about how the canal called Qızketken, which runs through the center of Nukus, originally came to be called Qızketken.'

Listen: the Amu Darya was once called 'Jayhun.' A small village located about a quarter day's journey from the Jayhun made its living by farming, carrying water from the river in containers. In that village, a widowed woman had an exceptionally beautiful daughter named Aysha, whose mouth was like the moon, eyes like the sun, and hair like the night. One spring, wishing to save her fellow villagers from their difficult situation, Aysha went out into the street and announced: 'Whoever takes a spade and begins digging a canal from the Jayhun to the village, I will love him!'

- One young man cannot possibly dig it all the way here! the villagers said.

- No matter how many young men come out to dig, I will love them all! the girl replied.

The people misunderstood Aysha and drove her out of the village. After leaving, the girl gathered young men from several unfamiliar villages and began the digging.

When the canal was finally completed and water reached her village, she climbed to the top of a high embankment and said:

‘Young men, to prove that I am faithful to my promise, I will love all of you equally and serve you with my spirit,’ and then she threw herself into the bottom of the canal and died.”

The people named the new canal ‘Qızketken.’ In the oral traditions of the Karakalpak people, the motif of the heroism of women and girls is widely developed. This motif appears not only in this legend but also in other forms of Karakalpak oral tradition, including epics, fairy tales, and other genres.

A similar motif can be seen in the epic “Qırıq qız” (‘Forty Girls’). In that epic, the girls fight selflessly for their homeland; in the legend presented in the novel, Aysha acts in order to bring water to her people. In both works of oral tradition, the central motif is the heroism of girls. T. Qayıpbergenov likewise depicts the courage of women and girls in his novel.

DISCUSSION

Thus, in creating a truthful representation of life in the novel-essay “Qaraqalpaqnama”, the writer makes effective use of legends and seeks to convey his ideas and intentions through vivid artistic imagery. The novel-essay is not limited to legends and traditional narratives; it also contains numerous examples of eloquent sayings, fairy tales, popular expressions, proverbs, and sayings. Among the Karakalpak people there are various kinds of traditional expressions, of which blessings and benedictions are among the most widespread. In one of his legends, T. Qayıpbergenov presents an unusual form of blessing in “What My Grandfather Said”: ‘When I was young, I used to receive two kinds of blessings for the services I performed for elders and older people. Some would say, “May your house be filled with cats.” Others would say, “May your house be filled with gold!” I disliked those who gave the first blessing and respected those who gave the second. Now I understand that those who gave the first blessing were wishing that my house would contain an abundance of grain. One year, the wheat we had sown produced a rich harvest, and our house filled with grain. Where there is much grain, mice multiply, so we had to keep two cats. But the second expression, “May your house be filled with gold!”, was not a blessing at all; it was a curse.

Our neighbor was a merchant. Gold accumulated in his house, and as a result there were frequent quarrels in his family. Not long afterward, that merchant was imprisoned because he caught his wife with a shopkeeper he knew and killed her. Today, nothing

remains in that house that was once filled with gold; it is completely barren. Even plants do not grow in such a place” (“Qaraqalpaqnama”, p. 110).

In this legend, the writer makes use of blessings and curses found in oral folk tradition. The principal distinctive feature of the novel-essay “Qaraqalpaqnama” is that works of folklore play an important role in it.

A distinctive feature of the essay as a genre is that the writer depicts real events from life and also participates in them himself. Another feature of the novel is that the author uses epigraphs in almost every part of the work.

CONCLUSION

In general, “Qaraqalpaqnama” remains one of the novels that our people continue to read with affection. T.Qayıpbergenov’s novel-essay “Qaraqalpaqnama” will remain forever in the memory of our people as a national treasure.

References

1. T.Qayıpbergenov. “Qaraqalpaqnama”: novel-essay. 1985.
2. Q.Mámбетnazarov and S.Baxadirova. Qaraqalpaq ańızlar ápsanaları hám sheshenlik sózler [Karakalpak Legends, Traditional Narratives, and Oratorical Sayings], pp. 9-53. Qaraqalpaqstan Publishing House, 1992.
3. N.B.Palwanov. T.Qayıpbergenov Qaraqalpaqnama roman-essesinde folklorlıq ańız hám ápsanalardıń qollanılıwı [The Use of Folkloric Legends and Traditional Narratives in T.Qayıpbergenov’s Novel-Essay Qaraqalpaqnama], pp. 65-88, 89-106. 2002.