

The Image Of Women And Social Views In Modern Turkic Poetry

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Abstract: This article analyzes the ethno-genetic significance of gender equality as a factor in the formation of modern Turkic poetry. The study covers the historical status of women in Turkic peoples, gender policy in the twentieth century, and the manifestation of female subjectivity in contemporary poetry. It also shows the interaction of the gender equality factor with other ethno-genetic factors such as language, religious-mythological values, and national kinship.

Keywords: Gender equality, Turkic poetry, ethno-genetic factors, female subjectivity, national identity.

Introduction: Studying the formation and development of poetry in the modern literary process on the basis of a system of ethno-genetic factors is one of the most relevant directions in literary scholarship. The ethno-genetic approach primarily refers to examining literary processes in relation to a people's origin, language, culture, religious values, and social system.

In the study of Turkic poetry, four main ethno-genetic factors are traditionally distinguished: the unity of the Turkic language, religious-mythological and everyday values, national kinship, and the subjectivity of the creator. However, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, another important factor - gender equality - has also become a subject of special attention. The reason is that this factor has not only socio-political significance for Turkic peoples, but also cultural and literary importance. Turkic states such as Uzbekistan, Turkey, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan have begun to define gender equality as an important direction in their modernization strategies. This process inevitably found expression in literature, especially in poetry. The purpose of this study is therefore to analyze the ethno-genetic nature of gender equality in modern Turkic poetry and to identify and substantiate its interaction

with other factors.

Before moving to the main part of the study, the following tasks are outlined :

1. To examine the status of women in ancient Turkic societies in a historical context.
2. To analyze the development of gender policy among Turkic peoples in the twentieth century.
3. To identify motifs of gender equality in modern Turkic poetry.
4. To examine the relationship between gender equality and other ethno-genetic factors.

Main Part

Gender as a category occupies an important place in the modern humanities. It is natural to ask why the term gender has become so widespread today, what its true essence is, and what purpose it serves. Gender is a spectrum of characteristics associated with male and female sex. Depending on the context, these characteristics may include social structures, especially gender and other social roles, or gender identity. In some cases, the term "gender" is incorrectly used as a synonym for "sex". In fact, there are significant differences between sex and gender. Many differences between women and men also have non-biological

causes. Based on these views, it may be emphasized that the concept of gender affects mental, cultural, and social differences, whereas the concept of sex refers only to physical differences, namely anatomical and physiological ones. Unlike biological sex, gender is a socio-cultural construct and refers to the roles, rights, and obligations of men and women in society. Gender relations arise from the ethno-genetic characteristics of each people and are formed within a cultural context.

In the context of Turkic peoples, several historical layers can be distinguished in the analysis of gender relations: the period of ancient Turkic societies (from the first millennium IX to the first millennium XIX), the period under the influence of Islam (IXth–XIXth centuries), the modernization period (the twentieth century), and the modern period (the twenty-first century).

Each period had its own system of social values and relations. In the period of the ancient Turkic peoples, women's military and political activity was high; after the advent of Islam, Islamic values and religious structures became stronger; and during the modernization period, targeted efforts concerning gender equality began. Poetry is an important field that reflects these processes. Literary texts not only describe social reality, but also participate in its formation and transformation. Therefore, studying the factor of gender equality in Turkic poetry is important for understanding socio-cultural processes. According to written sources in Chinese annals and in Greek, Sogdian, Tibetan, Bactrian, Persian, and Arabic, as well as in the Orkhon-Enisei inscriptions, women actively participated in Turkic governance, took part in great assemblies (toy, qurultay) where affairs of the people were discussed, and the great khagan consulted with his khatuns before making decisions. This indicates that women in Turkic political communities were relatively freer than women in neighboring or nearby regions such as China, Sasanian Iran, and Byzantium, and that foreign visitors, especially envoys, were astonished by this and recorded their observations. Ancient written monuments also provide information confirming the military skills of Turkic women. In Turkic tribes, girls were taught horseback riding, marksmanship, and military arts from an early age. Historical sources show that in ancient Turkic societies, women were not only active participants in family life, but also in social and

political life. This ethno-genetic feature was preserved to varying degrees and reached the modern era.

Women's images hold a special place in Turkic mythology. These images are reinterpreted not only in folklore and traditional poetry, but also in modern literature. For example, Mother Umay is one of the most important figures in Turkic mythology in transforming nature and biology into sacredness. In Mongolic languages, Umay means "womb". In parallel, it is the equivalent of the word *etene* (placenta) mentioned in "Devonu lug'otit-turk". As the goddess of fertility in Turkic mythology and the protector of pregnant women, infants, and descendants, Mother Umay's name is evidently connected with the meaning "womb". As in the case of female deities in many other mythologies, Mother Umay appears in Turkic mythology as a creative being. Since creation is equated with childbirth, the female being who gives birth is the creator of life and gives life to inanimate things. The meaning of the word "placenta", that is, Mother Umay, expresses the life line between mother and child. Among the Altai people she is called "Anam Yayuchi" ("Creative Mother"), and among the Yakuts "Ayis" ("Fertile Spirit"). This image is used in modern Turkic poetry as a symbol of woman's creative and protective power. In addition, in the Turkic worldview, the earth was imagined as mother-like: giving, nurturing, and a source of life. This idea continues in modern ecological poetry in the motif of the unity of woman and nature. The strength and activity of female images in Turkic mythology confirms the high status of women in ancient Turkic society. When modern poems refer to these images, they not only revive the memory of the past, but also create a basis for constructing a modern female identity.

The adoption of Islam (for Uzbeks in the IXth - Xth centuries, for Oghuz Turks in the Xth - XIth centuries) had a complex impact on gender relations among Turkic peoples. On the one hand, Islamic teachings granted women certain rights, including property, education, marriage, and divorce rights. On the other hand, the patriarchal order was strengthened. However, the adoption of Islam among Turkic peoples was distinctive compared with other regions. Ancient Turkic traditions did not disappear completely; rather, they entered into synthesis with Islamic values. As a result, women's social status remained freer than in

Arab countries. In medieval Turkic poetry, in the works of Alisher Navoi, Lutfi, Mashrab, and others, the female image developed in two directions: the beloved woman, as an idealized image of the lover, and the wise woman, as a possessor of wisdom and knowledge. These two directions continue in modern poetry as well.

In Turkic-Islamic culture, woman was glorified as a symbol of natural and spiritual beauty. This tradition holds an important aesthetic and ethical place in modern poetry.

The twentieth century was a period of fundamental change in gender relations for Turkic peoples. In particular, the Uzbek and Turkish worlds, considered fraternal peoples, approached the issue differently through two directions: the former Soviet model and Kemalism. In the first approach (Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and others), after 1917 the Soviet government granted women the right to vote, education, and labor rights. Although the “Hujum” movement (1927 - 1929) in Uzbekistan aimed to free women from traditional clothing, it produced highly controversial results. Modernization processes clashed with traditional values. The second direction emerged in Turkey, where during the period of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1923–1938), women were granted the right to vote in 1934, the sharia court system was abolished, and polygamy was prohibited. The Republic of Turkey considered gender equality an important element in shaping itself as a modern, Europe-oriented state. Both models were based on top-down modernization and were not equally accepted by all layers of society. However, these processes created the conditions for the emergence and development of women poets. In the field of poetry, the number of female poets increased significantly in the twentieth century. In Uzbekistan, Zulfiya Isroilova (1915–1996), Halima Xudoyberdiyeva, and Saida Zunnunova; and in Turkey, Halide Nusret Zorlutuna (1901–1984), Gülten Akin, Lale Müldür, and Didem Madak made important contributions to national poetry.

XIst-Century Turkic Poetry

In twenty-first-century Turkic poetry, gender equality appears in several main directions:

1. Articulation of female subjectivity. In modern Turkic poetry, woman appears not only as a describable

object, but also as a subject with her own voice. Women poets interpret the world from their own perspective, describe their experiences, and express their values. This change is not only the result of the influence of the feminist movement, but also of the general modernization of Turkic societies. Women poets gained the opportunity to express their inner world, emotions, and thoughts freely. In Uzbek poetry, poets such as H.Axmedova, Z.Mominova, and G.Mominova preserve the traditions of national poetry while expressing in their poems a woman’s view of the modern world. In their creative work, tradition and modernity, national identity and universality, are harmonized.

In Turkish poetry, poets such as Gülten Akin, Fatma Şengil, and Didem Madak present women’s experience in a deep and multifaceted way. In their poems, the female image is freed from traditional views and reveals each woman’s unique personal world.

2. Critical attitude toward traditional female roles. In modern Turkic poetry, women poets take a critical view of traditional female duties. They oppose the idea that a woman should be seen only as a wife, mother, or housewife, and emphasize that she is a multifaceted person. These views are expressed not in a sharply radical form, but through a subtle, ironic, and philosophical style. In the poem “Ayolga gul bering” (“Give Flowers to a Woman”), poet Z. Mominova writes:

“Give flowers to a woman - flowers

That have grown from a man’s breath,

Not from cries, shouts, or calls,

But flowers grown from whispers and voices” .

In the collection “Havvo”, G.Mominova uses a religious-mythological image to show both the strength and vulnerability of woman, and her place in fate. The image of Havvo departs from the traditional interpretation of woman as the bringer of sin and acquires new meanings.

3. The body, motherhood, and emotions of woman are described more openly. In modern Turkic poetry, not only a woman’s inner world, but also her body, motherhood, and emotions are depicted more openly. In the past, such topics were more closed or mentioned less often. Contemporary women poets now present

these aspects of women's lives as natural and important parts of existence. For example, in Fatma Şengil's collection **Söyle Sükunat** (2013), the image of silence expresses the pain, fear, and emotions left unspoken within a person. The poet uses silence not simply as quietness, but as a means of expressing a woman's inner experiences, hidden feelings, and mental state.

4. Women's freedom and national values are shown together. Many Turkic women poets depict women's freedom and national values together. On the one hand, they defend women's rights, respect, and place in society; on the other hand, they also value national tradition and values. It is not easy to combine these two directions, because some old views may limit a woman's role. Yet the poets preserve the positive aspects of tradition while criticizing female unfreedom. For example, in Z. Mo'minova's collection **Ayolga gul bering** (2017), ideas of respect, attention, and dignity for women are advanced. Here, respect for women is presented as a national value, while their importance in society and their worth as individuals are also emphasized.

Language and culture. The factor of gender equality also appears in Turkic poetry in relation to other ethno-genetic factors such as language, culture, religion, and personal experience.

From the linguistic point of view, Uzbek and Turkish have many common features because they are historically fraternal languages. According to grammatical rules, these two languages do not have grammatical gender; for example, the pronoun "u" is used equally for both men and women. This helps avoid separating women and men at the level of language. However, some proverbs and expressions preserve older views. Contemporary women poets create new images and expressions against this.

From the perspective of culture and values, modern women poets rely on Islamic values and national traditions on the one hand, while also using ancient Turkic images on the other. Through images such as Umay Mother, Tomaris, and Barchinoy, they portray femininity, protection, love and loyalty, patience and resilience, strength, and steadfastness. In H. Ahmedova's poem "Yashil" ("Green"), the color green is associated with life, renewal, and motherhood.

Although the female theme is similar in Uzbek and Turkish poetry, the manner of expression differs. Turkish women poets express the theme more openly and in a way influenced by Western traditions, while Uzbek women poets approach it more gently and gradually, through Eastern images and motifs. When G. Mominova creates a female image, she interprets it not only as the condition of an Uzbek woman and her sorrows, but as the inner experiences, pain, and rebellion of Eastern women in general. Her poem "Ayol bo'lib tug'ilma Sharqda" ("Do Not Be Born a Woman in the East") supports this idea :

"Find the strength to speak to the world,
Do not trade stone for affection,
Do not be deceived by much sweet talk,
Do not be born a woman in the East".

Each poet depicts the theme of womanhood in a unique way. For example, Gülten Akin takes a deeper approach to life and human experiences, Fatma Şengil conveys great meaning with few words, and Didem Madak combines memory and idyllic life with the modern world. In her poems, Zulfiya Mo'minova expresses Eastern values, while Gulnoza Mo'minova presents the inner world of woman and the lyrical "I" in new ways.

Conclusion

Summarizing the research results allows the following conclusions:

First, gender equality is an important ethno-genetic factor in modern Turkic poetry. This factor is historically linked to the relatively high status of women in ancient Turkic societies and develops in interaction with the modern global feminist movement.

Second, gender equality in Turkic poetry is manifested in several main directions.

Third, the gender equality factor exists in complex and multifaceted relationships with other ethno-genetic factors such as language, religious-mythological values, national kinship, and creative subjectivity. These factors do not negate one another; rather, they enrich each other and create the multilayered structure of modern Turkic poetry.

Fourth, the motif of gender equality in Turkic poetry is not only a struggle for women's rights, but also a path toward shaping the modern identity of Turkic peoples

and finding a balance between national modernization and global processes.

Fifth, gender issues in Uzbek and Turkish poetry are raised in similar yet distinctive forms. In both literatures, women creators serve as a bridge between tradition and modernity, national identity and universality.

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