Comparation of Romanticism in English and Azerbaijani Literature
On the Base of Huseyn Javid’s Poetry

Summary. The article is devoted to the issue of the choice of the Azerbaijani scientific thought of the English literature as an object of comparison in relation to Huseyn Javid’s romanticism. It was noted that Azerbaijani literary studies, as a rule, when evaluating the work of Huseyn Javid, samples of English literature were selected for comparison, in particular, the literary heritage of the great classical English literature of the XIX century George Gordon Noel Byron (1788–1824). The literary critic Ali Sultanli called the image of Arif in the tragedy “Iblis” (the Devil) the younger brother of Childe Harold, the personage of Byron. In the comparative analysis of Huseyn Javid’s art with English literature, literary critic Ali Sultanli called the image of Arif the outstanding poet Huseyn Javid “Hamlet of our poetry”. Ali Sultanli, who is quite aware of the European literature and philosophy in the article “Tragedies of Huseyn Javid” made a unique analysis of the works “Ana” (mother), “Maral”, “Sheikh Sanan”. He defined the boundaries of Javid’s philosophy, the strengths and weaknesses of this philosophy, and noted that in these works the author sometimes tends to realism. According to A. Sultanli, instead of clarifying the contradictions, i.e. the logical course of events in Huseyn Javid’s philosophy by the regulatory development of dialectics, the poet’s heroes uttered romantic sayings about life, death, love, religion, exploitation, labor, freedom, justice, what obviously was related to the education he got, the literature he was affected and environment he lived in. For this reason, Sultanli in his article “Tragedies of Huseyn Javid” tells about the poet’s family life, his education in Tabriz and Istanbul, as well as teaching activity and poetry living in Nakhchivan, Tulisti and Baku. On the other hand, literary critic Ali Sultanli, speaking about various tragedies and heroes of Huseyn Javid for the sake of scientific objectivity, considered it necessary to make comparisons with European literature and even assessed Arif, the main hero of the tragedy “Iblis” (The Devil) as the successor of European literary images: “...Arif is more a man of feelings than a man of mind. He treats all world events with feeling and heart. That’s why Arif complains to God, wants to climb to heaven, mystical elements dominated in his views; he becomes miserable in a feudal patriarchal world; he sees life only in black colors. However, his grief and therefore pessimism are not personal, but general, universal. In this regard, Arif is the younger brother of Hamlet, Werther, Childe Harold” [6, p. 108].

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In principle, the literary images of Hamlet, Werther, and Childe Harold indicated the qualitative changes inherent in European literature of their time. In other words, Hamlet, who is at the center of the Shakespeare “Hamlet” tragedy,
Werther, created by Goethe in the “The Sorrows of Young Werther”, as well as image of Childe Harold written by Byron in the “Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage”, face the readers with a different way of thinking, giving them the opportunity to become acquainted with modern literature.

Certainly, in the comparative analysis of Huseyn Javid’s art with European literature, literary historian Ajdar Ismailov gave rise to a new stage. In other words, in A. Ismailov’s work “Traditions of the romanticism world and Huseyn Javid”, presented to scientific society in 1983 by the publishing house “Yazichi”, we meet the New World of Huseyn Javid, where one of the visible representatives is Byron. Interestingly, in the second chapter of the work “Traditions of the romanticism world and Huseyn Javid” under the name “The tragedy of a man who understands himself” A. Ismailov mentioned for the first time the attitude of wise scholars to the concept of “demonism”, noting that according to the authors’ thinkers, spiritual poverty of people also led to countless sufferings. A. Ismailov considered it more appropriate to analyze the poem “Hubuti-Adam” (Adam’s descent from heaven), turning it into the object of comparison of Byron’s “Cain” with Javid’s “Hubutiti – Adam”. He writes: “In both Byron’s “Cain” and Javid’s “Hubuti-Adam”, God curses the “miserable man” and exiles him to a land of eternal torment and torture, a whirlpool of disaster and tragedy”.

While Byron used the plot of Adam and Eve to expose the despot of the time, Javid used this plot and demonstrated strong propensity to reveal the dialectic of the human heart. He tries to connect the psychological contradictions of the individual with the complexity and contradictions of the epoch, the social life, to present it as a product of society. According to Javid, a sick mind is a product of a sick society” [5, p. 74].

Although we find brief explanations of the content of the poem “Hubuti-Adam” (The Descent of Adam from the Heaven) in the book “Traditions of World Romanticism and Hussein Javid” before this analysis, Byron’s “Cain” appears here as a new side.

“Hubuti-Adam” teaches us that, despite the fact that Adam and Eve lived a carefree life in heaven, they were deceived “by a wild slope” that raised their hearts, and became slaves of their souls, having received an order to leave “Lahuti farrudjgha”. According to A. Ismailov, a serious disagreement was initiated in “Hubuti-Adam”. But this is not an uprising of Adam or Eve, it is simply an uprising of the romantic author, and the Adam-Eve plot was necessary for Huseyn Javid to express his rebellion. Thus, the book “Traditions of World Romanticism and Huseyn Javid” describes the spiritual revolt of the Azerbaijani poet with reference to the poem “Hubuti-Adam” as follows: “Javid’s rebellion is represented in a thin veil of lyricism with fine irony. According to the poet-thinker, human life is lived “in the nuranur (light)” – not in the realm of angels, but in the world of storms, on the battlefield. Life at the cost of spiritual bondage is a catastrophe in the true sense of the word. That is real catastrophe of a human being at the expanse of the spiritual enslavement lives so-called “shadu khan-dan (cheerful)” life. Human should prefer spiritual freedom to “rovzeyi-jannat (blossoming paradise)”. At this point, the demonic rebellion manifests itself with subtle lyricism” [5, p. 74].

Thus, A. Ismayilov, who clarified the problem of “tragedy of a self-aware person” in world romanticism, as well as in Javid’s work, evaluated the analysis of the poem “Hubuti-Adam” taking into account the criteria of the literary trend of romanticism. For clarity, the author draws attention to Byron’s “Cain” and concludes that both Byron and Javid considered a person who is reconciled to poverty and does not fight for a prosperous life, first of all became an object of hatred. However, Byron wrote “Cain” in the first half of the 19th century, and Javid’s “hubuti-Adam” was written almost 100 years later. On the other hand, although the work of the English romanticist Byron and the Azerbaijani writer Javid became the subject of comparison in “Traditions of World Romanticism and Huseyn Javid” the scholar firmly believed that the influence of Byron on Javid was not at the level of addiction, but at the level of enrichment of the concept of mankind. For this reason, the comparison of Byron and Javid made by the famous scientist Ajdar Ismailov led to the recognition of originality in the work of both poets. And from this narrative, it is clear that if Byron wrote the Adam-Eve theme to reveal the inner essence of existing power, then Javid mainly pondered the spiritual world of man, the complex psychic processes of mankind, the great poet directly connected the contradictions in the spiritual world of man with the social life.

The work “Traditions of World Romanticism and Huseyn Javid” suggests that God is the main character both in the Azerbaijani writer Huseyn Javid’s “Hubuti-Adam” and in the English poet Byron’s “Cain”. However, according to A. Ismayilov’s objective scientific position, both Byron and Javid are the children of their period, so, along with similarities there are serious differences in their work. In other words, the comparison of “Hubuti-Adam” and “Cain” in the above-mentioned scientific source leads to the following logical conclusion: “both Byron’s and Javid’s the image of an earthly tyrants who sow the seeds of tyranny, oppression and humiliation are identified with a heavenly tyrant. In both poets, God is presented as a merciless force towards the free-thinking man who seeks for free life. Javid considers the worshiping to nafs (desire) of the soul’s power, the slavery of the soul, to be alien to man’s lofty aspiration; he said that the challenge of goodness to evilness showed brought about the domination of society” [5, p. 76].

It is quite natural that Prof. A. Ismayilov in his analysis initially made the comparison of the works of Javid and Byron from the level of “Hubuti-Adam” – “Cain” and later changed to the level of “Iblis” (Devil) – “Cain”. At least because if Byron’s “Cain” is a lyrical play in three acts, then Javid’s “Hubuti-Adam” is a short verse of 41 strophes. In the first strophe of his verse, Javid first recalled that Adam and Eve lived in paradise, in the first half of the 19th century, and in the English poet Byron’s “Cain”. However, according to A. Ismayilov’s objective scientific position, both Byron and Javid are the children of their period, so, along with similarities there are serious differences in their work. In other words, the comparison of “Hubuti-Adam” and “Cain” in the above-mentioned scientific source leads to the following logical conclusion: “both Byron’s and Javid’s the image of an earthly tyrants who sow the seeds of tyranny, oppression and humiliation are identified with a heavenly tyrant. In both poets, God is presented as a merciless force towards the free-thinking man who seeks for free life. Javid considers the worshiping to nafs (desire) of the soul’s power, the slavery of the soul, to be alien to man’s lofty aspiration; he said that the challenge of goodness to evilness showed brought about the domination of society” [5, p. 76].
and it is impossible to find sorrow and mourning in that place of flowers and blossoms. Although Huseyn Javid also addresses the famous theme of Adam and Eve, we do not find an image of the Devil in the story of “Hubuti-Adam”. The angel who commanded Adam to leave Paradise accuses him of not realizing the greatness of God, of turning away from the truth, and of opposing a world in which there is no good or evil. The author’s final judgments in the verse story are both instructive and thought-provoking. Because the calamities that haunt mankind are inherited from Adam, and the way to rebirth is through self-control:

Bu qaflät, eyle bir süfi-cinayıät
Ki, vermez kismayä bir lahzä rahät.
Bu gün xlal üçün sandan əmanat
Qalan yalnız fləkəstdir, fləkəst!
Əmin ol, nərdə nafis olmuşa hakim:
Həşiqi eşqi məhv etmiş məzalim.
Kimin ülvısı ruḥu, söz onundur,
Əsir-i-nafis olan daim zabundur [4, p. 25].

While conducting a comparative analysis of Byron’s play “Cain” and Huseyn Javid’s “Iblis” (The Devil) tragedy, Prof. Ajdar Ismayilov, based on modern scientific criteria, also paid attention to the principles of art on the literary trend of Romantism. Based on this, he considered it more appropriate to evaluate the attitude of both artists to the problem of “personality and society” both separately and in parallel. We think that when talking about “Traditions of the Romanticism world and Huseyn Javid”, the love of A. Ismayilov for H. Javid should be noted. It can even be said that Professor A. Ismailov, sometimes explaining the problem of “identity and society” with reference to the works of H. Javid, took into account the unfair accusations of the repressive society against Huseyn Javid, expressing his firm position on these processes, he wrote: “Both poets (Byron and Huseyn Javid – N.S) used the mythical image as an art-cognitive tool for the stage decision of their thoughts on the fate of mankind. Throughout the dramatic event, the mythical symbol is not consistent with the existing law, with the criteria of society, with the mores of a passionate person, and his desires and ideals surpass the imagination of ordinary people. It is a gap between desire, conditions and time. No matter how noble and sublime this desire may be, the ruling moral norms and desires are the opposite. In order to achieve such a dream, it is necessary to turn the existing laws upside down. It is the Devil who helps with his horrors in order to shed light on the existence of such a morality. Demonstrating the complexity and contradictions of the times, The Devil is portrayed as a critic, reformer, and mentor of the hero’s incompatible personal qualities. In this sense, according to the method of struggle, Javid’s Devil occupies an original position in the pages of world demonism poetry” [5, p. 77–78].

In our opinion, Professor Ismailov’s thoughts about Lucifer, imprinted in Byron’s “Cain”, or about the image of the devil in Javid’s “Iblis” (the Devil), were influenced to some extent by the principles of socialism ideology. Here the famous researcher in the work “Traditions of romanticism world and Huseyn Javid” clearly emphasizes that in the work “Iblis” (the Devil) the author accuses God as the culprit of world wars, tyranny, evilness. In general, from the point of view of the attitude towards God, there are significant differences between “Cain” of Byron and the tragedy of Javid’s “Iblis” (the Devil). In Byron’s “Cain”, Cain simply does not believe in God’s justice, while the Devil openly declares that there is a struggle between him and God and he does not know the end of this struggle. And in the tragedy of Javid “Iblis” man asks God for help. And perhaps because of this peculiarity Professor Ismailov firmly states that the Cain of Byron is significantly different from Arif, which Javid embodied.

At this point it should be noted that it is possible to talk about many aspects that distinguish Byron’s “Cain” from the tragedy of Javid’s “Iblis” (The Devil). Firstly, acquaintance with both works gives reason to say that Byron thought mainly about God, and Javid about the devil, that is, the man who serves evil on earth. For this reason, the Devil in “Cain” states that he fights God without the need for lies. It may even be said that Byron so expressed his attitude towards the Creator in the language of his image:

“Lucifer: No! By heaven, which he
Holds, and the abyss, and the immensity
Of worlds and life, which I hold with him – No!
I have a Victor – true; but no superior.
Homage he has from all – but none from me:
I battle it against him, as I battled
In highest Heaven – through all Eternity,
And the unfathomable guls of Hades,
And the interminable realms of space,
And the infinity of endless ages,
All, all, will I dispute! And world by world,
And star by star, and universe by universe,
Shall tremble in the balance, till the great
Conflict shall cease, if ever it shall cease.
Which it ne’er shall, till he or I be quenched!
And what can quench our immortality,
Or mutual and irrecoverable hate?
He as a conqueror will call the conquered”

[1, p. 208–209; 7, p. 85–86]

Apparently, Byron’s “Cain” is more influenced by Aeschylus’ “Prometheus Bound”. The demon of Byron calls man to fight against God, who gives power to evil forces, that is, in principle, tyrannical rulers. And in the tragedy of Huseyn Javid “Iblis” (The Devil), the situation is quite different. In this work, the reader sees only at one point, or rather, in the fourth act of the tragedy, that after the murder of his grandson Khawar, Ikhtiyar Sheikh was terrified of grief and asked God for revenge against the oppressors in a psychological state. In fact, it would be wrong to call Ikhtiyar Sheikh’s protests a revolt against God. Through this image, Huseyn Javid introduced the man in search of divine justice. In other words, Ikhtiyar Sheikh once again confirms that in all cases it is impossible for man to comprehend the wisdom of God. In this place of work are quite interesting judgments about God of 3 images, namely Ikhtiyar Sheikh, Devil and Elkhan. In other words, in exchange for the old Sheikh’s wish for divine justice, Iblis (Devil) states that it is ridiculous for such a wish to be realized by creation. According to Iblis (Devil), for God, the world is like a toy in the hands of a child who does not know when he will have fun or break it. He also disagrees with Elkhan’s claims about the Creator. Because Elkhan does not accept the existence of opposites,
or rather beauty or ugliness, poverty or wealth, angel or devil in the same time and space.

The uniqueness of Byron and Javid’s work in terms of presenting the image of the devil is also seriously considered by contemporary literary critics. For example, D. Aliyeva writes in the article “The image of the devil in literature (based on the works of Huseyn Javid and Byron)”: “In all epoch, all of them are united in a common socio-spiritual point of view: Man learns the way of salvation from the rebellious spirit of the devil, the enemy of obedience from the beginning. While Lucifer explained the doctrine of death and eternity to Cain, Iblis (Devil) tried to show Arif the way out of social ugliness, the first of which was his own. This training is fed by the struggle of the time. However, the Devil in H. Javid’s “Iblis” (The Devil) tragedy has features that differ sharply from those of Lucifer in Byron’s “Cain”. In the tragedy, Javid distinguished two demons – the mythological devil and the living demons. In addition, the playwright through the Devil demonstrated the dissolution of Eastern philosophy, philosophy of love, mercy and conscience” [2, p. 104].

Of course, it is impossible not to agree with the latest ideas in this quote. Because the philosophy of love, compassion and conscience, which originates in Eastern thinking, can be impassable to people who control any pole of the world. Nevertheless, these qualities, namely love, compassion and conscience, are the criteria of humanity as a whole.

According to academician Isa Habibayli, the “devil’s age” was necessary for the author to embody his humanistic ideas about humanity. The prominent scientist summed up his opinion about the “devil”: “The tragedy of “Iblis” (The Devil) is highly valued in literary criticism. Even this genius work was considered the first “Faust” written in Turkish. Well-known Turkish researcher Irfan Ulki wrote: “The tragedy “Iblis” (The Devil) made Javid a local Shakespeare in the eyes of Azerbaijani writers and intellectuals, and the work itself – “Faust”, written in Turkish. For such works of his as “Iblis” and “Sheikh Sanan”, it will not be a mistake to evaluate him as a Turkish Shakespeare or Goethe.” The tragedy “Iblis” of Huseyn Javid is also relevant and modern for today” [3, p. 218].

We think that, it is not accidental that Javid’s “Iblis” (The Devil) is significantly distinguished from Byron’s “Cain”. Although Azerbaijani romanticist was familiar with Byron’s creativity from a young age, he did not accept the views of his European predecessor in relation to many issues and gave a clear way to the reader who faced serious socio-political and philosophical problems.

References: