

## NATIONAL AND SPIRITUAL VALUES OF THE TURKIC WORLD AND BAHTIYAR VAHABZADE

Nazim Muradov\*

European University of Lefke, Lefke, NCTR

**Abstract.** Bahtiyar Vahabzade is one of our poets who has a poetic style and adventure peculiar to him, and as a standard-bearer of national and spiritual values, he exalts these values from a different point of view. Poems of Vahabzade, constitute a mirror which reflects social and political events which have left an impression on the destiny of people. The creativity of Vahabzade resembles the most sensitive barometer of our contemporary history. The social reality reflected in his poems and his lucid approach to this issue attract the attention of readers. The common characteristics of the poet's approach that reflects the psyche of the poet is his sincerity and the lofty virtue of his sensitivity to national affiliation. Not only does the poet explain his love of his homeland and his compatriots, he also expresses how they should be loved.

Bahtiyar Vahabzade is a poet of the "mother tongue." He is not contented with the bravery he shows in connection with his fanaticism in the use of the language, he is also one of the most skillful users of his mother tongue. The position of the poet on issues of traditional music, history, psychology and culture, sets a sensitive example for his compatriots. Although B. Vahabzade lived most of his life in the Soviet period, he had not become a Soviet writer, he did not write in accordance with the orders of the Communist Party and he did not follow "the socialist realism" which constituted the official literary view. Because of his noble position before the Soviet regime, Vahabzade was one of the intellectuals who set an unprecedented example.

In this article we will deal with the attitude of Vahabzade towards history, music, language and literature, and we will concentrate on the poems he wrote with the syllabic meter as well as his epic poems. We will also analyze the values he had contributed to the phraseological wealth of our language.

**Keywords:** *The Gülistan poem (a poem of large proportion), mugam, music, syllabic meter, phrasal verbs.*

**\*Corresponding Author:** Nazim Muradov, European University of Lefke, Lefke, NCTR, e-mail: [nazim.muradov@gmail.com](mailto:nazim.muradov@gmail.com)

**Received:** 19 September 2022; **Accepted:** 18 December 2022; **Published:** 25 January 2023.

### 1. Introduction

Although extensive researches have been carried out about Bahtiyar Vahabzade, his poetic world and his poetry have not been systematically analyzed. The fact that when the poet attracted the attention of the Azerbaijani poet Samed Vurgun when he stepped in the literary world in the nineteen- forties, and the literary critics of that period began to express their views about him and his works, constituted the announcement of a good news introducing a new and different voice into the world of literature. This voice was capable of violating and ignoring the rules of "socialist realism" which represented the official view of the state on art and literature. It was a voice that stressed its dependence on the Party, yet it covered different "popular" concepts. Not only the form, but also the contents of this voice reflected national characteristics of Azerbaijani literature.

Furthermore, the dependence of the owner of this voice on the Communist Party was only a formal matter.

## 2. Vahabzade's creativity in the frame of national history

Living in the proud Soviet Union, a country with one party which was victorious in World War II, and at the same time opposing the Soviet system was rather difficult. The USSR Communist Party had established the duties of literature as early as the beginning of the 1930s and limited its "freedom of mobility" and had entrusted literature with the task of promoting and making people accept not only the official, but also the moral sovereignty of the Party. Bahtiyar Vahabzade, who had been living in Baku since he was nine years old, had become a witness to being sent to "the point of no return" in 1937-38 of those who were ambivalent to such a policy of art and literature of the Party and even those who did not demonstrate any reaction to it. He also had learned that more than twenty thousand Azerbaijani intellectuals had become victims of massacres. None of those intellectuals who had survived the massacres in 1937-38 were so comfortable at all. Those who were conscientious suffered spiritual pain and many were trying to find a way out of this situation; he who succeeded was acknowledged as an able person. The World War II which was resulted in the death of more than fifty million people, had begun in such an atmosphere. And the war that had just started was a war after all. However, it was not more horrific than the years of collectivization and the massacres of the years between 1937 and 1939.

Bahtiyar Vahabzade had also seen whom the Soviet regime had annihilated before and during the war. He has also learned how the Southern Azerbaijan National Government (12<sup>th</sup> December 1945 – 12<sup>th</sup> December 1946), set up under the leadership of Seyid Cafer Pişeveri (1892 – 1947) had collapsed through a revolt recorded later in history books as "the 21<sup>st</sup> Azer Operations." He learned about it and also about the approach of the Soviet Union to this issue after he personally heard it from Azerbaijani intellectuals who had to take refuge in the North Azerbaijan. These intellectuals were "the democrats with green passports who had no right to elect or be elected." Bahtiyar Vahabzade also knew that despite the fact that millions of people wished their homeland which was divided by Tsarist Russian Empire to be ruled at least as a colony of one state, the neo-emperor Stalin had said: "I do not wish to begin the World War III for the backward Muslims!" An historic opportunity was lost by the USSR that was victorious in the war and Azerbaijanis had to suffer for it...

The collapse of the Azerbaijan National Government led by Seyid Cafer (Cavadzade) Pişeveri is not a fortuitous and casual event. Ahmed Gavamu's-saltana, the prime minister of Iran at that time, paid an official visit to Moscow in March 1946. He promised to give the right of exploration and operation of oil fields in the north of Iran to the USSR. This offer whetted the appetite of the Soviet Union; the USSR immediately accepted the conditions put to them by Iran. The conditions put to the USSR were as follows: 1. Soviet armed forces should leave Iran until the end of March this year (1946); 2. The USSR would regard the issue of Southern Azerbaijan as internal issue of the state of Iran (Rəhimli, 2009: 168).

This meeting was a turning point in the issue of Southern Azerbaijan and the protagonists of the unchanging aspects of the old games had been revealed: in the *Gülüstan* (1813) and *Türkmençay* (1828) Agreements the two sides were Tsarist Russia and the government of Iran represented by the Kajars; the 1946 Moscow agreement was

between the USSR and the government of Iran represented by the Pehlevi regime... The consequences of the new agreement was tragic. The national government established by the Azerbaijan Demokrat Fırkası (Azerbaijan Democratic Party) collapsed after one year (1945 – 1946). This was followed by innumerable murders, imprisonments and exiles as well as the process of eradication of Turkic cultural values. Some of the literary figures of Soviet literature who were not much involved in politics and followed the rules of the Party, were to some extent supported by the government. Some of these literary figures who attached importance to their national values, openly expressed their views about this cultural tragedy. For example, “After the removal of the government of Pişeveri, Iranian authorities began to collect books published in Azerbaijani Turkish and burn them in town centres. Samed Vurgun, in his poem entitled “The Burnt Books” called the Iranian officials ‘the executioners’ and harshly criticised the Persian chauvinism of the Iranian government” (Akpınar, 1994: 191).

Bahktiyar Vahabzade, regarded Samed Vurgun, who, beside pro-Party poems, wrote poems with harsh contents, as his master, and saw himself as a son of a divided homeland. It was not difficult for him to understand the state of his homeland being divided as well as the double standard used by the Soviet administration. As an individual from divided Azerbaijan, Vahabzade would not have been taken in by such bombastic rhetoric as “*velikaya otçestva*” used for the Soviet Union which went on growing immensely after its invasions during World War II. Bahktiyar Vahabzade’s views on how this “Great Homeland” was “created” was different from others. After “communist” Pişeveri was killed in the communist Soviet Union by the Communist Party, the concepts of “Communist Party,” “homeland” and “citizen” had changed for Vahabzade. Let us pay attention to a poem by “Soviet poet” Bahktiyar Vahabzade:

*Vətəndaş – nə gözəl səslənir bu söz,  
Yeni bir vətənin övladıyıq biz.  
Anamız eynidir - gərdaşlıq demək,  
Sən mənə arxasan, mən sənə kömək!*

*Citizen, how beautiful resounds this word,  
We are the children of a new homeland.  
Our mother is the same – it means we are brothers,  
If you are my supporter, I am your helper.*

In these lines, “homeland” is not “Velikaya Rus” (the Great Russia); it is in fact the divided Azerbaijan; *citizen* is someone born of the same mother and brothers with the same blood, same language and same religion. As a citizen of the divided homeland Vahabzade later in his life had challenged this situation which was brought about by the existing regime. He said “*Orda Şəhriyaram, burda Bəxtiyar!*” meaning ‘I am Şehriyar over there and Bahktiyar here.’...

Thus, the love of the Turkic world developed with a longing for “a single Azerbaijan” in young Vahabzade who had stepped in the world of literature in the early nineteen-forties. His first two books of his poetry *Mənim Dostlarım* ‘My friends’ and *Bahar* ‘Spring’ were published in 1949 and 1950. The fact that the publication of the books had coincided with the last years of the rule of Stalin and his unexpected death in 1953 was a blessing in disguise for young Vahabzade who attached great importance to his freedom. Death of Stalin had shocked thousands of people and it was a relief for many others. One of those who enjoyed a great relief was Bahktiyar Vahabzade. The long rhyming poem *İki Qorxu* ‘Two Fears’ which the poet had written earlier and published it towards the end of the 1980s, was an important book due to the fact that it explained the psychology of the years up to 1953 when Stalin was in power. These years seemed to

be the repetition of 1937-1938.<sup>1</sup> In fact this book reflects a 30 – year period from 1924 until 1953 – the Stalinist period.

The nineteen-fifties were important years in poetry and scholarly work for B. Vahabzade. The poet wrote his doctoral thesis on *The Lyricism of Samed Vurgun* in 1951 and became a “candidate of Sciences.” In 1964 he defended his thesis on “Life and Creativity of Samed Vurgun” and received his professorship.

Later, in one his poems he expresses his feeling with all his modesty about being a poet more than a scholar:

*Qatlayıp dizinin altına qoyar,  
Alim Bahtiyarı şair Baxtiyar.*

*The poet Baxtiyar will bend his knee  
And put the scholar Baxtiyar under it.*

Furthermore, Vahabzade continued to show this modesty in his poetry too:

*...Bizim sənət dünyasının qırıq telli sazıyam  
Birce ondan razıyam ki, özümə narazıyam*

*I am the musical instrument with snapped  
strings of our circle of art  
I am only satisfied with the fact that I am not  
happy with myself.*

“The musical instrument with snapped strings” expresses his pessimism. We believe that the poet does not do justice to himself, because Vahabzade is a great poet and would not promote pessimism.

One of the most important events in Vahabzade’s private and literary life is his long poem *Gülüstan* published in the daily *Şeki Fehlesi* in 1957. This poem helped him gain popularity and at the same created problems for him.

Generally speaking, a noticeable issue in Azerbaijani literature is the fact that as from the mid-thirties many writers and especially poets dealt with the subjects relating to Southern Azerbaijan. In other words, the only poet that dealt with this issue “which conformed to the foreign policy of the USSR” (Akpınar, 1994: 178) is not Bahktiyar Vahabzade, and *Gülüstan* is not the only literary work. While there were so many literary figures and literary works concentrated on this subject,<sup>2</sup> what makes Vahabzade’s *Gülüstan* different from other literary works that sometimes assumed to be written on “Party’s order?” Would *Gülüstan* not be regarded as one of the hundreds of literary works on “south?” Was it the prohibition introduced by the state against this poem that made it so popular, or was it the literary, political, historical and ideological aspects of this poem that attracted the attention of the people? Why did the Socialist Realism have to keep pestering the literary works that expressed political, historical and social reality of the people?

We will try to answer questions regarding the *Gülüstan* poem, which have at least ten answers:

1. Bahktiyar Vahabzade, the writer of the poem *Gülüstan* was an honourable person. Despite his young age and the fact that he had no supporter (if the spiritual support of Samed Vurgun is not taken into account) he was a reliable person and had proved that he was different from the poets and writers who had been passivized from 1939 until

<sup>1</sup> For more information about how this work came about and full text of this work see Y. Akpınar, *Azeri Edebiyatı Araştırmaları*, pp 394-415

<sup>2</sup> For more information see Y. Akpınar, “Çağdaş Azərbaycan Şiirinde Millî Bir Mes’ele Olarak Güney Azerbaycan”, *age*, pp 175-197.

1950. People who had “enjoyed the freedom” (M. E. Resulzade) in 1918 – 1920, later were completely disappointed and depressed. They were longing at least for their spiritual freedom. Vahabzade who was working hard for this freedom, was in the limelight of public attention.

2. The name of the poem is taken from the name of the agreement (between Iran and Russia) after which Azerbaijan was divided. Unlike the didactic book *Gulistan* by the 13th century Persian poet Sadi Shirazi, the work (*Gülüstan*) of Vahabzade stresses the tragedy of the divided homeland.

3. Vahabzade had dedicated this book *to the honorable memories of Sattar Khan, Şeyhk Mahmmd Kھیabani and Pischeveri who fought for the unity and independence of Azerbaijan*. The dedication was openly written in the book. This was an open preference and the poet did not prefer the ruling authorities; he was on the side of his divided homeland and nation.

4. It was difficult to conform this work to “socialist realism” which reflected the understanding of the ruling party in connection with art and literature. The poem does not praise the Communist Party (rejects the partisanship) and follows the populism in the real sense, not in the way the Party requires. It has a traditional form, but its contents are not ‘socialist.’ This means that the poem was not written as recommended by the Party, but far from it, it had ignored the rules and prohibitions of the Party.

5. The poem *Gülüstan* was presented not on the basis of imaginative and subjective speculations of the poet; it was based on reality and objectivity of diachronic events and was reflected by new interpretations which were contrary to official understanding of history.

6. The poet has surpassed the routine approach and used a harsh and interrogating style. He puts forward ‘rhetorical questions’ the answers to which everybody knew. In this poem the poet accuses people whom history had entrusted with the duty of judges and makes them stand a trial themselves.

7. He presents the micro-nationalism which was utterly fostered in the Soviet system (Tunalı:2) with a macro-nationalistic approach and uses the term “great nation” instead of “small ethnicity.”

8. He stresses that the home of “this great nation” is not the separate parts of the divided homeland, but “that side and this side of a single united Azerbaijan” and the division is realized only on paper. He underlined the fact that “*both Tebriz and Baku are parts of one Azerbaijan.*”

9. He proves that both Tsarist Russia and Bolshevik Russia share the same quality; they both were colonialists and bear imperialistic ideas. He also believes that they set up their kingdom and pomp and glory at the cost of misfortune of other people.

10. Using a “reflecting style” with clear and at the same time emotional and romantic expressions as well as philosophical generalizations, the poet has managed to avoid giving the poem an ideological structure full of slogans and succeeded in creating a work with high literary quality that made readers think...

The poet in his poem *Gülüstan* says:

*Hanı bu ellərin mərd oğulları?  
Açın bəzələri, açın yolları.  
Bəs hanı bu əsrin Koroğlu-  
Qılınç Koroğlu, söz Koroğlu.*

*Where are the brave sons of this land?  
Remove the obstacles and open the roads.  
Where is then the Koroğlu (epic hero) of this century?  
The Koroğlu of the sword, the Koroğlu of the words.*

In these lines the poet says the “closed door of brothers” (borders dividing Azerbaijan into two parts) should be opened. He believes that to realize this ideal intelligence and power as well as sword and pen are simultaneously needed. With the expression “Köroğlu (epic hero) of the words” he explains that he himself has undertaken this task.

Bahktiyar Vahabzade had comprehensively analyzed cultural concepts such as *history, alphabet, religion, civilization, art* and *music* and the abstract concepts like *right, truth, ethics, honour, conscience, belief, faith, suspicion, lie, love, suffering, hatred, fear* and others, thus exalting our national and spiritual values and making the youth enjoy them.

The poet, expressing his views on our music with philosophical and poetic language in his poem entitled *Muğam* (musical mode), has, to some extent, presented the philosophy of the *Muğam* of Azerbaijan at the level of a musical expert and has analyzed the historical, philosophical and esthetic dimensions of the basic elements and concepts that make up the internal structure of every song, every tune or generally speaking every *muğam*. When we take into account that *muğam* occupies an important place not only in the musical culture of Azerbaijan, but also in the music of the Turks, Uygurs, Uzbeks, Turkmens and Iranians, we realize that the poet does not concentrate on national and traditional culture of Azerbaijan, he also represents Eastern music in the East-West cultural conflict. In the poem *Muğam* the poet has revealed the philosophy of this musical mode in Azerbaijani, Turkish, Uzbek and Uygur music and at the same time he has explained the psychological effect of the music on human being and the fact that music was an indispensable element of every nation.

According to Bahktiyar Vahabzade, the music created by the people, constitutes the fact that people learn their language and the language of nature and turn the language into sounds and place it onto the seven notes and make it possible to speak the language of nature with musical one. In his poem *Muğam* the poet writes:

<p>...Ney üstündə yeddi səsin          Oyuk-oyuk yuvaları          Nədir belə?          Bəlkə elə          Balaları perik düşən          Qaratoyuq yuvaları...          Səslər qırıq bir arzusun can səsimi?          Yuvaları dağıdılmış          Çolpalaarın naləsimi?...</p>	<p>... Hallowed cuttings of seven          Sounds on the reed;          What are they I wonder?          Perhaps they are          Like the back birds          Whose youngs have scattered in all directions.          Are the sounds the real sound of a broken wish of my          soul?          Is it the moaning of the chicks          Whose nest have been destroyed?</p>
---	---

It is not a coincidence that the poet writes about *ney* - the musical reed instrument. It is not possible to think of the Turkish classical and sufi literature and classical Azerbaijani literature without the concept of *Ney*. The *ney*, together with *rebab* (or with *tar* – NM) “...moans like a dervish overwhelmed with emotion and gets more and more profound ... The fact that Fuzuli assumed his body resembling a *Ney* may not be a coincidence.” (Okuyucu, 2009: 174).

*Tar* (or with its more popular name *rebab*) is the main instrument of the musical *Muğam*. Bahktiyar Vahabzade, after justifying the importance of the *tar* in the traditional music, says that it preserves the sound of the soul of people in its strings:

<p>...<i>Ürəyinin tellərindən</i>  <i>Tellər çəkib tara xalqın.</i>  <i>O tellərin nəğməsində</i>  <i>Öz ruhunu,öz qəlbini ara xalqın...</i></p>	<p>... <i>From the strings of people's heart</i>  <i>He has placed strings on the "tar."</i>  <i>In the tune those strings create</i>  <i>Seek the heart and soul of the people.</i></p>
--	--

In his poem entitled “Hâbil Segâhı” (The Segah of Habil) the poet gives a detailed property of the second most important instrument of the *muğam* music called Kaman (viol) and familiarizes his readers with this instrument, thus making it understandable why the sound of this musical instrument soothes the soul of the listeners:

<p><i>Kamanın qolunda yatan xalları</i>  <i>Hər biri qəm yurdu, hicran yuvası</i>  <i>Bir qolun üstünə cəm olup min – min.</i>  <i>Nəsimi isyanı, Vaqif nəvası...</i></p>	<p><i>The frets lying on the hand of the kaman (viol),</i>  <i>Each one is the residence of pain and home of</i>  <i>separation.</i>  <i>On the hand of the instrument have gathered in</i>  <i>thousands</i>  <i>The uprising of Nesimi and the cry of Vaqif...</i></p>
---	--

According to Vahabzade the *muğam* of Azerbaijan is “as old as both his grand-father and his grand-child.” The poet expresses his views in these lines:

<p>... <i>Gâh səsinde göy gürleyir</i>  <i>Gâh inləyir həzin həzin.</i>  <i>Həm babamın yaşındadır</i>  <i>həm nəvəmin</i></p>	<p>...<i>Sometimes it reflects the sound of thunder,</i>  <i>Sometimes it hums in pain.</i>  <i>It is as old as both my grand-father</i>  <i>And my grand-child.</i></p>
--	--

The following lines depict the reflection of the beautiful aspects of nature expressed in sound:

<p><i>Çiçəklərin öz rəngində, öz ətrində</i>  <i>Nəğmədəki səsləri gör, halları gör</i>  <i>Enib qalxan keçidləri,</i>  <i>Cığırları yolları gör.</i></p>	<p><i>In the colour and fragrance of flowers</i>  <i>Notice the sounds in tunes, observe the frets.</i>  <i>See the transposition going up and down</i>  <i>Observe the narrow and wide paths.</i></p>
---	--

The poet also believes that the music of every people is tantamount to their finger print:

<p><i>Tanumaqımı istəyirsən</i>  <i>Görmədiyin bir xalqı sən?</i>  <i>Əvvəl onun nəğməsinə sən qulaq as</i>  <i>Onu öyrən.</i>  <i>Öz sözünü, sorğusunu</i>  <i>Xəyalını, dugusunu</i>  <i>Xalq yaşadır nəğməsində...</i></p>	<p><i>Do you want to know</i>  <i>The people whom you have not seen?</i>  <i>Firstly, listen to their song</i>  <i>And learn it.</i>  <i>People make their words, questions,</i>  <i>Imagination and feeling</i>  <i>live in their songs...</i></p>
---	---

Bahktiyar Vahabzade has written about Ahmet Yesevi, Mevlana, Nesimi, Fuzûlî, Aşık Elesger, Mirza Elekber Sabir, Abdullah Tukay, Şehriyar, Mehmet Akif Ersoy, Musa Celil, Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, Nazım Hikmet, Aşık Veysel, Behcet Kemal Çağlar, Cengiz

Aytmatov, Oljas Suleymanov, Yavuz Bülent Bakiler ... and other literary masters both in poetry and prose. Whenever he expressed his views about the above-mentioned literary masters of the Turkic world orally or in writing, he proved that he was a skillful master of literary analysis as well as criticism.

Despite the fact that Vahabzade was born in the Soviet Union and lived 65 years of his 83-84 year-long life under the Soviet regime, he had never become a Soviet poet and conceded nothing from his noble stand against that regime and he had always been serving not only the Azerbaijani Turks, but the whole Turkic people and whole humanity. This attitude made him a popular person not only as an important ideologist of the fight and movement for national independence, and also as a symbol of the dignity of this movement (Jafarov, 2007: 176).

In the basis of the independence of the present Turkic republics as well as other republics of the USSR lies the “unacceptable” works of the great masters of words who did not follow the rules of “socialist realism” and with their highly lofty artistic characteristics managed to trample on the limits put by the regime. In the process of independence which was planned first and implemented afterwards, the intelligentsia who had trained people with “free thinking, free conscience and free knowledge” played an important role. At the bottom of all political ideologies that created the national states, lies a literary idea. We learn about this idea with all its political, literary and scientific and ideological aspects from our great poets and writers.

Our greatest and most lyrical poet Fuzuli comes out as protagonist of his own poems. Therefore, we may come to the conclusion that this might have been a tendency in our post-Fuzuli literature. As a fan of Fuzuli, Bahktiyar Vahabzade too was the lyric protagonist of his own poems<sup>3</sup> and this protagonist has shaped our literary ideas as well as our social, political and ideological thoughts.

Not only was Vahabzade a poet, he was also a learned philosopher. Today we know Ahmet Yesevi, who was a great poet of his time (12<sup>th</sup> century) more as a great thinker and his *hikmets* (philosophical poems) in *Divan-ı Hikmet* which constitute one of the most valuable examples of Turkish poetry, reflect his philosophy. The poetry of Vahabzade may not be as didactic as Yesevi’s, but it could be assessed as valuable example of the *hikmets* of the contemporary Turkic literature. He was not only contented with skillful use of his mother tongue and taking all the risk, he also demonstrated his linguistic fanaticism wherever he was on a platform. In a way Vahabzade was a poet of “mother tongue.” According to him our mothers, through our mother tongue, present us with the most elegant music of the world – their lullaby:

*Dil açanda ilk dəfə “ana” söyləyirik biz,  
“Ana dili” adlanır bizim ilk dərslərimiz.  
İlk mahnımız laylanı anamız öz südüylə  
İçirir ruhumuzca bu dildə gilə-gilə...*

*When we begin to speak we utter “ana” (mom)  
first  
Our first lessons are called “Ana Dili” (mother  
tongue)  
Our mother feeds our soul  
With our first song – lullaby.*

In 1954 the great poet who was a defender of our national language, addressed those who did not know their own language and preferred other languages (especially Russian):

<sup>3</sup> B. Vahabzade’s literary and scholarly views about Fuzûlî were expressed in his famous poem *Şeb-i Hicran* ‘The Night of Separation.’



<p><i>Ey öz doğma dilində danışmağı ar bilən Bunu iftixar bilən Modalı ədəbazarlar. Qəlbinizi oxşamır qoşmalar, telli sazlar. Qoy bunlar bənim olsun, Amma vətən çörəyi Sizlərə qənim olsun!</i></p>	<p><i>O you who feel ashamed of talking in your mother tongue, You idiot followers of fashion Are proud of what you do. Folk poems and stringed instruments do not appeal to you. Let these be mine. May the bread of motherland Become your enemy! (Vahabzade, pp. 8-9).</i></p>
--	---

Defending the national language required great courage at a time when the Russification policy of the Soviet system was intensified. Not many intellectuals had the courage to do that...

Bahktiyar Vahabzade who appropriated the views of Mehmet Emin Resulzade, the founder of the People's Republic of Azerbaijan and chairman of the National Council and attached great importance to what his comrades –in- action had done for Azerbaijan, had placed the idea of freedom and independence inside the lines of his poetry and had created the most beautiful examples of poems with social and political themes. The poet has a clear approach to Mehmet Emin Resulzade. It was at least different from the approach of the present government of Azerbaijan. In his poem he wrote in 1990 entitled “Məhməd Əmin Rəsulzadə'nin Xatirəsinə” ‘In memoriam Mhmet Emin Resulzade’ he says:

<p><i>...Borclu ikən Vətən sənə, xalq sənə Hər şey döndü tərsinə. Bu topraqdan verəmmədik Bir məzarlıq yer sənə... Heykəl – məzar! Biri zora söykənibdir, Biri haqqa şərəfə! Davamlıdır qəlbimizə köçüb gələn o məzar Postamenti nifrət olan Yüz heykəldən yüz dəfə!...</i></p>	<p><i>... When motherland and people were indebted to you, Everything turned out wrongly. From this land we could not give you A place for one grave ... Statute and grave! One leaning against power, The other agaainst justice and honour! One hundred times more eternal is The grave that has moved into our heart Than the one That is based on hatred.</i></p>
---	---

The Azerbaijani young students who were educated by reading his poetry and listening to his lectures were those who destroyed the “Iron Curtain” and re-established the independent Republic of Azerbaijan. The late Ebülfez Elçibey who had played an important role in achieving the independent statehood of Azerbaijan, had frequently called Bahktiyar Vahabzade one of the architects of the independence and one of the greatest teachers of the nation. He had admired Vahabzade's efforts in achieving the independence.<sup>4</sup> Bahktiyar Vahabzade enjoyed the happiness of seeing the independence of his country and he was a witness to the great success of the students he had taught. He

<sup>4</sup> For more information on this subject one could refer to the article of Prof. Dr. Necati Demir entitled “ Ülkəsinin Bağımsızlığını Taşıyan Şairi ‘The Poet Who Undertook the Independence of His Country’ (<http://www.necatidemir.net/images/demir/bkosem/vahapzade.pdf>); for Vahabzade's literary views on Elçibey see the article “Bahtiyar Vahabzade Şiirinde Türkiye” ‘Turkey in the Poetry of Vahabzade’ in “Gazi Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi, Bahar 2010/No.6, pp 105-106.

was seen off to his eternal resting place wrapped in the national flag of Azerbaijan and today he is resting in the shadow of his national flag. Vahabzade, the great martyr of our independence defines the flag as follows:

<p><i>Toprağım üstünə kölgələr salan Mənim varlığımın cilası – bayraq. Zəfərdən doğulmuş Göytürkdən qalan Qurdbaşlı bayrağın balası bayraq. Üçrəngli bayrağın kölgəsində mən Garaca toprağı vətən görmüşəm. Zəfər güllərini dövri-qədimdən Bayraq işığında bitən görmüşəm. Bayraq mənliyimdir, bayraq kimliyim Bayraq öz yurduma öz hakimliyim. Daim ucalasan! Savaş günündə Əsgər silahıyla səni tən görüm. Yalnız zəfər çalmış şəhid önündə Səni alqış üçün əylən görüm...</i></p>	<p><i>The flag that casts its shadow onto the soil, Polishes my existence. Born of victory, it is the inheritance of Gokturks It is a young of the flag of the wolf's head. In the shadow of the tri-coloured flag I have seen the black soil as my homeland. I have noticed that in olden time The flowers of victory growing in the light of victory. The flag is my pride, it is my identity, The flag is the sovereignty of my country. May you go higher and higher! On the day of battle, I saw you equal to the weapon of soldier I wish to see you bent before the martyr of victory, Bent to express your admiration.</i></p>
--	--

Bahktiyar Vahabzade has written all his works in an attempt to highlight the lofty values of our national, spiritual, moral, political and cultural history. His poem *Gülüstan*, as explained above, was written to deal with a historical fact that was imposed on us. It was written in a harsh language that reflected the national feeling and the sensitivity of the citizens. The poem *Şeb-i Hicran* ‘The Night of Separation’ about the poetic philosophy and spiritual world of the great poet Fuzyuli, is presented to the readers with a classical and at the same time contemporary interpretation. This poem of Vahabzade is one of the most effective literary work written about Fuzukli.

Vahabzade’s poem *Feryad* ‘Cry’ is about the poet Nesimi whom Vahabzade admired profoundly. This is a poem written in the light of Sufism and Hrufi and Mevlevi sects of mysticism. This is written after a comprehensive study of the ideas of Sufi figures like Şems Tebrizi, Mevlana Rumi, Yunus Emre, Hacı Bektaş Veli and others as well as mystic issues pertaining to the present and future world.<sup>5</sup>

The long poem *Qiymet* reflects the spiritual sphere of the university students of the Soviet period. This poem depicts pure and honourable feelings, imaginations and ideals of the university students and stresses how their ideals were nullified by some debauched, depraved and bribe-taker “teachers” who had somehow managed to find a position at universities. The poem with a lofty social and literary value, does not only depict these obnoxious creatures, it also criticizes the political system that helps them thrive with their immoral activities at universities. *Qiymet* is a valuable literary work due to the fact that it reflects the mistakes of the Soviet system of higher education. It also deals with bribery and favouritism at university entrance exams as well as quizzes and final examinations. The poem also explains the spiritual disasters these immoral activities at universities cause. Vahabzade spent most of his life teaching at university. In this poem he does not write about what he heard from other people; he writes about what he had personally witnessed at work.

<sup>5</sup> See B. Vahabzade, “Otobiyografim” ‘My Autobiography’ p. 11.

Chingiz Aytmatov was a good friend of Bahktiyar Vahabzade. The son of Kazangap, one of the favourable characters in Aytmatov's novel *The Day Lasts More than a Hundred Years*, insists in having his father buried somewhere whatever the circumstances may be, thus making his father a "dejected dead." Here, the son, who had been spiritually incapacitated by the Soviet system, is not different from those who leave their babies on the street or send their parents to old people's home. In this sense the works of Vahabzade called *Atılmışlar* and *Qiymet*, like the novels Aytmatov wrote after the 1970s, do not present everything so optimistic as required by Socialist Realism. Far from it, they could be assessed as literary works dominated by heart-breaking disappointment.<sup>6</sup>

In fact readers could easily notice similar excitement, discontent and rebellion between the lines of the poems that were not kept in the box and were published in innumerable books. The "Box" poems of B. Vahabzade not only express anti-regime ideas, they also defend the rights of other Turkic peoples and protest at injustice. Poems like "Nağıl-Həyat" 'Story-Life', "Hörümçək Tor Bağladı" 'The Spider Set up Its Web', "Qorxu" 'Fear', "Belə Olmaz" 'It Shoudn't Be Like This', "Diz Üstə" 'On the Lap', "Səbr Elədik" 'We Showed Patience', "Lal-Kar" 'Deaf and Dumb' and other poems could be given as examples of poems written in support of Turkic peoples.<sup>7</sup> Here, the poems "Bayram" 'Festivity', "Kırımda Tatar Qəbirləri" 'Tatar Graves in Crimea', "Kirov'un Heykəli" 'Kirov's Statue', "Qəribədir" 'It Is Strange' will be briefly discussed.

The poem "Bayram" 'Festivity' was written in 1963 as a protest against the Kirgiz people who celebrated the day of their captivity as a festivity:

<i>Bu gün bayram edir Qırğız elləri. Yadın caynağına keçəndən bəri "Ağ günə çıxıbdır..." Buna bax buna! Sevinir, fəxr edir qul olduğuna.</i>	<i>Today the Kyrgyz celebrate a festivity. Since they fell into the clutches of foreigners "They think they have come out to their happiness..." Look, look at at this! They rejoice and feel proud of being slaves.</i>
--	--

Actually the poet's reproach is not only for the Kyrgyz people, he also rebukes those who celebrate their captivity and slavery by kissing the handcuffs on their wrists. Courage, tendency to challenge and depicting the political scene of the Soviet period in these poems transcend politics.

The poem "Kirov'un Heykəli" 'Kirov's Statue' (1966) explains the feeling of the poet in front of the statue of the Communist-Bolshevik invader Sergey Mironovich Kirov on the highest hill of Baku and emphasizes that not only the Soviet system, this stone statue too threatens Azerbaijan:

<i>Başımızın üstündə Sıyrılıb kılınc kimi Hədələyir o bizi. Deyir mənimdir ölkə- Bu göy, bu yer, bu dəniz! Başınızı vuraram Ayaqlarım altından Başınızı çəksəniz! Ayağım altındadır</i>	<i>Over our head, like a sword unsheathed, Threatens us. It says "the country is mine, So is this sky, earth and sea!" I will chop your heads, If you move your heads From the bottom of my feet! Your honour and dignity</i>
---	---

<sup>6</sup> Assist. Prof. Dr. Sabahattin Çağın in his article entitled *Cengiz Aytmatov ve Gün Olur Asra Bedel Roması* says that some of Aytmatov's novels "are literary works where disappointment or frustration is a dominant factor." I believe that in this sense the above-mentioned poems of Vahabzade resemble Aytmatov's works. (NM)

<sup>7</sup> For the full text of these poems see B. Vahabzade, *Saçılmış Əsərləri, I*, pp 231-242.

<i>Namusunuz arınız. Başınızı sürüsün Daim ayaqlarınız.</i>	<i>Are under my feet. Always your legs Must drag your heads.</i>
---	--

However the poet is not pessimistic and as if he knew that this statue would collapse one day, ends the poem as follows:

<i>Mən istərəm tarixə Bu gündən də iz qala, O heykəlin yerində O heykəli yıxanın Tunc heykəli ucala...</i>	<i>I wish that history Would record this day And in the place of that statue Would stand the bronze statue of The one who destroyed it...</i>
--	---

The poet, even as early as 1966, believes that the statue of Kirov on the highest hill of Baku represents the Soviet regime and wishes that this statue would fall and this system would collapse.

“Qəribədir” ‘It Is Strange’ is a four-line poem that Vahabzade wrote in 1973. In this poem he deals with the Five-Year Plan of the Soviet regime and the ordeal of the Uzbeks in struggling to fulfil this plan. The poet explains the suffering of the Uzbek people in the context of history of Turkic peoples:

<i>Dövrən bizi tarixdə veyilləndirən oldu Bir yerdə donub göl kimi lilləndirən oldu. Dünyaya Uluq Bəy kimi dahini verən xalq Bir qul kimi yad millətə pambiq verən oldu.</i>	<i>This period made us loaf around in history Stopped our progress like a frozen lake turned blue. People who presented to the world a genius like Ulug Bey, Had to give cotten to foreigners like a slave.</i>
--	---

This poem depicts the reaction of the poet to the disrespectful attitude of the Soviet system to the history of Turkic people.

**Phraseological Aspects of the Language of the Poems of B. Vahabzade:** We notice the perfect structures and harmony of phraseological expressions, proverbs and idioms in the poetry of Vahabzade. Furthermore, these proverbs, idioms and stereotyped expressions are all inflectional. They have syntactic functions and since they have different places in a sentence (especially in the text of a poem), the extent of their accentuation is also diverse. This means that various forms of the use of these units in the sentence play a role in effectiveness of the poem. When we establish proverbs, idioms and stereotyped expressions in Vahabzade’s not so lengthy poem (about twenty lines) called *İki Qorxu* ‘Two Fears’ (Akpınar, 1994: 395-415) we notice the wealth and strength of metaphore in the language of the poet.<sup>8</sup>

### 3. Conclusion

The creativity of Bahktiyar Vahabzade who, with the style peculiar to him and the path he always followed in his poetry and attracted the attention of literary circles, constitutes the most sensitive barometer of the recent and earlier history of Azerbaijan. The dates at the end of the poems of B. Vahabzade not only show the time these poems

<sup>8</sup> It is not possible to find the exact equivalents of all of the Azerbaijani proverbs, idioms and other expressions. Therefore, we decided to present the examples in the language of the poet – Azerbaijani Turkish.

were written, they also depict not solely the poetry of Azerbaijan (or other places relevant to the poem) but also the social and political situation of the country. There is no serious social event that has not been reflected in his poetry. The poet skillfully reflects these sociological events and expresses his approach to these events. His approaches sometimes are rather harsh, sometimes they reflect his hatred and on other occasions they are emotional and overwhelmed with love. The common characteristics of these approaches which reflect the psychology of the poet are emotions that reflect his sincerity and lofty feeling of citizenship. Not only does the poet explain how he loves his homeland and his compatriots, he also utters the way they should be loved.

## References

- Akpınar, Y. (1994). *Azerbaijani Literature Studies*, Dergah Publications, Istanbul, 83p.
- Akpınar, Y. (1994). *South Azerbaijan as a National Issue in Contemporary Azerbaijani Poetry*. *Azerbaijani Literature Studies*, 175-197.
- Anar, Akpınar, Y. (2000). *Hundred Poets of a Thousand Years - Azerbaijan Poetry Anthology*, Ministry of Culture - Turkish World Literature, Ankara.
- Ayvazoğlu, B., Vahabzade, B. <http://www.zaman.com.tr/yazar.do?yazino=816820>
- Azmun, J. (1994). *Hodja Ahmed Yesevi, Divan-i Wisdom*. Istanbul:Tek-Eesin.
- “Bextiyar Vahabzade”, *Anthology of Turkish Literatures Outside Turkey – 5, Azerbaijan Turkish Literature*, pp.136-143, Ministry of Culture Pub., Ankara, 1997.
- Ceferov, N. (2007). *Bextiyar Vahabzade or the Poet of the Nation, Selected Works II*, Baku, Elm, 171-179.
- Cagin, Sabahattin Cengiz Aytmatov and the Novel *Asra Bedel, A Day Our*, Akademi Publishing House, Izmir, 2000.
- Dilçin, C. (2005). *Turkish Poetry with Examples*, TDK Publications (8th edition), Ankara.
- Eliyev, Y., (2009). *Fuzzy Logic Theory in Bextiyar Vahabzade Creativity*. <http://chudafarin.azeriblog.com/2009/03/04/bextiyar-vahabzade-yaradilginda-qeyri-selis-mentiq-nezeriyyesi>
- Hajiyev, T. (1990). *Thoughtful, Competent Language, Our Poetry, Our Prose, Our Literary Language*. Baku, Yazici, 106-130.
- Talibzade K. (1974). *Poetic Thoughts, Literary Inheritance and Inheritance*, Baku, Azərneşr, 200-202.
- Nerimanoğlu, K.V. (2005). *Bextiyar of Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan of Bextiyar, Our Essence, Our Word*. Çinar-Çap, Baku, 525-529.
- Okuyuncu, C. (2009). *The Culture That Raised Fuzuli, Who Asks Me With This Sign - The Book of Fuzuli*, Prepared by: Hanife Koncu – Mujgan Çakır, Section Yay., Istanbul, 176p.
- Rahimli (Bije), A. (2009). *Life Passed in the Whirlwind of Struggle - Sayyid Jafar Peshavari (Life and Public Activities)*, Nurlar Publishing House, Baku.
- Tunali, A.Y., *When Snow Falls in Sheki*, <http://www.haberkademi.net/default.asp?inc=makaleoku&hid=9634>
- Vahabzade, B. *My Autobiography*.
- Vahabzade, B. (2004). *Selected Works – I, Contemporary Azerbaijan Literature Series*, National Library, Edited by Azer Bagirov, Baku: Onder Publication.
- Vahabzade, B., *Selected Works – II (Poemas), Contemporary Azerbaijan Literature Series*, National Library, Edited by Azer Bagirov, Baku: Onder Publication.
- [www.vahabzade.net](http://www.vahabzade.net)