

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE AUTHOR'S INTENTION IN THE PORTRAIT OF HISTORICAL FIGURES IN DOCUMENTARY PROSE

O.Dadaboev

Namangan State Institute of Foreign Languages

Abstract

The article analyzes the image of a historical figure Amir Temur in works created in the genre of documentary prose from the point of view of the author's intent and aesthetic position. The main goal of the study is to determine the role of the author's selection criteria, attitude to historical sources and political and ideological position in the formation of the image of a historical figure. The problem is considered to be the differences in the perception and interpretation of Amir Temur by different writers, the degree of their objective reflection of historical reality.

Keywords: documentary novel, historical figure, author's intent, artistic interpretation, historical truth, ideological approach.

INTRODUCTION

In Europe, examples of various genres of fiction about Amir Temur began to acquire a special meaning in terms of content in the 20th century. Initially, Western writers wrote about Amir Temur's conquests, but later writers began to be interested not only in his military skills, but also in his qualities as a statesman and even an ordinary person. The main reason for this is that the most reliable sources describing the life of Amir Timur the works of chroniclers such as Ghiyosiddin Ali ibn Jamal al-Islam Yazdi, Nizamiddin Shami, Sharafiddin Ali Yazdi and Ibn Arabshah were translated into European languages and were accessible to writers.

MAIN PART

By the 20th century the genre of works written about Amir Temur in Europe was diverse: the content of this series of works was greatly influenced by the works of such Oriental chroniclers as Nizamuddin Shami, Sharafiddin Ali Yazdi, Ibn Arabshah, Muinuddin Natanzi, and Ibn Khaldun. The works of a number of Orientalists such as Hilda Hookham, Harold Lamb, Justin Marozzi, Lucien Keren, and Jean-Paul Roux about Sahibkiran were entirely based on the information in these chronicles. Since these works are based on documents, the provision of scientific information takes priority over the artistic depiction of the image.

In Uzbek literature works with such characteristics began to be created at the end of the 20th century. The works of historians and writers such as B.Akhmedov, P.Kadyrov, and P.Ravshanov about Amir Temur are also completely based on documents. Although Hilda Hookham called her work "a documentary story," Justin Marozzi "a historical novel", Poyon Ravshanov "a novel," and Pirimkul Kadyrov "a scientific fiction," in our opinion, it seems appropriate to call all of these works documentary prose.



Professor K. Yuldashev defines this genre as follows: “Documentary prose is focused on the artistic study of a historical figure, historical event, or social reality, based entirely or partially on documentary materials” (Yoldosh. K., 2011, 6). It seems that art is the most basic and primary characteristic of documentary prose. At the same time, it differs from purely literary prose in the minimal state of artistic texture, the fact that the documents and historical information on which it is based have significant social value, and there is no excessive attempt to show the inherent virtues or flaws in the nature of the heroes. In addition, documentary prose differs from the genre of articles and essays in journalism in that documents are approached from an artistic point of view, vital facts are presented in a historical perspective, and how famous the heroes later became. Although the expression of characters in documentary prose is approached based on the requirement of artistic depiction, it requires historical and scientific accuracy, since it is necessary to rely on documents and historical events as reliable evidence, to give a deep scientific interpretation of them, and to conduct artistic research only within the framework of available materials (Kozokboy Y., 2011, 6). In this regard, to create a clearer picture, the description of historical events in Herodotus’s “History” can be cited as the most vivid example of documentary prose in the history of Central Asian culture. In particular, the events related to Cambyses and the herald and priests under his command in the third book of the “History” and the attitude of the ruler Cyrus to them, in our opinion, express documentary prose. Indeed, Herodotus did not merely describe historical events, but also pursued the path of scientific accuracy (Herodotus, 1993, 157).

Almost every writer who touched upon the theme of Amir Temur in this genre tried to reveal the facets of his character, his inner and outer qualities. However, the versatility of this man’s character, the merciless conqueror of the world, the generous commander, the strict statesman, the kind father and brother, the loyal friend, the creative figure, all the writers of Europe were taken aback. The creators who were inclined to condemn this man as evil stopped before his human qualities. Those who called Sahibqiran bad did not hesitate to list his good qualities one by one. That is why the number of creators who have decided to illuminate the various aspects of this man is increasing year by year in both Europe and Central Asia.

No matter how many details and information there are about the life of Amir Temur, it is also very complicated. The abundance of historical information about this person has led to a variety of portrayals of his character. Over the past six centuries, new historians and writers have written works either criticizing or justifying Amir Temur. It should be noted that all these writers were able to refer only to the historical facts at their disposal. The number of preserved documents, chronicles, letters and information about the life of Amir Temur and the subsequent period is sufficient. On the example of just one event in the life of this person, witnesses and authors have drawn different conclusions. Moreover, the confusion in historical information is also added by assessments based on certain political leanings or national patriotic feelings, and this only increases the contradiction, not decreases it. In addition, the procedure for using sources on the life and activities of Amir Temur is different for all creators. For example, one writer carefully compared the available sources and tried to give an objective assessment, while another preferred the source that was convenient for him, that suited his views.

Let’s analyze the work “Tamerlane: The Conqueror of the World” by Justin Marozzi. The author’s position towards Amir Temur, and indeed the Turkic peoples, is already evident in the introduction to this work. In particular, Justin Marozzi says: “Central Asia resembles a minefield. And here we are not talking only about the names of cities” (Marozzi., 2010, 3). A style typical of journalists. Justin Marozzi forces the Western reader to be alert from the very



beginning of the work. The sentences he chooses also create negative thoughts about the East in the minds of the reader. True, he is trying to say that Asians have caused him trouble because of their famous horses. But there is also a style in the image. With just one sentence, Justin Marozzi is able to evoke negative thoughts in the minds of Westerners who, when they think of Asia, imagine a battlefield.

When Marozzi speaks of Christopher Marlowe's play "The Tamburlaine the Great" he says: "... there is another lesson to be learned from the play. As one literary critic wrote: "The events of Central Asia and elsewhere show that if we do not give them enough credit, their descendants may threaten us tomorrow" (Marozzi Justin., 2010, 62). As we have witnessed, there are unfortunately enough writers or literary critics who, based on the above point of view and position, try to convey their opinion to a wide library audience. It must be said with regret that the misunderstandings between Europe or America and the East, conflicting views cannot fail to influence literary processes in different periods. Even in the narration of past events, interpretation, and conveying to the people of the time who really was, the subtle games of politics have their say. If the writer does not look at history impartially, this situation will undoubtedly cause the emergence of false ideas about great personalities in the minds of librarians. Literature and history should not be free from anything (in this case, we mean politics - O.D.).

Justin Marozzi's work clearly demonstrates his attempts to assess events from a journalistic rather than a writer's perspective. The yellow press's reliance on superficial and false information to achieve its goals, and the public's dissemination of "fantasy-based" alarmist information to attract more attention from readers, are clearly evident in the work.

At first glance, it seems that the writer tried to limit himself to fulfilling the task of conveying to libraries the information provided by historians of the East and the West. However, he skillfully used historical sources and was able to subordinate them to his own purpose. As we read the work, the only purpose that can be understood from its writing becomes clear as day. The writer approached the personality of Amir Temur in a one-sided manner.

Although the approaches of the creator and the scientist to historical figures are unique, the creator is also required to be a historian. "A historian who illuminates the life of a state or people creates for us a picture of the entire era, based on chronicles, memoirs, correspondence of various contents, and relying on the vivid deeds of contemporary figures" (Buslaev F., 1990, 471). However, if the creator, creating a work on a historical topic, relies only on oral information, he is distracted from the main goal.

It should be noted that Justin Marozzi did not always try to accurately convey the information in the Eastern chronicles to the library. In some places, by omitting seemingly insignificant facts, he changed the views on the historical figure and the historical event associated with him. For example, when writing about the Baghdad incident, he does not write about Temur's mercy and pardoning many of the city's residents. When we read Marozzi's information, the impression arises that the people of Baghdad were completely killed. However, Nizamuddin Shami described the same event clearly and in detail. He writes that many people who escaped the siege of the city were well treated by the Temur's troops. Each day of the siege, which lasted forty days, many of these refugees left the city (Nizomiddin Shomiy., 1996, 313). A reader who has read Justin Marozzi's work will be convinced that he pretended to be unaware of this information. This way of "objectively" assessing historical events and personalities is undoubtedly aimed at a specific goal. Marozzi selects from the chronicles only the information that he wants to see and write about, and does not mince words about the evidence that truly



shows the personality of Amir Temur. Or, when writing about the conquest of Damascus, Marozzi finds it necessary to cite the information provided by Schiltberger, although he does not believe it. "According to Schiltberger," he says, "30,000 religious figures and their relatives gathered inside the Umayyad mosque were burned to death" (Marozzi, Justin., 2010, 156). However, it is written in Nizamuddin Shami's "Zafarnoma" that Amir Temur issued a decree not to kill the inhabitants of Damascus (Nizamuddin Shami., 1996, 308), and Marozzi could also have taken this information into account. Marozzi, who did not want to take into account the sources of the East, could at least have taken into account other Western sources. In particular, Bertrand de Mignanelli also wrote that before the burning of Damascus, an order was issued to evacuate its population outside the city (Walter J. Fishel., 1956, 201-232). However, this information did not fit Marozzi's purpose either. Mignanelli reports that Damascus was not a large city, smaller than the Italian city of Pisa, and that it had a population of about 100,000 (Walter J. Fishel., 1956, 201-232). If 30,000 people had been burned, he would certainly have written about it. So, as we mentioned above, Marozzi wants to use only information that serves his own interests. He deliberately creates a false impression of Temur in the minds of the 20th century readers with false information.

Marozzi is mostly based on Ibn Arabshah's "History of Amir Timur". From the history it is known that Ibn Arabshah didn't like Temur. From here it is clearly evident why Marozzi used his book as a main source.

Marozzi focuses mainly on Amir Temur's conquests and their consequences, so trying to focus on the negative aspects of Amir Temur. For example, when talking about Temur's harem, he writes that Amir Timur was famous for his polygamy. (Marozzi, Justin., 2010, 50) However, if we look at history, in the medieval East, polygamy was a widespread way of life not only among rulers, but also among the common people. Moreover, the harem of the defeated rulers was considered the property of the victorious ruler. This was a custom that had been formed before Timur. However, Marozzi, although aware of this unwritten rule, attaches it to the name of Temur in the form of an accusation. At one point, he writes that "Temur tries hard to leave behind a memory of his victorious campaigns and grandiose constructions, but this does not work" (Marozzi, Justin., 2010, 60). Of course, it would be one-sided to say that the author does not know the magnificent buildings, palaces, and numerous works written about him that Amir Temur left behind. Although Marozzi is well aware of Temur's creative works, he pretends not to know. Because he knows very well that he has read the sources about Amir Temur, that thanks to him the Renaissance began in Transoxiana and Khorasan, that he and his descendants carried out the development work, and that science has finally progressed. But Marozzi's intention is different. During the writing of his work, Marozzi referred to Ibn Arabshah's chronicle more than 70 times. That's understandable. At the same time, he referred to Sharafiddin Ali Yazdi's "Zafarnoma" almost 70 times too. However, what is noteworthy is that he referred only to Sharafiddin Ali Yazdi's stories about the results of Temur's military campaigns. But not to good things and jobs done by him.

Justin Marozzi can in one word be called the "Ibn Arabshah" of the 20th century. The lessons learned from his work will prevent readers from drawing incorrect conclusions about the history of the Turkic peoples, and especially about the historical figure of Amir Temur.

The work of the Uzbek writer Pirimqul Kadyrov "The Image of Amir Temur" (Kadyrov Pirimqul, 2007) is sharply different in content and essence from the work of Justin Marozzi. In the work, science based on authoritative historical sources and the artistic skill of an experienced, talented writer are combined, enhancing the influence of each other. Due to this,



the work presents truly significant historical events and the personality of the main character Temur with great charm, using an interesting plot, thoughtful composition, and novelistic thinking. However, if you read the work carefully, you will see that the author wrote only about good events related to Temur, events that arouse sympathy for Amir Temur in the reader, such as the troubles and obstacles and difficulties he encountered on his life path, which enhance the drama of Amir Temur.

The writer does not express his attitude to the events of Isfahan, Damascus and Delhi, which are of most interest to foreign readers. This may lead to the perception that he has described the events one-sidedly. In addition, in describing and explaining historical events, P. Kadyrov often relies on the work "Temur's Regulations".

CONCLUSION

Evaluating historical figures and events of the past based on the socio-political views and humanitarian ideas of the 20th-21st centuries leads to incorrect conclusions about history and historical figures. This issue is also directly related to the process of creating the image of historical figures in documentary novels. All this creates the need to evaluate historical figures from the perspective of their time and from the social, political and spiritual aspects of their time. After all, the change of time and space also leads to the change of views and ideas. Events and socio-political situations that occurred many centuries ago cannot be evaluated solely from the artistic and aesthetic perspective of the present.

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