

УДК 1(091)

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AZERBAIJANI PHILOSOPHY AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE TURKIC WORLD

The term "Azerbaijani philosophy" was initially introduced during the first half of the 20th century. Scholars explored the rich cultural heritage of the Azerbaijani people, whose roots trace back to ancient times, even to the era of the "Avesta." They studied the medieval literature of poets such as Nizami Ganjavi, Fizuli, Nasimi, Naimi, and many others, finding philosophical elements in their works. They systematized all the acquired knowledge and acknowledged that Azerbaijani philosophy had a rightful place in the world of philosophy. However, existing as an independent entity in the South Caucasus, a region bordering Turkey, Iran, Russia, and several Arab states, presented a formidable challenge. Undoubtedly, there has been a shift away from uniqueness and distinctiveness towards universalism and the exchange of ideas.

Furthermore, Azerbaijani philosophy had long evolved exclusively within the realm of Islamic philosophical thought. However, starting from the second half of the 19th century, a sense of national identity began to form in society, and an understanding of commonality with Turkic peoples emerged in terms of language, culture, customs, and way of life, beliefs, and philosophical traditions. The ideology of the Soviet era took over pro-Turkic thinking and dominated for the next 70 years. It was only towards the end of the 20th century that Azerbaijani philosophy continued its natural development within the framework of national Turkic philosophical thought.

A significant place in the history of Azerbaijani philosophical thought is occupied by the philosophy of enlightenment that developed at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. For its proponents, questions of national identity and relations with the Islamic and Turkic world were no less important than questions related to the reform of traditional norms and the integration of scientific knowledge into public consciousness. This study addresses the question of why the development of Azerbaijani philosophy within the realm of Turkic philosophical thought will enable a more effective resolution of the philosophical issues that arise on the path of the state's further development.

Key words: *philosophy, culture, Turkic heritage, Asia, East, enlightenment, Azerbaijan.*

Introduction. It is an established fact that numerous modern disciplines have emerged over time from the realm of philosophy, aptly characterized by Cicero as the "mother of all sciences". In the contemporary context, philosophy no longer confines itself merely to being a reservoir of foundational knowledge pertaining to the structure of the universe, upon which philosophical inquiry continues its quest for elucidation. Rather, it assumes the role of a sociocultural domain, frequently rooted in geographic or ethno-national parameters.

Expressions such as "the Western world" or "the Arab world" are now emblematic not of a state of peace but rather of a philosophical paradigm or framework specific to distinct ethnic, national, or regional entities. Recent times have witnessed the emergence of designations such as "the Russian world", "the Orthodox world", or "the Muslim world". This evolution prompts a pertinent query: do Turkic-speaking communities, replete with a substantial reservoir of philosophical wisdom, not warrant recognition as the Turkic world? Throughout the course of this inquiry, we shall endeavor to address this inquiry while simultaneously delineating the positioning of Azerbaijani philosophy within the framework of this value system.

The level of problem elaboration. When discussing Azerbaijani philosophy without acknowledging it as a part of Turkic philosophy, it becomes evident that in the 20th century, this subject has been

widely explored. Most notably, historians of philosophy such as Alexander Makovelskiy, Heydar Huseynov, Zakir Mamedov, Ziyaddin Gayushev, and others have delved into this theme. However, in the post-Soviet period of Azerbaijan's development, when previously restricted archives became accessible, and discussions on the matter were opened, a fresh perspective on the history of Azerbaijani philosophy emerged.

It was revealed that in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Azerbaijani philosophy developed within the framework of Turkic philosophy. The Soviet regime replaced this approach with the ideology of Marxism-Leninism and a focus on national identity. In the present day, the situation is evolving, and the issue is actively researched. Nonetheless, there is still a paucity of works with a conceptual nature addressing this subject.

Purposes and Objectives. This study endeavors to delineate the fundamental points of convergence between Azerbaijani philosophy and Turkic philosophy while concurrently undertaking the task of discerning both shared characteristics and distinctions. Achieving this goal will make it possible to pinpoint the challenges that Azerbaijani philosophy encounters when it is correlated with Turkic philosophy. Within this overarching research framework, the study's principal objectives encompass the identification of the central tenets underpinning contemporary Turkic philosophy and a nuanced exploration of the influence wielded by Azerbaijani philosophical thought on the ontogeny of this broader philosophical tradition.

Methods Employed. The research draws upon a comparative analysis of source materials pertinent to the subject at hand. Additionally, it adopts an analytical approach to the study in its entirety. Methodological choices vary depending on the specific research objectives at hand, encompassing techniques such as induction, deduction, synthesis, and the application of the axiomatic method. The axiomatic method, in particular, entails the identification and incorporation of well-established historical events and facts that obviate the need for further validation.

Main section. National consciousness, or as it is also referred to, national identity, is a sentiment without which the existence of entire nations or individual ethnic groups is inconceivable. This sentiment is molded over the course of decades and even centuries, and its depth is such that it exerts a direct influence on the historical processes spanning the entire world.

Peoples possessing a well-developed sense of national identity typically exhibit a high degree of awareness of their own subjectivity. Conversely, in situations where this sentiment has not yet been fully formed, the risk of various social cataclysms is invariably present.

Identity may find formal expression in official laws and institutions, dictating how a country's history should be taught in schools or designating which language is to be recognized as the official national language. Nevertheless, national identity extends into the sphere of culture and values. It is composed of the narratives that individuals construct about themselves, including their origins, the festivals they celebrate, the contents of their collective historical memory, and the criteria for attaining genuine membership within a society [14].

Indeed, at the core of the sense of national identity lies the philosophy of a people as a form of collective consciousness. According to the German philosopher Kurt Huebner, "the identity of a nation is as essential a practical postulate of human coexistence as the identity of an individual" [13]. However, issues of identity in philosophy have been explored in the past and continue to be addressed by no less renowned philosophers such as Karl Popper [13], Juergen Habermas [13], Vittorio Hösle [13], and others. Yet, the focus of their inquiries has predominantly revolved around individual "selfhood" rather than collective identity. Thus, it is pertinent to delve more deeply into the ideas put forth by Kurt Huebner.

In assessing a nation as a systemic whole, the thinker underscores its constituent elements, encompassing values, customs, culture, language, political ideas, and objectives. The formation of ethnonational identity is also contingent on specific geographical and climatic conditions, manifesting itself in material culture. Emphasizing the intricate hierarchies inherent in such systems, Huebner posits the conclusion that the identity of a nation at a given point in time is characterized by a structured array of systems [8].

Kurt Huebner delineates five distinct archetypes of national identity. The first among them is typified by the emergence of a bona fide manifestation of national essence, exemplified, for instance, by the German national identity. This category underscores the pivotal role played by national poetry, folk songs, ballads, and cognate cultural expressions in shaping this identity.

The second category hinges upon the postulation of a national myth, serving as a foundational narrative from which the spiritual evolution of a given nation derives. It is replete with mythological motifs, legends, and the epic heritage of the nation. These elements not only occupy a prominent place in cultural and historical studies but also serve as a focal point for scholarly exploration, encapsulating a distinct form within a specific "national context".

The uniqueness of the third type lies in the understanding that the national essence exhibits entelechy-like properties – a pronounced form that evolves and lives. In this case, dominant metaphors organizing national-identifying processes may include concepts such as the "spirit of the forefathers", the "tribal character of the nation", and the "internal principle of the nation".

Conversely, the fourth type posits that the essence of a nation eludes encapsulation through mere conceptualization, consequently necessitating the representation of a nation as a nuanced "idea". This classification is closely associated with key terminologies such as "homeland" and the "nation's mission", among others.

The fifth category of analysis centers on the domain of language. Within this context, it is postulated that within the realm of oral language and poetry lie not merely certain "cognitive attributes" of humanity, but rather the very essence of its "indivisible powers". Kurt Huebner advances the concept of language as a medium through which "each national spirit moves, constituting an indispensable precondition" [15].

When considering the Turkic peoples, encompassing Azerbaijanis, Turks, Turkmens, Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Kyrgyz, who have successfully forged independent and sovereign states, alongside the Turks predominantly inhabiting territories across Russia, Ukraine, China, Iran, Iraq, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan, all five typologies of national identity expounded upon by Kurt Huebner find their applicability. Consequently, Turkic peoples are not only self-reliant but also manifest distinctiveness. Moreover, if disparities exist among these groups concerning the first four identity types, be it in the realm of mythology, traditions, customs, ideas, or music, it is paramount to recognize that one of the identity categories, specifically the linguistic one, serves as the generative force behind the self-awareness of Turkic peoples, fostering not only individual distinctions but also their collective identity as Turks as a whole. All the aforementioned communities communicate through languages belonging to a shared linguistic group.

Hence, it is tenable to assert that, from a philosophical standpoint, all Turkic peoples exhibit a high degree of national identity. Furthermore, it can also be contended that there exists a clan-based identity, as these peoples identify themselves unequivocally as Turkic.

Nevertheless, in the process of forging national self-awareness, Turkic peoples have grappled with and continue to grapple with certain existential challenges. Despite a complex historical trajectory, they have managed to preserve their national spirit and sense of identity, often at the cost of oppression, persecution, and repression, including the prohibition of their native language and written script. At present, for the most part, these issues are largely in the past. However, some Turkic peoples remain at risk of assimilation by other dominant ethnic groups, particularly those residing in states with distinct prevailing ethnic majorities.

In order to safeguard the national identity of Turkic peoples, it is imperative to foster closer humanitarian, cultural, economic, and even political interactions within the framework of the Organization of Turkic States and other intergovernmental and non-governmental entities, as well as on bilateral and multilateral levels. In reality, such interactions have substantially increased in recent years. The earthquake that occurred on February 6, 2023, in Turkey vividly illustrated the cohesion of Turkic peoples in the face of a common calamity [19]. The support extended to Azerbaijan by Turkey, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan following its victory in the Second Karabakh War is also noteworthy [20]. Azerbaijan has successfully cultivated amicable ties with Kyrgyzstan

and Turkmenistan as well [20]. For the Turkic world, it is apt to posit that only through connection with kindred spirits can the preservation of the sense of national self-awareness be facilitated.

Turkic philosophy, being an integral component of global philosophy, undeniably shares commonalities with it and does not fundamentally oppose it. Nevertheless, a comprehensive understanding of the distinctive origins and subsequent development of Turkic philosophical thought enables us to confidently assert its inherent distinctive attributes and unquestionably intrinsic challenges.

Among the Azerbaijani people, recognized as one of the prominent representatives of Turkic civilization, there exists a clear consciousness of their association with the Turkic world and its philosophical ideals. This recognition is not confined solely to the Azerbaijani populace but extends globally, with the Azerbaijani people being long acknowledged as integral contributors to Turkic culture and language. An exemplar of this historical recognition is the renowned "Manifest" dated July 15, 1722, directed towards the populations residing in the Caspian regions. This document, printed in the "Turkic" language, is preserved in the Russian State Military History Archive (17, fund 20, inventory 1/47, case 11, page 92).

According to Azerbaijani historian Igrar Aliyev, the formation of the Azerbaijani people, as a Turkic-speaking community, culminated around the 3rd to early 7th centuries CE [4, p. 95]. It is undeniable that Turkic philosophy possesses a steadfast foundation, as reflected in its rich literary heritage from previous centuries, its contributions to medieval science, and its close associations with classical Muslim philosophy. However, the origins of modern Turkic philosophy, along with Azerbaijani philosophy, can be traced back to a period that predates the emergence of Islam, extending into the distant past. Western scholars also subscribe to this view. According to Professor Steven Frederick Starr, Turkic culture thrived for several centuries before the advent of Islam [12, p. 122].

When discussing the pre-Islamic phase of Turkic philosophical development, it is impossible to overlook the unification of all Turkic peoples through their belief in a singular god, Tengri, and Tengriism as a religious movement. The primary objects of veneration in Tengriism, such as the sun and the sky, are still depicted on the national symbols of certain Turkic states. Azerbaijan has preserved certain customs, rituals, and festivals from the era of Tengriism [1]. One cannot disregard the principal philosophical sources of the Turkic world written during the pre-Islamic period, including the revered Avesta [4] and the Manas epic [4]. It is widely recognized that the Avesta, one of the primary literary monuments of Azerbaijani culture, inspired some of the most renowned thinkers and philosophers of the German classical philosophical tradition, influencing the boundaries of their intellectual endeavors.

Following the establishment of Islam as the predominant religion across the territories inhabited by Turkic peoples around the 7th–8th centuries CE, new philosophical trends emerged. The most notable among these are Eastern Peripateticism (adherence to the ideas of Aristotle) [9] and Sufism [9]. In the journey to distinguish Turkic philosophy from the broader Islamic tradition, significant contributions came from great thinkers such as Bahmanyar [9], Al-Farabi [12], Yusuf Balasaguni [12], Ibn Sina [12], Nasreddin Tusi [12], and many others.

In the realm of literature, notable recognition is due to poets like Nizami Ganjavi, who, like Immanuel Kant, spent his entire life in one city but left a global impact on art and philosophy. Others include Fizuli [4], Nasimi [4], Naimi [4], and more. While much of the European continent was dominated by theology and the struggle against heresy, these Azerbaijani poets addressed the most pressing human concerns, writing about the meaning of life and engaging with ethical concepts such as good, evil, justice, love, friendship, and betrayal in their works.

During the Enlightenment era, which arrived relatively early in Azerbaijan by Islamic historiographical standards, the philosophical thought was significantly influenced by the views of scholars such as Abbas-Quli Agha Bakikhanov [16], Mirza Fatali Akhundov [16], Mirza Kazembek [16], Gasan bey Zardabi [3], and others. Their active public activities initially shaped national self-awareness among the Azerbaijani people, and subsequently, an understanding of their connection with

the Turkic world. It is not surprising that the works of these thinkers intrigued Azerbaijani historians of philosophy in the 20th century. Nevertheless, in contemporary times, there is a reevaluation and more comprehensive exploration of their ideas.

Contemporary Azerbaijani philosophy, akin to its Turkic philosophical counterparts, is deeply concerned with the pressing global issues that command the collective intellectual attention of the broader philosophical community. These multifaceted concerns encompass environmental challenges, the inequitable allocation of resources, the escalating specter of global warming, the looming threat of widespread famine, the pervasiveness of social inequality, the ever-increasing rates of unemployment, the inexorable encroachment of automation into the realm of human labor, the burgeoning integration of artificial intelligence, the ongoing efforts to combat terrorism, and the persistent endeavors to prevent the proliferation of armed conflicts, among other crucial topics.

It is irrefutable that the process of Azerbaijani philosophical maturation remains an ongoing endeavor. The trajectory of its development is characterized by a steadfast commitment to achieving deeper integration within the broader philosophical discourse of the Turkic world, all the while diligently safeguarding and reinforcing its own venerable philosophical traditions and distinctive characteristics.

Conclusions. Azerbaijani philosophy unquestionably constitutes an integral component of the broader Turkic philosophical tradition. Turkic philosophy encompasses a multitude of Turkic-speaking peoples and states, not limited solely to Azerbaijan, but also encompassing Turkey, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, as well as distinct regions within Russia and Ukraine.

The Turkic peoples share common historical and cultural roots, which profoundly influence their philosophical traditions. Thanks to linguistic affinities and shared linguistic characteristics, the exchange of philosophical ideas is readily facilitated. Azerbaijani philosophy has historically played and continues to play a pivotal role in shaping the development of philosophical thought within the Turkic world.

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АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНСЬКА ФІЛОСОФІЯ ЯК СКЛАДОВА ЧАСТИНА ФІЛОСОФІЇ ТЮРКСЬКОГО СВІТУ

Термін «азербайджанська філософія» вперше був введений у першій половині 20 століття. Вчені досліджували багату культурну спадщину азербайджанського народу, коріння якої сягає глибокої давнини, аж до епохи «Авести». Вони вивчали середньовічну літературу таких поетів, як Нізамі Гянджеві, Фізулі, Насімі, Наїмі та багатьох інших, знаходячи в їхніх творах філософські елементи. Вони систематизували всі набуті знання і визнали, що азербайджанська філософія займає належне місце у світі філософії. Однак існувати як незалежний суб'єкт на Південному Кавказі, регіоні, що межує з Туреччиною, Іраном, Росією та кількома арабськими державами, було серйозним викликом. Безсумнівно, відбувся зсув від унікальності та самотності до універсалізму та обміну ідеями.

Крім того, азербайджанська філософія довгий час розвивалася виключно в царині ісламської філософської думки. Однак, починаючи з другої половини XIX століття, в суспільстві починає формуватися почуття національної ідентичності, з'являється розуміння спільності з тюркськими народами в мові, культурі, звичаях, побуті, віруваннях і філософських традиціях. Ідеологія радянської доби взяла верх над протюркським мисленням і домінувала наступні 70 років. Лише до кінця 20 століття азербайджанська філософія продовжила свій природний розвиток в рамках національної тюркської філософської думки.

Значне місце в історії азербайджанської філософської думки займає філософія Просвітництва, що склалася на рубежі 19–20 століть. Для її прихильників питання національної ідентичності та відносин з ісламським і тюркським світом були не менш важливими, ніж питання, пов'язані з реформою традиційних норм та інтеграцією наукових знань у суспільну свідомість. У цьому дослідженні розглядається питання про те, чому розвиток азербайджанської філософії в руслі тюркської філософської думки дозволить більш ефективно вирішувати філософські проблеми, які виникають на шляху подальшого розвитку держави.

Ключові слова: філософія, культура, тюркська спадщина, Азія, Схід, просвітництво, Азербайджан.