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چکیده:

تعامل میان داستانها، موسیقی و ترانهها در فرهنگ موسیقایی آذربایجان تا حد زیادی ناشناخته باقی مانده است. این مقاله به بررسی ارتباط متقابل این عناصر و تقویت دوجانبه آنها میپردازد. هدف ما تحلیل این روابط از طریق نمونههایی از سنت موسیقایی آذربایجانی است. با مرور جامع پژوهشهای موجود و انجام مصاحبهها، ژانر عاشیقی را در فرهنگ ترکی به عنوان تلفیقی برجسته از موسیقی، ترانه و روایت شناسایی کردیم. این ژانر شامل دو شکل اصلی روایت است: حماسهها و داستانهای عاشقانه که هر دو از شعر و نثر بهره میبرند. بخشهای شعری معمولاً با همراهی ساز بلندگردن فوپوز اجرا میشوند و با قطعات موسیقایی متنوعی به نام «هاوا» همراهی میگردند، درحالیکه بخشهای منثور به شیوه گفتاری و بدون همراهی موسیقی اجرا میشوند. مطالعه موردی این پژوهش، داستان «عاصی و کرم» است که در آن تلفیق مؤلفههای روایی و موسیقایی بررسی شده است. یافتههای ما نشان میدهد که عناصر روایی بخش جداییناپذیر اجراهای عاشیقی هستند و تعامل میان داستانها، راویان (عاشیقا) و موسیقی، ارکان اساسی این سنت موسیقایی پویا را تشکیل میدهند.

کلمات کلیدی: روایتگری، ژانر عاشیقی، ترانهها، موسیقی، ادبیات شفاهی.

استناد (آپا):

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Songs as the Vehicle of Tellers, Stories as the Vehicle of Oral Literature: The Storytelling in Azerbaijani Musical Culture

Abstract:

The interaction among stories, music, and songs within Azerbaijani musical culture remains a relatively underexplored area of inquiry. This paper investigates the interconnections among these elements and their mutual reinforcement. It is aimed to analyze these relationships through examples drawn from the Azerbaijani musical tradition. Through a review of existing research and interviews, the Āshiqi genre within Turkic culture as an exemplary fusion of music, song, and narration has been identified. This genre encompasses two primary narrative forms: epics and romances, which incorporate both verse and prose. The verse components are traditionally performed alongside the long-necked lute (Qupoz), accompanied by various musical pieces known as Hāva, and the prose parts are performed in a recitative manner without musical accompaniment. Our case study in this research is Asli and Kerem story in which the integration of narrative and musical components has been examined. Our findings demonstrate that the narrative elements are integral to Āshiqi performances, with the interplay among stories, storytellers (Āshiqs), and music serving as the foundational pillars of this vibrant musical tradition.

Key words: Storytelling, Āshiqi genre, Songs, Music, Oral literature.

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Azərbaycan musiqi mədəniyyətində dastançılıq: dastançıların vasitəsi kimi mahnılar, şifahi ədəbiyyatın vasitəsi kimi dastanlar

Xülasə:

Azərbaycan musiqi mədəniyyətində dastanlar, musiqi və mahnılar arasındakı qarşılıqlı əlaqə nisbətən az öyrənilmiş bir sahədir. Bu məqalədə bu elementlərin bir-biri ilə əlaqəsi və qarşılıqlı gücləndirilməsi araşdırılır. Məqsədimiz, bu əlaqələri Azərbaycan musiqi ənənəsindən nümunələr əsasında təhlil etməkdir. Mövcud araşdırmaların və müsahibələrin diqqətli şəkildə nəzərdən keçirilməsi vasitəsilə türk mədəniyyətindəki Aşıq janrının musiqi, mahnı və dastanın qüsursuz birləşməsinə nümunə olduğunu müəyyən etdik. Bu janr iki əsas hekayə formasını əhatə edir: dastanlar və romantik hekayələr ki, bunlar həm nəzm, həm də nəsr hissələrindən ibarətdir. Nəzm hissələri ənənəvi olaraq uzunsaplı çalğı aləti (Qopuz) ilə ifa olunur və müxtəlif musiqi parçaları (Hava) ilə müşayiət edilir, nəsr hissələri isə musiqi müşayiəti olmadan rəqəbativ üslubunda oxunur. Bu araşdırmada nümunə iş kimi "Əsli və Kərəm" dastanı seçilmişdir ki, burada hekayə və musiqi komponentlərinin inteqrasiyası təhlil edilmişdir. Nəticələr göstərir ki, dastan elementləri Aşıq ifalarının ayrılmaz hissəsidir və hekayələr, dastançılar (Aşıqlar) və musiqi arasındakı qarşılıqlı əlaqə bu canlı musiqi ənənəsinin əsas sütunlarıdır.

Açar sözlər: dastançılıq, aşıq janrı, mahnılar, musiqi, şifahi ədəbiyyat

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Anlatıcıların Aracı Olarak Şarkılar, Sözlü Edebiyatın Aracı Olarak Hikâyeler: Azerbaycan Müzik Kültüründe Hikâye Anlatıcılığı

Özet:

Azerbaycan müzik kültüründe hikâyeler, müzik ve şarkılar arasındaki etkileşim, henüz yeterince araştırılmamış bir alandır. Bu makale, bu unsurlar arasındaki bağlantıları ve karşılıklı güçlendirme ilişkisini incelemektedir. Amacımız, Azerbaycan müzik geleneğinden örneklerle bu ilişkileri analiz etmektir. Mevcut araştırmaların ve görüşmelerin detaylı bir incelemesi sonucunda, Türk kültüründeki Âşıklık geleneğini müzik, şarkı ve anlatının örnek bir birleşimi olarak tespit ettik. Bu tür, başlıca iki anlatı biçimini içerir: hem şiir hem de nesir barındıran destanlar ve aşk hikâyeleri. Şiirsel bölümler, geleneksel olarak uzun saplı bir çalgı olan Kopuz eşliğinde ve Hava adı verilen çeşitli müzik parçalarıyla icra edilirken, nesir kısımlar müziksiz bir şekilde recitatif tarzda söylenir. Bu araştırmadaki vaka çalışmamız, anlatı ve müzikal unsurların bütünleşmesinin incelendiği Âşık Kerem ile Aslı hikâyesidir. Bulgularımız, anlatı unsurlarının Âşıklık performanslarının ayrılmaz bir parçası olduğunu ve hikâyeler, anlatıcılar (Âşıklar) ile müzik arasındaki etkileşimin bu canlı müzik geleneğinin temel taşlarını oluşturduğunu göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hikâye anlatıcılığı, Âşıklık geleneği, Şarkılar, Müzik, Sözlü edebiyat

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Introduction

In West Asian cultures, music and storytelling have been woven together. This article explores the relationship between songs and oral literature, delving into how music acts as vehicles for tellers, while stories—rooted in the oral traditions of diverse cultures—unfold as the essence of literature passed through generations.

As we embrace the power of stories told through song, we uncover universal themes of love, struggle, joy, and sorrow that resonate across cultures. Through this exploration, we seek to understand how these harmonious narratives not only preserve cultural heritage but also shape identities and foster connections in an ever-evolving world. We first define some key concepts used in the rest of this study.

Literature review

Storytelling, music, and oral literature have long been intertwined in Turkic culture. Our aim is to explore the deep interconnections between these phenomena, highlighting their characteristics and the mutual effects they have on each other. Each of the above phenomena has been investigated separately by researchers, however, no written source was found that properly examined the relation between music and storytelling.

Başgöz (1970) focused on storytelling tradition specifically in Azerbaijan in his paper but he did not provide a precise explanation about oral literature and the social functions of storytelling. Albright (1976) examined the musical tradition of Northwestern Iran in her Ph.D. dissertation. Albright (1976) also described the *Ashiq*, his training and performance in her paper. Then, she analyzed one segment of a narrative to show what its components are, and how they can be manipulated by the performer. Reichl (1992) gives an introduction to the oral epic traditions of the Turkic peoples of central Asia in his book, however, he did not discuss the interaction between music and storytelling in *Ashiqi*. Qasımlı (2011) has provided extensive information about *Ashiqi* and its history, he has also examined the *Ashiqi* tradition in various regions. Oldfield & Nikaeen (2018) presented a comparison between *Ashiqs* (performers) in Iran and Azerbaijan but they did not focus on the narrative sides of *Ashiqi* genre. Oldfield & Nikaeen (2020) in their other paper, examined how changes in methods of transmission are enhancing a tendency toward musical change in the Azerbaijani *Ashiqi* genre as it is performed in the Republic of Azerbaijan and northern Iran. There are also many other resources which

their main focus is on various categories of narratives and different functions of storytelling in social life, but they did not discuss the storytelling tradition among Turkic people and its role in *Ashiqi* genre. This essay is an attempt to provide a source that simultaneously explains the storytelling and music and the relation between these two phenomena with oral literature.

Research Method

The main focus in this paper was on the interconnection between storytelling, music and oral literature. This paper is an answer to the question that whether the narrative elements are integral parts of *Ashiqi* performances or not. The research has been conducted using a qualitative method based on description and content analysis. The data gathering method was using the written and visual sources, as well as personal analysis of the author on the case study.

Key concepts

Oral literature is one of the substantial components of every culture and refers to a tradition which uses spoken words as a medium of communication and comprises various forms of literature including epics, poems, dramas, ethnic stories, tales, jokes, proverbs, conundrums, lullabies, etc.

In some cultures, oral literature has precedence over written literature because its roots trace back to the prehistory era. Several stories and tales existed before the invention of writing and were orally transmitted to the next generations. In societies relying on oral tradition, the preserved history is transmitted via human memory (Seydou 1996). Oral tradition is a complex of cultural values whose transition is based on an oral way from one generation to the other through education and practical aspects of life and it includes narratives and non-narrative cases. These messages can be historical, technical, scientific, religious and aesthetic (*ibid*: 764).

Jafari Ghanavati (2005: 77c) categorizes shared features in oral literature as follows:

1. Anonymous Origins: Oral literature is frequently transmitted through generations, obscuring the identity of the original creators or authors of specific stories.
2. Primarily Oral Transmission: The principal mode of sharing oral literature is through storytelling, recitation, or performance, allowing narratives to pass from one generation to the next.

3. Cultural Diversity Without Borders: Oral literature emerges from a wide array of cultures and regions worldwide, transcending geographical boundaries.
4. Varied Versions: Many tales, legends, and folktales in oral literature manifest in numerous versions, continually evolving as they are retold over time.
5. Entertainment Value: At its core, oral literature serves as a source of entertainment, captivating and engaging audiences through its narratives.
6. Vernacular Language: Often expressed in the local dialect or vernacular of the community, oral literature reflects the rich linguistic diversity inherent in oral traditions.
7. Educational Value for Children: Beyond mere entertainment, oral literature conveys educational messages and moral lessons. It plays a crucial role in imparting cultural values, traditions, and knowledge to younger generations, often employing allegory and symbolism to communicate vital life lessons.

Stories are the basic foundations of all human learning and teaching (Cajete, 1994). People presented and narrated different types of oral literature and their presentation methods changed according to the changes in the taste of their audience and social conditions over time. Stories as widespread branches of oral literature, are dependent on the narrator and the narration method. Brooks (1985: 3) believes that "Our lives are ceaselessly intertwined with narrative, with the stories that we tell, all of which are reworked in that story of our own lives that we narrate to ourselves.... We are immersed in narrative." Storytelling with different functions was one of the social activities among people in their free time in the ages when there was no broadcasting media; and many proverbs, sarcasms, etc. are derived from the stories of that period. Storytelling has held significant roles in society long before the advent of written history. As the primary means for preserving and sharing cultural customs, beliefs, and heritage, oral storytelling emerged as an effective vehicle for encoding knowledge within oral cultures. This method not only enhanced memorability but also facilitated the transmission of information across generations (Kadhim Khudhair and Saadoon 2017: 3). In indigenous cultures, storytelling is a vital practice that strengthens community bonds and affirms the experiences and worldviews of indigenous peoples. It offers a valuable platform for expressing these experiences in native languages, fostering relationships, and promoting the sharing of traditional knowledge and cultural heritage (Iseke 2013: 559).

Stories play a crucial role in shaping how individuals understand themselves and their environments (Kadhim Khudhair and Saadoon 2017: 5). Each society, along with its various

subgroups, has its own narratives that reflect common human behaviors recognized within that social context. This narrative framework is fundamental for acquiring and storing social knowledge, allowing individuals to interpret and engage with the stories presented in their discourse (Nash 2005: 30).

According to (2008) there are 3 levels of storytelling:

1. Sacred stories which are specific in form, content, context, and structure. These stories themselves must be told at different levels according to the initiation level of the listener. Only those trained, tested, and given permission to do so are allowed to tell these stories, which must never vary in how they are told. They are sacred and contain the history of people.
2. Mythical stories (indigenous legends) that you may have heard or read in books that teach morals, lessons, or events. They can be shaped by the storyteller – drawing on the teller's or the listeners' experiences – but the underlying message of these stories does not change.
3. Personal stories are used often by elders in teaching and counseling. To tell these stories, elders draw on their experiences or those of others to aid listeners. It is a particular use of these kinds of stories as pedagogical tools (Wilson 2008 quoted in Iseke 2013: 565).

Unlike the lullabies which exclusively belonged to parents, stories have a wider range because in addition to children, adults were the audiences too and sometimes, storytelling was part of a special ritual; this led to the appearance of storytellers. Through storytelling and ceremonial life, we are involved in the lifeways of a people, culture, community, family, and tradition, and in it, we make a new story today of our connections. Whether our stories are pedagogical or witnessing and therefore have a teaching function, or ceremonial and have a spiritual connection, the stories are important to our cultural life (Iseke 2013: 573). Morgan and Dennehy (1997) identify five essential components that contribute to an effective story, arranged in a sequential framework:

- The setting: a description of the time, place, characters and context so you provide something the audience can mentally imagine a part of it.
- Build-up: a sequence of events that warns the listener that something (usually some type of conflict) is about to happen. This creates suspense, interest and attention.

- Crisis: the climax or high point of the story. This is also the place to introduce a new element and for a turning point.
- Learning: point out what the central character(s) learned. Here lies the lesson of the story.
- How change ensued in the character(s) behaviors, awareness, and abilities: the storyteller focuses on the learning to be retained by the listener and is cautioned to not assume that the listener always understands the lesson of the story (Morgan and Dennehy 1997 quoted in Kadhim Khudhair and Saadoon 2017: 9).

Mehrdad Bahar (Linguist, 1929-1994) believes that “the emergence of great epics requires a society with a dynamic economy and culture which can provide for the existence of a strong, warrior and victorious aristocracy who appear as kings and heroes in these stories. Therefore, not all nations have such epic collections.”

Storytelling among Turkic People

Storytelling has been a popular social action among societies from prehistory era among many nations including Indians, Greeks and Iranians. The stories predominantly explore themes such as religion, socioeconomic status, lifestyle, and national values, among others.

In this research, we focus on the rich tradition of storytelling in Azerbaijani culture. We will explore its historical roots and distinctive features, delving into the cultural significance and unique characteristics that define Azerbaijani storytelling. Storytelling tradition and music are intertwined in Azerbaijani culture. Among the Turkic peoples, this activity is deeply rooted and has remained a powerful tradition to this day. Many of the ancient Turkic stories were published in a large geographical area and were the basics of the creation of the resources followed. The storytelling tradition among Turkic people is deeply rooted in their nomadic lifestyle, which often involves engaging in numerous conflicts. This rich oral history served as a vital means of preserving their culture, values, and experiences amidst the challenges of their dynamic way of life. So, many adventures could be the basic building blocks of the stories. Another factor that may have contributed to the storytelling tradition is the cold climate of the Turkic regions, which often kept people confined to their homes. During the long nights, elders would share their memories and experiences with the younger generations, fostering a rich tradition of storytelling that helped preserve cultural knowledge and strengthen community bonds. Storytelling has persisted among Turkic people, even in the face of urbanization. The

oldest source of written Turkish stories recorded is *Dede Qorqud Kitabı*. Playing musical instruments has long been a common skill among Turkic peoples, particularly in the Caucasus, as evidenced by their rich folklore. Over time, these stories have evolved into poetic and musical forms, blending narrative and music into captivating entertainment.

The Azerbaijani story (*Dastan*) is an epic-length oral narrative that combines a story plot told in prose with verses sung to the music of the *saz*. Defining the *Dastan*, Karl Reichl describes how "In performance, the prose parts of these epics are declaimed by the singer, usually in a loud and clear voice, with short pauses after each rhythmic unit, while the verse parts are sung or chanted" (Reichl, 1992). Accordingly, the Azerbaijani *Dastan* is a narrative in which the story plot is told in dramatic prose while the dialogues between characters are sung to the accompaniment of the *saz*. *Dastan* can be heroic, spiritual, or romantic and can vary widely in tone from tragic to comic. The performance is neither fully memorized nor fully improvised. The recitation of the story plot can be extended to include digressions and audience interaction, but the musical aspects, such as specific songs and *Hava* to include in certain scenes, are fixed. *Dastan(s)* are performed by professional *āshiqs* (Turkic storytellers), who tell the story, sing, and play *saz* themselves (Oldfield and Nikaeen 2020: 6).

This storytelling genre is also called *āshiqi*. The *āshiq* (the performer of the *āshiqi* song) is deeply embedded in the Azerbaijani cultural imagination and holds an important role in weddings and other life cycle ceremonies (Oldfield and Nikaeen 2018: 53). According to Basgöz, "A *Hikaye* (story) teller is always a professional wandering minstrel, an *āshiq*. An *āshiq* may or may not compose or improvise original poetry. At all events, he knows the large repertory of folk songs and poems created by other artists" (Basgöz 1970: 391). The *āshiqi* genre history has its roots in oral narrative which makes it difficult to place its origins empirically, but from the earliest *Dastan* narratives such as *qurbāni*, many scholars believe it evolved as a form of Western Turkic bardic singing and storytelling at the end of the 15th century in early Safavid Iran (Oldfield and Nikaeen 2018: 57 'quoted by Axundov and Tahmasib, 2005: iii; Köprülü, 2006: 174). The *āshiqi* art has been the main vehicle for Azerbaijani oral literature for hundreds of years and is performed by professional bards who accompany their performance with a long-necked lute called a *saz* or *Qopuz*, but the music is often simple and repetitive to support the poetic line (Oldfield and Nikaeen 2020: 1).

As mentioned, stories include prose and verse parts which are presented by song and music, and narrated by *āshiq* in different ceremonies; the *āshiq* begins a story, telling the narrative portions in dramatic prose, singing dialogues between characters in song with the accompaniment of his *saz*, making amusing digressions and responding to audience requests (Oldfield and Nikaeen 2018: 56). According to Oldfield and Nikaeen, *āshiq*'s performance includes digressions and requests that pulled the audience into the *Dastan* to experience the adventures of heroes such as the lovers *Asli and Kerem* or the brave *Koroglu* (Oldfield and Nikaeen 2020: 3).

Basgöz believes that the prose sections are usually in the third person but songs are in the first person; prose alternates with poetry when the emotion is high, when the hero talks about his love and his fears, the beauty of nature, and the power of God, or when his life or the life of his lady is in danger (Basgöz 1970: 391). Verbal narrative is clearly important to *āshiqs* themselves, and they make sure the narratives are understood by the audience: they sing every verse of song lyrics twice and will sometimes stop playing to recite a poem as part of their performance (Oldfield and Nikaeen 2020: 7). Certain elements of these stories were shared through the everyday experiences of people, while the verse sections were expressed as songs. Many proverbs also originated from these tales, gaining widespread popularity in the process. The fusion of storytelling, music, and poetry has emerged as a significant cultural phenomenon within Turkic societies, rooted in a rich tapestry of shared knowledge. This enduring tradition boasts a long history across Turkic nations. While the practice of storytelling may now carry symbolic meaning, it remains a vital aspect of Turkic identity, encapsulating the history, traditions, and customs of these peoples. Storytelling serves various functions in their lives, reflecting their unique cultural heritage and communal values.

General characteristics of Turkic stories

Turkic stories often begin with a captivating, shocking event designed to immediately engage the audience and draw them into the narrative. These tales typically conclude with either tragic or non-tragic endings and can be categorized into two main types: epics and love stories. Epics like *Köröğlu*, *Shah Ismail*, *Qaçaq nabi* and love stories like *Asli and Kəram*, *Aşiq Qarib* and *Şah sənəm*, *Abbas and Gülqiz* are the most famous stories in *āshiqi* music. During the nomadic era of the Turkic people, epic and heroic tales held great popularity. However, following their urbanization and the subsequent rise in affluence, a growing demand for entertainment

emerged. As a result, the focus of their storytelling gradually transitioned from heroic themes to romantic narratives. These two branches despite of differences are related and we cannot divide them completely from each other; there are usually heroic and epic elements in love stories and vice versa. Epics centered around a main hero tell the story of a war or a series of struggles with the aim of justice which include the description of war scenes and ends with the hero's victory or honorable death. In love stories, there is a romantic goal to reach a woman. The main hero goes through many adventures which sometimes include elements of the epic, reaching his lover or being killed. In Turkic narratives, both epic and romantic, the hero typically emerges as a noble and courageous individual hailing from an aristocratic lineage. However, notable exceptions such as *Koroglu* and *Ashiq Qarib* illustrate the diversity of heroic figures in these tales.

Every hero faces an antagonist, whether it is a malevolent character or a formidable array of dark supernatural forces, all striving to thwart the hero's quest for achievement. These supernatural forces are the heritages of the shamanism traditions. Magical forces¹ in the form of curses, spells, animating the objects or creatures coming out of the sea, trees and mountains are seen in the ancient stories. After the advent of Islam, the metaphysical aspects of the stories tended to the miracles of prophets and holy issues, and due to the prohibition of magic, another phenomenon replaced in the love stories which is called '*Buta Vermak*'; we can also see the element of dreaming and the inspiration of it in the stories. In Turkic folklore, the role of the mother is of paramount importance, reflecting a revered and influential status across all historical periods of Turkic society. Even kings acknowledged the strength and obedience of mothers, highlighting their esteemed position in cultural narratives.

The elderly members of the community, particularly those who were unable to engage in manual labor or participate in wars, often assumed the role of primary storytellers. They would share their wisdom, advice, and memories with others, passing down valuable knowledge and preserving the community's traditions. Mothers also played a crucial role in storytelling within Turkic society. They would tell stories to their children, not only for entertainment but also for educational purposes. Through these stories, children would learn about their ethnic and national values, as well as important life lessons. Narrating historical events was another common form of storytelling among the Turkic people. These stories served as a way to preserve and transmit the community's collective memory. It allowed individuals to connect

with their past, understand their heritage, and appreciate the struggles and triumphs of their ancestors. Among the most prominent storytellers in Turkish society were the *āshiqs*. *Āshiqs* were skilled musicians who specialized in narrating stories. They would accompany their storytelling with the *Qopuz*, a traditional musical instrument. The *Qopuz* held great cultural significance among the Turkic people, and it was considered a symbol of honor and respect. Holding a *Qopuz* granted an individual a certain level of protection, and in some cases, it even saved its owner's life. As mentioned above, Turkish stories were divided into two verse and prose parts. *Āshiqs* narrated the verse parts by *Qopuz* and the prose parts among them. *Āshiqs* never narrated stories without playing *Qopuz*. Today, *Āshiqs* avoid narrating the whole story and just present the verse parts. Many of these songs and stories became the origins of operas like *Koroqlu* opera and *Asli and Karam* opera composed by Uzeyir Hajibeyov.

In this way, Turkic people's musical identity and their classical music and songs, originate in storytelling tradition and oral literature.

Different functions of storytelling among Turkic people

Storytelling tradition is not just for entertaining people and filling their free time, there are several other functions for storytelling. Here is a list of the most notable functions of storytelling:

- Healing; stories are used to invoke positive energy and recite epics like the Epic of *Manas* over a sick individual. This practice is often associated with mythological stories and their healing powers.
- Culture developing; Stories are a platform for promoting cultural values and condemning anti-values. They serve as a means to impart cultural knowledge and help shape a collective identity.
- Education; Indigenous storytelling has long been recognized as a powerful form of education. It fosters a sense of interconnectedness among family, community, and nation. It also imparts important life lessons, verbal skills, courage, and diffusion of ethnic values to children. For adults, storytelling helps in acquiring fighting skills and nurturing a warrior spirit. (Iseke 2013: 573). The educational effect on children consists of improving verbal skills, braveness and diffusion of ethnic values; and this type of effect is important for adults to acquire fighting skills and warrior spirit.

- Entertainment; Entertainment is a more obvious function of storytelling. It provides people with a means to pass their free time and find pleasure. Stories are often shared and enjoyed during ceremonies, weddings, and other social gatherings.
- History transition; Through stories, the history of a community is passed down to future generations. This is why we can find the cultural roots of Turkic people in their stories. Stories help preserve a community's history and heritage, ensuring that it is not forgotten or lost with time.

Echoes of Emotion: The Significance of *Hava* in Azerbaijani Storytelling and Music

The songs, which are the emotional high points of the narratives, draw on the musical skills of the *āshiq*; however, the primary goal of the Dastan is to tell the story (Oldfield and Nikaeen 2020: 4). *Āshiqs* narrate the stories through especial musical pieces called *Hava*. *Hava* is a musical form played by the *Qopuz*. Each *Hava* is a named melodic structure of five to ten minutes that can be expanded by improvisation at certain points. *Hava* can be played with a choice of different lyrics, and there are specific ways of singing to each one (Oldfield and Nikaeen 2020: 7). Many of the *Havas* were the inspiration for great musical pieces in Azerbaijanⁱⁱ. *Havas* are divided into three main categories according to their melodic structure: epic *Havas*, romantic *Havas* and joyful *Havas*.

The *Āshiq* chooses the best *Hava* to perform according to the content of the stories and his/her virtuosity. The verse parts of the story are performed in different *Havas* with the accompaniment of *Qopuz*, and the prose parts are recited by *Āshiq* himself without instruments. Today, many *Havas* have gained popularity among people and are frequently performed at wedding ceremonies, regardless of their stories and origins. In contemporary performances, *āshiqs* are increasingly prioritizing instrumental music over narrative storytelling. They play different *Havas* in the weddings and ceremonies without narrating the story. Oldfield and Nikaeen believe that a large proportion of *Havas* and lyrics are taken from the stories, thus they always keep a hand touching the past and referencing the vast body of Azerbaijani oral literature even while reaching into the future (Oldfield and Nikaeen 2020: 20).

The Musical Heart of *Asli and Kərəm*: The *Qopuz* and Its Role in the Love Stories

Asli and Kerem is a well-known Turkic love story, popular across regions like the Caucasus, Anatolia, Iran, Armenia, and Georgia. The story takes place in Ganja city and it is about the

love between a Muslim Azerbaijani boy (*Kəram*) and a Christian Armenian girl (*Asli*). As an Armenian priest, *Qaramalik*, the girl's father, initially opposed their marriage due to religious differences. However, because *Kəram*'s father was the ruler of Ganja, *Qaramalik* was forced to give his consent. Despite this, *Qaramalik* secretly fled Ganja with his family. *Kəram*, determined to find his fiancée, endured countless hardships. With the aid of supernatural forces, he was finally able to locate her after seven years in Aleppo. Some versions of the story extend this period to twelve years. The ruler of Aleppo forced *Qaramalik* to organize *Asli* and *Kəram*'s wedding. *Qaramalik* put a magical dress on his daughter that anyone who touches its buttons, dies. On the wedding day, *Kəram* tried to unbutton *Asli*'s dress but when he touched the buttons, he burst into flames and died. While *Kəram* was burning, *Asli* was playing *Qopuz* and singing, this scene in the story is known as *Yanix Kərami*ⁱⁱⁱ. After *Kəram*'s tragic death, *Asli*, weary of her father's cruelty, took her own life. In a final act of devotion, she touched *Kəram*'s ashes, and like him, was consumed by flames. In the whole body of this story, both *Asli* and *Kəram* sing and play *Qopuz* and many of the dialogues between the characters are sung in verses.

According to Wilson's classification, the story of *Asli* and *Kəram* is categorized as a mythical tale, where the storyteller has the freedom to shape the narrative according to their personal preferences, while the core elements of the story remain unchanged. Among Turkic people, this tale has served multiple functions:

- Entertainment: *Asli and Kəram* is an epic narrative, often spanning over forty nights of storytelling. This tradition was a cherished pastime for Turkic people. While modern *āshiqs* may not recite the entire tale, they frequently perform specific scenes based on personal preference or audience requests.
- Cultural Development: The story promotes values such as respecting mothers and obeying them while condemning anti-values like male and paternal oppression towards women, as exemplified by *Asli*'s father. Additionally, it explores social norms of the time, such as the disapproval of marriages between Muslims and non-Muslims.
- Edification: The tale serves as a cautionary tale, condemning moral vices like breaking treaties and using magic for harm, as demonstrated by *Asli*'s father's actions against *Kəram*. The story also highlights the negative consequences faced by villainous characters, such as *Asli*'s father's execution by the king's order and the demise of the former tyrant ruler of Ganja.

- Historical Context: *Asli and Kəram* incorporates historical details about kings, rulers, social conditions, and political circumstances of various periods. These elements enrich the narrative and provide valuable insights into the historical context of the tale.

When analyzed through the lens of Morgan and Dennehy's narrative components, *Asli and Kəram* effectively employs various storytelling techniques:

- Setting: The *āshiq* skillfully establishes the setting by providing detailed information about *Asli*, *Kəram*, their families, and the city of Ganja. Vivid descriptions of *Asli*'s garden and the characters' attire immerse the audience in the story's world.
- Build-up: Tension is created as *Asli*'s father flees Ganja to avoid a forced marriage and *Kəram* pursues them. The suspense reaches a climax when *Kəram* is captured in the mountains and his attendant dies.
- Crisis: The story's turning point occurs in the "*Yanix Kərami*" scene, where *Kəram*'s death and *Asli*'s subsequent seclusion and suicide culminate in a tragic crisis.

Learning: The story's messages are multifaceted, encompassing moral and social themes. While the prohibition of Muslim-Armenian marriages is a prominent message, the tale also emphasizes respecting mothers, as exemplified by the reverence shown to both *Asli* and *Kəram*'s mothers. Additionally, the story highlights the importance of gratitude, as demonstrated by the ruler of Aleppo's assistance to *Kəram* in gratitude for *Kəram*'s father's kindness.

Character Development: While *Asli* and *Kəram* ultimately meet tragic ends, the story showcases their character development. *Asli*, for instance, demonstrates a significant change in behavior by finally standing up to her father's cruelty and sacrificing her own life in protest.

Discussion and Conclusion

This paper has explored the intricate interplay of storytelling, songs, and music within Turkic cultures. Storytelling, a cornerstone of man's social life, emerged from oral traditions marked by anonymity, oral transmission, diverse origins, the use of vernacular languages, and a pedagogical role.

Storytelling among Turkic people has historically served as a multifaceted tool, encompassing education, healing, historical preservation, and entertainment. While these purposes once coexisted, entertainment has gradually taken center stage. The *Āshiqi* genre, a unique

combination of music, song, and storytelling, exemplifies this tradition. *Āshiqi* performances blend sung verses and recited prose, with the selection of accompanying *Havas* to set the specific story and the *āshiq's* expertise. The intrinsic connection between music and narrative in *Āshiqi* underscores the necessity of a holistic approach in ethnomusicological studies, which have traditionally overemphasized musical analysis at the expense of narrative exploration.

This paper has provided an overview of the narrative dimension of *Āshiqi* music and its interaction with music and song. Future research can delve deeper into various aspects, including potential gender differences in storytelling.

Our case study, the *Asli and Kəram* story, is a renowned romantic narrative with multiple versions. Despite variations in details, the core narrative remains consistent. As a mythical tale, it combines entertainment with educational and moral messages. The components of effective storytelling identified by Morgan and Dennehy are evident throughout the story, which also reflects the cultural beliefs and national values of Turkic people.

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ⁱ One of the examples of the use of magic can be found in *Asli and Kəram* story, where *Asli*'s father used magic to kill *Kəram* and casts a spell on the buttons of his daughter's clothes. We will explain this part of the story in the following sections.

ⁱⁱ For example, Uzeyir Hajibeyov used *Koroqlu Havasi* in composing *Koroqlu* opera.

ⁱⁱⁱ *Yanix Kərami* is a romantic *Hava* which is performed in tragic scenes, but because of its rhythmic structure, this *Hava* has been changed to a joyful one and it is performed in wedding ceremonies out of the story context.