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NARRATIVE AND RHETORIC IN GULRUKH ALIBAYLI'S ENVIRONMENTAL DISCOURSE: LITERARY PERSPECTIVES ON THE CASPIAN SEA'S ECOLOGICAL CHALLENGES

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p><i>Article history:</i> Received: 2025-01-10 Received in revised form: 2025-01-13 Accepted: 2025-02-04 Available online</p> <hr/> <p><i>Keywords:</i> Azerbaijani literature, Gulrukh Alibayli, literary analysis, environmental humanities, Caspian Sea, poetic imagery, human-nature relationship.</p>	<p><i>This paper examines the literary contributions of Azerbaijani writer and critic Gulrukh Alibayli, focusing on her works such as "Our Thinking World" and "Our Struggling World", as profound reflections on the ecological challenges facing the Caspian region. Through evocative prose and critical analysis, G. Alibayli employs literary techniques to explore the root causes of the Caspian Sea's ecological decline, including pollution, habitat destruction, and climate change. Her narrative draws attention to the philosophical relationship between humans and nature, portraying the sea as a cultural symbol and a threatened ecosystem.</i></p> <p><i>G. Alibayli contrasts the Caspian Sea's idyllic past with its current degradation, using poetic symbolism and vivid imagery to evoke a sense of loss and urgency. This paper delves into how her works critique societal and systemic attitudes toward environmental stewardship, intertwining themes of patriotism and cultural identity with a call to action. By analyzing her rhetorical and literary strategies, this study situates Alibayli's advocacy within the broader context of Azerbaijani literature and environmental humanities. Her portrayal of the Caspian Sea's plight serves as a literary appeal for collective responsibility and sustainable action, offering a nuanced perspective on the interplay between cultural heritage and ecological preservation.</i></p>

1. Introduction

In Azerbaijani literature, the natural world often serves as both a symbol and a canvas for exploring the human condition. Gulrukh Alibayli, a prominent writer and critic, uses her works "Our Thinking World" and "Our Struggling World" to intertwine themes of ecological preservation with cultural identity. Her literary narratives delve into the degradation of the Caspian Sea, not merely as an ecological crisis but as a profound cultural and philosophical loss (Alibayli, 2000). Through evocative prose and symbolic storytelling, G. Alibayli crafts a compelling discourse on the need for a renewed relationship between humanity and nature.

Her writings reflect a nuanced engagement with literary traditions, where the Caspian Sea emerges as both a metaphorical and physical entity under threat. This study situates G. Alibayli's work within the broader context of literary studies, examining how her narratives use environmental degradation as a lens to explore deeper questions of identity, cultural heritage, and human responsibility (Alibayli, 1998).

2. Literary Perspectives and Philosophical Dimensions

Gulrukh Alibayli's philosophical stance towards nature proves intriguing, as she contends that the cacophony of urban life and the burdens of domesticity swiftly obscure profound sentiments and concepts. Admiring the intellectual movements inspired by serene natural surroundings, G. Alibayli fervently seeks communion with nature, deeming it an invaluable, perpetually evolving entity, replete with unforeseen nuances and perpetual motion, wherein she inscribes her life's narrative (Darwish & Miller, 2018). Yet, G. Alibayli's elation at nature's splendor is starkly juxtaposed by her dismay upon beholding the sorry state of the Caspian Sea. Emotionally aghast, she vehemently airs her civic discontent at the deplorable condition of the route leading to the sea. Confronted with such unsanitary neglect, she is compelled to divert her guest, the visiting American Azerbaijani scholar Tadeusz Svyatakhovsky, along an alternate path to shield him from this squalor.

2.1 Nature as a Literary and Philosophical Muse

In G. Alibayli's reflections, nature is not merely a backdrop but an active participant in the human narrative. She frames the Caspian Sea as a repository of memory and inspiration, embodying the intertwined destinies of humanity and the environment. Echoing literary traditions where nature often symbolizes the human spirit, G. Alibayli's works reflect on the sea's decline as a mirror to societal apathy and cultural loss. Her writings align with Romantic traditions that celebrate the sublime, yet they diverge by embedding a stark critique of modernity's impact. G. Alibayli's prose captures a deep yearning for the untainted beauty of the Caspian, juxtaposed against its present polluted state. In doing so, she invokes philosophical questions about humanity's estrangement from the natural world and the moral imperatives of ecological stewardship (Ghaffari et al, 2010).

3. Cultural Reflections and Literary Symbolism

This fervent concern finds poignant expression in "Childhood Shores", a paean to the Caspian Sea. G. Alibayli evokes memories of her coastal upbringing, lamenting the sea's current desolation, while embracing the ecological ethos embodied in the notion of the "Caspian Shore" (Alibayli, 2000).

For G. Alibayli, whose formative years were spent in the sea's embrace, Rasul Rza's "Songs of the Sea" epitomizes the zenith of poetic dynamism. She extols the series for its evocative portrayal of boundless vistas, impassioned emotion, and profound philosophical contemplations. This sentiment is echoed by many, as the poems resonate with a harmonious cadence and provoke profound introspection. Her impassioned plea transcends mere lamentation, offering a clarion call for collective action to preserve the ecological sanctity of the Caspian Sea.

Let's take a look at a poem from the series "Songs of the Sea":

(Original)

Dəniz dedi ki,
sahillər sıxır məni,
Darıxıram qayaların
əbədi çəmbərində.

(Translation)

The sea said I am burdened
by the weight of the shores,
I yearn in the timeless embrace
of steadfast rocks.

Dalğaların rəqsinə baxma. Turn your gaze not to the whimsical dance of waves,
Üstümə pul-pul tökülən şəfəqlərə, Nor to the dawn's golden cascade upon my surface.
sinəmdə itib gedən üfüqlərə Do not fix your sight on horizons vanishing within my
baxma! depths!
Dərdim çoxdur dərində. For within lies a plethora of hidden woes,
Darıxıram sahilin çəmbərində. I yearn in embrace of the shores.

This embodies the murmurs of the sea, where the poet engages in an intimate dialogue with it, personifying its essence as if it were a sentient being. The sea whispers its secrets, perhaps echoing the poet's innermost thoughts, blurring the lines between the sea and the poet's identity. Undoubtedly, the sea emerges as a profound wellspring of inspiration, infusing the poet's verses with vitality and permanence. Such fervent expressions from the author inevitably resonate deeply with readers, stirred by the heartfelt sincerity conveyed through emotive and expressive prose. Moreover, Gulrukh Alibayli's unwavering patriotism lends further weight to her discourse, amplifying the impact of her words on a national scale.

4. Materials and Methods

4.1 Literary Analysis

The methodology employed in this study integrates a qualitative analysis of Gulrukh Alibayli's literary works such as "Our Thinking World" and "Our Struggling World", complemented by a cultural and ecological review of the Caspian Sea's current state. Primary materials for this study included G.Alibayli's writings, particularly her essayistic reflections and literary depictions, as well as selected Azerbaijani poetry, such as Rasul Rza's "Songs of the Sea". These texts were analyzed for their thematic resonance, philosophical undertones, and environmental advocacy. A comparative framework was used to examine how G.Alibayli's perspectives align with broader ecological and cultural concerns in the region. Secondary data from ecological reports, journal articles, and environmental assessments of the Caspian Sea provided insights into the region's ecological challenges. The study focused on pollution levels, habitat destruction, and the socio-economic impacts of environmental degradation.

4.3 Interviews and Observations

Informal interviews with residents and ecological advocates were conducted to gather firsthand accounts of the Caspian's environmental and cultural significance. Observational methods included site visits to coastal areas highlighted in G.Alibayli's narratives, comparing literary descriptions with the current ecological state. Societal attitudes towards environmental stewardship were assessed using case studies of community-based initiatives aimed at restoring the Caspian coastline. Data was triangulated to evaluate the efficacy of civic engagement in addressing ecological issues.

5. Results

5.1 Literary Themes and Ecological Symbolism

The findings of this study reveal a poignant dichotomy between G.Alibayli's poetic envisioning of the Caspian Sea and its current degraded state. G.Alibayli's works encapsulate a profound reverence for nature, fostering a sense of environmental stewardship among readers. Literary themes highlight the interplay between human identity and the natural environment,

underscoring the emotional and cultural loss accompanying ecological degradation. The Caspian Sea faces critical threats from industrial pollution, overfishing, and habitat destruction. Coastal areas suffer from neglect, with visible signs of waste accumulation and infrastructural decay. Despite G.Alibayli's advocacy, awareness of environmental issues remains fragmented. Localized efforts to address pollution and restore ecological balance are emerging, but they lack the cohesive support of broader societal and policy-driven initiatives (Huseynova, 2022).

6. Discussion

The findings underscore the urgent need to bridge the gap between ecological awareness and actionable change. G.Alibayli's philosophical reflections present nature as a repository of inspiration and identity, which starkly contrasts with the environmental neglect observed. This dichotomy highlights a disconnect between cultural reverence for the Caspian and the practical measures needed to protect it. Literature, as seen in G.Alibayli's works, plays a pivotal role in fostering environmental consciousness. Her evocative narratives serve as a medium for galvanizing civic engagement, illustrating the power of storytelling in influencing public attitudes and policy agendas. Policymakers should prioritize integrated strategies addressing pollution, conservation, and sustainable development. Community-led initiatives, supported by governmental and international agencies, can amplify efforts to restore the Caspian Sea (Huseynova, 2023). Education and cultural programs inspired by literary works, like those of G.Alibayli, can nurture a sense of environmental responsibility in younger generations.

7. Conclusion and Call to Action

In conclusion, Gulrukh Alibayli's impassioned call to action serves as a beacon of hope amidst the environmental challenges plaguing the Caspian region. Through her evocative prose and unwavering advocacy, G.Alibayli sheds light on the urgent need for concerted efforts to address the ecological degradation of the Caspian Sea and its surrounding areas (Huseynova, 2023). Her deep-rooted connection to nature, coupled with her acute observations of the sea's decline, underscores the critical importance of preserving our natural heritage for future generations. Her plea for collective responsibility resonates powerfully, urging individuals, communities, and policymakers to unite to safeguard the Caspian's ecological integrity (Mansurov, 2020).

As we heed G.Alibayli's call to action, let us remember that the fate of the Caspian Sea is intertwined with our own. By working together to combat pollution, promote sustainability, and foster environmental stewardship, we can ensure a brighter, healthier future for both the Caspian region and the planet as a whole. In the words of G.Alibayli, let us not be indifferent to the plight of the Caspian Sea, but rather, let us stand together, hand in hand, as voices for change, dedicated to preserving the natural beauty and ecological diversity of this vital ecosystem.

Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

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