Abstract. The personality and creativity of Nizami Ganjavi, who began to be regularly studied and glorified since his time, has always been the center of attention of philosophers, poets, writers, and dramatists in all periods of literary history. In the article, the poems, stories, novels and plays written in Azerbaijani fiction from the Middle Ages to the present day about the genius thinker have been studied and analyzed.

Keywords: Azerbaijani literature, Nizami Ganjavi, literary portrait.

Azerbaijan’s literature is a unique spiritual treasure for its people and there is no doubt that Nizami Ganjavi is one of the greatest representatives of this literary heritage. His works, with their unique poetic innovations and universal themes, have transcended borders to influence the literature of distant lands. Nizami Ganjavi, the outstanding figure of the Eastern Renaissance, was born in 1141 in Ganja, one of the ancient cultural centers of Azerbaijan and the capital of the Azerbaijani Atabey's state. His birthplace is reflected in his name because Ganjavi means “from Ganja”. Nizami Ganjavi combined philosophy and poetry with history and legend to create a literary legacy that resonates to this day. Nizami received an exemplary education that included science, mathematics, Islamic theology, history, philosophy, ethics, and Persian and Arabic literature. His education is often reflected in his poetry, which he began to write at the age of thirty.

He inscribed his name forever in the annals of art with his five poems,
“Treasury of Secrets” (1175), “Khosrow and Shirin” (1180), “Leyli and Majnun” (1188), “Seven Beauties” (1197) and “Iskander-Nameh” (1203), presented to the world of literature. They laid a strong foundation for the great Nizami school of literature which continues to exert its influence nowadays. Humanity is the motif at the very heart of Nizami’s poetry and the poet regarded it as his sacred mission to apply every ounce of creativity to the service of his people. In this lies the immortality and eternal youth of Nizami’s art through the centuries. His works have been translated into Western as well as into Eastern languages from time to time and played a great role in humanity’s moral development.

In reviewing world literature, it can be seen that two principal poets used the strong humanistic influence of art to rise above a cultural environment generally defined by the mysticism and prejudices of patriarchal feudalism. One of these was Nizami Ganjavi, the greatest representative of the Eastern Renaissance, who was born in the 12th century in Sunny Azerbaijan and represented the quintessence of world literature and philosophy in his immortal work “Khamsa” (Five) via the aesthetic power of his art. The other was William Shakespeare, the greatest representative of the Western Renaissance, who was born in Foggy Albion more than 400 years later to become a child of humanity. Even now, in times when science and technology are no longer developing in linear series but exponentially, it can be easily seen how mysticism prevails proudly over healthy minds and it is impossible not to be amazed by the clear logic and consciousness in the works of these two brothers in art and intellect.

In the 20th century, the interest and need to study the poet's creativity increased, and the literary personality of the poet itself has already become an artistic image of literature. In these literary and artistic examples, the first sources that nourished the writers' imagination were the poet's poems, and the first literary sources played an important role. Until today, small and large-scale artistic examples dedicated to the image of Nizami Ganjavi were written based on those primary sources. Illumination of the poet's image from the perspective of the socio-political thinking of the time had its effect on the writers' imagination and became the main leitmotif of almost all the created works. Therefore, the comprehensive study of the image of the poet in
literary works and its objective literary critic's point of view is one of the urgent issues facing our science today. Thus, just as Nizami Ganjavi's genius has illuminated the creative path of Azerbaijani poets, writers, and thinkers for centuries since the Middle Ages, the poet himself has become an image of fiction, as a result of which countless works of art have appeared. The existence of these immeasurable works of art is a clear example of the fact that Nizami Ganjavi was an Azerbaijani poet and always a peak in the genetic memory of the people to whom he belonged. Nizami Ganjavi, a prominent representative of world literature, and a great Azerbaijani poet and thinker, is one of the rare personalities who opened a new page in the annals of artistic thought of mankind. The brilliant heritage of the great artist, which has become an integral part of the spirituality of our people, has maintained its unique place in the unparalleled cultural treasures of the East for centuries. The creation of the image of Nizami Ganjavi in Azerbaijani prose requires the writer, first of all, to master the works of the poet, the history of his time, socio-political environment, life, national traditions, and literary environment. From this point of view, Hamid Arasli's “Life of Poet” (1940), Mahammad Said Ordubadi's “Sword and Pen”, Anatoly Zohrabbevov's “Fiery Land” (1978), Mehdi Huseyn's “Nizami” (1942), Anvar Mammadkhanli's “Afag” (1941), M. Alizade's “Poet's Sorrow”, J. Mammadov's “Portrait” (1941), Mirvarid Dilbazi's “Mahsati” (1941), Zeynal Khalil's “Eagle of Ganja” (or “Poet's dream”) (1975)), Kamala Agayeva's “Mahsati” (1974), Balash Azeroglu's poem “Nizami” (2004), Ogtay Salamzadeh's “Secret of Ages” (1989) and Isa Huseynov's novel “GurUN” are noteworthy and in each of these works there is an artistic interpretation of the information provided by primary literary and historical sources. It is very difficult to find a second thinker or a writer in the history of Azerbaijani literature, as well as in the history of world literature, who was revived as an image in fiction as Nizami Ganjavi and about whom works of art were written. Although the reasons for the writers to address the personality of Nizami Ganjavi arose out of love for the genius poet, at the same time they wanted to bring immortality to the work they wrote through the image of Nizami and to express what they wanted to say through this image. In each of these works, the artistic representation of the information provided by the primary literary and
historical sources is observed. Among these works, Mahammad Said Ordubadi’s “Sword and Pen” is the first work of art in Azerbaijani literature that perfectly illuminates the image of Nizami Ganjavi in the context of historical events of his time. “Sword and Pen” is, in the highest sense of the word, a beautiful example of figurative thinking. The images in this work are a vivid depiction of a century-old history. In “Sword and Pen”, the writer modernizes history in order to modernize the idea. The attempts of Nizami and his close friends Fakhraddin and Gizil Arslan to unite the divided Azerbaijan (North and South Azerbaijan) in order to bring independence to the nation are good examples of this. Since the years of writing the novel coincided with the years of struggle for the national state in South Azerbaijan, M.S Ordubadi tried to find this idea in history as well. Along with Nizami, Khagani, Mahsati khanum, Abulula, Jahan Pahlavan, Muhammad, Gizil Arslan, Abulmuzaffar, Shirvanshah III Togrul and dozens of other historical figures take part in the novel “Sword and Pen”. In the work, the writer reveals Nizami's personal life, love, family environment, his political, social, philosophical and literary views in close connection with the conflicts. Mahammad Said Ordubadi in his historical novel “Sword and Pen” established the responsibility and honor of the sword with the power of the pen.

In the works of Azerbaijani writers, Nizami Ganjavi is first and foremost a memorable figure with a free personality, and scientific research has historically focused on this issue. Lutfali bey Azer Beydili in “Ateshgade”, Mirza Mahammad Akhundzadeh in “Sheikh Nizami”, Firidun bey Kocharli in “Historical materials of Azerbaijan literature”, Salman Mumtaz in the article “Sheikh Nizami”, Mahammad Amin Rasulzadeh in monograph “Azerbaijani poet Nizami” glorifies the poet's free spirit. The first three Azerbaijani literary critics who wrote about Nizami narrated in detail the famous legend about the poet's meeting with Gizil Arslan to show the level of his inner freedom and spiritual growth.

Thus, it is very difficult to find a second thinker in the history of both Azerbaijan and world literature who has been portrayed as a character in fiction and about whom fiction works have been written, as much as Nizami Ganjavi. This is a manifestation of the love and affection of the Azerbaijani people for the Great
Azerbaijani Nizami Ganjavi. The existence of such artistic works about the genius thinker, which attract attention with their quality and level, is a clear example of Nizami Ganjavi being an Azerbaijani poet and always occupying the top spot in the genetic memory of the people he belonged to.

The conclusions of the study lead to the point that the genius, personality, and image of great Nizami Ganjavi will be the masterpiece of scientific and artistic works written by Azerbaijani writers in all genres in the coming centuries.

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