

FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF AZERBAIJAN LITERARY CRITICISM IN THE PRESS

ОРГАНІЗАЦІЯ ТА РОЗВИТОК АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНСЬКОЇ ЛІТЕРАТУРНОЇ КРИТИКИ В ПРЕСІ

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The formation and development of Azerbaijani literary criticism in the press was closely related to the emergence of the national press. Starting in the second half of the 19th century, the publication of newspapers and magazines in Azerbaijan created a fertile ground for literary criticism. In 1875, the "Ekinchi" newspaper, founded by Hasan bey Zardabi, laid the foundation for the national press and published the first articles that influenced public opinion about literature. At the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, the directions of enlightenment and critical realism brought new content to literary criticism. The activities of the "Molla Nasreddin" magazine led to the combination of literary criticism with satire and social criticism. The formation and development of Azerbaijani literary criticism in the press is a complex process closely related not only to the internal dynamics of Azerbaijani literature, but also to the political, social and cultural context. The press and literary criticism are considered to be two main areas that play a special role in the history of Azerbaijani literature and public thought. These two areas, being closely connected with each other, have rendered invaluable services in the processes of national and spiritual revival, in the formation of public consciousness and in the development of the literary environment. The press has become the main platform of national enlightenment and intellectualism, and literary criticism has given direction to the literary process and determined the regularities of its development.

Although Azerbaijani literary criticism developed under ideological control during the Soviet period, criticism gained scientific and methodological foundations and turned to new directions. Systematic approaches to both classical and contemporary literary samples were formed. After Azerbaijan gained independence, literary criticism entered a completely new stage. With the elimination of ideological restrictions and the influence of global literary and philosophical thought, literary criticism gained new views and approaches. The article discusses the formation and development of literary criticism in the press. We have included the formation of literary criticism in the study of periods. In modern times, Azerbaijani literary criticism and press have gained new opportunities due to the influence of technological development. Through online media platforms, literary blogs, and social networks, literary criticism and press reach a wider audience. At the same time, calls for improving the quality of literary criticism and press and preserving their independence continue.

Key words: literary criticism, reader, press, critic, author, formation.

Становлення і розвиток азербайджанської літературної критики в пресі тісно пов'язане з появою національної преси. Починаючи з 2-ої половини 19 ст видання газет і журналів в А. створило благодатний ґрунт для літературної критики. У 1875 році газета «Екінчі», заснована Хасан-беком Зардабі, заклала основу національної преси і опублікувала перші статті, які вплинули на громадську думку про літературу. Наприкінці 19 – на початку 20 століть напрями просвітництва і критичного реалізму внесли новий зміст у літературну критику. Діяльність журналу «Молла Насреддін» призвела до поєднання літературної критики з сатирою та соціальною критикою. Становлення і розвиток азербайджанської літературної критики в пресі є складним процесом, який тісно пов'язаний не тільки з внутрішньою динамікою азербайджанської літератури, а й з політичним, соціальним і культурним контекстом. В історії літературної та громадської думки Азербайджану преса і літературна критика розглядаються як дві основні сфери, які відіграють особливу роль. Ці два напрями тісно пов'язані між собою і зробили неоціненну заслугу в процесах національно-духовного відродження, у формуванні суспільної свідомості та розвитку літературного середовища. Преса стала головною трибуною національного просвітництва й інтелектуалізму, а літературна критика дала напрямок літературному процесу, визначила закономірності його розвитку.

У наш час азербайджанська літературна критика і преса отримали нові можливості завдяки впливу технічного розвитку. Через онлайн-медійні платформи, літературні блоги та соціальні мережі літературна критика та преса охоплюють ширшу аудиторію. Водночас продовжуються літературна критика та заклики до підвищення якості преси та захисту її незалежності.

Незважаючи на те, що в радянський період азербайджанське літературознавство розвивалося під ідеологічним контролем, критика набула науково-методологічної основи і вийшла на нові напрями. Сформувалися системні підходи як до класичних, так і до сучасних літературних зразків. Після здобуття Азербайджаном незалежності літературна критика вступила в абсолютно новий етап. З усуненням ідеологічних обмежень і впливу світової літературно-філософської думки літературознавство набуло нових поглядів і підходів. У статті йдеться про становлення та розвиток літературної критики в пресі. До вивчення періодів ми віднесли становлення літературної критики.

Ключові слова: літературна критика, читач, преса, критик, автор, становлення.

Introduction. Literary criticism is one of the most important areas that plays an important role in the development of literature, determines its artistic and aesthetic level and mediates between the reader and the writer. Although the history of the formation and development of Azerbaijani literary criticism in the press at first glance seems to be connected with the ideas of enlightenment, the creation of the national press and the formation of modern literary thought, in fact it took place against the background of numerous contradictions, problems and internal tensions.

“Analysis of recent research and publications. The process of the formation of literary criticism is characterized not only by the application of literary and aesthetic criteria, but also by its transformation into an instrument of socio-political struggle. It is rightly noted that in the early stages of the creation of Azerbaijani literary criticism, it was almost impossible to compare criticism with artistic creativity” [6, p. 16].

The formation and development of literary criticism was often closely linked to the activities of the press, which were an integral part of the socio-cultural life of the period. The press, especially newspapers and magazines, were an important means of bringing literary criticism to a wide audience, forming the literary taste of society and creating healthy relationships in the literary process, and the emergence and development of literary criticism in Azerbaijan was closely linked to the formation of the press.

In general, the strongest and brightest cornerstones of Azerbaijani scientific-critical thought were laid by Mirza Fatali Akhundov in the middle of the 19th century. The beginning of the publication of the newspaper "Ekinchi" in the second half of the 19th century also united literary criticism and the press. The activity of literary criticism in the Azerbaijani press was a new stage. Hasan bey Zardabi expressed his views on artistic examples in the pages of "Ekinchi" and explained his attitude to the activities of contemporary literature and its authors. Zardabi called on literary figures of the period to keep up with real life and not to be far from realities: “Our time is a time of progress, and those who do not progress will decline day by day and eventually come to naught” [8, p. 13].

Since the middle of the 19th century, in parallel with the development of the Azerbaijani press, the foundations of national literary criticism have been laid. Thus, literary criticism found its first examples in the press. Later, newspapers and magazines such as “Ziya”, “Kashkul”, “Shargi-Rus”, “Füyuzat” and “Molla Nasreddin” opened up wide opportunities for the development of critical thought. In the articles of Ali bey Huseynzade, Jalil Mammadguluzade

and other intellectuals, literary works, especially the enlightened realist literature of the time, were analyzed and evaluated. They saw the main task of criticism as the enlightenment of society and the promotion of new aesthetic and ideological values.

In this process, certain press organs, especially the newspapers and magazines "Kashkul", "Ziya" and "Shargi-Rus", occupied a special place. All three publications, in addition to reflecting the socio-political realities of the period, also had a significant impact on the formation and development of Azerbaijani literary criticism. Through these press organs, enlightening ideas, reformist thoughts and the main ideological principles of the national awakening movement were conveyed to the broad masses. Their activity in the field of literary criticism was not limited to the evaluation of artistic examples, but also put forward ideas aimed at the formation of national literary thought. “They approached literature not only as art, but also as an important means of forming public consciousness” [4, p. 62].

The enlightening spirit, national idea, and calls for solving social problems brought to literary criticism by these press organizations played an important role in the development of Azerbaijani literature and created solid foundations for the formation of the future literary generation. The ideas of national ideology, Turkism, and cultural awakening were taken as the basis for literary criticism articles published in "Shargi-Rus". The newspaper featured criticism of the work of writers and poets such as Jalil Mammadguluzadeh, Mirza Alakbar Sabir, and Uzeyir bey Hajibeyov. Ali bey Huseynzadeh and Ahmed bey Aghaoglu developed the idea of national literature in their critical articles and called for strengthening ties with the Turkic world. At the beginning of the 20th century, a significant revival took place in the Azerbaijani press. In particular, the magazine “Molla Nasreddin”, which began publication in 1906, stood out among the press organizations of that period for its satirical style, social activism, and enlightening ideas.

“Molla Nasreddin” was not only a satirical magazine, but also one of the important platforms that ensured the transition of Azerbaijani literary criticism to a new stage. The magazine played a serious role in the democratization of criticism, the connection of national literature to public life, and the strengthening of realism. “Molla Nasreddin” magazine constitutes a new stage of Azerbaijani literary criticism. “It turned literature into one of the main means of social struggle, and gave impetus to the development of realistic and satirical literature” [1, p. 101]. The magazine put forward the principles of critical realism, people-orientedness, enlightenment,

and nationalism as the main ideological line in literary criticism. Under the influence of “Molla Nasreddin” magazine, Azerbaijani literary criticism moved away from authoritarian thinking and formalist tendencies, became closer to the people, and began to play an important role in public life.

Since the beginning of the 20th century, literary criticism has become a more systematic and theoretically based field. With the establishment of Soviet power, serious ideological changes took place in Azerbaijani literature and press. Literary criticism and the press began to function as an ideological tool of the Soviet state. One of the main tasks assigned to literary criticism and the press during this period was the promotion of the principles of socialist realism, loyalty to the party, and the spread of communist ideology. Nevertheless, certain creative tendencies and individual approaches also manifested themselves in Azerbaijani literary criticism, and literary criticism was an integral part of the press during this period.

“Literature and Art”, the magazine “Azerbaijan” and other publications became the main press area where literary criticism articles, polemics and debates were published. However, during this period, criticism was mainly subject to social order. The work of writers and poets was approached from a class position, with ideological views. One of the biggest problems in the history of the development of Azerbaijani literary criticism is its exposure to ideological influences. In particular, during the Soviet period, literary criticism operated entirely within an ideological framework. Literary works were evaluated on the basis of the principles of socialist realism, and literature was subordinated to party and state policy. During this period, literary critics checked the ideological “correctness” of literary works, distorting the social function of literature. The main problems of this period were, first of all, that ideological influences limited the independence of literary criticism.

Instead of objectively analyzing literary works, literary critics were forced to adapt them to an ideological template. For this reason, the development of literary criticism slowed down during the Soviet period and superficial approaches to the analysis of literary processes emerged. Along with all this, some critics, despite ideological pressures, tried to objectively examine the classical heritage, folklore, and realistic literature. The leading literary critics of the period – Mir Jalal, Mammad Jafar, Ali Sultanli, Ali Nazim, Kamal Talibzadeh, Bekir Nabiyeu, Mammad Arif, etc. strengthened the scientific foundations of literary criticism and demonstrated a serious scientific-aesthetic approach to works of art.

When Mir Jalal Pashayev spoke about the work of many writers, he to some extent drew on his own creative experience. That is, he followed exactly those aspects in the work of the artists he studied, which he himself paid more attention to in the process of artistic creation.

Or it may be that when studying the creativity of a certain writer, Mir Jalal identified the factors that had a positive impact on this creativity, and at the same time took this as a key factor in his works as a positive creative and artistic fact.

The formation and development of Azerbaijani literary criticism in the press is a complex process closely related not only to the internal dynamics of literature, but also to the political, social and cultural context.

One of the main functions of literary criticism is the reading and interpretation of literary works in the context of the scientific and theoretical values of the contemporary era. Because the approach and perspective of each era to literary works is distinguished by their uniqueness. It is possible that works that were not sufficiently appreciated (or incorrectly appreciated) at some point in the history of literature may gain new value with the modern reading of criticism.

With the restoration of Azerbaijan’s state independence in 1991, a new era began in the country’s literary and cultural life. Ideological pressures in the field of literary criticism and the press were eliminated, censorship was abolished, and conditions were created for the free expression of ideas. However, this freedom also brought new problems to the agenda: “the weakening of the principled position of criticism, subjective and unprofessional approaches, and the fragmentation of literary taste began to be observed. However, the period of independence was characterized by methodological diversity, new forms of analysis, and the development of postmodernist and alternative views in Azerbaijani literary criticism” [3, p. 58]. During the period of independence, that is, after the 1990s, a new stage began in the field of literary criticism and the press in Azerbaijan. In the 1920s–1930s, the government implemented its policy in the field of literature in the field of publishing and the press [5, p. 48].

The abolition of censorship with independence gave criticism a freer activity. However, in the conditions of a market economy, commercialism increased in the activities of press organs, which also affected the previous prestige of literary criticism. Criticism took place more often in literary magazines and specialized newspapers. During this period, the “Literature Newspaper”, the “Azerbaijan” magazine,

“Ulduz”, the cultural supplement of “Kaspi” and other publications devoted a lot of space to literary criticism. “In these years, literary criticism saw the path to mastering new thinking mainly in assessing national-moral values, restoring the historical right of artistic truths that had been subjected to distortion and falsification, and directing social-literary thought towards national content and the channel of Turkish thought” [1, p. 19]. In the new era of literary criticism, critics of the time – Vagif Yusifli, Rustam Kamal, Javanshir Yusifli, Yashar Garayev, Nizameddin Shamsizadeh and others – brought new views to literary criticism. Their articles showed aesthetic, philosophical and postmodern approaches to literature. At the same time, in modern times, literary criticism has also taken its place on Internet resources and social networks. Blogs, websites and forums have opened new horizons for criticism. However, most of what is written on these platforms is sometimes at an unprofessional level and subjective positions prevail.

The press, especially the literary press, is of great importance in terms of transmitting literary criticism to society. Literary criticism is conveyed to a wide audience through the press, which leads to both the formation of reader taste and the creation of healthy critical-analytical relations in the literary environment.

The press protects the objectivity of the critic's opinions, stimulates public debates and creates conditions for the recognition of new signatures. However, in modern times, the relationship between literary criticism and the press also faces certain problems. The commercialization of literary criticism, subjective and biased approaches, reviews and critical articles written on the principle of friend-acquaintance reduce the trust in criticism among readers. On the other hand, the poor financing of literary critics and the decrease in the number of professional critics are also current realities. Literary criticism and the press are two important areas that complement each other. Literary criticism, reflected in the press, shapes the literary taste of society and determines the development directions of literature.

The press expands the field of dissemination, discussion and evaluation of criticism. In the modern era, literary criticism and the press should be based on more objective and scientific approaches in a mutual cooperation environment so that our literature can develop further. Although Azerbaijani literary criticism is faced with new opportunities in the modern era, there are also various problems in this era. For example, the application of new theoretical approaches and methods among literary critics is weak. Also, when analyzing modern literary

processes, literary critics often rely on old templates and do not use new theoretical approaches and methods sufficiently.

Discussion. This prevents literary criticism from analyzing modern literary processes and slows down the development of literary criticism. “In various studies, literary criticism is evaluated as a science, art, and sometimes journalism” [7, p. 40]. Literary criticism can manifest itself in various forms. These include the following

1. In Book Reviews: Short or detailed reviews of newly published books. These reviews provide information about the book's theme, characters, style, and other aspects of interest to readers. Book reviews help readers determine the value of a book and whether it is worth reading.

2. In Literary Analysis: A more in-depth analysis of works, examining the author's ideas, symbols, and literary techniques. These analyses determine the value of a literary work and its place in the history of literature. Literary analysis is prepared by literary scholars and critics and helps to provide a deeper understanding of literary works.

3. Literary Discussions: Discussions on various literary issues, movements, and trends. These discussions explore the role and development of literature in society. Literary discussions create a dialogue between literary scholars, critics, and readers.

4. Literary Interviews: Interviews with authors, poets, and literary scholars. These interviews provide valuable information about the authors' creative process, sources of inspiration, and literary ideas. Literary interviews allow readers to better understand the authors' worldview and creative method.

Literary criticism emphasizes the role and importance of literature in society. Because literary criticism is an integral part of the literary process, accompanied by works written in form, genre and creative styles. Literature has always been a mirror of time. “The processes and events that took place in any period were reflected in the pen of a writer or poet and passed on to generations. In this sense, he plays as important a role as a historian in reaching the details of any event” [2, p. 27]. Sometimes poets and writers write such works that it is difficult for readers to understand their essence. At this point, literary criticism interprets the work in terms of idea-content for the reader's audience, revealing the points it considers necessary in the text.

Literary criticism reveals its necessary position in the literary-reader encounter. This field examines the impact of literary works on society and determines the impact of literature on social, cultural and political issues. Literary criticism evaluates the con-

tribution of literature to the development of society and examines the impact of literary works on readers. In modern times, literary criticism has expanded further with the development of new technologies and media. The Internet and social media create new opportunities for the dissemination and delivery of literary criticism to readers. In modern times, literary criticism manifests itself not only in traditional media, but also in blogs, online magazines and social media platforms.

“As the era and time change, the attitude and approach criteria towards it also change” [5, p. 33]. The critic is not satisfied with evaluating only the literary process, but in most cases he acts from a social position, connects literature with life and expresses his opinion about society. In connection with the development of literature and society, the content of criticism, methodological principles, and the approach to the literary process also changed. This factor plays an important role in the evaluation of both classical heritage and the modern literary process. The activity, sensitivity, observational ability, and level of theoretical preparation of criticism determine the development of the literary process. Azerbaijani writers and critics approached literature as a national cultural phenomenon and evaluated the literary process on the basis of aesthetic principles. “Since the government’s control over their creativity was relatively weak, these artists brought their feelings and thoughts to works of art and relied on the ideology of nationalism in their literary and aesthetic activities” [6, p. 13].

One of the areas that attracts attention with its uniqueness in research on fiction and the literary process as a whole is literary criticism. In fact, literary criticism has emerged in various forms since the earliest times when artistic thought

existed. Academician Ramiz Mehdiyev, while characterizing the third stage in the development of the Azerbaijani national idea, evaluates the role of the press as follows: “The publication of the newspapers “Hayat” and “Irshad” and the magazine “Füyuzat” gives impetus to the creation of a national ideology, the formation of statehood thinking and the idea of national freedom” [2, p. 24]. In fact, the lack of a complete and objective picture of the national idea in the Soviet period was also due to the biased interpretation of this stage. The reality is that those press organs, especially the editor-in-chief of “Füyuzat” Ali bey Huseynzade, gave impetus to the awakening of philosophical trends in the national and political life of Azerbaijan: conducted scientific-theoretical analysis, directed the artistic thought about Europe, valued the importance and role of artistic translation, and justified the superiority of the elite thought system. “It is no coincidence that A. Huseynzade, who fully confirmed the directions of the Azerbaijani national idea for himself, considered the magazine “Füyuzat” to be the main book in this direction and published all the issues of the magazine in a row” [6, p. 21].

Conclusions. In Azerbaijani literature, a number of articles by Jalil Mammadguluzade, Abdurrahim bey Hagverdiyev, Abbas Sahhat, Jafar Jabbarli, Yusif Vazir Chamanzaminli, Samad Vurgun, Rasul Rza, Suleyman Rahimov, Anar and other authors can be evaluated as examples of literary criticism. Literary criticism is still in the stage of reforming itself and restoring its professional scientific foundations. The press and literary platforms create the basis for the formation of a new generation of critics. In the coming stage, the reconstruction of the school of literary criticism and the strengthening of the scientific and methodological basis remain important tasks.

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