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ARTISTIC EXPRESSION OF THE AZERBAIJANI NATIONAL IDEOLOGY IN 1990s AZERBAIJANI LITERATURE

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Abstract

The article discusses the artistic expression of the Azerbaijani national ideology (*Azerbaijanism*) in the literature of the 1990s, which is characterized as the initial stage of the independence period. The literature of the 1990s is regarded as a “transition period” from Soviet literature to independence. Alongside the continuation of Azerbaijanism ideas from the 1960s-1980s, their direct realization in life brought new themes, perspectives, and styles to literature. The study concludes that Azerbaijanism ideology became the main ideological-artistic platform for the newly emerging independence literature, shaping its national identity and facilitating its integration into the world literary process.

Keywords: *Azerbaijani national ideology (Azerbaijanism), 1990s Azerbaijani literature, idea of independence, national identity, artistic thought*

Introduction

The Azerbaijani national ideology, or Azerbaijanism, forms the ideological and artistic core of modern Azerbaijani literature. Its formation, the shaping of the people's worldview, and the active role of literature in achieving state independence are undeniable. The rich examples of Azerbaijani literature across several stages prove this. At the beginning of the 20th century, Romanticism and Realism led to the formation of Turkism and Azerbaijanism, resulting in the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (1918–1920). Later, despite seventy years of Soviet occupation (1920–1991) attempting to replace national ideology with internationalist slogans, literature played an unparalleled role in preserv-

ing the national spirit, language, traditions, and the ideology of Azerbaijanism. The literature of the 1960s–1980s, in particular, significantly contributed to the reformation of Azerbaijanism and the idea of independence. This legacy determined the dominant position of Azerbaijanism in 1990s literature after the restoration of state sovereignty.

Literary-Theoretical Foundations of Azerbaijanism

Since the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, the actualization of Azerbaijani studies has been linked to the Azerbaijanism ideology. During the Soviet era, this process continued secretly, with Azerbaijanism ideals indirectly carried into socialist society. With the crisis

of socialism and the collapse of communist ideals, Azerbaijani values began to surpass socialist values in the 1960s–1980s, and the national ideology gradually strengthened. In the 1990s, Azerbaijani literature continued the previous era's experience while entering a new ideological-artistic stage. The ideas of independence, which began seeping into literature from the 1960s (e.g., Khalil Rza's motifs), branched out widely in the 1990s. As one scholar notes, "Literature, freed from ideological constraints, gained the opportunity to more freely artistically analyze... the traumatic experiences imprinted on the collective memory related to the Karabakh conflict, refugeeism, and the collapse of the imperial system" (Mamurakhon, 2025, P. 542–543).

During independence, the reprinting of works by founders of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, such as M.A. Rasulzadeh, played a crucial role in strengthening national ideology and Azerbaijani studies. As N. Shamsizade wrote, "at the beginning of the century, it was precisely Azerbaijanism that was the main idea of independence. Now... Azerbaijanism, which is based on Turkism and Islamism, should also be the foundation of our independence ideology" (Shamsizade, 2008, p. 65). The integrity of literature from the 1960s–1990s is confirmed concerning the concept of nationality. The literature of the 1960s–1980s opposed Soviet ideology with images of national society and culture, guarding national language, history, and moral values. According to T. Alishanoghlu, "the literature of the 1990s largely draws its content from the embodiment of the collapse, bankruptcy, and pains of that ideal, including the Karabakh theme" (Alishanoghlu, 2017, P. 464–465).

Nevertheless, the literature of the independence period is a significant historical event. The Constitutional Act on State Independence of October 18, 1991, "started the development of nationwide, free, and democratic thought... [and] meant the declaration of a new type of literature based on a national-democratic ideology" (Habibbeyli, 2019, p. 326). If in the 1960s–1980s this ideology found its way through indirect means and protests, then in the 1990s it became the direct mouthpiece of independent literary-artistic thought. The 1990s, charac-

terized as a "transition period," saw works across various topics and styles – from poems and novels about the Karabakh war and refugee life to absurd plays and stories about imperial ruins – all united by the Azerbaijanism ideology (Habibbeyli, 2016, p. 260).

Azerbaijanism and the World Literary-Cultural Space

In the 1990s, the purpose of Azerbaijanism carried the mission of creating and introducing the image of an independent Azerbaijan to the world. Simultaneously, there was a need to adopt the humanistic and progressive values of the modern world and integrate into advanced world literature. In literature, these processes continued both in depth (penetrating deep layers of Azerbaijani culture and history) and in breadth (mastering previously banned literary-philosophical heritage). Historical novels and stories by Isa Mughanna, Davud Nasib, Nuraddin Adiloglu, and others explored ancient roots, creating the image of the Azerbaijani people with rich statehood traditions (Habibbeyli, 2016, p. 260). Plays by Nabi Khazri, Bakhtiyar Vahabzade, and Ilyas Afandiyev evoked national pride through ancient Turkic roots or exposed the Russian Empire's occupation. Heydar Aliyev emphasized the importance of such works for creating patriotism and educating youth (Aliyev, 2023, p. 396).

Journalistic works by Gilman Ilkin and Manaf Suleymanov focused attention on pre-Soviet national life and values. Works by Movlud Suleymanli, Ismayil Shikhli, and many others artistically exposed the repression, deportation, and colonial policies of the seventy-year occupation. Moreover, poetic collections and prose by Vaqif Samadoglu, Anar, Afag Masud, Elchin, and others not only demonstrated the realities of the post-colonial environment but also helped determine the place of independent Azerbaijan in the modern world. As the country's prestige grew, "this literature, whose ideological basis rests on Azerbaijanism... has, above all, been able to create and introduce to the world the image of modern Azerbaijan" (Habibbeyli, 2016, P. 22–23). Finally, the Turan ideal, based on Turkism and Azerbaijanism, remains relevant, with President Ilham Aliyev shaping the nation's future on

the principle “our family is the Turkic world” (President Ilham Aliyev..., 2024, p. 3).

Conclusion

Thus, the literature of the 1990s in Azerbaijan is distinguished by its “transitional character.” On the one hand, the concept of nationality from the 1960s–1980s continues; on the other hand, the demands of independence reflect the transition of the Azerbaijanism ideology from idea to direct action. The implementation of independence is accompanied by socio-political, psychological, and moral

processes. The expression of Azerbaijanism in literature is directly linked to the people’s struggle for independence. In the 1990s, the literature of independent Azerbaijan simultaneously restored its historical-cultural context, with Turkism and the Turan ideal returning. The direct and unimpeded integration of Azerbaijani literature into the world literary process began. Along with adopting advanced ideas, the Azerbaijanism ideology created an ideological-moral basis for preserving and artistically expressing the national identity and rich values of Azerbaijani literature.

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