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## LITERARY-THEORETICAL

AZERBAIJANI INTELLECTUALS' ENGAGEMENT WITH TURKISH LITERATURE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE XX CENTURY

### COMPROMISO TEÓRICO-LITERARIO DE LOS INTELLECTUALES AZERBAIJANOS CON LA LITERATURA TURCA A PRINCIPIOS DEL SIGLO XX

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#### ABSTRACT

The goal of this research is to delve into the burgeoning interest in Ottoman-Turkish literature within Azerbaijan's literary and cultural milieu at the dawn of the 20th century. It is scrutinized how Azerbaijani intellectuals, notably poets and writers like Huseyn Javid, Mohammad Hadi, Abbas Sahhat, Abdulla Shaiq, Firidun Kocherli, Mohammad Amin Rasulzadeh, Abdulla Sur, and others, who played pivotal roles in promoting Turkish literature. Their artistic endeavors were complemented by proactive efforts to elevate Turkish literary works, evident in their publications, newspapers, magazines, and literary discourses. The article dissected their perspectives on Turkish literature, dissecting various themes, individual artists, and creative exemplars. These viewpoints, widely disseminated in early 20th-century media and literary texts, underscored the profound influence of Turkish literature on Azerbaijani literary thought. Ultimately, the study revealed that Azerbaijani writers and poets' discussions on Ottoman literature exerted a twofold impact. Firstly, they acquainted Azerbaijani readers with Turkish literary heritage, fostering cross-cultural understanding. Secondly, they catalyzed the intellectual renaissance and spurred the emergence of new literary paradigms within Azerbaijan's literary landscape. Thus, these intellectual exchanges facilitated a rich literary dialogue between Azerbaijani and Turkish literary traditions, enriching both cultural spheres.

**Keywords:** Azerbaijani literature, Turkish literature, Azerbaijani intellectuals, literary-theoretical thought, literary-cultural influence.

#### RESUMEN

El objetivo de esta investigación es profundizar en el creciente interés por la literatura turco-otomana dentro del medio literario y cultural de Azerbaiyán en los albores del siglo XX. Se analiza cómo los intelectuales azerbaiyanos, en particular poetas y escritores como Huseyn Javid, Mohammad Hadi, Abbas Sahhat, Abdulla Shaiq, Firidun Kocherli, Mohammad Amin Rasulzadeh, Abdulla Sur y otros, desempeñaron un papel fundamental en la promoción de la literatura turca. Sus esfuerzos artísticos se complementaron con esfuerzos proactivos para elevar las obras literarias turcas, evidentes en sus publicaciones, periódicos, revistas y discursos literarios. El artículo analiza sus perspectivas sobre la literatura turca, analizando varios temas, artistas individuales y ejemplos creativos. Estos puntos de vista, ampliamente difundidos en los medios de comunicación y los textos literarios de principios del siglo XX, subrayaron la profunda influencia de la literatura turca en el pensamiento literario azerbaiyano. En última instancia, el estudio reveló que los debates de los escritores y poetas azerbaiyanos sobre la literatura otomana ejercieron un doble impacto. En primer lugar, familiarizaron a los lectores azerbaiyanos con la herencia literaria turca, fomentando el entendimiento intercultural. En segundo lugar, catalizaron el renacimiento intelectual y estimularon el surgimiento de nuevos paradigmas literarios dentro del panorama literario de Azerbaiyán. Así, estos intercambios intelectuales facilitaron un rico diálogo literario entre las tradiciones literarias azerbaiyana y turca, enriqueciendo ambas esferas culturales.

**Palabras clave:** Literatura azerbaiyana, literatura turca, intelectuales azerbaiyanos, pensamiento teórico-literario, influencia literario-cultural.

## INTRODUCTION

Azerbaijan has a rich history and culture spanning several millennia. The country is strategically located at the crossroads between Europe and Asia, therefore Azerbaijan has been an important center of trade, politics, and religion throughout history. The country was once part of the Silk Road network and medieval kingdoms. Baku's Walled City and the Gobustan rock art depict the country's ancient past and development of early human civilization. Over the centuries, Azerbaijan absorbed influences from different conquering powers including Persians, Ottomans, and Russians. Because of that, the cultural diversity is reflected in Azerbaijan's art, cuisine, literature, and architecture with a unique blend of Asian and European elements. In addition, Azerbaijan is considered the birthplace of the first major oil industry in the mid-19th century. The country has also produced prominent personalities who have contributed to science, arts, and politics over the ages. In general, it can be said that the country has succeeded in preserving its rich cultural heritage even during occupation and war as seen by its UNESCO World Heritage Sites, being from antiquity to modern times, a vital linking East and West (Gasimov, 2017; Nevins, 2020; Salazar, 2017).

According to several authors (Baghirova, 2019; Rahmanzade, 2019; Suleymanli, 2021), the end of the XIX century and early 20th century marked a transformative period in Azerbaijan's cultural and political history. Major advancements were made in areas like education, media, and the arts, facilitating the growth of national thought and statehood. The proliferation of the Azerbaijani press was especially impactful, as it addressed salient socio-political issues of the time, including tough imperial policies and widespread illiteracy (Ibrahimli, 2023). Importantly, this period witnessed foundational cultural reforms centered on reestablishing state sovereignty and promoting equal civil rights. These multifaceted developments in the early 1900s crucially paved the way for Azerbaijan's modernization and integration into global cultural flows. However, the conquest of Azerbaijan by the Soviets frustrated independence, and the Soviet rule generated a profound impact on the country's national and cultural identity, fueling feelings of resistance and aspirations for self-determination (Bolukbasi, 2013). This period of political subjugation also shaped Azerbaijani literature and intellectual thought, serving as a recurring theme and source of inspiration for writers and literary theorists.

If we look at the literary and cultural environment of Azerbaijan in the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, it can be observed that interest in Turkish literature was increasing in that period. As a result, along with interesting articles on the

analysis of the works of Ottoman-Turkish writers and poets in Azerbaijan, a lot of work has been done to bring their works to the attention of readers. The reason for the increased interest in Ottoman literature is the fact that the two peoples have common historical and cultural values, the same lineage, and a common language, as well as the increasing struggle for national awakening and independence in Azerbaijan, which was a colony of the Russian Empire for a hundred years (Javadi & Burrill, 2012). This struggle's acceptance as support played a key role. This created opportunities for strong influence on Ottoman-Turkish culture and literature, Azerbaijani society, culture and literature. At the same time, Azerbaijani poets writers, and publicists benefited from the features and innovations of the Ottoman literary and cultural environment, and the works of Turkish writers and poets, and wrote several valuable works under the influence of these works. This development and influence covered the various attributes of the art of words, from the point of view of subject, genre, form, and idea, to the elements of language and style. Considering the above, in this research the relationship between Azerbaijani-Turkish literature in the early XX century has been studied, which until now remains has been neglected in Azerbaijani literary science.

## DEVELOPMENT

### 1. Problems of Turkish literature in the literary-theoretical heritage of Azerbaijani romantics

#### 1.1. Huseyn Javid's literary and theoretical views on Turkish literature

In the works of Huseyn Javid, whose worldview, artistic ideology, and romanticism were strongly influenced by the Turkish literary and cultural environment, we encounter certain shades of theoretical-aesthetic attitudes toward Turkish literature. On October 25th, 1915, in the article "War and Literature" published in the "Achig Soz" newspaper, he asserted that in the Islamic East, including the Ottoman literary environment, a large number of ascetic, careless, scoffers, flatterers, and adulatory poets had emerged over the centuries, without bringing any innovation or benefit to art and artistic thought. It is noteworthy that the author includes well-known poets such as Ruhi, Nafi, Nabi, and Nadim among these artists, accusing them of "chattering," "philosophizing with a dead idea," writing "absurd ruins," and "disrupting and loosening the healthy and unshakable spirits of the Turks," instilling a "universal spirit, universal philosophy" into the Turkish ethos (Javid, 1915). He suggests that this trend persisted until Ibrahim Shinasi and beyond.

H. Javid exhibits a dual attitude towards the infusion of the European spirit into Turkish literature since the second half of the XIX century. He observes that during this period, Turkish literature underwent the influence and imitation of French literature. In the pursuit of innovation, some writers began to mimic the worthless, rotten, unnecessary, and even harmful traditions of French and European thought and literary practices. This tendency failed to benefit national thought, morals, and culture. Nationally-minded Turkish poets and writers such as Namik Kemal, Reza Tofig, Abdulhaq Hamid, and Tofiq Fikret embraced the progressive aspects of European literature and produced artistic works imbued with a modern spirit.

Namig Kamal's tragedy "Akif Bey" premiered on October 4th, 1913, at the Tbilisi theater in the Azerbaijani language. H. Javid's article "Theatre, or the Art of Performance: Confusion and Progress," published in the "Iqbal" newspaper on October 9 of the same year, just days after the play, comprises theoretical and aesthetic impressions of the play as a whole. The critic first discusses the content and idea of the tragedy, followed by an assessment of its successful aspects, portraying it as a catalyst for awakening and progress in the Azerbaijani stage. He emphasizes that works with such topical themes stimulate national awakening and the revitalization of public opinion.

## 1.2. Muhammad Hadi's literary and theoretical views on Turkish literature

Mohammad Hadi, a prominent researcher and advocate of Turkish literature, was an Azerbaijani poet who penned works in the romantic genre. He conducted detailed research on various aspects of Ottoman literature and the creativity of its representatives, expressing his views through a series of articles. One of these articles, a scientific and critical piece titled "We Must Stand with a Lion's Heart Against Social Jackals" was published in the *Taraqqi* newspaper on July 29th, 1908, during the tsarist reaction (Hadi, 1908). The choice of title for the article was deliberate. During the period of reaction following the First Russian Revolution, political pressure, censorship attacks, and persecutions were unleashed against the press and the creative endeavors of writers. Hadi referred to these persecutors as "public jackals" and emphasized the potential of fiction to withstand their assaults. He invoked the wisdom of the 13th-century Turkish poet Jalaleddin, who advised following in the footsteps of Rumi.

Hadi highlighted Rumi's skillful use of symbolism to convey truth while evading the reproaches and accusations of ignorant persecutors. He noted that despite the passage of centuries since the Middle Ages, attacks by "social jackals" and political reactions against truth-tellers persisted

into the 20th century. Hadi advocated for the continued use of allegory and symbolism, following Rumi's example, as effective methods of conveying ideas amidst societal challenges. Aziz Mirahmedov, a scholar of Hadi's legacy, rightly observed that akin to M.F. Akhundov, Hadi sought to instruct writers living under absolutism on the use of allegory and symbolism, as demonstrated in this article (Mirahmadov, 1985, p. 145).

M. Hadi's article " d biyyat mü taqlarına bir b ar t" ("A Good News for Lovers of Literature") is a scholarly work focusing solely on literary studies. The article delves into the theoretical-aesthetic analysis of Tofiq Fikret's activities and creativity. Hadi authored and submitted the article (Hadi, 1911), initially published in the "Sada" newspaper, while he was working at the "Tenin" newspaper in Turkey. This marked the first scholarly endeavor related to analyzing the contributions of the esteemed Turkish poet in Azerbaijani literary studies. According to Islam Qaribli, Hadi rightfully earns the title of "the first researcher of Tofiq Fikret's legacy" in Azerbaijan (Qaribli, 2018, p. 95). The critic examines significant aspects of Fikret's work, proceeding to analyze specific poems. Firstly, the focus is on the poem "X luqun d ft ri" ("The Book of Creation"). Hadi underscores the profound humanitarian ideals depicted in the poem, emphasizing its central message: "If man were an angel, the world would be heaven" (Qaribli, 2018, p. 140). He contends that Fikret epitomizes the spirit of the people. His pure and profound poems resonate even with a peasant child due to their simplicity of language and expression of sincere, natural emotions.

M. Hadi also highlights the themes of militancy and rebellion evident in the artist's work, notably in the analysis of the renowned verse "Sis" ("The Fog"). This poem, imbued with political content, serves as a sharp poetic condemnation against oppression and tyranny. Hadi, drawing attention to this aspect of the poem, describes it as a remarkable example of art that "instills a profound abhorrence towards tyranny in every conscience." Additionally, he examines Fikret's poems "Ruju" and "Tarihi-gadim," praising the poet's adeptness in passionately singing the spirit of independence and the fervor of freedom. Focusing on the poem "Hilali- hm r c miyy ti-n sib si hüzurunda" ("In the Presence of the Red Crescent Society"), the critic underscores how the poet portrays human tragedy with anguish and suffering. Hadi cites a portion of the poem, noting its enduring relevance and thought-provoking nature for humanity today. The poem presents a grave and contemplative message: Humanity possesses a malicious character and evil nature, engaging in demonic practices such as factionalism, death, killing, bloodshed, hypocrisy, backbiting, oppression, and heedless deeds. According

to Hadi, these actions and progress ultimately lead to the destruction of “The Son of Man” (Hadi, 1911), signifying that all the malevolent deeds of an individual will ultimately lead to their downfall.

M. Hadi’s literary-theoretical perspective on the work of Rza Tofiq is also noteworthy. He expresses this viewpoint through two poetic works dedicated to the philosopher-poet: “Türkl rin yegan filosofu Rza Tofiq h zr tl rin ” (“To His Holiness Reza Tofiq), the sole philosopher of the Turks,” and “Hayati-Bashar” (Hadi, 1914). While these works take poetic form, they essentially reflect the author’s theoretical insights and assessments of the Turkish thinker’s oeuvre.

### 1.3. Abdulla Shaig’s literary and theoretical views on Turkish literature

During the first decades of the 20th century, Abdulla Shaig emerged as the author who produced the most textbooks in the national language. His textbooks featured a significant number of examples from Turkish literature. We will delve into these examples in detail later, particularly when discussing instances of Turkish literature in school textbooks. For now, let’s focus on Shaig’s two works concerning Turkish literary and artistic reality, as well as his unique literary persona - Tofiq Fikret’s work.

The first of Shaig’s works is his extensive memoir titled “Xatir I rim” (“My Memories”), penned during the Soviet era. In the section dedicated to “Huseyn Javid” within the memoir, the author explores the influence of the Turkish literary and cultural environment on the worldview and creative output of the poet. During this period, Shaig elucidates the landscape of the literary process and the conditions prevailing in Turkey at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. He provides a concise yet comprehensive examination of the social, political, economic, and cultural factors that shaped this landscape with honesty and detail.

Shaig’s analysis reveals that Turkey, grappling with crisis and backwardness in various dimensions, was compelled to seek solutions beyond Western exploitation, colonialist dreams, and emerging real threats. This quest fostered ideologies of nationalization, Islamization, and modernization within the progressive intelligentsia. Discussing the reflection of these ideologies in artistic thought, Shaig notes: “Literature also began to champion these three movements. Muhammad Akif, the editor of the ‘Siratil-Mustaqim’ collection, spearheaded the Islamization movement, while Mammad Amin led the nationalization movement. Tofiq Fikret, the publisher of the ‘Sarvati-Funun’ collection, stood at the forefront of the modernization movement. Romanticism and realism supplanted the sentimentalism that once prevailed in literature. Abdulhaq Hamid

continued the romantic literary tradition and achieved renown with numerous poetic historical tragedies” (Shaig, 1978, p. 276). In general, the author elucidated the manifestation of socio-political, economic, and legal realities within Turkish fiction during that era.

Another article by A. Shaig, titled “Tofiq Fikr tin türk d biyyatı tarixind h miyy ti” (“The Significance of Tofiq Fikret in the History of Turkish Literature”), remained in his archive for many years before being published (Shaig, 1978, pp. 156–159). In this article, though not extensive in length, Shaig offers a precise interpretation of T. Fikret’s place and role in modern Turkish poetry, his influence in reshaping the literary landscape, and the key nuances of his creative output. Shaig illustrates that since the 1860s and 1870s, a trend of westernization had begun to manifest in Turkish literature. However, artistic thinkers who derived their themes and inspiration from Western poets and literature often struggled to integrate this influence with the national environment, Turkish social realities, and everyday life. Initially, T. Fikret also grappled with hesitation and uncertainty during the early stages of his career. However, he swiftly transcended this phase, effectively synthesizing European literary sensibilities with the Turkish ethos.

Fikret emerged as a pioneer and trailblazer of a new literary movement known as “Sarvati-funun” literature within the national milieu. Departing from the artificial and imitative styles of the past, his works depicted authentic Turkish life in its true colors, glorifying the essence of Turkish existence (Shaig, 1977, p. 157). By skillfully amalgamating European literary models with Turkish spirit, daily life, and societal realities, he laid the foundation for a robust literary tradition. Fikret assumed the role of a spokesperson for national grievances and suffering, becoming a voice for the collective wounds and pains of the Turkish people.

## 2. Problems of Turkish literature in the literary-theoretical heritage of Azerbaijani intellectuals

### 2.1. Firidun Bey Kojarli’s thoughts on Turkish literature

In the works of the renowned literary critic Firidun Bey Kocherli, we encounter insightful considerations regarding various aspects of Turkish literature. His in-depth research particularly focuses on two Turkish artists: Yusuf Nabi and Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi. Notably, Kocherli included a separate essay on Yusuf Nabi in his seminal literary history titled “Azerbaijani Literature” (Kocherli, 1978, pp. 112–113). He attributed this decision to Nabi’s profound impact on Azerbaijani poetry and literary thought, surpassing even that of Muhammad Fuzuli. In his essay, Kocherli portrays the Turkish poet as a figure of wisdom and civility, adept at expressing subtle nuances. He writes, “Like

Fuzuli Baghdadi, Yusuf Nabi's works preserve deep meanings, lofty ideas, and firm opinions. Additionally, his guidance to Abulhair Muhammad Chalabi, encapsulated in his *dalaili-aqilana* and *nasayih-mushfigana*, holds significant authority for our worldly happiness, salvation in the hereafter, and spiritual progress" (Kocherli, 1978, p. 105). Kocherli also draws comparisons between Nabi's creativity and that of Fuzuli, acknowledging that while Nabi may lack Fuzuli's eloquence and rhetoric, his words resonate with wisdom and intellectual pleasure.

In the essay, a certain idea is crafted about the themes, ideas, artistic style, and main nuances of Yusuf Nabi's works. The essay extensively discusses various poetic examples from Nabi's repertoire across different genres and themes, analyzing his artistic contributions. Through these classical examples, "the personality of an artist deeply connected to science and art, driven by humanistic ideals, becomes evident" (Bektashi, 1986, p. 46). F. Kocherli also expresses his admiration and sympathy for Rumi's work in his essay "Aghamirza Muhammad Bagir Khalkhali," featured in the book "Azerbaijani Literature." Discussing Khalkhali's poem "Salabiyyanama," Kocherli applauds the author's adept use of symbolic-allegorical devices to convey ideas. Amidst representational and fantastical events, Khalkhali imparts numerous words of advice and meaningful quotations to society through a symbolic narrative, concealing deeper meanings within the tale and representation. Kocherli regards Khalkhali as a worthy successor to J. Rumi in employing such artistic methods, recognizing Rumi as the master of this approach (Kocherli, 1981, p. 365).

F. Kocherli also compares the creative abilities of these two artists in their utilization of artistic techniques, asserting that, undoubtedly, the Turkish poet exhibits greater mastery. While it's true that the "wise words, subtle nuances," and profound thoughts found in "Masnavi" surpass those in "Salabiyya," it cannot be denied that Khalkhali's work contains "meaningful advice," gentle reminders, acceptable humor, and subtle suggestions. In addition to presenting the work of the Azerbaijani poet as a valuable example to the reader, the literary critic acknowledges Molla Jalaluddin Rumi as a master of unparalleled stature, a literary figure whose contributions to classical literature serve as exemplary models (Kocherli, 1981, p. 365).

## 2.2. Muhammad Amin Rasulzade's views on Turkish literature

Prominent national ideologist Muhammad Amin Rasulzadeh was also a talented literary critic who offered notable insights into Turkish literature. In his socio-political work titled "The Republic of Azerbaijan," Rasulzadeh

delves into the socio-political, literary, and cultural milieu that gave rise to the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (ADR). He also explores the sources and trends shaping literature in Azerbaijan during the transition from the XIX to the XX century. Rasulzadeh observes that during this historical period, Azerbaijani literature experienced a dual evolution. On one hand, it continued to develop within the framework of its classical tradition. On the other hand, there emerged a phenomenon of renewal, modernization, and Europeanization in both its form and content. Russia and Turkey served as significant sources and conduits of influence for this innovation. Consequently, Rasulzadeh characterizes this phase of Azerbaijani literature as a period "under the influence of Russian literature on one hand, and Ottoman literature on the other" (Rasulzadeh, 1990, p. 16).

On March 26th, 1907, an article by M.A. Rasulzade was published in the newspaper "Takamul," adopting a literary and critical style, titled "Islamic Press." Meanwhile, Hasan Sabri Ayvazov's analysis of the play "Why did we become like this?" was serialized in the "Fyuuzat" magazine at that time. Ayvazov's article delves into the theoretical-aesthetic perspective of the play with concise and scientific detail, primarily focusing on its flawed aspects. Muhammad Amin Bey critiques Ayvazov's portrayal of a socialist character in the work, noting that the socialist image is inaccurately depicted. The character's words, speeches, and actions do not align with the expected demeanor and tactics of a socialist figure. Rasulzade attributes this discrepancy to the author's ignorance and misrepresentation, leading to the presentation of the work with a different ideological premise (Rasulzadeh, 1992, p. 140). Additionally, the critic highlights several inconsistencies in the characterization of the protagonist. Firstly, the hero is portrayed as fearful of engaging with the crowd and interacting with the community and writers. Secondly, he exhibits a lack of proficiency in his mother tongue and displays indifference toward it, reminiscent of certain apostate intellectuals. Lastly, he demonstrates ignorance about his own nation. Rasulzade argues that these traits do not accurately represent the majority of socialists, as many actively engage with the masses, particularly workers, to promote their ideas.

M.A. Rasulzade held a deep admiration for Tofiq Fikret and conveyed his sentiments about Fikret's persona and creative contributions in his article titled "A Great Loss." Published on September 20th, 1917, in the "Açı Söz" newspaper, which Rasulzade himself published and edited. This article serves as an obituary marking the passing of the Turkish poet. The tone and style of the article resemble that of an obituary, reflecting a heartfelt lament

for the absence of a significant figure in Turkish literature and humanity at large. The article exudes a sense of sorrow and reverence. Rasalzade initially informs readers about T. Fikret's demise, then proceeds to highlight the essence of his work by citing a verse from the poet's poem "Tarihi-Kadim." He emphasizes that Fikret, throughout his life, was a poet who lamented humanity's suffering, bloodshed, oppression, and adversity. Fikret viewed human history as a chronicle of brutality and malevolence, expressing this bitter reality through his poetry.

Din hid ist r, asiman qurban

H r zaman, h r m kanda qan, qan, qan.

(Religion wants martyrs, heaven wants sacrifices

Blood, blood, blood all the time, everywhere)

(Rasulzadeh, 2013, p. 346).

The author then shifts focus to the First World War, reflecting on its massacres and calamities. It serves as a poignant reminder that the war not only claimed the lives of countless ordinary individuals from various nations but also snatched away many great personalities. The war, the author contends, brought profound anguish and sorrow to T. Fikret. Despite his physical departure, the author asserts that this brilliant individual, who "penned his laments," remains spiritually alive. The poet of both today and tomorrow, he resides in the collective consciousness. Directing words to the poet's soul, the author proclaims, "The poets of Tofiq village shall not perish, they shall not be vanquished; they belong to the future, and the future belongs to them!"

The author pays homage to T. Fikret, referring to him as a master, a distinguished Turkish artist, a champion of freedom and liberty, a champion of the human spirit, and a purveyor of both spiritual and physical poetry. The author implores that if Fikret's message urged action—"try, strive, connect, resist, shout"—then it must not have been in vain. The Turkish youth, inspired by Fikret's teachings, exhibit a resolute determination to toil diligently. This determination, the author believes, will undoubtedly yield the desired fruits (Rasulzadeh, 2013, p. 348). Muhammad Amin Bey commemorates and commends T. Fikret for his invaluable contribution to shaping the Turkish youth, instilling within them a resilient spirit, a fighting demeanor, and modern convictions.

### 2.3. Abdulla Sur's thoughts on Turkish literature

Abdulla Sur was one of our critics who displayed a sensitive and active attitude towards Turkish literature. Educated

in Istanbul, he possessed a profound understanding of the history of Turkish literature and even authored a comprehensive work on the subject titled "An Overview of Turkish Literature" (in Azerbaijani: "Türk d biyyatına bir n z r"). According to information provided by Kemal Talibzade, the work comprised three volumes and approximately 1000 pages (Talibzadeh, 1984, p. 229). This extensive book delves into the centuries-old history of Turkish literature. Unfortunately, the complete work has not reached us; only fragments remain, which are currently housed in the Institute of Manuscripts named after M. Fuzuli of ANAS under the codes -544 (3577), -567 (3579), -976 (3576).

In the book "An Overview of Turkish Literature," the author offers a comprehensive examination of the history of Turkish literature, aiming to delineate its developmental trajectory, identify key characteristics, and literary trends, and compile a scholarly history of this literature. The available fragments attest to A. Sur's creation of a valuable literary history. It is evident from these fragments that the critic harbored disdain for derivative poetry, which failed to innovate within the literary-artistic sphere. He criticized proponents of form over content, denouncing those solely preoccupied with aesthetic beauty in form and style. Instead, he championed literary innovation, particularly endorsing the "Usuli-jadid" movement. In this regard, he lauded Ibrahim Shinasi's stance. Fragments related to Shinasi in "An Overview of Turkish Literature" illustrate Sur's appreciation for Shinasi's innovation, particularly his realism, and commitment to portraying life's truths, termed as "emotional truth and naturalness."

Sur regards Shinasi as an artist who revolutionized Turkish literature: "Shinasi's greatness lies not in his poetry, but in his complete dismantling of the old literary architecture by forsaking the style-focused poetry that dominated for centuries. He transformed literature into a European taste and poetry into the realm of nature" (Talibzadeh, 1984, p. 230). Moreover, Sur emphasizes that Shinasi's innovation does not entail detachment from Eastern and Turkish literary traditions; rather, it is rooted in tradition and antiquity. He asserts that while Shinasi's right hand reaches towards the future, his left hand remains firmly connected to the past. The author highlights the significance of encompassing form, content, and aesthetic pleasure in literary works. He criticizes Turkish poets who prioritized verbal beauty over meaningful content, suggesting that works solely crafted for stylistic allure lacked true beauty. Sur argues that modern literary life demands meaning and substance over mere aesthetic appeal. Thus, conveying insights into modern life and its truths becomes a crucial task for the artist.

A. Sur's articles, "An Overview on Sinan Pasha" and "An Overview on Nafiya," manifest a scientific-theoretical perspective on the lives and works of these two prominent literary figures of Turkish literature. These articles essentially serve as essay-like explorations. The first article was published in 1907 in the 28th issue of the "Fuyuzat" magazine. It commences with a two-verse epigraph by M. Fuzuli. Subsequently, brief details about Sinan Pasha's biography are provided, noting his existence in the 16th century during the reign of Fateh Sultan Mehmet, highlighting his renown as an intellectual and statesman. Regarding his creative output, the article remarks: "There is tenacity of thought in his works, a scent of nobility in his thoughts, and a touch of Sufism, an essence of devotion" (Sur, 1907, p. 6).

The critic acquaints readers with various facets of Sinan Pasha's personality and creativity, emphasizing that he was not merely a man of letters but also a proficient scientist in multiple disciplines. A. Sur primarily discusses Sinan Pasha's works such as "Tazarronama," "Nasikhatnama," and "Managibi-mashayikh," offering insights into their thematic and stylistic characteristics along with excerpts from these works. Sur underscores the artistic brilliance of the Turkish writer through these special observations. Moreover, the article "Nəfiyə bir nəzər" ("A Look at Nafi") is another of A. Sur's contributions (Sur, 1909). Here, the author presents a scientific-theoretical examination of Nafi's creativity. The article adopts a dual perspective on the Turkish poet's work, addressing both its positive and negative aspects while commenting on its overarching themes, principal attributes, successful elements, and shortcomings. Nafi is portrayed as a bold, courageous, and proud "poet of concise expression" (Sur, 1909).

The critic highlights that Nafi did not emulate poets like Fuzuli and Baghi, who preceded him and set the standard for all. Instead, he carved his own lavish, majestic path. He crafted valuable odes and penned fiery satires. Even in his ghazals, Nafi displayed his unique beauty, characterized by "chivalrous verses" and "bold exhortations." His style is original, and his ability to convey truth is unparalleled. His themes are authentic, serving to express truth rather than fiction: "Nafi's style shines brilliantly and magnificently, free from idle words and imperfections. Why settle for trivialities? We crave truth, even if it may seem mundane! We desire nature, even if it may seem austere!" (Sur, 1909). A. Sur illustrates how Nafi diverged from the conventional path while incorporating traditional genres such as ghazal and qasida, demonstrating an original style. However, the critic also expresses dissatisfaction with the excessive inclination toward eulogy, subjectivity,

prejudice, and individualism evident in some of the Turkish artist's satires.

## CONCLUSIONS

In this research it has been found that the active and sensitive approach towards Turkish literature that emerged in Azerbaijani literary and theoretical thought during the second half of the XIX century, particularly intensifying in the early 20th century. Intellectuals and critics such as M. Shahtakhtli, A. Huseynzadeh, A. Agayev, H. Javid, M. Hadi, A. Shaig, J. Mammadguluzadeh, F. Kocharli, M. A. Rasulzadeh, A. Sur, and S. Huseyn played significant roles in presenting and promoting Turkish literature to Azerbaijani readers. They aimed to introduce Turkish people and literature, both classical and contemporary, to Azerbaijani Turks, emphasizing the educational and cultural value of Turkish literature. These efforts also involved encouraging Azerbaijani writers to learn from Turkish literary innovations and view Turkish literature as a source of aesthetic pleasure and inspiration. Ultimately, these endeavors facilitated mutual understanding and unity between Azerbaijani and Turkish peoples. This way Turkish literature was portrayed as a unifying force that transcends borders and fosters cultural exchange and appreciation between nations.

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