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Azerbaijani Philology: Formation and Evolution

The history of Azerbaijani philology commences in the early Middle Ages, when the waves of Turkic migrations shaped an ethno-linguistic milieu on the territory of contemporary Azerbaijan from which the Azerbaijani language (one of contemporary Western Turkic languages) took its origins and later the Azerbaijani literature emerged as a result of the rising national identity. The formation of the main parameters of the country's ethno-linguistic picture continued in the 12th and 13th centuries. The first fundamental occurrence of that period is the epic ›Dede Qorqut‹. Though it can be characterized as a common-Oghuz written monument, Azerbaijani featuring is clearly manifested in the language of the text, in the geography of the depicted events and the content and notions of the monument. It is assumed that the epic was written down in the 11th century and gave an impetus to the formation of Azerbaijani written literature. It is considered that the surviving texts of ›Kitabi-Dede Korkut‹ of the late Middle Ages were copied exactly from those first manuscripts.

The impact of Islam on the Turkic-Oghuz fundamentalism in ›Dede Qorqut‹ is consistently and repeatedly manifested in the linguistic evidence of Arabic and Persian languages. This influence continued throughout the Middle Ages and let the Arab and Iranian studies take a certain place in Azerbaijani philology together with Turkology. It is no coincidence that in the 11th and 12th centuries, during the Muslim Renaissance, Arabic-speaking literary scholar Khatib Tabrizi, Persian-speaking poets Qatran Tabrizi, Afzaledin Khagani Shirvani, Mahsati Ganjavi, and Nizami Ganjavi came from Azerbaijan. Their glory had spread all over the world. Albeit they did not write in their native language – Azerbaijani Turkic, in accordance with the traditions of the Muslim Renaissance – their apperceptions and themes were of a pan-Eastern, even universal character (coming from Plato, Aristotle); their language, style of expression and artistic intonation are rightly called ››Azerbaijani (Turkic) style‹‹. Muhammad Amin Rasulzade, one of the leaders of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, articulated in his monograph ››Azerbaijani Poet Nizami‹‹ (1951) the outcome of his long lasting research and wrote: ››In any case, for an Azerbaijani child who gives such a high place to the meaning of Turkic in his perceptions, feelings, thoughts and inventions, to a poet who called anything beautiful and great Turk, attributed Turkicness to beauty and greatness and ››in Turkic‹‹ to beautiful and great expressions, called the land of beauty and grandeur Turkistan – is it possible for this child not to call him a Turkic just because he wrote in Persian? ... Never!!!‹‹¹

The misconception that is still occasionally encountered to this day is that every literary text written in Persian in the Middle Ages is a phenomenon of Iranian literature. Such an approach refutes that in the Persian texts of Azerbaijani Turkic poets of

1 Muhammad Amin Rasulzade, Azerbaijani poet Nizami, Baku 2021, p. 292. [Rasulzadə M. Ə. Azərbaycan şairi Nizami, Bakı 2021]

the Muslim Renaissance period metaphors, phraseology along with folk sayings of Azerbaijani Turkic origin form a whole system. And even the Iranian scholars of Nizami heritage have repeatedly acknowledged that Turkic fragrance comes from him (Nizami Ganjavi).

Thus, even though Korkut studies and Nizami studies are virtually based on sources in diverse languages, they are still constituting a foundation of Azerbaijani philology. In the first case, the philological vision is focused on the ancient (common) Turkic roots, however, in the second case, it is directed at the geography of the Muslim East, and herein a particular »dialogue« of history and geography emerges. And this means a fairly perfect universal ground for the formation of the genotypology of one nation's language, literature, as well as spirituality.

In the 13th and 14th centuries, an epic era in the history of Azerbaijani philology ended, and the era of lyric, basically »armed« with Sufi-pantheistic ideas, began. This militant lyric, which opposes Islamic religious canons, is characterized, first of all, by the fact that the Oghuz-Azerbaijani manifestation of the Turkic language expanding its sphere of activity at an unprecedented speed covered a larger part of the masses of the people. The works of Sufi poet-thinkers such as Izzeddin Hasanoglu, Yunus Amre, Qazi Burhaneddin and Imadeddin Nasimi significantly strengthened the influence of the Turkic language both in Azerbaijan and beyond its borders. And after the 13th and 14th centuries the following 15th and 16th centuries are, on the one hand a direct continuance of the previous centuries in the enrichment of the Azerbaijani language and literature, and on the other hand the beginning of the National Renaissance which will display itself more brightly in the 17th and 18th centuries.

The 15th and 16th centuries are, first and foremost the period of developing Sufi-pantheistic poetry along the lines of Nasimi – Jahanshah Haqiqi – Kishvari – Habibi – Fuzuli and the gradual transition from ideology to aesthetics. The leading personality of the ideological scene is Nasimi, and the greatest literary and philological figure of the aesthetic scene (and the period as a whole) is, without a doubt, Muhammad Fuzuli. Nasimi was born in Shamakhi (Shirvan), became a student of the Sufi-literate Master Sheikh Fazlullah Naimi, escaped the persecution of Amir Timur, and then the Timurids, lived in Asia Minor, Syria; he wrote both in the Turkic (Azerbaijani Oghuz), Persian and Arabic languages and created enough poems, each of them to form a »divan« (the poetry of the Ottoman Empire). Nasimi is an Eastern symbol of being executed in front of the public for his own faith (»Həqq mənəm, həqq məndədir, həqq söylərəm! ...«) (»I am the truth, I have the truth, I am telling the truth! ...«). Notwithstanding Fuzuli is originally an Azerbaijani Turk, he lived in Iraq and Baghdad. Like his ancestor Nasimi, he also wrote in Turkic, Persian and Arabic languages; nevertheless, he is more renowned for his works in Turkic (Azerbaijani Oghuz). Genius Fuzuli's poem »Leyli and Majnun« is a result of high artistic taste, both in language and style, and in idea-content. He used to say: »Məndən, Füzuli, istəmə əşari- mədhü zəm, Mən əşiqəm, həmişə sözüm əşiqənədir ...« (»Don't ask me, Fuzuli, any praise and condemnation, I am in love, my word is always love ...«). The poet is the founder of a great literary school that has guided Azerbaijani poetry for several centuries, about

which professor Mir Jalal, an eminent Fuzuli scholar, writes: »The Fuzuli literary school constitutes an artistic encyclopedia of human feelings and thoughts with its richness of meaning, content, and artistic height.«²

The Safavid state of Azerbaijan, founded in the first years of the 16th century under the leadership of Shah Ismail Safevi (Khatai), not only revealed the national socio-political will of the people about to be formed, but also determined the Renaissance of its language and literature, along with art. Even though the religious-pantheistic aspect is shrouded in »fog« (increasingly Shiite!) and enriched with certain political-ideological motives, the Azerbaijani Renaissance takes its first successful steps per the work of Shah Ismail Khatai.

Since the beginning of the 16th century, an evolutionary trend that has manifested itself in the deeper (democratic) literary and cultural life of the country is a direct transition from the Azerbaijani Turkic-Oghuz epic to the Azerbaijani epic; and the most perfect sample of it is the »Koroglu« epic. And »Koroglu« is the epoch after »Dede Korgut« in the context of Azerbaijani folk literature (love to »word«!). In the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, along with the »Koroglu« epic, the novel era of Azerbaijani epic thought »Qurbani«, »Asli and Karam«, »Abbas and Gulgaz«, »Ashiq Qarib«, »Tahir and Zohra« and dozens of creative samples (novels of oral folk love) are created. The »anonymous« authors of this creativity represent Azerbaijani *ashiq* (folk singer – poet and storyteller) art, which is a genetic prolongation of the Turkic-Oghuz *ozan* (minstrel or bard) art, and its most eminent representatives are Dirili Qurbani, Ashiq Abbas Tufarganlı, Sarı Ashiq, Khasta Gasim and Ashiq Valeh.

The mass manifestations of the National Azerbaijan Renaissance in written literature starts with the transfer of samples of ashig poems and epics to writing. However, the classic event of the renaissance are undoubtedly the creations of Molla Panah Vagif. His creativity is of historical significance as it emerged from a round of other poets such as Molla Veli Vidadi, Huseyn Khan Mushtaq, and Telimkhan.

Although Shah Ismail Khatayi knew both Arabic and Persian, by writing the majority of his poems in Turkish (Azerbaijani), and even expanding the tradition of using Turkic (Azerbaijani) in his palace, he created such a political-ideological environment that his »Qış getdi, yenə bahar gəldi, Gül bitdövü lələzar gəldi. Quşlar qamusu fəğana düşdü, Eşq odu yenə bu cana düşdü« (»Winter is gone, spring has come again, the flowers bloomed. All the birds squalled, the fire of love fell again into this soul.«) can be said to symbolize the spiritual awakening asserted above. The National Renaissance continued in the 16th and 17th centuries into the early 18th century when the Safavids and Nadir Shah Afshar were in power, and the identically fruitful environment followed in the period of the Azerbaijani khanates covering the second half of the 18th century. The writing down of numerous samples of folk art, widespread distribution of folk books, national art such as music, fine arts, their most unique types were especially taking place: in music – Azerbaijani mugham, ashig performance;

2 Mir Jalal Pashayev, Fuzuli's mastery, Baku 2018, p. 21. [Mir Cəlal, Füzuli sənətkarlığı, Bakı 2018]

in fine arts – national calligraphy, miniature painting, architectural mastery, etc. In the political sphere revolutionary rise was also a sign of the National Renaissance and at the same time the formation of the Azerbaijani nation.

Molla Panah is the first national Azerbaijani poet with Vagif language, poetic technology of his work, idea-content, the first literary (philological!) personality whose Azerbaijaniness is indisputable among the Turkic languages (and literatures). Firudin bey Kocherli, the founder of Azerbaijani literature historiography, wrote at the beginning of the 20th century that »our Azerbaijani Turks like his poetry and ghazals too much, and everything [...] that came out of his pen are works which are completely from the heart and about the real life. There have been few of our national poets who wrote poems and ghazals in simple and clear language and in the dialect of our native language.«³ Vagif, who was the *vizier* (a high executive official who advised and helped a ruler in certain Muslim countries in the past) of the Khan of Karabakh and actively participated in the social and political life of Azerbaijan after the middle of the 18th century, wrote and created both in the classical style and in the style of folklore, and at the same time, by demonstrating the perspectives of the folklore (folk) style, he had founded a new literature (and a new literary language) that was a prolongation of the National Renaissance.

Vagif's ideological and aesthetic goal, coming from the spirit of the National Renaissance, is figuratively expressed in his verses »Ala gözlü, sərv boylu dilbərım, Həsərətın çəkdiyim canan, bəri bax« (»My darling with grey-eyed, cypress height. My beloved, whom I am longing for, look at me.«). With his realism, the poet, who reduced a sweetheart of his predecessor Fuzuli in the »heavens« to the »earth«, had determined the horizons of the »Vagif school« in Azerbaijani poetry after the Fuzuli school. Salman Mumtaz (a victim of Stalin's repression in the 1930s), who systematized in his works the outcomes of the preceding research about Vagif in satirical poems, folk books, »Qarabagnamas«, giving it to the disposal of the future Vagif scholars, exposed that as much as the Javanshir's palace of his Karabakh Khanate appropriated the Vagif, Vagif still managed to master that palace.⁴ This was a specimen of creative mission carried by Vagif in the Azerbaijani Renaissance.

The Azerbaijani language, literature (and philological thinking), which reached its highest level of development with Fuzuli, started its own new era via the line of Khatai-Vagif. In the same years as Salman Mumtaz wrote his works, the poet-thinker Samad Vurgun, who deeply comprehended the identity and the national value of Vagif, wrote the noted drama »Vagif« about him. At the same time, using the expression »sweet language of Vagif« instead of the »the Azerbaijani language« in one of his poems, he ascertained the extent of modernity of the 18th century poet to the 20th century.

The National revival of Azerbaijani culture, which commenced at the beginning of the 16th century and lasted until the end of the 18th century, stimulated the

3 Nizami Jafarov, Molla Panah Vagif, Baku 2017, p. 7. [Cəfərov N., Molla Pənah Vəqif, Bakı 2017]

4 Ibid., p. 10.

restructuring of a) the Azerbaijani language (Azerbaijani Turkic), b) Azerbaijani literature and c) Azerbaijani art on a national basis. The Azerbaijani nation, which was formed over several centuries, was the output of that language, literature and art that received its ethnographic, social as well as political regulation from the Safavid state of Azerbaijan.

The 19th century brought at least two fundamental innovations to the history of both the Azerbaijani people and Azerbaijani culture. First the country which until now had been divided into khanates (small feudal states) was now divided into two parts merging with the territory of Russia and Iran – Northern and Southern Azerbaijan. The second was the gradual confrontation of Eastern and Western cultural trends in the country and the determination of the future destiny of the nation (and its culture). In the first half of the century, while the Vagif school continued to exist, a national satirical movement of thought characteristic for the entire century gradually arose. Its first signs were »həcvə« (»hajv« – a type of satirical poem that is full of vulgar words) which did not represent serious literary phenomena as such. The rather serious consequences of that creative tendency developed along the lines of Kasim bey Zakir and Seyid Azim Shirvani, showing up in enlightenment activities. In general, Mirza Fatali Akhundzade is the greatest successor of intellectuals such as Abbasgul Agha Bakikhanov, Mirza Shafi Vazeh, and Mirza Kazim bey of the 19th century.

Academic Tofiq Hacıyev contends that he started our drama, brought our prose to a novel direction; for the first time he was involved in the theory of literary language, did language construction work such as spelling, orthoepy, punctuation, terminology. His conception and activity related to the alphabet went way beyond the scope of language construction, he covered the entire fields of education, pedagogy and culture of the people, displayed the unity of history and geography, became prominent as a talented philosopher, was the first »falcon bird« of our revolutionary thought, grew up as our first professional critic and literary critic; as a whole he directed our people towards the development of modern-advanced thought development.⁵

In addition to uniting the divided North and South of Azerbaijan in his creative thinking, Mirza Fatali attempted to eliminate the hesitations between the East and the West, and promoted the union of Eastern and Western cultural values in a country based on universal principles.

Despite resistance from Russia in the North and Iran in the South, language, literature and art were intact in Azerbaijan at the beginning of the 20th century, as throughout the 19th century. Both the romantic and realistic wings of the national press – both »Füyuzat« (>Fuyuzat<) and »Molla Nəsrəddin« (>Molla Nasraddin<) – spoke of one and the same nation. And the contradictions between romanticism and realism were nothing more than circumstances that arose within the same nation on the eve of revolutionary conversions. At the beginning of the 20th century, »the press, which is a mirror and translator of people's desires and wishes and socio-political struggle,

5 Tofiq Hacıyev, Selected works, vol. 1, part II, Baku 2017, p. 145. [Hacıyev T., Seçilmiş əsərləri, 1- ci cild, II hissə, Bakı 2017]

has never been in such close contact with literature as it is now. In the first quarter of the century, there was no outstanding Azerbaijani writer who was not directly connected with the press.⁶ Ali bey Huseynzade, Muhammad Hadi, Huseyn Javid and others gathered around ›Füyuzat‹, and Jalil Mamedkulizade, Mirza Alekper Sabir, Omar Faig Nemanzade, Ali Nazmi and others gathered around ›Molla Nəsrəddin‹. The ›Füyuzat‹ school wrote in the Istanbul dialect due to standing in a position of Turkism-Turanism, and the ›Molla Nəsrəddin‹ school wrote in the Azerbaijani language (Turkic) in as much as it is acting from its »local« position.

Sabir was one of the greatest wordsmiths at that time, whose rich satirical creativity fully illuminates the spiritual, social and political issues of Azerbaijani society, and by creating artistic portraits of human types from various walks of life, he was able to introduce them better to his readers. Azerbaijani literary scholars call Sabir »crying, laughing«; this means that the genius poet cried at the condition of his people with laughing, laughed with crying. In both cases, the goal was to rescue individuals from their situation. Sabir wrote with secret signatures to avoid persecution, he altered them often, and more than thirty of his signatures are known. The poet proudly said about himself: I look like an old mountain standing in the sea.

In terms of poetic technology, Sabir was the opposite of Fuzuli; the style of expression that Fuzuli utilized for lyrical-romantic purposes, Sabir turned into the »linguistic material« of satire. Consequently, the genius of Fuzuli had a significant influence on the formation of the satirical style of Sabir's personality. However, the horizons of Sabir's creativity are, of course, wider, and the idea – content – is extremely modern.

At the beginning of the 20th century, there is no doubt that theater is one of the areas closely related to Azerbaijani literature and language. Drama, which was spread in the country in the middle of the 19th century by Mirza Fatali, became an integral component of the national culture at the beginning of the next century due to the works of prominent playwrights such as Jalil Mammadguluzade, Nariman Narimanov, Abdurrahim bey Hagverdiyev, Huseyn Javid, and Uzeyir Hajibeyov. Significantly, at the same time a generation of talented directors and actors appeared and theater buildings were beginning to be built.

Introducing philology in schools, education laid the foundation for a certain enlivening of the old Azerbaijani school which ended with incomplete teaching of the Arabic and Persian languages. Azerbaijani teachers who graduated from the Gori teacher's seminary opened by the Russian Empire in the Caucasus created modern-style schools in various parts of the country and educational programs and textbooks were prepared. All of them promoted the national language, national literature, national spirituality, and in general all the values that constitute a nation in the eyes of a young generation.

The majority of writers and intellectuals of that time were, to one degree or another, teachers of their native language and literature. Among them Firidun bey Kocherli's place is exceptional. Born in Shusha (Karabakh), Firidun bey graduated from the Gori

6 Mir Jalal, F. Huseynov, Azerbaijani literature of the 20th century, Baku 2018, p. 19. [Mir Cəlal, Hüseynov F., XX əsr Azərbaycan ədəbiyyatı, Bakı 2018]

teachers' seminary, became a teacher for some time at the Yerevan gymnasium, and then worked at the Gori seminary. One of his merits was teaching, but another major virtue was the writing of the first fundamental history of Azerbaijani literature. Here can be found information about more than 120 literary personalities who wrote and created in Azerbaijani, Persian and Arabic. The work consists of a scientific-theoretical introduction, historical essays, along with articles about the life and creativity of artists. The author's extensive information about the classical Azerbaijani literature, deep scientific and theoretical knowledge, exquisite taste, particularly comprehensive knowledge of the secrets of poetry, are being felt on every page of the book. Valuable essays about such masters as Fizuli, Vagif, Zakir, M. F. Akhundov, and S. A. Shirvani give full reason to express this opinion.⁷ The work was published after the death of the great literary critic under the title >Historical materials of Azerbaijani literature<.⁸

With the establishment of the Azerbaijan People's Republic in the North of Azerbaijan (1918), an invigoration commenced in both the social, political and cultural life of the country. Turkic (the Azerbaijani language) was declared the state language, the problems of the nation were discussed in parliament in the native language, serious measures were taken for the education of the young generation, Baku State University was established ... Nonetheless, the international relations of that time and the claims of imperialism did not permit such a divided nation as Azerbaijan to achieve political independence. And therefore the North of the country joined Soviet Russia, and the South remained within the feudal Iran. Thus the same nation was forced to live in two politically and ideologically opposite environments, which was quite naturally considered as its historical tragedy.

Along with the serious pressures and aggressions that the Soviet government exerted on its unthinkable »building communism« projects and the Azerbaijani society in order to implement them, especially in the 1920s, the elimination of mass illiteracy, the expansion of the activities of the national press, the establishment of creative institutions as well as enterprises in many fields of social life succeeded. Representatives of the »old era« such as Huseyn Javid, Jalil Mammadguluzade, Abdurrahim bey Hagverdiyev, Abdulla Shaiq, Najaf bey Vazirov, Uzeyir Hajibeyov, Yusif Vazir Chamanzaminli, Ahmad Javad, and Jafar Jabbarli became a part of Soviet literature, while Samad Vurgun, Suleyman Rustam, Rasul Rza, Mehdi Huseyn, Ali Valiyev, Suleyman Rahimov, Mir Jalal, Mikayil Mushfig and others belonged to the young generation that directly represented literature of the »New Age«. »One of the main themes was criticism of the past, approval and promotion of the new.«⁹

7 Ibid., pp.552-553.

8 F. Kocherli, Historical materials of Azerbaijani literature. Baku 1925; I v., II v., 1926, new edition: F. Kocherli, Azerbaijani literature, Baku 1978, I v., II v., 1981. [Köçərli F., Azərbaycan ədəbiyyatı tarixi materialları, Bakı, I c., 1925; II c., 1926, yeni nəşri: Köçərli F. Azərbaycan ədəbiyyatı, Bakı, I c., 1978; II c., 1981]

9 First All-Union Turkological Congress (verbatim report), Baku 1926, p. 29. [рвый Всесоюзный тюркологический съезд (стенографический отчет), Баку – АССР 1926]

At the beginning of the 20th century some emerging contradictions with its peculiar elements in literature, for instance, the clash of inclination Azerbaijanism, Arab-Persianism, Turkism and Russian-Europeanism, were rapidly eliminated in the 1920s. However, instead of all of them, a confrontation between bourgeois literature and proletarian literature opened up in marxist-leninist (socialist) ideology. The Soviet authorities demanded more and more severely »national in form, socialist in content« works from the writers of all nations involved in the Soviet Union, which led to very cruel repressions against creative people in the 1930s.

The most crucial academic as well as philological event in the life of both Azerbaijan and the Turkic world as a whole in the 1920s was the holding of the First All-Union Turkic Congress in Baku. At the congress held from February 26 to March 5, 1926, 131 representatives widely discussed the most diverse (linguistic, literary, historical, artistic, etc.) issues of Turkology.¹⁰ Particular attention was given to such issues as the alphabet, spelling, terminology, literary language, linguistic relations, and language teaching, which had strict poetic significance during that period. The most real result of the congress was that the Arabic alphabet, which had been utilized by the Turkic languages for many centuries (but did not match the phonetic structure of these languages, which created serious difficulties and notably hindered the work of literacy building), was replaced by the Latin alphabet. It is interesting that according to the decision adopted on this issue, Azerbaijan's experience in switching to the Latin alphabet from the early 1920s was welcomed and it was recommended to spread it throughout the entire territory of the Soviet Union.¹¹ In general, the First Turkological Congress considerably raised the scientific and cultural standing of Azerbaijan in the Turkic world. Baku rapidly became a center where Turkological research was carried out and prominent Turkologists worked.

In the 1920s and 1930s the scholar who achieved the greatest success in the field of philology in Baku was originally from the Crimean Tatar – he was Professor Bekir Chobanzade. He received advanced Turkological education at Budapest University, worked in the Crimea, and from there was invited to Baku State University. The scholar who began his career in Baku with the publication of the book >Introduction to Turkic-Tatar Linguistics< (1924), wrote innumerable monographs and textbooks as well as articles devoted to both Azerbaijani and general Turkic philology¹²; he ensured high-level teaching of those fields at the university. Let us just recall that this great scholar who was shot as an »enemy of the people« in 1937 was followed by three great specialists who created and developed the foremost areas of Azerbaijani linguistics

10 First All-Union Turkological Congress (n. 9). [Ibid.]

11 A. Akhundov, The First Turkic Congress and the Modern Turkic World. – Materials of the International Scientific Conference dedicated to the 80th anniversary of the First Turkic Congress, Baku 2007, p. 12. [Axundov A., Birinci Türkołoji Qurultay və müasir Türk dünyası. – Birinci Türkołoji Qurultayın 80 illik yubileyinə həsr olunmuş Beynəlxalq Elmi Konfransın materialları, Bakı, 2007, səh. 6-14]

12 B. Chobanzade, Selected works, 5 vol., Baku 2007. [Çobanzadə B., Seçilmiş əsərləri, beş cildə, Bakı, 2007]

(dialectology, history of language and modern language): academician Mamedaga Shiraliyev, corresponding member Abdulazal Demirchizade and professor Mukhtar Huseynzade. And the successes of Azerbaijani linguistics in the 1950s and 1960s are associated with the names of these scholars as well as with their direct students.

In spite of rising aggressiveness of the »Red Terror« of the 1930s the ban on: a) Turkism, b) Islam, and c) modernity, universality, – which were an integral component of the ideology of Azerbaijanism that was established at the beginning of the 20th century, Azerbaijani poetry, prose and drama demonstrated a crucial creation success. For instance, in the poetry of Samed Vurgun, the greatest master of words of that time, Azerbaijani fanaticism, patriotism and national feelings were stronger; nevertheless, the genius poet abandoned his »Turkic roots« for the sake of »Soviet internationalism«: »Why does the principal character of our poem sometimes come from Iran, sometimes from Turan? But where is the existence of my country? The epic written by a great poet sometimes comes from Iran, sometimes from Turan ...« When Samad Vurgun says »great poet«, he means Huseyn Javid, who gets his themes from the »depths of history«, and called him to write about modern issues and the construction of socialism.

In the philology of the time, the Turkicness, the Muslimness and Azerbaijanism, missing modernity (universality), were the leading methodological trend not only in the artistic creativity, but also in the works of academic-theoretical analysis (in linguistics, literary criticism, art criticism, etc.). Only since the 1970s and 1980s, in the Soviet Union as a whole as well as in Azerbaijan, certain dissident tendencies against the official state ideology arose which gradually became the norm, and Soviet ideology was, along with the Soviet Union, forced to leave the stage of history.

Although certain successes were gained in the development of the national language, literature, and academic-philological thinking in the North of Azerbaijan since the middle of the 20th century, the decline of literature alongside the literary language took place in the South. After a long break, as a result of idea-aesthetic awakening, the poetry of Mohammad Huseyn Shahriyar, which aroused wide interest in both the South and the North, particularly his poem »Hail to Heydar Baba«, on the one hand, manifested the strength of the ethnic-ethnographic energy of literature and on the other hand, the weakening of literary normativity in the language. However, since the 1980s the revival of literary life, the increase in the publication of Azerbaijani books, bulk-magazines, newspapers and the regular publication of the »Varliq« magazine under the leadership of southern intellectuals like Dr. Javad Heyat characterized serious progress. Not only the absence of higher and even secondary specialized educational institutions in the Azerbaijan language, but also the neglect of the national rights of languages other than the Persian, and the national rights of other peoples than the Persians is still going on.¹³

13 N. Jafarov, *Literary language of Southern Azerbaijan: norms, styles*, Baku 1990. [Cəfərov N., Cənubi Azərbaycanca ədəbi dil: normalar, üslublar, Bakı 1990]

Back in the 1970s and 1980s the »nationalist« communist Heydar Aliyev, who ruled the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic (let's remind you that in the early 1920s the leader of the Azerbaijan Republic, the prominent writer Nariman Narimanov, also belonged to the same political party), keeping within the framework of the opportunities provided by Moscow and following every possible diplomacy, consistently had fought against restrictions of the rights of the Azerbaijani language, literature, and art in the republic. After Azerbaijan became an independent state in the early 1990s, the same struggle of the national leader Heydar Aliyev took a wider scale¹⁴ and laid the foundation for a new period in the intellectual, cultural and spiritual development of the people.

In the evolution of Azerbaijani philology, in a certain sense its renaissance, the 21st century is characterized mainly by the fact that 1) the national-aesthetic process had returned to its own way of native Azerbaijani ideology; 2) the Azerbaijani language is restoring its connections with the Turkic languages, it is in direct contact with international languages, notably English, and its rights as the state language of the Republic of Azerbaijan are protected; 3) Azerbaijani literature, as a part of both Turkic and world literature, demonstrates a sufficient range of creative abilities; 4) the ideological restrictions imposed on academic and philological research in Azerbaijan during the »Soviet era« have disappeared, therefore a) the common Turkic roots and context of language and literature are being intensively studied; b) artistic and aesthetic creativity related to muslimness is involved in the research (for example, sufism, eulogy literature, etc.); c) as the literary process is open for the most divergent trends, schools, as well as individual stylistic quests, there are no obstacles for their academic and theoretical analysis and assesment either.

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14 N. Jafarov, Heydar Aliyev: language, literature and art, Baku 2023. [Cafarov N., Heydar Aliyev: dil, adbiyyat v incasnt, Baku 2023]