



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Self-awareness in 19th-century Azerbaijani literature

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: Jul 15, 2024 Accepted: Oct 8, 2024	<p>The article examines the creation of the image of the Motherland, the Homeland, and the idea of independence, characterized as a new era. As Russia gained a place in the South Caucasus in the 19th century and injustice in governance increased, the resistance against it increased in artistic thought. The socio-political processes that took place in the Caucasus at the beginning of the 19th century are changing the subject and problematic of artistic thought. From some poems that have come down to us from that period, it can be seen that there are manifestations that show the formation of the idea of national unity in the people. The article also analyzes M.F. Akhundzade as an Azerbaijani. It is noted that in the 19th century, it had a great role in the national self-awareness and self-recognition of the people. He led the national identity movement to the renaissance level of social, literary, cultural, and educational thought. However, in the works of M.F. Akhundzade, Azerbaijaniism has gone somewhat secretly. In other words, his Azerbaijaniness was based on the national language. Such protest notes are also manifested in the works of Mustafa Agha Arif. The poet's patriotic feelings caused him to be exiled from the country. The poet was exiled to Russia in 1826 by the order of the Caucasian Viceroy Yermolov and stayed there until the end of his life. Abdurrahman Agha and Mustafa Agha were compatriots and contemporaries. The opposition of both of them to the current situation shows that they are prejudiced against the homeland and the land.</p>
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INTRODUCTION

The 19th century was a transformative period for Azerbaijani literature, marked by a profound sense of self-awareness that reflected the broader sociopolitical and cultural shifts of the time. As the Azerbaijani intellectual landscape began to engage with modernity, literature became a crucial platform for the exploration of identity, national consciousness, and the role of the individual within society. This era saw a blending of traditional themes with emerging ideas inspired by European Enlightenment, Islamic reformist thought, and increasing contact with Russian imperial forces. Writers and poets, such as Mirza Fatali Akhundov and Abbasgulu Bakikhanov, began to question the status quo, challenge feudal and religious constraints, and examine the nature of personal and collective identity.

Self-awareness in 19th-century Azerbaijani literature was not only a reflection of individual introspection but also a form of cultural and national awakening. Through prose, poetry, and drama, Azerbaijani authors explored themes of freedom, progress, and reform, contributing to a growing sense of national self-consciousness. As these writers navigated the complexities of imperialism, tradition, and modernization, they forged a literary path that laid the foundation for Azerbaijani intellectualism and nationalism in the 20th century.

This article examines the rise of self-awareness in Azerbaijani literature during this pivotal century, focusing on how writers articulated personal identity, national belonging, and cultural transformation in a time of upheaval and change.

OBJECT OF STUDY

The object of this study is the exploration of self-awareness as a thematic and intellectual current in 19th-century Azerbaijani literature. The study focuses on how prominent Azerbaijani authors of the time used literature to reflect on personal identity, social dynamics, and national consciousness amid significant cultural, political, and intellectual shifts. By analyzing key works of figures like Mirza Fatali Akhundov, Abbasgulu Bakikhanov, and other notable writers, this study seeks to understand how the growing sense of individual and collective self-awareness manifested in literary forms, influencing both the characters and the broader cultural narratives.

The study will also investigate how this literary self-awareness was shaped by external forces, such as the influence of the Russian Empire, the spread of Enlightenment ideas, and Islamic reformist movements, and how it contributed to the development of a distinct Azerbaijani identity. Through the analysis of themes, character development, narrative techniques, and socio-political commentary, the study aims to highlight the role of literature in fostering a self-reflective and nationally conscious society during a time of historical transition.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

It is possible to characterize the 19th century as a period that laid the foundations of national self-awareness, national self-recognition and national identity movement, social, literary, cultural, and educational thought at the renaissance level. Starting from this period, a new stage of artistic thought began in the history of Azerbaijani artistic thought in the form of intellectuals. One of the main features characterizing this stage is the emergence of national thought, the direction towards the formation of national identity. It is interesting that the triple formula of Turkification, modernization, and Islamization, which is the basis of the ideology of Azerbaijaniism, was formed to some extent in this period: "Azerbaijanism is the national ideology of the Azerbaijani people, which consists of three organic components: 1) with deep (and perfect) ethnographic foundations, 2) formed at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, and 3) a rather complex, contradictory (as a result, successful) having an evolutionary history:

Turkism, 2) Muslimism, 3) modernity (secularism)" (Jafarov, 2016, p. 3).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The 19th century is characterized as a new era in literary and social thought. The main reason for this was the development of socio-political processes in the Caucasus. As Russia gained its place here and the injustice in the administration increased, the reactions against it increased in artistic thought. At the beginning of the 19th century, the socio-political processes that took place in the Caucasus changed the subject and problematic of artistic thought. The conquest of Ganja by Russian troops (1804) and the martyrdom of Javad Khan remained forever in the people's memory and became a symbol of Azerbaijan's national liberation struggle in the subsequent processes. The resistance of Javad Khan, a descendant of Ziyadkhanogullary, who ruled Ganja since the 16th century, inspires the people living in Gazakh and Borchali districts, as well as in the surrounding khanates. The subjugation of Gazakh district to the ruler of Georgia, Irakli II, causes certain dissatisfaction among the people. From some poems that have come down to us from that period, it can be seen that there are manifestations that show the formation of the idea of national unity in the people. Popular poet Abdurrahman Agha is one of them. The poet had a great reputation among the people. When the news that he was a supporter of Javad Khan was brought to Irakly II, the ruler ordered his eyes to be gouged out. These events were also reflected in the poet's work, and he wrote in his poem "Ağlaram (I'm crying)" giving public content to the events:

I am a stranger in my homeland, veterans

I have lost heavy hands, I cry.

The heart is longing, the soul is waiting,

My eyes are on dawn and dusk, I am crying!

I'm out of control, I don't know

I'm in shelter, my lord, I have nothing else to do,

I don't have a guardian, a guardian, a friend,
I'm crying in my head, slaves! (Kocherli, 1978, p. 232-233)

In his poems, certain images are against the complex and contradictory events of the time, such as Russian oppression. These meant the formation of the poet's patriotic feelings. This is the reason for the following correct conclusion about the poet's work: "Abdurrahman Agha, who witnessed bloody historical events and described them, has strong patriotic feelings in his works. In his poems about the capture of Ganja, the poet describes the looting and looting of the population, the innocent bloodshed as a national calamity, and feels sorry for the plight of the people, describes the disasters caused by wars with great sadness, and does not hide his hostile attitude towards tsarism (Azerbaijan, 2011, p. 76)".

In fact, in these poems of Mr. Abdurrahman, there is a sharp protest against the foreign invaders rather than a complaint. There is also an image of Azerbaijan in the poet's poems depicting the Ganja massacre. The poet compares the destruction of the city of Ganja by the Russians to the events of Karbala and chronicles this tragedy poetically. Today, although there are few historical documents about this event, it is lived in artistic thought:

The Khan of Ganja became a razer,
The castle was painted, and it became golden blood.
The angels saw, the sword and the houri,
They made a noise in the sky.
The angels are pleased with Javad Khan,
Writing from an indestructible accident,
He was not aware, knight, veteran,
Neither Sheki nor Shirvan helped (Mumtaz, 1935, pp. 106-107).

Although many of the poems reflect the result of the Russian invasion and describe the national struggle, they have not reached our time, and there are reports that they were written. In the Soviet era, such poems were not named or studied. However, professor Ahmet Jafaroglu, who lives in exile, classified these poems that revive the image of the Motherland and tried to give traces of the national independence struggle, even if only a little. A. Jafaroglu classified the poems of Azerbaijaniism and the national struggle that emerged in this period as follows:

Epics and poems about the struggle of Javad Khan.
Poems written about Sheikh Shamil, the defender of the North Caucasus.
Reflection of Russian invasion in fugitive epics and love literature.
Azerbaijani school of patriotic poetry and national trend.
Independence poems of the last emigration period (immigration after the 1920s is meant - V.T.) (Jafaroglu, 2008, p. 190).

Although not all of these poems have come down to us, in the poems that have come down to our time, we see that there is an image of a People, a Nation, and Azerbaijan. Poems depicting Javad Khan's struggle against the Russian invasion constitute one of the best pages of the national independence struggle. One of them is the writings of Ganjali Hasan, who witnessed those events. At that time, Hasan from Ganja spoke poetically that Ganja was subjected to a real genocide and that the city was brutally destroyed:

May those who see, know and hear burn,
See what happened to Ganja.
The prince will not help us,
Is Ganja's road blocked?

They set the flags on the constellation,
 they all slaughtered the poor children,
 When they shot Javad Khan,
 Ganja's back was broken.
 Hasan from Ganja, my heart hurts,
 Moscow took the opportunity and drew his sword,
 Shamseddinli, Kazakh, Borchali, Georgian
 Ganja's property was looted. (Mumtaz, 1935, p. 62-63)

Such protest notes are also manifested in the works of Mustafa Agha Arif. The poet's patriotic feelings caused him to be exiled from the country. It was said in the sources that the poet had a great reputation among the people and that the ruling regime was afraid of this reputation. Therefore, the poet was exiled to Russia in 1826 by the order of the Viceroy of the Caucasus, Yermolov, and remained there until the end of his life. Interestingly, Abdurrahman Agha and Mustafa Agha were contemporaries and contemporaries. The opposition of both of them to the current situation shows that they are prejudiced against the homeland and the land. Like Abdurrahman Agha, he wrote a poem titled "I am crying" and expressed his public protest here:

I will taste it, there is not enough crying,
 My pain is increasing day by day,
 I cry every time I fall
 Our Gazakh-Garamanlar, I am crying!
 I lost my nightingale,
 I am separated from the meadow, from my flower,
 Separated from my nation, from my hand,
 I'm lost, my friends, I'm crying! (Mumtaz, 1935, p. 75)

The poet always remembered his homeland in exile and longed for it. For him, the motherland consists of rivers, forests, and spiked purple meadows. But now they are far away and occupied, not like before:

We had hands, gentlemen and pashas,
 We had mountains, non-ferrous forest,
 Iris-spike, sweat purple
 There are gardens and alleys, I am crying.
 I don't know where our Gazakh, Shamseddin,
 There is no news from them, it is difficult
 This is probably a divine accident
 Gone are those times, those times, I cry. (Mumtaz, 1935, p. 76)

In the poems written by Mustafa Agha Arif in exile, longing for the homeland and the hardships of exile were described. Kazim Agha Salik, the brother of the poet, who remained in exile for the rest of his life and died here, unable to withstand the separation from his homeland, said about him: "One is a scholar, his mother made a cycle, // That one who dies abroad is a martyr", considered him one of the martyrs of the homeland and the nation. Kazim aga Salik wrote in another poem:

Do not tell the doctor about this wound, there is no cure for it.
 Ointment, they said, this sting wound of separation,

Oh, the wheels of my desolate fountain,
 I've been a wanderer of a mad scientist,
 Let's see what has happened to Saliki Hijran.

In the 19th century, the exile of many poets in their homeland was related to the poetic protests in their works. Such deportations also took place in Karabakh province. They were either exiled to the depths of Russia or various places in the Caucasus. One of those exiled to the Caucasus was Mohammad Bey Javanshir. He was exiled to Ordubad and died here (1861). In the last years of his life, he openly protested against Russia in his work "Apology". Another poet Aghamesih Shirvani was forced to move to Iran, not wanting to live under the Russian occupation, and lived there.

As the Russian regime in Karabakh strengthened and exploitation increased, the national struggle increased. Gasim Bey Zakir's protest as a poet and his exile to Baku also stemmed from the protection of Azerbaijaniism. It is clear from the poet's poems that he innocently faced the injustice of officials like Tarkhan-Mouravov. Gasim Bey Zakir and his family were exiled to Baku for ten years. Criticizing the new administration brought to the people by the current regime, the poet wrote:

Our civilian property spilt into the desert,
 Our situation is getting worse day by day.
 Mashallah, our governor day and night
 Plays the piano, plays billiards.
 The work of Guttautarig,
 God's gift to robbers,
 They devastated the province
 One careless drunk, one inclined card.
 You wouldn't know a half-beard if you saw it.
 Go out of the state-property
 Khandamirov destroyed the district,
 Who is bald, scoundrel, grab it yourself it yourself (Zakir, 2005, p. 23)

All these criticisms stemmed from the great poet's love for his country and his patriotism. The poet was very offended by the injustice of the current administration and tried to express it in many poetic complaints.

In addition to this, praise and praise of the motherland also played an important role in the literature of the 19th century. These hymns can be considered as the creation of the image of Azerbaijan and the manifestation of Azerbaijaniism. Mirhamza Seyyid Nigari, a prominent representative of 19th-century takka-sufism literature, was born in Jijimli village of Bargushad (now Lachin) district of Karabakh. He fought against the Russians during the Russo-Turkish and Crimean wars of 1877-1878. It is reported that he also supported Sheikh Shamil's rebellion. Since he opposed the Russian policy in Azerbaijan, he could not stay here for long and immigrated to Turkey. Seyyed Nigari was one of those who opposed Russian rule and occupation and was one of the first immigrants. After that, the motives of Azerbaijaniism in his poems became stronger. In one of his poems, he opposes the invasion of Karabakh by the Russians and symbolizes this event with a dagger stuck in his chest:

My chest is a black mountain,
 My black heart is my bloody Karabakh.
 Does Miri-Nigari sow blood and fire?
 The land of Karabakh has become a stranger again.
 The blood of love is Karabakh, my place.
 I am in nightingale, heaven is my place.

First of all, my melon is Blackberry,
 Now my garden is Garapirim.
 Blood and tears always fall from my eyes,
 The cypress is bent by a single bow.
 Mountains cross my chest,
 When I remember, Chilgaz plain. (Nigari, 2006, p. 64)

The poet's poem "Karabakh" can be considered the best manifestation of the praise of the motherland. The poem, which begins with the lines "What a strange state is the sight-shikari-Karabakh, //What a wonderful blessing is the conversation - my love - Karabakh", talks about the natural beauty of Karabakh and its "heavenly world".

However, after this description of the poet, Karabakh's head is described as being in trouble, and, holding his face to the people, he declares to everyone the situation he is in, and calls them to help: "Come, O people of heart, my pain is increasing, listen, // No narrator, my brain market is cut off, listen", - with his address, the poet expresses the pain of Karabakh to the whole world:

I'm broken, listen to me.
 My lunch with lye is gone, listen.
 Come together, listen to me
 It's time to come, dig my grave, listen.
 Listen to my patience, my resolve,
 I'm used to swimming, listen.
 Disperse who, hold together, I mean, listen,
 If the earth rises to the sky, oh dear, listen,
 A parterre-Karabakh has torn me apart
 I was set on fire by a Nari-Nigari-Karabagh. (Nigari, 2006, p. 124)

Thus, under the influence of social events in the 19th century, artistic thinking also changes and renews in terms of content and idea-aesthetics. In particular, poetry moves from love lyrics to social motifs. In satirical poetry, social motives are the main ones. This is due to the fact that poetry responds more and more adequately to the events of social life. As the policy of oppression and occupation brought by Russia to the Caucasus increases, it begins to be reflected in artistic thinking. Increasingly, the description of the homeland and the singing of the homeland occupy the main place in poetry. This leads to the formation of Azerbaijaniism.

Many places of the motherland were described in the poems of Novras Iman and Ashıg Ali, and its artistic geography was also created. Novras Iman writes in the poem "Dalidagh (crazy mountain)":

Tartar, Darkness, Gunpowder water flowing,
 How many meadows were hanging from the collar?
 I glanced at the wood,
 You look like a crown on your head, Dalidagh.
 You can't stop fighting in the winter,
 Always be proud of your white beard.
 I glorified Mount Ararat, your brother,
 Decided to be a little tall Dalidagh...
 Nakhchivan on one side, Deraleaz on the other.
 Fearful people, prostration does not come to anyone.

If Ali is in his bosom, his waist will not bend,
Novras will stay, old man, Dalidagh. (Sazli, 2018, p. 56)

The description of different corners of the homeland by Azerbaijani poets and lovers leads to the depiction of the homeland in their works.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the first half of the 19th century, the process of Azerbaijanism was going on secretly in the works of M.F. Akhundzade. It is known that the new artistic and social thought in the enlightened style of M.F. Akhundzade came from the Eastern context and form. He could not completely separate from them. The artistic forms created by A. Bakikhanov and M. Sh. Vazeh were still in the Eastern style. We witness this in the early works of M.F. Akhundzade. However, as M.F. Akhundzade gets acquainted with Western literature and public opinion, his creativity enters the Western context and uses new artistic forms. Of course, there were certain factors that brought M.F. Akhundzade to this stage, which cannot be overlooked. So, before that, M.F. Akhundzade worked as a teacher of Turkish language and Sharia in Tbilisi Russian district school for four years, that is, from 1836 to 1840. After some time, Mirza Shafi helped Vazeh to work in his place. His activity in this school was appreciated by Demyentyev, who holds the post of general director of Transcaucasia schools, and a proposal was put forward to appoint him as a teacher of Turkish language in Tbilisi gymnasium. However, since this appointment did not take place, he worked as a Turkish language teacher at the Tbilisi seminary for some time. It seems that M.F. Akhundzade focused on teaching in the first years of his life and activity and tried to learn and teach the first alphabet of Azerbaijani language by teaching our native Turkish. In 1841, together with M. Sh. Vazeh, he wanted to create a publishing house to publish textbooks for Eastern languages and Azerbaijani Turkish for Transcaucasian educational institutions. However, this wish of his was not fulfilled; he was told that there was neither an experienced specialist in lithography, nor a possibility to provide an easel.

In M.F. Akhundzade's activities, the direction of Azerbaijanism occupies the main place. His activities as a translator and the work he did in the Caucasian viceroyalty gradually increased the thought of homeland, country, and Azerbaijanism in his thinking. In this respect, it is necessary to consider his struggle for alphabet reform. For the sake of the new alphabet, he worked for more than ten years and tried to change it. The fight for the alphabet is one of the trends that caused the separation of the nation to which the great comedian belongs from the current context. He saw the development of the people he belonged to in this direction and tried to do so. He attached great importance to the adoption of this alphabet, and in his letters to individual friends and heads of government, he expressed that its adoption could lead to the great development of the nation. It was not only a matter of the alphabet, but also a matter of reform never before seen in the East. In his 1867 poem "A Poem About the New Alphabet", he addressed Nasreddin Shah and urged them to learn from Western statesmen and carry out serious reforms in Iran:

O king, what did your ministers do?

Witness their work!

Ministers have not done a flawless job.

Sometimes they are in trouble with their stomachs, sometimes with cardamomum bags

So they are not worth a grain of barley.

O king of kings, drive them out of the gate

Look for wise, thoughtful ministers.

Leave nobility, look for skill.

That the country with a new decoration

Dress up as much as you want

Let them start the new alphabet,

Let the tree of happiness bear fruit (Azerbaijan, 2011, p. 451-452).

M.F. Akhundzade enters a new stage of Azerbaijaniism with his dramaturgy. In the 50s of the 19th century, the comedies he wrote one after the other were not only the idea-aesthetic content, but also the events he described, the images he brought, and most importantly, the language was the people themselves and served to reflect their national thought. At the same time, a new literary type was used in the national artistic thought. It was not only a matter of form, but also the content of literature changed and updated with his creativity. M.F. Akhundzade's comedy is one of the first steps towards Azerbaijanism. In addition to depicting the life of the simple people, the educator (through theater, drama!) plays an important role in the realization of national self-consciousness. In this respect, it is necessary to evaluate M.F. Akhundzadeh as an outstanding thinker who shaped Azerbaijaniism with his works and activities and gave it direction. It is true that during M.F. Akhundzadeh's time, the process of transition from ummatism to nationalism had not fully begun, but was experiencing its first stage. However, M.F. Akhundzade's activities and works play an unparalleled role in the process of national self-awareness. M.F. Akhundzade, who used terms such as "Muslim tribes", "Islamic nation", "Muslims", "Islamic people", called the people to modernize and laid the foundation of national self-awareness with both his written works and practical works.

Azerbaijanism emerges in M.F. Akhundzade with all its prominence when he writes his comedies in the national language. Considering this, Z. Göyalp wrote in his work "The Foundations of Turkism": "While Abdulhamid was trying to stop this holy trend in Turkey, two great Turkists were growing up in Russia. The first is Mirza Fatali Akhundzade, whose original comedies written in Azeri Turkish have been translated into all European languages. The second is Gaspıralı İsmail, who published the newspaper "Tarjuman" in Crimea" (Goyalp, 1991, p. 27).

This assessment of Ziya Goyalp is very valuable: at first glance, there is something strange in the fact that this outstanding thinker, who elaborated the foundations of Turkicisms, considers M.F. Akhundzade "the first Turkic". However, Z. Goyalp searched for and found Turkism (read: Azerbaijaniism) deeper. In other words, M.F. Akhundzade's Azerbaijaniness (nationality) was, of course, also Turkism and the author took the language factor as a basis here. This can be considered completely true. The nation that emerged in Europe at the beginning of the 19th century laid the foundation of national self-awareness with the comedies written by M.F. Akhundzade and the thoughts of Westernization he put forward at a time when racial disputes had not yet reached the region. The foundation of national dramaturgy, storytelling and professional criticism are among the factors that shape Azerbaijaniism. It is interesting that Yusif Akchura, one of the researchers of the problem of Turkism, joins Z. Goyalp at this point. Y. Akchura expressed M.F. Akhundzade's service in this field in his work "History of Turkism" as follows: "...Mirza expertly used the pure and authentic Azeri dialect in his works. In this situation, Akhundzade Mirza Fatali is actually Turkic in language. But I don't have any serious information about Mirza's thoughts and views on Turkish nationalism." (Akchura, 2010, p. 61) It may be that there is some truth in the last opinion of Y. Akchura. During M.F. Akhundzade's time, there was no current of Turkism and nationalism, as we understand it now, and it would not be right to look for this current in his work. In this matter, M.A. Rasulzade's opinion coincides with Z. Goyalp's opinion. M.A. Rasulzade highly appreciated M.F. Akhundzade's position of Azerbaijaniism and wrote: "The Turkish self-awareness of the Muslim peoples of the Russian Empire began a long time ago - from the time when our first playwright Mirza Fatali Akhundzade wrote in the simple vernacular in the 1850s." (Rasulzadeh, 1991, p. 116) Both Z. Goyalp and M.A. Rasulzadeh's thoughts on national self-awareness, nationality, and Turkism are expressed here. That is, both thinkers looked for and saw M.F. Akhundzadeh's Turkism deeper.

However, it is clear that in the centuries, letters, and articles written by M.F. Akhundzadeh, although there was no direct Azerbaijaniism, the psychology, thought, and character of the people to which he belonged were described, regardless of how the name was called. At that time, since the Caucasus was taken as a geographical location, and the nationality was called Tatar, this name was also used in his writings. In one of his letters, while evaluating the work done by General Yermolov in the Caucasus, he wrote: "That is why (the government's attention to the creation of literature in the Tatar language - V.T.) when General Yermolov was the ruler of this country (Caucasus-V.T.) with the orders he sent to the places where Tatars live, he prohibited the population from writing in Persian. advised them to do their writing in Tatar. After that, writing works began to be done in Tatar language, although there were different rules everywhere... That's when I got the idea to write comedies in Tatar language." (Akhundov, 1988, p. 57)

Indeed, the writing of M.F. Akhundzade's comedies in Azerbaijani Turkish had a great impact not only on the development of the literary language, but also on the formation of national social consciousness. The language revealed the national-spiritual and physical existence of the people in these works. His first comedy called "The Story of Molla Ibrahimkhalil the Alchemist" lays the foundation of this genre and focuses artistic thinking on the life and everyday life of Azerbaijan. In other words, the artistic work becomes a mirror of Azerbaijani life, which the playwright observes every day. By basing the comedy on an event that happened in the city of Nukha at that time, it also develops enlightened realism a little. In his first comedy, M.F. Akhundzade tries to describe the most characteristic features of Azerbaijani life through laughter and comedy. Several social defects and shortcomings of the feudal society could be eliminated only in this way. In the comedy, the author whips the backwardness, inertia and fanaticism characteristic of Azerbaijani life with satirical details. In the comedy, the embodiment of the general conflict in the generalized image of "Nukhuls" also meant the creation of a generalized image of Azerbaijaniism.

In M.F. Akhundzade's second drama "Monsieur Jordan, the Dervish Mastali Shah Jadukunu Famous" comedy, M.F. Akhundzade succeeds in bringing Azerbaijani Turkish to the list of world languages. When Shahbaz Bey is asking his uncle Hatemkhan Agha for a bribe to go to Paris to learn languages, the following dialogue takes place between them. The language factor is already involved here, that is, Azerbaijani Turkish is revealed to the world in the form of Karabakh. With the character of dramatist Hatemkhan Agha, we witness that the Azerbaijani-Turkish language does not lag behind world languages:

Hatemkhan Agha. Why do you need the Faryan language, my dear! All you need are Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and Russian languages, which, thank God, you have read and learned in the madrasas opened by the compassion of our state.

Mr. Shahbaz. Uncle, I need the Farang (French) language. He knows that you sent me to Tiflis to get permission to build a ditch. Allahverdi Bey's son, Tariverdi Bey, studied the Farang language in Warsaw, so he was respected by me in every meeting. Along with him, he could not speak languages other than Farang and Turkish. (Akhundov, 1988, p. 98)

With this work, M.F. Akhundzade lays the foundation of the national cultural awakening, and with the East-West discourse he has introduced, he introduces the problem into the arena of literary, social, and political thought. For the first time, the Azerbaijani Turkish language in artistic thought is coming out of its shell and entering the world arena. Shahbaz Bey was one of the first to realize that Azerbaijaniism would enter a wider arena in the future, and he thought of going to Paris for this purpose. The dramatist, based on enlightened and realistic thinking, saw the formation of national culture at the junction with Western culture by using European forms. In terms of the form and content of artistic thought, westernization could not fail to show its influence on other areas of social life as well. Realist drama and national prose, critical articles, alphabet project, etc. all aimed to express the national ethnic thought in new forms. This was adequately supported by the integration processes of both society and literary, artistic, social thought.

For a long time the classical romantic-didactic Eastern monologue was the leader in artistic thought. However, M.F. Akhundzade uses poetic romance and changes the form to a realistic Western dialogue. This was one of the main problems facing the Muslim world, as the inevitable demands of history. For the development of the nation's opinion and mental thinking, first of all, it was necessary to conduct a realistic dialogue, to have discussions at a level that negates each other. This dialogue occurs in M.F. Akhundzade's comedy "Monsieur Jordan...". The events in the comedy take place in the house of Hatemkhan Agha, the bey of the Tekle-Muganli village of Karabakh. However, the dramatist changes its direction during events and moves from the national space to the international arena. For Shahbaz Bey not to go to Paris, Azerbaijani thought and national thought is in conflict. Mr. Shahbaz, who works for the emergence of Azerbaijani thought in the world arena, is faced with reactionary thought and fanaticism. There is a contradiction in Hatemkhan Agha's views about Europeans. When Shahbaz bey asked: "Uncle, I don't know how you are aware of the customs and habits of the people of Paris?", Hatemkhan aga said: "...It seems to me that we have all the customs and characteristics, but the opposite is the case with the people of Paris.. ." gives answers like. According to him, we put henna on our hands, they don't, we shave our heads, sometimes they put hair on their heads, we sit with hats, sometimes they sit with bare heads... His main intention is to prevent Shahbaz Bey from

going to Paris. But Monsieur Jordan Hatemkhan laughs and objects to this idea, and wants the world to be introduced to the herbs, flowers, and nature of Karabakh. According to him, if he had not come here, the world would not know about these flowers and herbs.

With this work, M.F. Akhundzade develops the East-West discourse and by showing the dark sides of the Muslim world, he wants it to move forward and have the positive sides of European thought. The playwright sheds light on all areas of Azerbaijani society and tries to expand the boundaries of Azerbaijaniism. Since Hatemkhan Agha never left Karabakh during his life, his ideas about the world are also limited. This limitation can only be fulfilled if Shahbaz Bey goes abroad and not only learns the processes happening in the world, but also implements them in the Muslim world.

M.F. Akhundzade was able to express the Azerbaijani life and thought in the simplest vernacular in his comedies "Sarguzeshti-vaziri khan Lankaran", "Khirs gyuldurbasan", "Haji Kara", "Murafia lawyers' story", which he later wrote. Unlike his other works and articles, the use of vernacular in his comedies can be considered as the best expression of Azerbaijaniism. Firudin Bey Kocharli said about him: "Just as Gogol was the master and mentor of Russian and Moliere drama writers, the late Akhundov was the father and guide of Turkish Azerbaijani writers and comedians." (Kocherli, 1971, p. 435)

M.F. Akhundzade contributed to Azerbaijaniism by solving the language problem in Azerbaijani literary thought with these six comedies. However, it is also known that M.F. Akhundzade is satisfied with six comedies, after that he does not write new comedic works. The main reason for this was that the comedies he wrote were not performed on stage. When the comedian wrote these comedies, he thought that they would be something new for the life of Azerbaijan. But since there are no professional actors and the theatre is not developed, it is not important to write new comedies in this way. M.F. Akhundzade explores new possibilities of expression for the environment and society of Azerbaijan. The short story "Deceived Stars" written in 1857 was a novelty in Azerbaijani prose. This work represented a new way of thinking not only in its form but also in its subject and content. The writer sharply criticized the public administration method here. The state management system that he wrote in the comedy "Adventure-minister-khan-Lankaran", which he once wrote, is presented here in a different way. Here, the writer criticized the feudal system of thought, socio-political management, flaws and defects of the Eastern world. The writer exposes Prime Minister Mirza Mohsu, Finance Minister Mirza Yahya, Mollabashi Akhund Samadi, as well as Sardar Agha Zaman through their speeches in the Supreme Council in their language. Prime Minister Mirza Mohsin is not interested in anything in the country, so he does nothing. The country is economically depressed. Nevertheless, in the presence of the Shah, he describes himself as a powerful and intelligent statesman. His wisdom is this:

- The relationship between this servant's loyalty to our state is absurd. Of course, Qibla is for the sake of the world that the treasury-amira was free from criticism at what level because in the kingdom of his stepfathers, a single penny was sent to the ministry by people of weak intellect. (Akhundov, 1988, p. 305)

By bringing Yusif Sarrac to the head of power, the writer touches on the issue of someone who came out of the people ruling the people, even for a short time. As soon as Yusif Sarraj came to power, he initiated major socio-political reforms in the country and removed those who were doing illegal work from power. He strictly forbids the governors of the provinces to give bribes to the Shah and his officials under the name of Peshkash. Regulates state revenues, and develops agriculture and trade. These reforms of Yusuf Sarraj were, in fact, a collection of what the author wanted to see in the national government. He believed that if an enlightened, intelligent, capable and fair person is brought to the head of the state, it is possible to eliminate the injustices in the society.

In his critical articles and letters, M.F. Akhundzade speaks from the Azerbaijan area and from the point of view of Azerbaijaniism. This thinker, who approached literature from the principle of realism, set before him the task of reflecting reality. He criticized formalist poets and paid special attention to ideas and content in works. In his critical articles, he referred to Azerbaijani and Iranian literature, evaluated its past and tried to determine its new literary contours. His view of literature and art was close to the ideas of Western European writers. M.F. Akhundzade took a progressive position in defining the essence and character of literature.

M.F. Akhundzade discusses East and West in his work "Letters to Kemaluddov". In "Letters to Kemaluddov" we encounter a new model of West-East dialogue. In the letters of Jalaluddovla and Kemaluddovla, M.F. Akhundzade lays the foundation of the social-political confrontation, and thereby advances the social and political thinking a little further through the East-West discourse. The writer, comedian, publicist, philosopher, critic creates an Eastern example of socio-political dialogue in this work. The satire and humor in his comedies replace social criticism in the philosophical treatise, the scientific and political terms he introduced, the thoughts of a democratic society, as well as ideas about political management: "This method is called "criticism". When there is freedom of thought, the benefit of criticism will be that eventually, truth will take its place from the clash of different opinions and opinions and progress will appear in the world of culture" (Akhundzade, 2005, p. 207).

This path taken by M.F. Akhundzade is not accepted by all his countrymen, he is sometimes accused for his different (or rather, innovative!) ideas, and even called an enemy of the state and religion. Although, M.F. Akhundzade: "...I am not an enemy of religion and the state. I am a person who loves his people and is ready to sacrifice himself on this path" (Akhundov, 1988, p. 176), he said, but at different stages of his creativity, he did not hesitate to criticize religion using the method of enlightened realism, realism, and in some cases critical realism. When M.F. Akhundzade says "who loves his people", he means his people, and he wanted to introduce one of the three basic principles in his concept of national progress - westernization, which was realized in the subsequent processes.

His later works ("Letters of Kemaluddov", critical articles and other correspondence) and his activities (alphabet reform) crossed the Eastern borders and, in general, in addition to forming new stereotypes of national thought, brought innovation to the social, political, literary, artistic, philosophical, cultural and cultural cycle. he lays the foundation of political thinking and ideology with the problem of society and management in his works.

CONCLUSION

The rise of self-awareness in 19th-century Azerbaijani literature represents a crucial turning point in the intellectual and cultural history of Azerbaijan. As writers grappled with the realities of imperial dominance, the erosion of traditional structures, and the influx of new philosophical ideas, they began to reflect deeply on the individual's place in society and the nation's evolving identity. Through their works, figures like Mirza Fatali Akhundov and Abbasgulu Bakikhanov not only questioned the established norms but also laid the groundwork for a new literary tradition that engaged with themes of personal and national consciousness.

This period of literary self-awareness was characterized by a growing emphasis on reform, enlightenment, and modernization, which were seen as essential to the preservation and advancement of Azerbaijani culture in the face of foreign domination. Azerbaijani authors played a pivotal role in shaping a collective understanding of identity, advocating for progress while preserving a sense of cultural heritage.

In conclusion, self-awareness in 19th-century Azerbaijani literature was more than a reflection of individual introspection; it was a significant component of a broader cultural awakening. The literature of this era not only mirrored the intellectual currents of the time but also actively contributed to the formation of a national consciousness that would influence the future trajectory of Azerbaijani society and its literary tradition.

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