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Comparative Perspectives on Postmodernism in Azerbaijani, Russian, and Turkish Literature: from Soviet Legacy to National Transformation

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Abstract: The literary productions yielded after the collapse of the Soviet Union headed towards different directions in the former-Soviet geography. After the end of a period in which the literary themes and subjects were repressed, literature which has found a much more unrestricted and vast scope recognizes many West-originated movements and trends, and gets in contact with them. Postmodernism has become prominent among the movements developed during the post-Soviet literature. The post-Soviet literature, which makes use of the facilities of the newly-adapted postmodernism by protecting its authenticity, finds itself in a vast geography and in great thematic capacities. From the holistic sense, the impact of the postmodernism observed after the Soviet period differs from the Soviet tradition and literature within the context of literary style and it becomes to be accepted as an initiator of innovation. In this study, wherein the Soviet postmodernism is analysed through its sources and indicators, the historical typology, research methodology and scientific data of the postmodernism, which is one of the genuine movements of the literature of the post-Soviet period, are analyzed. This tendency is related to the literary and social processes within the society during the Soviet and post-Soviet era. One of the primary indicators that separates the post-Soviet literary experience of the Azerbaijani and Russian postmodernism from Western examples is that Soviet totalirian thought was against the freedoms regarding the social rules and intellectual products. It can also be proposed that Turkish literature has developed as a national variant of postmodernism. Turkish postmodernism represents an in-between position and a synthesis of the east and west models of this literary movement. This study aims to comparatively analyze the postmodern elements of Azarbaijani, Russian and Turkish literatures.

Keys words: Postmodernism, modernism, Soviet literature, post-Soviet literature, Azerbaijani literature, Russian literature, Turkish literature, literary transformation, totalitarianism.

Introduction. One of the most important topics of Post-Soviet or post-Soviet literary debates is undoubtedly postmodernism. One of the most important reasons for this is that this tendency is sharply different from the classical tradition and the Soviet literary experience. Especially in the first years of independence, the search for a new method did not yield results. It was eventually seen in the works that there was no single result, and that at some point, a single methodology was actually a notion of Soviet totalitarian thought. In free thought, there is no single methodology, and there shouldn't be. This reality was first proven by the artistic experience itself, before the researchers. In Russian literature, starting from the classical realism tradition, many literary movements emerged such as "hard prose", "mass

literature", "women's literature", metarealism, conceptualism, minimalism, escapism, post-war post-avant-garde, mannerism, post-intellectualism, and finally postmodernism. In Azerbaijan's literary process, tendencies such as avant-garde, modern, magical realism, minimalism, social-psychological prose, and postmodernism were declared.

Main part. Postmodernism observed in the post-Soviet period, began to be accepted as diverging from the Soviet literary tradition in terms of method-style diversity and as the main symbol of innovation.

In recent literary research and literary criticism, we cannot say that the essence of the concept of postmodernism has been completely resolved. Sometimes, we even witness searches for postmodernism in the works of Mirza Jalil and Sabir. Generally, if we look at the existing matters, it can be seen that postmodernism is mainly understood in the following senses. First, the current modern state which is a synthesis of different types of culture; second, the creative method followed in different periods, artistic features also found in other literary trends, etc. Regardless of the differences in conceptual approaches, researchers say that postmodernism is devoid of the traditional hereditary, distorted value system, imitation (the concept of mimesis/mirror coming from Aristotle) and evaluation. The characteristic of postmodernism in post-Soviet folk literature, which transforms itself, expresses itself, turns the world into a game, replaces the real world with a virtual environment, is the radical perception of Soviet ideology and totalitarian thought.

In fact, elements providing access to postmodern Soviet ideology can be seen from the second half of the 20th century in the works of A. Bitov (“Pushkin House”), Ven. Yerofeyev (“Moscow-Petushki”), S. Sokolov (“A School for Fools”), Y. Aleshkovsky (“Kangaroo”). Postmodernism, along with the obsolescence of the social system, transformed into a broad literary movement that sharply diverged from the classical literary tradition in the literature of many former Soviet nations, which was sharply different from the criteria of socialist realism. Therefore, in the post-Soviet literary environment, the postmodernist movement, formed under the influence of the Soviet social environment, historical situation, cultural tradition, and other factors, has a more typological characteristic than Western postmodernism. These characteristics can be considered as a common historical-typological quality of postmodernism in post-Soviet nations. On the other hand, in the literary process of the former Soviet people, individual qualities derived from national-cultural identity and regional processes emerge.That is, post-Soviet postmodernism exists as a literary-cultural phenomenon with common artistic qualities from the same sociopolitical environment, while also having national-genetic characteristics. This characteristic is the determinant of the subject of postmodernism in the literature of post-Soviet nations, which is essentially chosen like a universal literary phenomenon; this has existed in the socialist sphere for many years. Therefore, a comparative study of the historical sources of postmodernism in the post-Soviet world, including Azerbaijani.

As we have indicated, following the initial examples of the works of authors in the 1960s and 1970s, the gradual collapse of social-public processes and communist ideology also forms an important foundation for A. Bitov, Ven. Yerofeev, S. Sokolov, and Y. Aleshkovsky. The crisis of the Soviet political regime and communist ideology was reflected in postmodernism as subtextual allegorical and latent references. However, the expression of communist ideology by postmodernism did not occur simply, i.e., in the form of "critique" and "exposure." The postmodernist text rejects what it denies, by repeating the essence of communism within its own poetic structure: communist determinism is a class of social life determined by the production process, the postmodernist text, defined by intertextual relations, is also symbolic; social reality in communism is shaped by ideological outcomes, in postmodernism, the world, i.e., the real realm, does not exist; it is considered a surreal text; the communist society in an authoritarian style is based on the ideas of the authoritarian classics of Marxism-Leninism; the postmodern text also consists of existing texts, quotations; Soviet society is a prototype of virtual communism, which is not real. In postmodernism, there is no image reflecting truth, there is a simulation without an original, of reality. The ritual of the Soviet way of life corresponds to postmodern playfulness, etc. The postmodern text, possessing similar structural similarities, determines that communist ideology and Soviet society were empty and "was a sign of the antiquity of many cultural

traditions, the exhaustion of many ideas and values, the weariness of culture devoid of many goals and meanings, and also of the pursuit of limitless freedom." It should be noted that the diversity of genetic, typological sources also caused a diversity in the poetics of Azerbaijani and Russian postmodernism. The original genre changes observed in contemporary Azerbaijani modernist and postmodernist literature are a reconstruction.

It should be noted that the diversity of genetic and typological sources also caused a diversity in the poetics of Azerbaijani and Russian postmodernism. It is the reconstruction of the original genre variations observed in contemporary Azerbaijani modernist and postmodernist literature. “The Missing Manuscript” (K. Abdulla), “Biography-Novel”(l. Fehmi, “Collage from Baku's History”), the works of R. Tagi (“The Bright Bird, Court Cases with Anna Karenina”), M. Kohnegalan's “The Silver Cup”, Azad Yaşar's “Mediative-Parody” , the deconstructive poetry of Salam and Etimad Başkeçid, the minimalist works of Rasim Garacan, and other genetic sources and interpretations can be sufficiently analyzed against the background of the typological context. As can be seen, postmodernism has both universal and national-regional characteristics. In the historical processes within the post-Soviet literary environment, postmodernist creativity has manifested itself in a multifaceted way. It is noteworthy that the formation of the historical typology and poetics of postmodernism in the literature of post-Soviet countries, including Azerbaijani literature, took place in the context of the removal of Soviet ideology. These aspects, along with the differences in the national tradition within Azerbaijani and Russian postmodernism, also have similarities stemming from the commonality of the socio-cultural context. Therefore, a comparative study of the national indications of postmodernism in the post-Soviet space can be considered effective at this stage. Comparative studies can provide a broader opportunity to explore the universal semantics of postmodernism as an original typological phenomenon, to explore the classical tradition and the interpersonal relationship between modern poetic perception, universal, national, and individual characteristics.In Turkish postmodernism, starting approximately from the second half of the 20th century, a discussion begins about the emergence of a new direction in the Turkish literary environment, namely the postmodern orientation, expressed in new forms and content, in the development of cultural traditions that were foreign, and it is represented by a small but very talented, effective group of writers. Young writers, regardless of the uniqueness and heterogeneity of their own creativity, managed to present themes new to Turkish literature, a shaped system, structures, a repertoire of used avant-garde methods; this became a notable phenomenon in Turkey.

If we consider the postmodern literature of Turkey in the 1980s, we cannot fail to mention the literary trends and tendencies preceding this artistic phenomenon. Since the 1940s, "social realist" literature had come to a leading position in Turkish literature. In the 60s and 70s, "literature of crisis" or "literature of alienation" held an important place in Turkish literature. Two tendencies in this direction are clear: Freudian and existentialist. For both, the main theme is the problem of alienation. Just as in Freud the alienation of the individual is explained by biological reasons, the existentialist trend attributes everything to the will of chance and carries a critique of the existing order. The works of the representatives of this tendency (Demir Özlü, Leyla Erbil, Bilge Karasu, etc.) represent a synthesis of reality, which is a social voice of modernity and the understanding of realism, confirm the idea that Turkish modernism itself is ambiguous and cannot appear in a "pure" form in great artists. "Literature of crisis" can be seen as a renewal of literary language and a struggle against the struggle of the bourgeoisie. Internal contradictions lead writers to deviate from their own principles, thus alienation loses its importance in literature.

Instead of the old direction, the social and psychological current of Sait Faik, which deals with the main theme—alienation—as a social direction, comes. The writers of this tendency pay more attention to the spiritual state of a person in a period of loneliness, alienation, and, awakening to active action, think that it is possible to overcome alienation by reorganizing society. Social realists examine the process of a person's alienation from society. The representatives of the "literature of crisis," however, draw attention to the process of the individual's alienation from society itself. Socio-psychological literature shows a way out of alienation through the individual's self-development.

In recent decades, a number of changes have been observed in Turkish literature; with this, literary tendencies have become invisible. Traditional tendencies and movements are losing their clarity and distinctness, and at the same time, a newly emerging thought began to encompass the principles of postmodern literature. Postmodernism can be called the only artistic direction that developed in Turkey at the end of the twentieth century. Although Turkish postmodernism emerged in the second half of the 1980s, Turkish literary scholars did not immediately notice its appearance. The discussion of postmodernism only emerged in the early 1990s, with participants calling postmodernism an "avant-garde phenomenon." Then, under the name "the newest novel," Turkish researchers often referred to postmodernist writers, or those writing in unconventional styles unrelated to postmodernism (Oguz Atay, Yusuf Atılgan, Duygu Asena). However, by the early 1990s, critics and literary reviewers emphasized the main features of postmodern works: intertextuality, the author's play, pluralism, and irony.

Conclusion. In conclusion, postmodernism in post-Soviet literature emerged as a response to the collapse of Soviet ideological and aesthetic constraints, marking a transition toward freedom of expression and stylistic experimentation. Azerbaijani and Russian postmodernism, while sharing a common socio-political background, each reflect national traditions and cultural identities within a shared typological framework. This synthesis of universal and local elements signifies the transformation of literature from rigid realism to intertextuality, irony, and playfulness. Similarly, Turkish postmodernism developed as a national variant that bridged Eastern and Western literary models, embodying a synthesis of cultural traditions and innovative narrative forms. The evolution of postmodernism in Turkey during the 1980s and 1990s reflects its gradual recognition as a dominant artistic movement characterized by pluralism, metafiction, and the rejection of linear realism. Comparative analysis of Azerbaijani, Russian, and Turkish postmodernism reveals that despite regional differences, all share a common pursuit of redefining reality, questioning ideology, and exploring fragmented identities. Thus, postmodernism functions as both a cultural and philosophical response to totalitarianism and modernity, representing a new literary paradigm that celebrates diversity, skepticism, and creative freedom in the post-Soviet and postmodern world.

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