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## WORLDVIEW AND IDEOLOGICAL TENDENCIES OF THE LATE 19<sup>th</sup> AND EARLY 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURIES IN ARMENIAN LITERARY CRITICISM

### Abstract

The article presents the ideological and worldview tendencies in Armenian reality in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and their influence on the literary criticism of the time. Firstly, the article focuses on the social-political situation that influences the formation of social-political ideologies, then the approaches of representatives of various directions on different spheres of life. The study also discusses the influence of these currents on the formation of the views of the literary critics of the time.

As an obvious example of a literary work that was exposed to diverse literary criticism, some pieces of critical reviews on the poem “Loretsi Sako” by H. Toumanyán are presented. These reviews prove that artistic and philosophical approaches of the social-political currents of the time serve as the basis of subjective evaluations carried out by literary critics.

*Keywords:* social-political currents, literary criticism, worldwide contemplation, history of philosophy, ideology, Hovhannes Toumanyán.

### Introduction

The second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was significant for the history of Armenian literature.

The successive events in social and political life get a quick reaction in different spheres of the social mind: science, philosophy, fine art. Old ideological currents make renovations and reformations following the spirit of new times. The press becomes more active. The Armenian worldview becomes more open when dealing with new theories in world sociology and philosophy.

Inspired by the philosophy of Enlightenment, Armenian Romanticism continues to be a leading movement for patriotic and progressive young people who acquire their education in European and Russian universities. These young Armenian people cherish the idea of having a developed and enlightened motherland while preserving the national and universal ide-

als. The freedom of the country is envisioned. Armenia gets an opportunity of resurrection based on new national ideologies. Philosophical thought examines the issues of ontology and epistemology, matter-consciousness, materialism-idealism, and studies the history of Armenian people within the context of world history. Naturally, any piece of verbal creativity acquires relevant significance in the system of social consciousness, thus leading to the formation of literary criticism. However, spiritual thought is divided into currents giving life to various slogans on social development, national protection, nationalism, and other issues.

The essence of the question in this study is to reveal the following: Although the 19<sup>th</sup>-century literary criticism was already formed and was trying to act as an independent discipline, it still directly carried the influence of social-political currents, often exposing the literature of the time to subjective criticism.

Literature Review of Spiritual-Cultural  
Environment of the Late 19<sup>th</sup> and  
Early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries

The history of Armenian social movements has been widely studied, taking into account their socio-philosophical perspective, which directly influenced spiritual and cultural life. These movements were reverberated in creative literature and penetrated into the sphere of ideological-aesthetic concepts of literary criticism. The Armenian literary critic and theorist S. Sarinyan (2005) noticed: "It would not be an exaggeration to state that almost all the doctrines and theories of the time found their echoes and responses in the Armenian reality. These theories enhanced and upgraded the level of social analytical thought in the new historical period" (p. 44). In the first issue of "Mshak" ("Worker") newspaper, a liberal writer, publisher and editor Grigor Artsruni (1872), who received his education in Europe, uttered his perception on the history of the nation's development: "Yesterday we were a testamentary nation. Today we are patriots. Tomorrow we must become workers". Artsruni directed social thought towards practical activities (for example - self-recognition of personal demands and desires) and connected the prospect of the Armenian people's economic progress with capitalism. Nevertheless, according to cultural leaders of "Mshak" periodicals, to carry out economic reforms, Armenians should deactivate the level of their national identity and obey the same historical worldwide rules and regulations.

That was where the contradiction between liberals and national-conservatives came from. The underlying principle of the national-conservative movement was that each nation had its own philosophy of life, and the basic priority must be given to moral wealth rather than material wealth. The ideological contrast between the two movements was pronounced in the sphere of religion and church. Stubborn and lasting debates evolved between the national-conservative movement - "Meghu Hayastan" (S. Mandinyan,

P. Simonyan) later "Nor-Dar" (S. Spandaryan) periodicals, and "Mshak". The conservatives were also "accused" of having indifferent posture and attitude towards the question of the national liberation movement of the Armenian people.

The representatives of the liberal-conservative movement on behalf of Abgar Hovhannisyan proposed the third ideological route. In the newspapers entitled "Pordz" ("The Experience") and "Ardzagank" ("Echo") A. Hovhannisyan aimed at putting into equilibrium and reconciliation two radical movements. He proposed that the Armenian bourgeoisie invest their capital in the motherland for the prosperity and material welfare of the Armenian people. However, there was still a contradiction concerning the national church, religion, history and culture.

It is known that the priority was given and even today is given to the liberal-intellectual movement, whereas the national-conservative movement and its ideology gained an emphatic restraint. Only recently, an accurate assessment and re-interpretation of the principles of the nationalistic-conservative movement had been carried out, thus, attributing to it the vital mission of preservation of the national spirit and transmission of national ideology through history.

The above-discussed realities put their mark on the spiritual environment. The successive events of the social and national-political life found a quick response in all spheres of social thought: scientific, philosophical and artistic. The old ideological movements changed into sophisticated orientations following the spirit of the new times. The press expanded its activities meeting the growing public demand for information. S. Sarinyan writes: "Under the influence of the new philosophical theories, specific transformations are held in the spheres of art and literature, modifying not only its method and methodology, but also the ties between an individual and the community, and causes of social and biological wants" (Sarinyan, 2008, p. 10). Such historical procedures were marked by internal complexities and contradictions – the fact that

could not escape the attention of the literary intelligentsia. In 1893 an Armenian author A. Shirvanzade (1962) wrote in his article “Journalistic Remarks” the following statement; “The social life of Russian-Armenians, which was growing day by day, brought to the fore several questions that required their detailed study and serious elaboration in the press” (p. 132). The Eastern Armenians encountered multifaceted problems; their inner problems in Eastern Armenia and the cataclysmic situation of the Western Armenians under the dictatorship of Sultan Hamid the Second. Naturally, the critical situation gave rise to serious anxieties among the Armenian intelligentsia.

In the late XIX and in the early XX centuries, pivotal ideological trends were evident in Armenian social development. First, there was the transition from Armenian Romanticism to Realism. There was a rapid change in the social and political environment, which influenced the characteristic peculiarities of public relations, traditional habits and customs. The patriarchal community lost its actuality. In all spheres of life, new moral criteria were put forward. “The old is being destroyed, the novice has not been formed yet, the future is dark and uncertain. The past is separated from the present with profound “lacuna”, submerging the elegy of the destruction of patriarchal Armenia into a fading illusion, as an echo to an irreversible end” (Sarinyan, 2005, pp. 47-48).

### *The Process of the Development of Literary Criticism*

In the 90s of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the issues on contemporary literature and literary criticism occupied one of the top places in the cultural policy of the press.

Senior and junior writers were united in the same domain within the rapid-paced developments, who were the representatives of different social-political currents, and wrote both methods: realism and romanticism. Hakob Paronyan, Ghazaros Aghayan, Gabriel Sundukyan and Perch

Proshyan created when Shirvanzade, Nar-Dos, Muratsan, Vrtanes Papazyan, Hovhannes Toumanyanyan and others entered into the sphere of creative literature. The new literary generation aimed at depicting the objective reality and life. The Armenian society should have got rid of its old habits, recognize its disadvantages, and be engaged in the creation of a civilized society. Individual freedom, protection of women’s rights, healthy family relationships, and re-evaluation of moral perceptions became pivotal. The authors initiated the formulation of innovative statements for the cognition of morality and biophilosophy.

It was worrisome, however, that literature became the focal point of social movements and ideological disagreement between parties and, therefore, it was difficult for the creators to get rid of those stereotypes. The literary critic S. Sarinyan, thus, stated that “Literature was subjected to the intellectual movements of the time and press, which was under the influence of these movements. No matter how much literature tried to break the ideological shackles of the social movements, no matter how much writers tried to break out their creative art from the narrow boundaries of the press, nevertheless, literary life, literary movement, worldview orientations of the writers and the social discretion were, more or less, in subjection to the given social movement and the press” (The History of Armenian Criticism, 1998, p. 6).

If it was not an easy task for the literary sphere to get rid of these ideological constraints, naturally for the literary critics, it would have been much more difficult. Socio-political party bias almost deprived the literary critics from the chance of objective assessment and evaluation, especially that, in many respects, the field was still in the process of establishing the balance of self-awareness and self-realization. The writers, who had a deep awareness of their artistic destiny and responsibility, remained faithful to the inviolable law of art independence. In this connection, the Armenian writer A. Shirvanzade

(1962) states, “Literature is higher than any other party. The narrow, limited, impatient direction of a party that prevailed in our press is an enemy of pure literature” (p. 132).

The new generation of intellectuals initiated to fight for the necessity of literature “liberation” and healthy criticism on various occasions referring to diverse problems of literature and criticism and embarking on the practical labours to resolve the quintessential issues immediately.

Hence, in the 1890s, within the theoretical and practical framework, literature and literary criticism “separated” from the social and political movements. In Armenian social life, there was a gradual formation of literature as a separate organic unit of spiritual existence. This event automatically led to the emergence of another independent unit – the discipline of literary criticism.

The Armenian literary criticism underwent the path of self-determination and tried to separate the scope of its study, the subject and the problems, to enhance the essential doctrines of theoretical literature, as well as to interpret various art-related issues with specific theoretical justification and arguments. During its development, literature put forward new challenges for the sphere of literary criticism, which led to the implementation of new approaches, mechanisms and methods. Meeting the above-mentioned requirements, the criticism gradually acquired genre diversity and new criteria for the aesthetic and philosophical evaluation of literary works, as well as sufficient knowledge of literary directions, movements and professional vocabulary, etc. Zh. Kalantaryan (2017) writes, “The 19<sup>th</sup>-century literature and, first of all, the literary criticism was a means of the reflection for ideological struggles and social views, as it allowed voicing social and political problems” (p. 181).

Moreover, unique tendencies towards studying aesthetics and philosophy as independent fields of theoretical knowledge became obvious. The works of world-famous philosophers, aesthetics, literary theorists (Aristotle, G. Lessing,

G. Hegel, I. Kant, H. Ten, G. Brandes, F. Bruneter, E. Zola and others) were newly interpreted, and their aesthetic and philosophical views were re-evaluated to enhance the Armenian literature and literary theory. The literary criticism met the new theories of contemporary literature and art requirements and illustrated the influence of the representatives of European “non-classical philosophy” (A. Schopenhauer, A. Bergson, F. Nietzsche) on Armenian literature. The hermeneutic study and the interpretive procedure of literature provided an opportunity to conduct research and sometimes depict the bio-philosophy, human nature, the shadowy sides of morality and psychology, the relation of individual and community.

However, the functional question of criticism still remained under discussion: whether the criticism, by separating itself from social discourse and didactics, should continue its function as a social ideologue, or whether it should deal merely with the aesthetic problems. This question also interested the literary historians, who, based on the experience of further development of literature and criticism, gave their answer to the question. Thus, S. Sarinyan wrote, “The Armenian critical thought was vigilant in understanding its role in social life. The principle “Art for Art’s sake” did not face the temptation and the criticism found its mechanisms, where the Armenian literature should undertake the role of seeking answers to questions of social life. The demand for the scientific criticism, which was strictly put forward by the literate men of the time, was a thorough mastering of the principles of aesthetic science, theoretical-historical understanding of the aesthetics of the Armenian literature and unified, coherent analysis of the form and content of literature” (The History of New Armenian Literature, 1972, p. 52).

One cannot fail to observe that an opinion was formed about the role and significance of the criticism, and the most critical doctrine was: criticism is the indispensable part of literature for revealing the beauty, the valuable, the true and

the philosophical in art. Both the aesthetic and the contextual aspects of the narrative text were equally valued, and such an analysis led to criticism.

In the 90s, one of the pivotal questions of the criticism was, for instance, the scientific understanding of the logical sequence of the development of literary methods and schools. An idea was put forward that the qualitative changes in the series of development of literature were, first of all, conditioned by the natural law of historical progress, and the changes were not the result of the personal interests and preferences of this or that poet. In a large-scale study entitled “Grakan dprocner” (Literary Schools), M. Abeghyan introduced the directions of several famous literary schools. M. Abeghyan drew the parallels between the history of French literature and the development of Armenian literature, thus, revealing the regular nature of the formation of Romanticism in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Armenian literature. “Romanticism was not only a retrospective school but the opposite. It was the revolutionary school of the time, and its propaganda was free thoughts. It was the first to bear the contemporary literary and friendly ideas in it, to evaluate it. That is why our poets and novelists should study this great literary school among other schools” (Abeghyan, 1975, p. 266). But each period had its rules, and the introduction of Realism in Armenian literature by criticism was an inevitable event. S. Sarinyan pointed out, “The logical law of the historical succession of literary schools put the Armenian critical thought to the right place to motivate the victory of Realism in Armenian literature. Literature used to be engaged in ideology, and now it is necessary to transfer it for analysing, examining and representing the objective reality of social life” (The History of Armenian Criticism, 1998, p. 11).

In the variety of approaches and questions, however, there were also concerns of general interest. In this connection, literary critic H. Tamrazyan (1992) noticed, “*There were some pivotal issues that need to be discussed.* The new period

put forward the ideas in a unique way by intertwining the literary peculiarities, *and the public discourse granted its place to true art. Through the prism of this analysis, new criteria were put forward, and the problems of national character and content, national popularity, the national and universal relationship evolved*” (p. 472). In other words, with the ideology and popularity of the Realist method, the principles of literary evaluation became of paramount importance, which presupposed an analytical interpretation of the reality within poetic and epic structures and psychological and philosophical justification of events etc.

#### *Hovhannes Toumanyán in the Literary Criticism of the Time*

In order to study the question under discussion, it is essential to present an author who was writing at that period of time, being in the centre of the social, political, literary life as well as literary criticism. In light of this, we aim at separating All - Armenian poet Hovhannes Toumanyán, grounding our choice on the fact that the poet was always a target for criticism and never oriented towards any social-political current. To show the subjectivity of literary criticism conditioned by the social and political orientations of the time, we consider it important to make a brief review of the poet’s philosophical views.

Within the whirlpool of the inner turbulence of the literary-critical period H. Toumanyán’s works appeared in the literary arena. The history of the nation, which confirmed its centuries-old existence, their mental horizon and vitality, the psychology and lifestyle became the centre of the poet’s creative world and the source for inspiration. Indeed, the socio-psychological and philosophical changes of the time had global and universal characteristics. However, with the insight of a genius artist, Toumanyán was destined to reveal and embellish his artistic creativity with the uniquely original reverberations of objective reality; the spiritual turbulence and struggle of the Armenian nation for preservation of the na-

tional traditions, their forced renunciation, the genetic “blood call” and the drama of meeting with the developments of time requests, etc.

The ontological background of the issue was uniquely perceived and expressed by Toumanyan (1994), who scrutinized and formulated the pivotal concerns of a philosophical sense in the right time: “What is the historical path of this people, the essence of its existence, its will, its spirit. And where to find this spirit?” (p. 194). These questions reiterate Nietzsche’s theory. Hence, S. Sarinyan (2005) stated that “The philosophical source from which the thesis originated is the theory of “re-evaluation of values” formulated by Nietzsche, whose universal response was perceived by the Armenian thought in exact time” (p. 67).

As an insightful interpreter, Toumanyan revealed the philosophical sub-layers of the question and the possible developments of the historical perspective. The Armenian question remained on the agenda of Western and Eastern Armenians and still demanded “a silent presence” in the geopolitical arena. In the context of changes and re-evaluations, Toumanyan (1994) put forward the thesis of the ontology and the existentialism of the nation: “Science and enlightenment, along with many dark stages in the history of human life, will shed light on the long and difficult journey that we have initiated. The journey is precious to us. At the same time, it is beyond our power. Though it is beyond our power to look, examine, recognize our past and present, it is indecent for a nation, who overcame various cataclysms and sufferings, to ignore its life, indulging to the tempestuous waves of time” (p. 194). Therefore, it should be a priority to “understand clearly” the memoirs devoted to our country, people, literature and history.

The poet aimed at understanding and comprehending the philosophical revolutions of the sociological thought of the time, as well as the fundamental movement of the Armenian people through the perspectives of those events. In the article “The Armenian Spirit”, the poet formu-

lates his own philosophy of “national spirit” and arrives at the point of national self-recognition and self-verification. In this connection Armenian philosopher 19-20 centuries, E. Frangyan (1910) stated: “Life belongs to the one who is strong, who is called to win the battle for existence. This is at the same time the aristocracy of nature” (pp. 41-42). The formula indirectly contradicts the principle of Schopenhauer, according to whom the intellect is secondary. It presupposes an awareness of spiritual identity. Therefore, it tests the level of resistance of the national spirit. Toumanyan reaffirms the statement mentioned above that the fundamental essence of the people’s longevity is the spirit, and its primary bearer is the culture; therefore the underlying principle is to have “a nation with its own culture”.

It is known that Toumanyan was basically considered as a follower of the realistic method. Those who consider Toumanyan as realist stress that he depicted indeed the customs of the Armenian village, social relations, and the people in that environment. However, Toumanyan’s world was accepted differently by the literary criticism of the time. For example, historian, critic and writer Leo, who was a representative of the cultural-historical school still existing at the beginning of the XX century, in accordance with his narrow party thinking, couldn’t reach organic harmony in his appraisals of Toumanyan’s works. Leo’s worldviews and methodical orientations often were formed by the critical weight of “Mshak”. In “The Russian-Armenian literature from the beginning to the present day”, Leo (1903) develops the idea that “all human affairs must serve for the sake of mankind, if they do not want to be useless and without meaning” (p. 51). In general, literature too must serve “for the sake of usefulness”, in other words, it must have a certain ideological tendency. As the critic clarified, the aim of the author was to express an idea to the reader for achieving a certain goal.

The relationships between literature and life and the social role of fine art were given much importance by many critics. For example, with

some differences, N. Aghbalyan, A. Chopanyan, M. Berberyan, K. Kusikyan, S. Hakobyan, and others generally also protect the inseparable nature of literature and social life. However, Leo, who was theoretically following this principle when examining other writers' works, reaches extremes making apparent mistakes. For instance, here is where he calls Toumanyan a "mountain singer", narrowing his work's content meaning and decreasing artistic value (Leo, 1903, p. 62).

Methodology: The Analysis of Literary  
Criticism Toward a Literary Piece:  
"Loretsi Sako" by Toumanyan

As the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century literary criticism directly bore the influence of the social and political currents and schools, their reaction would, naturally, be different towards the same literary piece. In light of this, as an obvious example of the above discussed, the appraisals of Toumanyan's "Loretsi Sako" are presented. The choice of this literary piece is based on the following factors:

- This poem is a unique opportunity to reveal Toumanyan's philosophical worldview,
- The poem gives a key to recognise and characterise Toumanyan's ideal of a human being,
- The poem is one of the most criticised literary pieces by critics oriented towards different social-political currents,
- The poem underwent changes a few times because of literary criticism.

The targets for the criticism of the poem were basically the theme and the psychological and philosophical reasons for the hero's madness. In 1980, the first critic, philologist, literary critic, and follower of conservative current M. Abeghyan considered the secret of success of this poem to be the correct psychological solution. The author keeps the character of Sako in the centre of attention and analytically follows all the psychological processes until his madness. These analyses make the critic's conclusions reliable that

the childish superstitious education wins, and the child of nature, the giant Sako, "Becomes miserable in front of his imagination" (Abeghyan, 1890). Abeghyan understands the philosophy of life of the mountain man.

Pedagogue and writer L. Manvelyan, who mainly was oriented towards the realistic current, has an opposite approach. He notes that the man hero is almost not alive. Manvelyan (1891) gives a simplistic explanation to Toumanyan's creation, stating that his aim is to show how the nation's superstition is protected and transferred (p. 96). The critic, indeed, could not guess that "Loretsi Sako" was the destination of Toumanyan's search for an ideal man and also a spot where a human being's spiritual smallness is depicted. All this is understandable and explainable only in the system of unity of the poet's works. Manvelyan's critic even lacks the simple analysis of the hero's ever-moving psychological states, which is essential to come to the point of a well-grounded conclusion.

Leo's criteria of appraisal are also not understandable. He writes, "The poet does not notice that Sako is a miserable coward, who evokes laughter. There is no psychology. Such a miserable ending of a giant hero is not adequately explained, is not justified. At least, Toumanyan could remember that the heroes start the fight against devils in national mythology, and the last ones are defeated only after a long fight. There is no effort to adequately locate his hero in a normal psychological world" (Leo, 1903, p. 63). Probably, the reason for this misunderstanding was the fact that Leo, as well as some of the critics, thought that Toumanyan, in the face of his giant hero, wanted to create an epic character in the style of folk stories. However, he could not put him into adequate deeds or psychological states, something that is believed not to have any connection with Toumanyan's psychological creation.

By 1903, "Loretsi Sako" had already undergone qualitative changes (some insights from literary critics were taken into account) and, un-



like the previous version, was comparatively higher in light of artistic ideology and psychological reliability. The volume of the second version of the poem was 200 lines longer than the first one. However, in the third version, there were only 188 lines out of 287. Behind these numbers, there is a considerable amount of work by the poetic mind of the genius poet. The second and the third versions characterise the two different stages of a poet's creative development. The second is a time of the tense search when the author switches from one try to another, making possibly understandable the following philosophy for the reader: his hero is the child of the surrounding nature, sometimes disastrous and frightening, sometimes unprotected in front of superstitions settled in the soul since childhood. One try is not enough. He tries another, then the third. The lines of the depiction of nature, the hero's psychological world and the lifestyle realities follow one another. The more the volume grows, the more the impression is decreasing. The author has not reached the proficiency to make use of the proper words in the proper places, which is the basis of Toumanyan's art. The third version is the ideal creation of this very art.

Many different critics, oriented towards different currents and considering the poem not persuasive (Gh. Aghayan, Leo, G. Balasanyan, P. Makintyan and others), ignore the question on why in "Mehri" and "Alek" poems, Toumanyan further presents his hero's patriotic deeds without calling his heroes "igit" (in folk language meaning "brave" or "brave man"). However, he honours Sako with this title, only hinting about his brave deeds. Alternatively, why does the author, taking into account the critics' many other recommendations until the end, stubbornly keeps devotion to his grounding principle? If the critics could give importance to these questions, they would probably understand that every creative idea has its aim, which in itself dictates the artistic structure and character of the work.

Is the fact of someone so brave as giant Sako completely impossible? In this case, it is not so

essential as there are unique exceptions that are often more persuasive in proving the tendency than a number of cases like that. With this consciousness or subconsciousness, Toumanyan has guessed it and, with his work of many years, has raised this remarkable fact to the level of artistic truth. Some time was required until everybody would recognise this truth, so that time was still very far from the days of G. Balasanyan's criticism. Otherwise, he would not write it. "Is there anyone who does not know that superstitions influence the young generation very badly and there is need to be armoured against them? Nevertheless, is there a need to call "Igit" an illiterate stupid man who is afraid of devils?" (Balasanyan, 1910, p. 7).

Balasanyan (1910), of course, does not leave aside the depictions of nature, which prove that the author is a real poet and he regrets that "such cosy depictions are done for "a coward rabbit" and funny hero, that has an "imaginary pride" and an "indefinite, foggy, brave soul" (p. 8). It is essential, however, to understand that the depictions of nature and the people inseparable from that nature make Sako's character's dignity and tragedy persuasive and exciting, something that departs from the philosophy of Toumanyan about an ideal man.

Unlike the bias of the previously presented critics and their methodical approaches, a famous representative of the psychological school, A. Terteryan (1980), considers "completely possible Sako's psychological disbalance" (p. 100). Using artistic scenes, Toumanyan reveals the tragedy of a giant man who could turn the world upside down in other conditions and even manage natural disasters. However, the secrets of a human being's smallness are unknown in the context of the eternity of the universe. The coward soul, living in the giant body, become the slave of nature. Living in nature as a part of it, a village man is obedient to the great nature.

Summing up all the discussion above, it is possible to state that the critics of the time (except for a few) based their recommendations not

only on their social and political biases but also external impressions, especially the surface imagination, that the force, bravery and fear are incompatible. From this point of view, Toumanyan's character of "Loretsi Sako" is not psychologically persuasive.

### Conclusion

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the movements, with their social, political, national, and philosophical ideologies, directly influenced all spheres of Armenian society's spiritual and cultural life. Notably, they significantly impacted the ideological and aesthetic conceptions of verbal creativity and literary criticism. No matter how contradictory and ambivalent their social progress and national preservation slogans were, the crossing point of contradiction was obvious.

Thus, the characteristics of the literary criticism of the time are the following:

- In the 90s of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a new stage in the development of the history of criticism in the Armenian reality was announced, which had a series of theoretical and practical outlines and mechanisms, consistent methodology for solving multifaceted problems. As a separate discipline, the criticism almost clarified and defined its essential functions, thus putting its role on a solid scientific background.
- The orientations of the literary criticism of the time were based not only on the critics' individual views but also the social-political currents and their methodology prevailing at that time.
- Because of the limitations and bias of the literary criticism of the time, appraisals of Toumanyan's works sometimes were characterised with contradictions and the raised issues with argumentations. The same applied to other authors of the time and their works (Mouratsan, Nar-Dos, Raffi, A. Shirvanzade, H. Hovhannisyants etc.).

Finally, we emphasize the thesis that in light of the historical, social-political realities of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, it becomes obvious that Armenian literary criticism bore the influence of national and international ideologies and very often showed subjective and biased approaches in evaluation of the literary pieces of the time.

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