

## Labor features with classical heritage relations of the staff in “Mollah Nesreddin” journal

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### **Abstract**

*This article deals with the mission of the satirical magazine “Molla Nasreddin” that published firstly in 1906 in Tbilisi city of Georgia, the cultural centre of the Turkic speaking people. The problem of reality and the literature are given with satirical laughter. “Mollah Nesreddin” journal (magazine) was a social-political mirror in the life of Azerbaijan in the beginning of the XX century. Its establishing was an important event in the social-literary life of Azerbaijan and this journal played a role of literary school where joined writers with different styles. This journal active intervened to the social life in the contests of reality ideas. It renewed exist literary-esthetic relations and coordinated new literary direction and styles. It was the first humor magazine in Azerbaijan which played an important role in the emergence of the pioneers of the cartoon art of humor, literature, the name of the magazine is taken from the repartee with the well-known anecdote type Mollah Nasreddine (Nasreddin Hodja, Teacher Nesreddin).*

**Keywords:** *Mollah Nesreddin, the mollanesreddins, literary movement, literary school, laugh (smile), style, satire*

### **Mollah Nesreddin” Journal**

"Molla Nasreddin" magazine in the early twentieth century, became the mirror of the social and political surrounding at the time. The publication of that journal was based on necessity of a public life in that period. That important literary event united writers, combining different styles in their creativity and played the role of a literary school. Journal “Molla Nasreddin” was unprecedented phenomenon earlier in national literature. So that journal by means of publications mixed actively in public life and supported the renewal of existed literary and aesthetic relationship, directed the engendering and development of new trends and styles.

It is quite natural, that in that time by direct influence and “instigation” of this style, in Baku the publication numerous magazine and newspapers began. Among them, "Bahlul" (1907), "Zənbur" (1909-1910), "Mirat" (1910), "Bee" (1910-1911), "Kalniyat" (1912-1913), "Lek-Lek" (1914), "Tuti" (1914-1917), "Funny" (1914-1915), "Babai-Amir" (1915-1916), "Tartan-partan" (1918), "Horn" (1918-1919), "Zanbur" (1919), "Fire" (1919-1920) illustrated magazines can be pointed out (Mirahmadov, 1966; Habibbayli, 1997).

"Molla Nasreddin" magazine workers greatly enriched our literary treasure by their new creative positions, new creative, and artistic and aesthetic ideas. That peculiarity displayed also in saving of relations between the classical heritage, in style and attitude to the creation of a new poetic forms and improvement of old poetic forms also.

At first (even it look commonplace) let's try to find an answer to the question: Who were the “Molla Nasreddin”ers? "Molla Nasreddin" magazine by it's matter can be considered as the

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unique phenomenon in reality of that historical period. This uniqueness of the magazine can be explained by the fact, that it was formed on the basis of collective intellect of creative persons, united by one outstanding person of deep thought.

It's clearly, that "Molla Nasreddin" is not the work of a single author, with somebody's heart beating, it was result of person's activity, who share the same ideas and the belief. These persons, writers, their activity had not any analogues in the earlier history of Azerbaijani literary thought. Taken separately, the creation of these most brilliant writers, working in "Molla Nasreddin" coincide with activity of the magazine. That fact can be called "historical opportunity". Sabir, Omar Faiq Nemanzadeh and each of the other writers, as a creative person were extremely talented and powerful. But how the creativity of those writers will form, if the surrounding, conditioned the forming of "Molla Nasreddin" magazine and united those talented people didn't exist - it would be very difficult question to answer today.

Mirza Jalil Mammadguluzadeh the second writer, who lead the journal "Molla Nasreddin" was Sabir, the founder of the revolutionary satire in Azerbaijani poetry. As noted above, Sabir created the main part of his creativity, main texts, which etched his name forever in the national literature history in period when he worked in "Molla Nasreddin".

At that time, "Molla Nasreddin" magazine was alive audience for readers. That's why Sabir addressed to themes, close to readers, to themes which could make them think and separated from dreams and artistic stereotypes, protested against them. This feature is certainly based on matter of Sabir's satire. Sabir signed his works by different names, such as "Hop-Hop", "Aglar-guleyen" (Crying-Smiling), "Jingoz (Jinni eyes) bay". In "Molla Nasreddin" Sabir also published his works under many other hidden signs.

Omar Faik Nemanzadeh (1872-1941) is considered to be the second editor of "Molla Nasreddin". Omar Faik Nemanzadeh (1872-1941) studied in Istanbul, had been arrested twice for contacts with young revolutionaries. At the beginning of the twentieth century, while working in the editorial office of the newspaper "Shargi-Rus" ("Eastern-Russian") he was acquainted with J.Mammadguluzadeh. Soon that acquaintance transformed into sincere friendship. Omar Faik together with J.Mammadguluzadeh opened printing-house "Geyrat" and then began to publish "Molla Nasreddin".

Nemanzadeh Omar Faik was born in 1872 in the village Azgur of Meskhetian region. Omar Faik got primary education in rural mosque, but later, at the insistence of his mother, went to Istanbul in 1882, continued his studies the "Fateh" School.

As for "Molla Nasreddin" artistic features, it's contacts and connections with the classical heritage, at this point, we must talk about serious factors, which the "front line" of "Molla Nasreddin" literary activity.

E.g. academician Isa Habibbayli in his scientific monographic investigation "J.Mammadguluzadeh: surrounding and contemporaries" wrote: "According observations, in "Molla Nasreddin" literary front formation, it's publication, main role was played by the outstanding persons, whom J.Mammadguluzadeh knew and whose abilities and talent, knowledge he relied.

When "Molla Nasreddin" publication began, J.Mammadguluzadeh lived and worked in Yerevan and Nakhchivan. He hoped on help and many-sided support of his old friends, whom he knew while studying in Gori seminary, and working in "East-Rus" newspaper office.

J.Mammadguluzade could unit creative forces, functioned earlier separately and direct them, all their efforts in one, general course. (Mammadov, 1989; Molla Nasreddin Magazine, 2009).

In this case, the professionals who share the same ideas with him, who spent force in the realization of the honorable aim – such as M.S.Ordubadi, A.Gamkusal, A.Sharif, M.Sidgi, A.Hagverdiyev, I.Sharifbeyov, O.F.Nemanzadeh, Mashadi Alasgar Bagirov and others helped. As a result, all those efforts finally merged into a single course and ended by the formation of general literary front. But one issue must be taken into account, and to be emphasized particularly- it is important to realize that understanding of that activity matter by people, who wanted to help and support each others is not a simple process.

In other words, taking into consideration the results of the joint, it's obvious result, within the culture, the need for refinement of the processes leading to its deeper layers of Azerbaijani culture is seen clearly.

Isa Habibbayli choose very right approach to that point, and he noted that, " Before the publication of " Molla Nasreddin " in Azerbaijan satirical journalism almost didn't exist. Satiric poetry in main part had a didactic character. In works, origin of which was already connected to the recent history of realistic fiction, only certain features of the satire could be seen. Therefore, Dj.Mamedguluzade had very serious and difficult aim- to bring up new literary generation of "MollaNasreddin". They had to be the satirical poets, publishers, publicists, artists, cartoonists. Having such aim, the great writer used opportunities of "Molla Nasreddin" in very reasonable and most-effective way and benefit from them. In the true sense of the word, "Molla Nasreddin" new satiric collection became a school for satiric poets " (Mammadov, 1989; Molla Nasreddin Magazine, 2009)

So, here we can come to very important conclusion- "Molla Nasreddin" traditions became a special event both in Azerbaijani culture and literature. It means, that it is necessary to explain it in detail as term or a cultural category. First of all we must find "literary school" notion in various dictionaries, encyclopedias and research and understand it clearly. In general it is seemed, that the literary trend and literary school are analogous notions. In other words, this term, the narrow sense of the word contains any great writer's creative features and these features (in this writer's artistic outlook ideas, images system, described in the vehicles, etc.) are considered as an example for other writers and plays the role of a school. (6)

It is known well, that notion "literary school" (trend) is closely connected with the category of artistic methods. This term ("artistic method") was formed in 20-30s of XX century in Russian literature in close connection with means of reality understanding. It has been formed as a result of the method. In that period, the literary point of view was almost identified with method category. However, it is known that when we speak about art methods, it is expected to be the aesthetic attitude to reality. To our mind, method is a fact of reality understanding by figurative art. The peculiarities, which form such phenomenon has created a sustainable way, and is repeated in the writer's creativity. So, it is necessary to understand and interpret the category "literary school" in this context.

However, here very important question arises : if similar features are repeated in writer's work continuously, how the different styles of writes, united in the same literary school can form? As a matter of fact, the words, artistic sense of writers, who addresse to te same themes

is connected not with their cost of mind, but with factor of "literary school". It doesn't rule out the enjoining of different writes in whole literary school.

Thus, the uniting of writers of different styles in "Molla Nasreddin" stuff was based on ideology first of all. The activity of "Molla Nasreddin" was aimed on understanding of events, took place in Azerbaijan in that time, on investigation them in social context and thinking over the fortune of nation, country and all Moslem East. It's also necessary to point out, that in Azerbaijani literature from the end of XIX century the process of "style changing" was going on. The representatives of "Molla Nasreddin" were supported by movement, called later "resistance literature". That movement was presented by M.F.Akhundov, Hasan bey Zardabi, Gasim bey Zakir and others.

To our mind, the philological heritage by Gasim bey Zakir isn't studied deeply enough. So, Gasim bey Zakir's creativity began in initial period of Russian conquest and it's a reason, that writer tried to reflect the processes, took place in people's mind as reaction on that historical event. It means, that in Azerbaijani literature realistic trend or style wasn't based on aesthetic principles only, it was an answer on social demands and needs. To our mind, it's necessary to understand the matter of Zakir's creativity, it's role in order to investigate the aesthetic and social ideology of "Molla Nasreddin" representatives. In Zakir's verses the motif of "exile" is felt clearly. Poet described the reality of time, included pictures, observed in real life in his works, used them in literary analyses.

Mirza Jalil and his colleagues in "Molla Nasreddin" also felt the matter of Zakir's attempts. There is no doubt, that the historical period was very complicated and writer, who worked in "Molla Nasreddin" also lived in that reality and knew it very well. As a result, their satiric approach was much stronger. These writer didn't limit by description of one village or town, the perceived those problems as problems of all region and all nation. E.g. in "Molla Nasreddin" we can read such extract: "yesterday my friend from Iran asked me: why don't you like Iranians? - Why do you think so? - I answered. He explained, that I criticize Iranians too often. - But whom have I to criticize? - he answered - "you can touch upon all peoples and nations - the French, the Englishmen, Americans, Swedes.... But not us.... (6, 235).

In Gasim bey Zakir's poetic narrations very interesting intonation existed always and was leading one: he always described the events, seen by people from quite unexpected aspect. Poet never exaggerated negative facts, happened with simple people. As for "Molla Nasreddin", that journal changed the direction of irony, and demonstrated most characteristic features of darkness, oppression and ignorance. "Molla Nasreddin" criticized Iranians and by such means criticized all others, who oppressed people. "Molla Nasreddin" always complained on other nations and called Azerbaijani people to find the exit from hard situation. "Molla Nasreddin" always criticized it's own people and in such way gave all opportunities to opponents in order to clear up the real matter of events.

I thought you'll be my lover

And become the only support for me

I dreamed, my friend, you'll share all my sorrows,

Existed in Iran

But how could I know, that you'll be such bored

When I stayed in darkness of strange land

You'll be friendly with my foes. (Molla Nasreddin Magazine, 2011)

This poetic extract, based in “complaint” was written in traditions of classical Azerbaijani literature, on traditional poetic oppositions- “lover” and “unloved”. But in the same time that traditional motif was used here in quite different context and reached it's main aim very exactly. So, the ability of “Molla Nasreddin” to reach criticized objects was connected with aesthetic matter of satiric literature and formed on it's artistic system.

I would never promise, my love

If I knew, you can be such ruthless

I would never think, you will intoxicate so much

And separate from me so early

You are too majestic know, don't think

About others...

But one day you'll be so broken and weak.... (Molla Nasreddin Magazine, 2011).

The style of “Molla Nasreddin” was seen clearly even in texts, which were not connected with social problems at first sight. The satiric verses of such kind the life, which passes without any development and sense is spoken about. The mode of life, typical in that time for Moslems, their sufferings and may be the senseless of his existence is presented in such poetic texts from all aspects. The heroes of such verses are persons, who spent their life not for good, positive activity but for senseless actions became the main object of critic and irony. In poetic text the words “my stick fall out of my hand” is of ambivalent sense- that personage lost his forces, lost his youth, but he cannot understand the disparity between his wish and ability. It's pity, I grow old, my stick fall out of my

O, my lovely youth!

The old age made very weak and helpless

I suffer too much

While remembering old times

I suffer more and more

O God! May be I can get my dreams!

O, pity...

My beard is white, my back is hunched...

Don't ask other things....

“Rishi berengi ilakh” (Molla Nasreddin Magazine, 2011)

In “Molla Nasreddin” style the matter of all negative transformations were demonstrated. “Molla Nasreddin” proved, that main moral values, passed through centuries changed radically in negative way and it was strict sign of that time. In that historical period the social and moral conditions corrupted very strongly. That's why “Molla Nasreddin” tried to use new

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approach in it's activity- it demonstrated and exposed "reversed side" of event and gradually this peculiarity became specific feature of it's style. Don't be ashamed of anything!

Spend your time in tearooms! (Mammadov, 1989; Molla Nasreddin Magazine, 2009).

The personages, described in "Molla Nasreddin" don't believe in knowledge or in truth. They believe only in desirable and unexpected miracle. Such persons are presented as unhappy, ignorant men, far from real life and progress, normal activity. They are object of satiric laugh and are criticized sharply from different positions. Such means helped readers to understand the matter of such life position and usefulness of their existence. These human beings are "alive deadmen". From other side such negative personages are placed in the centre of literary work. It's also one main peculiarities of "Molla Nasreddin" style. E.g.

I wouldn't know that life can change so much

That unwell will be healthy

I taught you for two centuries

But it was quite useless

No doctor can help

Those who don't want to recover himself (Molla Nasreddin Magazine, 2011) It must be pointed out, according to its exposing pathos, satiric direction and new approach to activity, the journal "Molla Nasreddin" had great influence on public and literary life in that period. As a result, in Azerbaijan new illustrated journals began to be published, such as "Bahul" (Baku, 1907), "Zanbur" (1909-1910), "Mirat" (1910), "The Bee" (1910-1911), "Kelniyyat" (1912-1913), "Lek-lek" (1914), "Tuti" (1914-1917), "Mezeli" (Amuzing, 1914-1915), "Babai-Amir" (1915-1916), "Tartan-Partan" (1918), "Horn" (1918-1919), "Zanbur" (1919), "The Fire" (1919-1920). Besides, some satiric collections were published in Russian:

"Jigit" (1907-1918), "Vay-vay" (1908), "Bakinskoye gore" (Baku grief) (1908-1909), "Bich" (Lash) 1909-1915, "Adskaya pochta" (Hell post, 1909-1910), "Bakinskiye streli" ("Baku Arrows" 1910), "Baraban" ("The Drum", 1912-1913) (Heyzinge, 1988). In spite of some intervals in activity, "Molla Nasreddin" became real school of progressive ideas, which tried to change existed society by means of satire and made attempts to connect Moslem society with civil world.

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