

THE CRITIC'S MASTERY IN LITERARY CONVERSATIONS

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Abstract. The article analyzes the literary conversations of the critic U. Normatov and reveals his contribution to the development of the genre. In particular, the conversations included in the book *“Talent Tarbiyasi”* (“The Education of Talent”) are subjected to detailed analysis.

Keywords: critic, genre, literary criticism, literary conversation, dialogue, literary evaluation, writer.

In Uzbek literary criticism, literary-critical conversations between writers or poets and critics developed mainly in the 1970s of the twentieth century. During these years, such conversations gained importance because they attempted to address the pressing issues of artistic creativity and were directed toward striving for the elevation of literature. The prominent critic U. Normatov made a significant contribution to the development of the genre of literary-critical conversation.

The book *“Talent Tarbiyasi”* by the distinguished literary scholar and critic Umarali Normatov, who holds a respected position in literary studies, is unique even in its structural form. It does not resemble any previously published books on artistic mastery in Uzbek criticism. In it, the critic conducts direct literary conversations with writers of different generations about creativity and the secrets of artistic mastery. In this way, he enters the “inviolable” world of the writer—the creative laboratory—generalizes their experiences, and draws instructive conclusions for young creators. At the same time, the book addresses important issues related to the education and creativity of young talents and to the contemporary literary process as a whole.

For example, the conversation conducted with the People’s Poet of Uzbekistan, Erkin Vohidov, focuses primarily on the theme of “the education of talent,” which is also reflected in the book’s title. Therefore, the critic entitled the conversation “Talent Tarbiyasi.” The critic is primarily interested in issues such as talent, innate ability, their cultivation, and society’s attitude toward talented creators today. Emphasizing that “artistic talent is innate; if a person does not possess the qualities of an artistic creator, it is impossible to produce them merely through education and training,” he also notes that the environment and surrounding conditions play a crucial role in revealing and developing this innate talent. Normatov is concerned that genuine talents sometimes remain undiscovered, that some individuals pursue creativity merely out of superficial interest, and that the increase of “mediocre” creators negatively affects the quality of literature.

Moving slightly away from the problem of cultivating talent, the critic directs the interlocutor's attention to the nature of talent and to the moments of inspiration—the most magical aspect of artistic creativity. Here, he reveals a shortcoming in literary criticism: while literary scholars admit that a talentless person cannot achieve anything even with deep knowledge of the laws of literature, they have not sufficiently demonstrated what a talented writer can achieve through professional knowledge. Normatov's observation is justified. From this literary conversation, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- A) It positively influences the growth and development of literature and literary criticism;
- B) It creates broad opportunities to enter the writer's creative laboratory and reveal the secrets of artistic creation to readers;
- C) The critic also appears as a knowledgeable poetry scholar capable of comprehensive analysis.

In the conversation with the People's Writer of Uzbekistan, Asqad Mukhtar, entitled "The Creator's 'Inviolable' World," the title itself serves as a key that reflects the essence of the entire dialogue, demonstrating the critic's stylistic mastery. The critic begins the conversation by addressing the relationship between writer and reader. Readers' interest in the writing process, creative psychology, letters addressed to writers, personal meetings, and conferences indicate the growth of their intellectual level.

In this conversation, the critic and the writer exchange views on several theoretical issues in literature: creative psychology, the relationship between prose and poetry, fact and fiction, tradition and innovation, and the relationship between writer and reader. This dialogue is significant primarily for creators and secondly for readers. Therefore, organizing such conversations is essential for the literary process and for the development of literature.

Some of Normatov's conversations are characterized by a stronger focus on theoretical problems in literature. One such example is "From Life Experience to Artistic Truth," conducted with the writer Mirmuhsin. This conversation differs from previous ones in its stronger critical tone, as the critic openly points out shortcomings in certain characters created by the writer, following the principle "when speaking the truth, spare no one." For instance, he argues that in "*Degrez O'g'li*" the inner light of the character Arslon is not sufficiently revealed. The interlocutors discuss the role of fiction in the artistic interpretation of historical figures, the formation of a hero under the influence of others—especially mentors—common features in the works of various writers, and each author's creative individuality.

Observations show that this literary conversation primarily reveals the writer's individual image and creative psychology. By illuminating previously unknown aspects of the author's творчество, it also reveals the persona of the critic-interlocutor.

The conversation dedicated to Said Ahmad's trilogy "*Ufq*" ("The Horizon"), its writing process, and the peculiarities of creation is also engaging and appealing to readers. After its publication, the trilogy was repeatedly reprinted, analyzed, and became the subject of numerous studies. The main purpose of the conversation is to summarize the writer's fifteen years of

labor and the debates surrounding the work and to hear the final word from the author himself. It is evident that this objective was achieved.

In the conversation with the writer Odil Yoqubov, entitled “The Nature of the Novel: Its Demands and Possibilities,” the critic approaches the issue from the perspective that the most important feature of the novel is the presence of novelistic thinking within the work. The writer, drawing on world and Russian literary experience, reveals shortcomings in Uzbek novels. The interlocutors discuss the concept of the hero based on Yoqubov’s novels. The critic’s view that “if a writer penetrates more deeply into the human heart, it opens the way to creative originality” is supported by the writer, who agrees: “Indeed, the primary task of literature is to depict the human soul—to express, as Chernyshevsky said, the dialectics of the human spirit.” Thus, the interlocutors conclude that the fate of the novel genre largely depends on correctly resolving the theoretical and practical enigmas posed by literary experience itself.

The conversation entitled “Aesthetics within Character,” conducted with the writer P. Qodirov, clearly concerns literary criticism from its very title. On the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the resolution “On Literary-Artistic Criticism,” the interlocutors discuss changes in literary criticism. They exchange views on its subject, theory and methodology, principles and tasks, the talent of the critic, and his duty to literature and readers. Regarding the talent of the critic, the writer believes that literary criticism emerges at the boundary between science and artistic creation, where both spheres merge and synthesize their qualities.

The statement in the conversation that “If we imagine literature as a living organism, criticism performs the function of the liver, purifying its blood” (p. 149) accurately characterizes the essence and unique nature of literary criticism. This dialogue broadens the reader’s understanding of criticism.

The conversation with the renowned children’s writer Khudoyberdi To‘xtaboev, entitled “The Concerns of Adventure,” addresses attitudes toward adventure and detective genres, the writer’s creative laboratory, the inner essence of his works, the writing process, and shortcomings in contemporary children’s literature.

The conversations in “*Talent Tarbiyasi*” are products of the 1970s; therefore, traces of that period are naturally present. Normatov’s active engagement in this genre is also evident in his 1986 book “*Qalb Inqilobi*” (“Revolution of the Heart”), which includes two literary conversations (with Omon Matjon and O‘tkir Hoshimov), further confirming his contribution.

In conclusion, literary conversations contribute to the development and elevation of literature. Literary-critical dialogues serve as assistants to readers in understanding more deeply the creative personalities and inner worlds of the interlocutors. Such conversations are distinguished by their scientific and educational significance for literature enthusiasts and aspiring writers. The observations above clearly demonstrate the unique role of the devoted critic and scholar U. Normatov—who is now celebrating his blessed 90th anniversary—in the development of this active genre within Uzbek literary criticism.

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