

## **EXPOSING THE CRISIS OF RATIONALISM AND OVERCOMING IT**

In Hrant Matevosyan's literature \*

**Key words:** The crisis of rationalism, standard ways of being, natural lifestyle, dead values, intuitive perception, accountability.

### Introduction

After the October Revolution in 1917, there was a great interest in the *Bolshevik experience*. The World War II halted the process of transformation. Though the hopes of creating a good life did not die down, yet in the middle of the century the irreversible consequences of the policy of the time were obvious.

Hrant Matevosyan was the representative of the generation that carried the war devastations on his shoulders in the rear. He was sensitive to all kinds of changes in life. Though the writer had to listen to harsh accusations, the time showed that he was the most farsighted among his contemporaries. Back in the 1960s, the writer's artistic-philosophical world thoroughly formed. His essays and novels revolutionized the public thought molded by ideological provisions.

Considering the greats of the Armenian literature, Hovhannes Tumanyan, Aksel Bakunts, Yeghishe Charents, Hamo Sahyan, to be his teachers, Matevosyan also mastered the World Literature through the works and the experience of Sherwood Anderson, William Faulkner, Hemingway, Marquez, Bergson, Freud, and Jung. They contributed to the discovery of the new artistic forms, such as the flow of consciousness, different perceptions of the time related to the ways of abandoning the traditional way of writing, changing the quantitative method of narration with qualitative one, creating confessional literature.

The *novelty proposed* by the author was the *expansion of the mental world* of the characters and its relation to the *individual and righteous experience of reality* which became a reliable source of documenting the modern life in literature. Matevosyan revealed the contradictory inner world of a man, the power of instincts and the dominance of the subconscious, the dialectics of human soul - the interaction of thoughts, feelings, and moods, mutual penetrations of the transition from one to the other origin and the further process of detailed reproduction, which contribute to the revealing of the main patterns and state of mental process.

The thematic division of Matevosyan's work ("The Carriage Horses", "Beginning", does not clarify the qualitative transitions of the different cycles. It has to be noted that in Matevosyan case the language development went through a certain subjectivization. The separation between the author and the text in the first period ("Ahnidzor", "Our Family of Clowns", "Princess Nana's Bridge", "We and Our Mountains") gradually reduced, while in the second ("August", "Alkho", "Hangover", "The Autumn Sun", "The Buffalo", "The Beginning", "Trees") and the third periods ("Tashkent", "The Lord", "The Barrow") it manifested itself in a new way as a unique linguistic thinking.

*Monologue* is the direct way of discovering the character and the inner world of the hero for the writer, which is built on a certain rhythm, mood ("The Beginning", "Trees"), feelings ("A Transparent Day", "Metsamor"), combination of different perceptions of the time ("Tashkent", "The Barrow"), different interpretations of things ("The Lord"), etc., between the text and the writer.

In the 1970s, Matevosyan created mainly the literature of *monologues* where the acting character, the self, acted as a subject of speech. The best works of this period are "Autumn Sun", "Trees", "The Beginning", and "The Punishment". In the literature of the 1970s, Matevosyan, *as a leading character*, concedes his place to the heroes as the first person, since the author's position, according to him, "is purely fixative rather than relational, that is, he says: this is how it is."<sup>1</sup> In the works of 1980s ("Tashkent", "The Lord", "The Barrow"), the self of the *story* turned into a *collective "self"*, the

<sup>1</sup> Matevosyan H. I., *In Front of A White Paper* [In Armenian]. (Yerevan: Publishing House: "Hayagitak". 2004), p. 71.

subject of the speech turned from “self” to “we”, it was expressed as “we”. The aim of the author was to reveal the psychology, ethics, and portrait of the people. This was a new level of self-consciousness of the *collective* “self” which became the culmination of Matevosyan's world perception model.<sup>2</sup>

### 1. Society “Without Opposition”

The October Revolution was an unprecedented phenomenon in the history of world civilization, which imposed an original path on the course of development of the vast Soviet Union that was being formed. With its backwardness Russia was unable to compete with the West; a balancing force was needed for the opposing forces and that was socialism, which was created in the West as a result of a struggle against great faults, moral losses, and injustice, as a result of a struggle to restore equality. The Bolsheviks, or as they were called, the “Reds” “gave a completely new direction to the Russian history because Russia adopted the Western worldview for the first time”.<sup>3</sup> The advantages in the country were combined with obvious disadvantages: the ideology of the Communist Party prevailed everywhere.

The state concentrated the surplus profit in the economy, thus excluding free development.<sup>4</sup> The same happened in the field of culture: the socialist realism limited the boundaries of perception of the phenomena. After the revolution, the Soviet literature had a strong ideological character until the 1950s. Those who did not obey paid with their lives or with exile, especially from 1935 to 1937, and surely after that, too. In the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century at the cost of great losses, the Armenian literature had authors who were rescued. The literary generation of the 1960s, led by Hrant Matevosyan, rendered invaluable service to the Soviet literature, “*They replaced the awkward role of the elucidator of ideology with the responsible work of the conqueror of the real life*”.<sup>5</sup> The reconstruction of the 1980s did not save the general situation. The society “without opposition” committed suicide; the

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<sup>2</sup> Grigoryan V. R., *The Development Periods of Matevosyan's Work. Matevosyan's Readings* [In Armenian]. (Yerevan, Yerevan State University Publishing House, 2006), p. 162.

<sup>3</sup> Toynbee A. J., *Civilization Before the Judgment of History* [In Russian]. (Moscow. Iris-Press Publishing House, 2003), p. 441.

<sup>4</sup> Grigoryan V. R., *Hrant Matevosyan. The Work* [In Armenian]. (Yerevan. Yerevan State University Publishing House, 2013), p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p.4.

destruction of millions of destinies was unnecessary, “The whole country has become a graveyard of oppressed souls and restrained abilities... It became a cemetery before it exploded”,<sup>6</sup> wrote Hrant Matevosyan. He predicted the collapse of the state decades ago. In October of 1961 while the Soviet Union was going to adopt a plan to build Communism, in May of 1961, contrary to the country's left-wing policy, Hrant Matevosyan published his essay “Ahnidzor” in Armenia. This was an unprecedented courage. The issues of the “Soviet Literature” journal, where the essay had been published, were collected and publicly burned, and the author was expelled from the institute. “If the essay “Ahnidzor” had gone unnoticed, if it had not been savagely crushed, the journal had not been collected, had not been burned, and banned, perhaps I would have gone through another way, looking for other things. But contrary to them, I stood up for the place where they hit me, the place where they bombed me”.<sup>7</sup>

Matevosyan was not published anymore, he was not broadcast on the radio; everyone rejected him, “There were a lot of arguments, there was something like despair, and it was just disgusting”. Finally, they appointed him as a proofreader in the newspaper “Armenian Fiskulturnik”; they were even ready to publish him. The defense came from abroad. The situation in the country was strictly criticized on the Munich radio, comparing it to the violence behind the *Iron Curtain* in 1937. Several such publications and, “they began to atone for their sins here”.<sup>8</sup> They offered to publish him in the journal “Soviet Armenia” published for the Diaspora. With the story “Hovsep Returned from the Army”<sup>9</sup> the writer's return to the literature took place.

All of Matevosyan's literature became a critique of the left-wing policy of the Soviet country in all spheres, “Perhaps, it is the distorted version of the world culture, politics, and history that has fallen on us,” said the writer. “Again, the problem comes from the Marxist-Leninist doctrine where the peasantry is considered only as an ally of the working class. I do not know what role was given to the intelligentsia, but the working-peasant classes were

<sup>6</sup> Vardumyan H. S., *Conversations with Hrant Matevosyan* [In Armenian]. (Yerevan, “Van Aryan” Publishing House, 2003), p.16.

<sup>7</sup> Matevosyan H. I., *I am who I am* [In Armenian]. (Yerevan, “Voskan Yerevantsi” Publishing House, 2005), p. 501.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 500.

<sup>9</sup> The story “*Hovsep Returned from the Army*” was published in the magazine “Soviet Armenia” (1962, vol. 2) after the “stir” and forced silence around “Ahnidzor”, and in 2006 in the book “*Princess Nana's Bridge*” under the title “*Return*”.

never in an equal condition, the peasantry was doomed to destruction”.<sup>10</sup>

Still at the beginning of his literary journey, Matevosyan predicted the collapse of the country. The created works became the chronicle of the destruction of the country. Only outwardly it might seem that there was success, there was construction, there was social security; but it was just a deception, “Since I started smoking, I have been looking for cigarettes. Since I have had a family, I have been in the queues for bread and meat. No matter what you say; whatever was meant to collapse, it collapsed. That society was not something to be saved, it was not something to be rebuilt”.<sup>11</sup> Matevosyan, fighting against the great-power ideology with his literature, defended the country, the homeland, the people on behalf of the village and the rural fiction.

## 2. Rejection of the Party’s Planned Forms of Living

In terms of content, the development of Matevosyan's artistic world was somewhat natural. The novelist entered the literature with the inviolable mindset of rejecting the *planned forms of living* and defending the *natural forms of existence*. The process of existence took out from itself the dead and false values. In the works of his third period, he defended the right of a man to *progress, to get accomplished, to exercise his potential power freely, without restriction*. By this, the crisis of giving a rationalist meaning to being was overcome, and the issue of human responsibility became a priority.

Matevosyan entered the literature with an essay “Ahnidzor” (1961) where he thoroughly criticized the economy of the Soviet country “governed” by planning and calculations. It was obvious that progress was impossible without taking into account the daily demands of a man. The conclusion was that *the private owner is not the enemy of the public economy, but its supporter*.

The essay opposed the outrageous omissions of the communist economic management. But if the contemporaries offered to overcome the shortcomings, to improve the methods of work, to regulate the bureaucratic apparatus, to strengthen the ideological work, etc., Matevosyan was far from

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 318.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 450.

wandering like a blind man in the apparent circle.

It was necessary to create opportunities for the development of private economies. If the private sector in production was ignored, then its soul was taken out of the economy. This was the general conclusion of the essay, but not the comprehensive meaning of the content. It was necessary to fight not for the *idea*, but for the *person*. The importance was given to the problem of the citizen, who bore the burden of the country. If the problem was resolved for the sake of the principles, it meant, they were acting against a person. And the consequences were catastrophic in the fields of economy, domestic politics, national relations, and science. It turned out that many illegalities could be justified for the sake of the country and its course. And all this at the expense of the reaper, the shepherd, the milk man, the guard. For the first time, Matevosyan spoke neither about the workman, nor on his behalf, but through his mouth.

In his essay, the writer openly criticized the failures of the planned economy, which were the result of the consistent *calculations*. The writer saw the events from the inside and demanded to make the life of the villager bearable without additional means, i.e. to allow members of sovkhos to have ten sheep each; if keeping cows was not forbidden, then allow having grass for that cow. Most grasslands were not harvested, many rotted. It must be allowed to reap, “You have cut down the lands near houses. After all, the much can be cut down, how do you reduce what is already little? In which charter is it written that the salary is paid once every two or three months? It is not written, and the received amount is a price of a piece of clothing”.<sup>12</sup>

When the state failed to meet the basic needs of a workman, people found a way out. They picked berries, i.e., wild strawberry, and sold them in the city, “Wild strawberry became a loaf of bread, two pounds of sugar, four caloshes for a mother who took the cattle to the mountains for the summer season, tarpaulin shoes, a hat, and a tie. Wild strawberry became the failure of the field work...”.<sup>13</sup> The country found itself in a catastrophic situation after the enlargement of the community economies, after sovkhosisation; the control

<sup>12</sup> **Matevosyan H. I.**, *Works in two volumes*. Vol. 1 [In Armenian]. (Yerevan, “Sovetakan Grogh” Publishing House, 1985), p. 32.

<sup>13</sup> **Ibid.**, p. 40.

became almost impossible.<sup>14</sup>

Matevosyan depicted the invisible side of the country with a combination of various stories. It was a military state that controlled every square meter of the boundless country but had not been able to solve the basic demands of its citizens. Man was forcibly plunged into an ideological swamp. He was forced to speak and to think what was considered necessary. While each one had the corner of his heart, “the corner of the heart that does not concern us, does not even concern his wife, does not even concern its mind, his corner of the heart. Why do you definitely want to make that corner red? At least we did make it! We do not make anything, we destroy, we leave”<sup>15</sup>.

The works written in the 1960s were directed against the rationalist regulations that existed in the society; they covered various spheres of life, from economics to the fields of art, in particular, the literature. This path began with small but clear steps that led to great generalizations.

The first part of the “August” (1967) collection includes the novel “We and Our Mountains”, the stories “The Bear”, “Sadness”, “Dogs”, “A Naive Story”, as well as the series “The Carriage Horses” which are the manifestations of a united world and tend to have a certain regularity. The works created mainly in the 1950-60s feature the expulsion of a person full of vitality from the world that was created by the rationalist theory of being, hence the loss of the meaning of being and its integrity. Matevosyan's world was aimed at the protection of human rights. In this sense, the literary pre-attempts to which the author did not attach much importance were important. They were an integral part of the writer's work as a whole.

Still Pythagoras predicted the mathematicalization<sup>16</sup> of science over a period of two thousand five hundred years, if not forever. In modern times, with Husserl's philosophy, everything was put within certain limits. Nature (Husserl) did not avoid it, either. Empirical subjects were subjected to mathematical idealization. Man began to be viewed as a generalized, ideal

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<sup>14</sup> The story “*Hovsep Returned from the Army*” was published in the magazine “Soviet Armenia” (1962, vol. 2) after the “stir” and forced silence around “*Ahmidzor*”, and in 2006 in the book “*Princess Nana's Bridge*” under the title “*Return*”.

<sup>15</sup> **Ibid.**

<sup>16</sup> Volkova, V.O., Maslov, V.M., Sosnina, Y.,N., Shetulova, E.D., Shirshin, G.A (2015). *Philosophy of Science: Post-Non-classical Development Strategies* [In Russian]. Nizhny Novgorod State Technical University after R.E. Alekseev, pp. 9-10.

type without personality. And just as the creator<sup>17</sup> of the unity of the Platonic cosmos (mind and soul are inseparable), God, occupying a central place in the Christian worldview, could not answer many questions, neither could Newtonian law-based science and Husserlian philosophy. The belief in absolute reason, which meant reality, collapsed, “The theoretical world was separated from the world of life, but at the same time aspired to become the main roleholder of the whole being”.<sup>18</sup>

The literature felt the discomfort caused by this disproportion and the impending losses. Echoes of the event were evident in the world literature, particularly in the Russian literature. Dostoevsky was convinced that a man was a secret that must be revealed.<sup>19</sup> The scientific and technological progress could not answer many questions, they pushed man only to false solutions, consequently he tended to serve Baal, the idol of the desire for accumulation, which rejected everything spiritual. Dostoevsky guessed what would happen as a result of socialism. A society, with a negative attitude towards the spiritual, simply could not offer any solution, the same was true for capitalism which was deprived of a spiritual high purpose. Tolstoy, who considered science to be a knowledge of the essentials of human life, was more consistent. Veritable, true science was needed by all; it was short, clear, and understandable. As Skovoroda remarked, “God, wanting good for people, has made the useless things difficult for them and everything that is necessary easy for them”.<sup>20</sup> And what they call science was actually false because it sought to give a person everything except for the only thing that was necessary for a person - to live a good life. Tolstoy did not believe in the possibility of social progress; he valued the ascent that was based on religion, particularly on Christian morality. Consequently, external changes in public life could not improve the life of people. Tolstoy did not accept “Avenarius”, “Darwinians”, “Haeckelians”, as well as Marx.

In some cases, with considerable delay, the clash between the traditional and modern literature armed with the “achievements of science”

<sup>17</sup>Plato, *Works in Four Volumes*. Vol. 2 [In Russian] . (St. Petersburg, “Oleg Abishko” Printing House, 2007), p.12.

<sup>18</sup>Martinov, F. T., (1995). M.M. Bakhtin on ways to overcome the crisis in the rational-theoretical understanding of being, *Bakhtinology*, [In Russian]. St. Petersburg, “Aleteya” Publishing House, p. 102.

<sup>19</sup>Dostoevsky F. M., *Complete Set of Works*. Vol. 28: Book 1 [In Russian]. (Leningrad, “Nauka” Publishing House, 1985), p. 63.

<sup>20</sup>Tolstoy L. N., *Complete Set of Works*. Vol. 38 [In Russian]. (Moscow, “Khudozhestvennaya Literatura” State Publishing House, 1928-1958), pp.135-136.



took on a certain form in the Armenian literature, too. In the article “On the so-called rural fiction”, Matevosyan, arguing with Vardges Petrosyan, defended the right of true literature; he was against the systems that were supposed to create new literature, “And if you are not a writer, then add, divide all physicists, shepherds, and miners, get a physicist-pastor in quotient who accurately reflects the second half of the twentieth century of the Armenian reality, but it will not be a human being, but a sum, division, and answer of quotient”.<sup>21</sup>

Although Matevosyan talked about a broad literature in this article and was convinced that the division between rural and urban fiction was artificial; in fact, his concern was related to a general, important problem. He was against the general invasion of the civilization that was destroying the natural state of a man, “All the military records mention my father's half-suitability for military service, my suitability, my twelve-year-old brother's reserve suitability, the number of our shovels, the length and thickness of our dog's chain; the civilization has discovered them from the darkness of uncertainty and put them in the mouth of calculators...”.<sup>22</sup>

The writer's negative attitude towards everything, which will result in a new “quality” - a person deprived of personality, was obvious. Matevosyan was convinced that a person could not be a collection of resolutions; he was much richer than they tried to present or push within the regulated limits. In this regard, the essays and stories of the first period, including “We and Our Mountains”, can help us to understand the writer's path. They have internal commonality in the sense of an internal rebellion against the “standard” forms of life. It was an already oppressive, gloomy world where it was difficult to live.

Rationalist thinking was obviously important for human existence, but by its size and weight it could not cover the whole life with its wealth. According to Matevosyan, “mathematics” and “calculation”, no matter how much they tried to act as a life-regulating force, would remain only in the domain of desires. There were qualities in events, in human nature, that were not subject to logical interpretation. The rationalist approach distorted life, equalizing everything, distorted the uniqueness of the human inner world, the

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<sup>21</sup> Matevosyan H. I., *In Front of A White Paper* [In Armenian], (Yerevan, “Hayagitak” Publishing House, 2004).

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

qualities formed over a long period of time. And the life was fully manifested only by the unity of the writer's experience, outside the formulations of the world and the man.

### 3. Essay “In the Steppe”

The actions of Matevosyan's heroes are often logically *unexplainable*. They act contrary to *common sense*; they live their lives and their day as it is. Opposing the compulsion of relationships proposed by the time, they try to preserve their individuality as much as possible by resisting the long and irreversible process of bifurcation of human nature. As long as it concerns them, they are able to stand for their own essence, human qualities. It is more difficult when it turns out that in the new reality the *life* and *the notions* about it strongly differ from each other. Just at the beginning of his literary journey, Matevosyan found out the biggest miss of the time: *the purely rationalistic meaning of being is in crisis and cannot reveal the essence of phenomena*. The hero of the essay thought, “There should have been fallow, they should have seen it, yes, they should have seen that no, we are not *standard*”.<sup>23</sup> This conclusion, found yet in the first essay, was directed against the standardization of life. This was the beginning of the road, later the writer would fight *against the dead forms of life* with new approaches and in depth, he would establish the right of *existence of life full of vital force*.

The essay “*In the Steppe*” is quite important in terms of the beginning of the literary path. Matevosyan differed from the essayists published in the Union press, whose raised questions were of a general nature. The route of leveling, which was carried out in all spheres of public life, found its direct expression in the essays presented in the press. Matevosyan's long-range gaze caught the moment, “The whole Komsomol here is a mechanizer... All the mechanizers here are young communists.... Here the whole brigade, the whole working field, the whole sovkhos can be called, “Comrade mechanizers or comrade young communists”.<sup>24</sup> As a result of such policy, the person, the wealth of his inner world with all the volume of feelings and thoughts were ignored. Matevosyan talks about people who have different destinies and biographies, who work to the best of their ability, some with a

<sup>23</sup> Matevosyan H. I., Essay “*In the Prairie*”. “Soviet Literature”. Vol. 7 [In Armenian]. (Yerevan, 1959), p.34.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

clear goal of forgetting the past, some with a clear goal of making their future more prosperous, others simply cannot work because it is their essence. A bureaucratic class is being formed in the country, which attributes its achievements to it, those who avoid hard work become "leaders", "organizers" in visible spheres. The high social position of tomorrow is being prepared for them. For Matevosyan, all this is secondary to the kind of human being who is devoted to the country. And it is possible that not only man cultivates the steppe, but the steppe in turn "cultivates" the man. They are in the process of being established. This was Matevosyan's most important conclusion, which went beyond the time frame. "Steppe" is not so much about heroic work as it was about improving people.

The story "To the Examination"<sup>25</sup> is a unique expression of natural forms of life. The internal logic of the work is directed against the efforts of standardization. It seemed to people that the truth was summed up in various fat books, and that by repeating them and making various promises, one could be a good student and, in the end, a good citizen for the country. The young hero had a healthy, natural childhood. His still developing perceptions were conditioned by the impulses of the lived life. Matevosyan created the image of a young man above conventionality who had not yet tasted the bitterness of the reality; he did not know what path he would take. The bearer of the spirit of his own house, school, and village, even if those are poor but still are warm and unique, he was not afraid of a chaotic, primitive, and hard life. His inner freedom was conditioned by the freedom of the natural being of the environment where there was no compulsion; no one turned the desired into a reality. Matevosyan's hero reminds that of Salinger's<sup>26</sup> in terms of speech and some ways of expressing himself. And no matter how flawed this literary experience may be, where the one-line psychological justifications are obvious, it still has an internally appealing power. Matevosyan's Artyush Soghomonyan is diametrically opposed to Salinger's Caulfield, if the latter escapes from the environment of bitterness and falsity to an abstract world where he can be with himself at some point, then Matevosyan's hero has his world. He has no fear of the unknown. For him, everything is definite; everything has its value and place. He does not feel the need to reinterpret

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<sup>25</sup> **Matevosyan H. I.**, Essay "To Examination". "Soviet Literature". Vol. 2 [In Armenian]. (Yerevan, 1960), p. 43.

<sup>26</sup> **Salinger's J.D.**, Novel "The Catcher in the Rye" was first published in 1951. In 1960 it was published in Russian in the 11th issue of the magazine "Foreign Literature".

these phenomena. And all this is conditioned by his inner sense of united community life . "The boys came and said they were going to study, in groups, right now". The labour division happened by itself. One of the boys ran to the village council, the other ran to the medical center to get references, the president provided a car to take the boys to the institute, the driver would not take anything from such strong and knowledgeable boys. On the way, as they were passing by the gardens, he stopped the car, filled it with apricots under the benches to enjoy the beauty of the nature, and the garden guard threw his handcuffs only when the boys had already jumped over the fence in groups. The chairman of the admissions committee said that the power of attorney should have been written separately, but in the village council they had given one, they did not feel the need to write it separately. For now, though not in depth, the *live life and its dead forms* opposed one another. So, when on the evening of the sixth day the boy was talking about his impressions at home, he first told about the hay gathering, expressed his admiration for the president, the driver, his friends, the theft of apricots, the story of bringing “galette for tea” for the guard, the party at the mountain pass restaurant. His mother was not interested in all this, moreover, she cried because the boy took after his father, he didn't see the main thing and was happy with useless things, “And my father asked, “Did you steal apricots while leaving? Did you bring galette for the guard when you returned? You knew the questions, but you did not want to become a student, did you? Cinnamon tea is very good. And in general, your mother makes very good tea. Give me some jam...”<sup>27</sup>

The end of the story is the glorification of the vital forms of life, the charm of everyday life is the most important, and it cannot be replaced by the schemes of life, live by self-deception. According to the father, the son's comment is appropriate. If human existence does not proceed according to the imposed norms, then everything is right. After all, he enjoys the wonderful jam made by his wife; he is not forced to eat what he does not like. Then you have to be content with what you have and everything you own today.

The story “I Left My Mountains Above” was aimed against the monotonous forms of living. It was published in the “August” collection

<sup>27</sup> Matevosyan H. I., (1960), p. 49.

under the title “Dogs”. The problem was more obvious in the thoughts and experiences of the hero of the story. Live life was opposed to mathematics, to calculation. Nature and life were “located” in the world of numbers; phenomena lost their pre-created wealth and charm. Here again the hero "is a teenager" and acts as a participant in the events. The opposite is the conflict between the vital forms of life and the forced schemes of life, which finds an unexpected solution. As the pardons were "corrected" with difficulty, so did the boy. He overcomes his love for the mountains and is completely immersed in algebra. The alienation was so thorough that at the end of the month, when the teacher wanted to hear the forgiveness story again, the student simply doubted the teacher's common sense. The youngster was already an example of a “*re-educated*” person. The headmaster was simply delighted with the progress of the once lazy boy, the quarrelsome, malevolent spirit was no longer stirring in him, and that would not wake up any more in him.

What can be said about these literary experiments? From the very beginning, Matevosyan chose the path of resistance; the “fight” he started would turn into a general “war” in the literature, simply because a view that encompassed horizons included “everything” with internal contradictions, ups and downs. Matevosyan's struggle was for the protection of the right to a healthy and natural life which was under attack by the new era. The country lived *with the consciousness of carrying out a serious historical mission* which justified the difficulties and misfortunes that weighed on the shoulders of the workman. The sacrifices made “for the benefit of humanity” gave a historical meaning to the existence of the Soviet country. *It turned out that the Marxists still did not deeply value the traditions of the ancient world; it was difficult to be guided by humanity, and in some cases, to leave much to the conscience of the people.* The criminal became the obvious manifestation of the imperfect laws of the society (“Princess Nana's Bridge”)<sup>28</sup>. Obviously, progress was necessary, but *the price of what was achieved was too much greater, when the love and conscience of a man, the warmth of the human soul, and his personality are crucified*, and as a result of all these mathematics- the account remains that tries to play not a secondary but the

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<sup>28</sup> According to the writer, the novel “*Princess Nana's Bridge*” was written before 1967. But it was published as a separate book only in 2006.



into life what is not really life. It is interested in the *right, serious, predictable, safe, and expedient* forms. But these are the qualities of the one alienated from the living forms of life of an ignorant person. The society turns life into a “public masquerade”. The environment creates rules that enclose live life and its internal outburst into various systems, forcing to live in a new way. And these are dead forms separated from the live life.

#### 4. Alienation as a result of a one-dimensional thinking

In 1965 Matevosyan published the novel “We and Our Mountains”. The goal of the writer as a whole was to reject the false forms of the reality for the sake of human natural forms of life. This was a self-governing world. The community brought out the one who was able to bear this or that burden. The headmaster brought the economic accountant to school, who had been a prisoner of war for two years: thereafter, the graduates received excellent marks from the German language when they entered university. The threshing floor guard took over the position of accountant, the first president of the farm, who had long since retired, became a guard. They lived by the laws of nature. Everyday work was the basis of human well-being in Antaramej Village. A lot had changed. The danger was that the work was directed by means of extra-economic compulsion. The indifference of the collective owner to his own work increased. Man began to be alienated from work, which was the way of his natural existence. Alienation from work became universal. The village felt that it was not the owner, while the process of distributing the result was reserved for those who were not the direct organizers and employees of the work. Seventy years later they were forced to declare that public property was deprived of its real owner. Matevosyan recorded that absurd situation back in the 1960s with exceptional justifications. Finally, the writer concludes the process of separation of a man and the law with an important conclusion, where the degree of alienation is absolute. "The good thing is not only that, after the case of sheep, they say, no theft was found in Antaramej. To be, it may have been, but it was not discovered, so it was not." Dealing with the law once was enough for the villager to make sure that the further away from the law, the better. And if something happened, the inhabitants of Antaramej found their own way out, trying to live without public bodies “maintaining order”.

Eventually, the internal development of the events simply had tragic consequences for the country: the flow of the peasantry to the city became unmanageable. It was an aspiration to pass from one quality of the life to another. It meant the loss of centuries-old traditions, culture, and human qualities. The aspiration to be included in the cultural life in the urban environment became only artificial. In the very first novel, the writer's ability to create deep and natural characters appeared. Avag, Ishkhan, Zaven, Pavleh, the Lieutenant, the General, and others were personalized characters with characteristic qualities peculiar only to them. Zaven's observations in court were noteworthy, "You are an accountant, an accoun-tant... One can't deal with you, you collect a medal, you collect a certificate, you collect a biography and become a master... You are an accountant, an accoun-tant..." "Speak to the point," said the judge. "Citizen Judge, whatever you have is in essence, nothing more... You have turned the world into accounting".<sup>32</sup>

The questions raised in the works of the first period already delineated the boundaries of Matevosyan's world. According to the author, when he was still young, he found what to say, the issues raised in "Ahnidzor" were present in "Tashkent". But if the theme and the problems were the same, then the cognition of life, the process of discovering what already existed, the way of interpreting the events were not the same. What mattered was not seeing the universality of the phenomena or their cause- effect links. *There was no longer a fighting irony against the standard ways of living, against rationalism.* After all, the stories and novels of the first period showed how not to live, how not to devalue life, how not to put it in schemes and numbers because they were conditions imposed on "real life" from the outside. And all this was nothing compared to the natural forms of life and its course.

If the essays, then the novels, and stories that continued in their mood, were works created by the *laws of logic*, here the word they contain could not be objected, no one could turn the direction of the writer's gaze- the land was being alienated from the workman, the people from the result of the work, the basic human needs were not solved, the expansion of the city at the expense of the village was not right; then from the second half of the 60s such questions, which were logically interpretable and "understandable", were absent or

<sup>32</sup> Matevosyan H. I., *Works in two volumes*. Vol. 1 [In Armenian]. (Yerevan, "Sovetakan Grogh" Publishing House, 1985), p. 141.



secondary to the writer. Writer's rationalism gave way to intuition, Matevosyan was no longer interested in the *idea abstracted from the text*; he put importance in the whole process of making the text.

## Conclusion

The study is dedicated to Hrant Matevosyan's criticism of the consequences of the policy of equalizing the Soviet reality in literature.

After the revolution of 1917, the interest in the Bolshevik experience was quite high. Although the Second World War halted the development process, the irreversible consequences of the policy were already evident in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Hrant Matevosyan's essays and works revolutionized the stereotyped public thinking, along with the fearful attempts to voice the truth in literature. The "Ahnidzor" essay, with bold questions and generalizations, became the most serious criticism of the economic policy of the Soviet country. The writer boldly showed the way out of the created existence. "Ahnidzor" was also a consistent criticism of the calculable forms of social existence, which was developed in the writer's later works. This basic principle was completed in the essay written by the writer in 1959 in "Tapastanum", ("In the Steppe") where the writer rebelled against the "standard" ways of living: he talks about improving people.

Matevosyan entered the literature with an unbreakable mindset of rejecting the calculable ways of life and protecting the natural ways of life.

The crisis of the philosophy of culture deepened in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Matevosyan remembers M. Bakhtin's name. The latter's scientific activity, both philosophical and literary, was the answer to the crisis of the rationalist meaning of existence that appeared in recent times. "In short, the essence of the crisis can be expressed as follows: the expulsion of a person from the world created by the rationalist theory of existence, and hence the loss of the meaning of existence, its integrity".<sup>33</sup>

Revealing the consequences of "calculable, planned" economic policy in the comments, the writer deepens the questioning in the novel "We Are Our Mountains", presents the alienation of the worker from work, law, and

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<sup>33</sup> Bakhtinology, [In Russian]. (St. Petersburg, Aleteya Publishing House, 1995), p. 101.



Ուսումնասիրությունը նվիրված է Հրանտ Մաթևոսյանի գրականության մեջ խորհրդային հավասարեցման քաղաքականության հետևանքների քննադատությանը: Հոդվածում նոր տեսանկյունով են վերլուծվում գրողի ստեղծագործությունները, կիրառվել են համադրական, պատմահամեմատական և վերլուծական մեթոդները:

1917 թվականի հեղափոխությունից հետո բավականաչափ մեծ էր հետաքրքրությունը **բուլշևիկյան փորձի** հանդեպ: Թեև Երկրորդ համաշխարհային պատերազմը կասեցրեց երկրի զարգացման ընթացքը, այդուհանդերձ, 20-րդ դարակեսին այլևս ակնհայտ էին վարվող քաղաքականության անդառնալի հետևանքները: Դեռևս իր ակնարկներում բացահայտելով «հաշվարկելի, պլանավորված» տնտեսական քաղաքականության հետևանքները՝ գրողը, «Մենք ենք, մեր սարերը» վիպակում խորացնելով հարցադրումը, ներկայացրել է երկրի վարած քաղաքականության հետևանքով աշխատավորի օտարումը ինչպես աշխատանքից, այնպես էլ օրենքից և դատական համակարգից:

Գրականության մեջ ձևարտությունը բարձրաձայնելու վախվորած փորձերի կողքին Հրանտ Մաթևոսյանի ակնարկներն ու երկերը հեղաշրջեցին կադապարված հասարակական մտածողությունը: «Ահնիձոր» ակնարկը համարձակ հարցադրումներով ու ընդհանրացումներով դարձավ խորհրդային երկրի տնտեսվարման քաղաքականության լրջագույն քննադատություն: Գրողը համարձակորեն ցույց էր տալիս նաև ստեղծված կացությունից դուրս գալու ելքը: «Ահնիձորը» նաև **հասարակական կեցության հաշվարկելի ձևերի** հետևողական քննադատություն էր, որը Մաթևոսյանը զարգացրեց իր հետագայում գրված գործերում: Այս ելակետային սկզբունքն ամբողջացվել էր դեռևս գրողի 1959 թվականին գրած «Տափաստանում» ակնարկում, որում գրողն ընթրստանում է կյանքի «ստանդարտ» ձևերի դեմ. նա խոսում է *կապարելագործվող* մարդկանց մասին: Մաթևոսյանը գրականություն էր մտնում կյանքի հաշվարկելի ձևերը մերժելու և բնական կենսաձևերը պաշտպանելու անխախտ մտայնությամբ:

Հարցադրումները գրողը քննում էր ոչ միայն հասարակական, այլև բնագիտական՝ կենսաբանական մակարդակում: Նրա «Ծաղրածուների մեր տոհմը» վիպակը բնության կողմից մարդուն տրված պաշտպանական միջոցի՝ ծիծաղի և լրջության՝ ռացիոնալիզմի հա-



серьезной критикой экономической политики страны советов. В то же время писатель смело указывал на пути выхода из создавшейся ситуации. Повесть «Агнидзор» стала инструментом последовательной критики последствий форм **расчетлового бытия**, что в последствии проходит лейтмотивом во многих произведениях Матевосяна. Этот основополагающий принцип отчётливо проявился уже в повести «Тапастан», написанной в 1959 г., где автор как бы восстает против установленных «стандартов» и говорит о совершенствующихся людях.

Становление Матевосяна на литературном поприще началось с беспрекословного намерения отказаться от форм расчетлового бытия и стать приверженцем естественного развития форм существования.

К середине XX столетия кризис культуры философии стал ещё глубже. Матевосян в своих интервью вовсе не случайно упоминает имя Михаила Бахтина, труды которого – как философские, так и литературоведческие – стали ответом на рационалистическое осмысление сущности возникшего кризиса: «Краткую суть этого кризиса можно выразить так: вытеснение человека из того мира, который создавала рационалистическая теория бытия, а отсюда и утеря смысла бытия, его целостности».

Поставленные проблемы писатель анализирует не только на социальном, но и на естествоведческом и биологическом уровнях. Повесть «Наш род насмешников» – это разговор о рациональности противопоставления смешного и серьезного, что есть природный дар, данный человеку в качестве средства защиты. В повести «Мост княгини Нана» – ярко выражено столкновение ложных расчётов и человеческого характера. Взор Матевосяна направлен на защиту прав «естественного человека» и созвучен мировоззрению Бахтина, со всеми вытекающими последствиями. Защитить право жить по-человечески – означает нести ответственность за человека и его судьбу.