

DOI: 10.15643/libartrus-2016.4.1

## The influence of Vissarion Belinskiĭ on the literary criticism of Mikhail Naimy

© M. L. Swanson

United States Naval Academy  
589 McNair Rd., 21402 Annapolis, MD, USA.

Email: swanson@usna.edu

*In the article the influence of Russian literary criticism on writings of Mikhail Naimy, the world renowned figure in modern Arabic literature, is studied. Together other Arab-American men of letters he founded the Pen Association, a literary league in New York that lifted Arabic literature from the quagmire of stagnation, imitation and old classicism. They also promoted the new generation of Arab writers and made it an active force in Arab nationalism. In this article the author touches upon the only one aspect of Naimy's multifaceted literary efforts, his literary criticism. The article is focused on the key role of the Russian influence in its development. We would claim that along with Arabic influence the American and Western Europe literary traditions played a secondary role in Naimy's development. Only the Russian school had produced a developed theory of criticism and an understanding of literature that positioned the critic, along with the writer, as a social reformer, and viewed criticism along with writing as a social labor. It was Russian literature that had the most important impact on Naimy. This influence has still only been studied superficially aside from some Soviet era analyses. The article makes a much-needed contribution to this blank spot, since the Russian authors contributed greatly to the foundation of the modern Arabic literature. It also sheds light on global literary processes, as Naimy was able to synthesize Russian, European and American literary and critical traditions into his native Arabic heritage. The study has significant methodological value, as it will identify the typology and significance of cultural contacts, based on the example of influence mentioned above. It will also contribute to an important topic of the renewed interest in the academy – Russian influences and impacts in the Middle East and in Arabic culture and literature.*

**Keywords:** Mikhail Naimy, Vissarion Belinskiĭ, Russian influence, modern Arabic literature, Russian literary criticism.

### Introduction

It was in the middle of the 1920s that Ignatĭĭ Ÿulianovich Krachkovskiĭ (1883–1951), founder of the Soviet school of Arabic studies, discovered a young Lebanese writer by the name of Mikhail Naimy. Krachkovskiĭ was in the process of putting together an anthology of Arabic literature that he was editing. As he was making his way through the material, he came upon a critical article by the young Naimy that impressed him. Krachkovskiĭ knew nothing about the writer outside of the fact that he was living in the U. S. at the time. What he saw in this article, however, struck him by its resemblance to Russian critical thinking, particularly that of the nineteenth-century critic Vissarion Grigor'evich Belinskiĭ (1811–1848). Almost thirty years later Krachkovskiĭ would write:

I was afraid to succumb to my first impressions, but some sounds of Russian critical thoughts that were little familiar to Arabic literature of the time, seemed to echo from this article. This impression was strengthened by the collection of... [Naimy's] articles [that] were edited under the significant title, *The Sieve*... In his works, especially in his critical essays, I felt the traces of Russian literary influence, especially that of Belinskiĭ's critical school [58, p. 56].

Krachkovskii's profound knowledge of Arabic and Russian literature as well as his sensitivity as a reader enabled him to recognize Naimy's talent, and he set to work publishing his critical articles as examples of the new trends in Arabic literature.

How it was that a young Lebanese writer schooled in Russian Orthodoxy in his home country should come to be so influenced by Russia's chief social critic of the nineteenth century?

It was, to be sure, an unlikely literary relationship, one that might have seemed counterintuitive given the state of Russian literary life when Naimy first arrived in Russia in 1905. The Golden Age of Russian literature was waning, yet the great philosophical novels of Tolstoĭ and Dostoevskii still remained the benchmark of greatness. The early twentieth century witnessed the shorter forms of writers such as Chekhov who turned his attentions to the subtly realized details of the everyday. Realism was ceding its place to symbolism, while the world of tsarist autocracy was slowly coming unraveled through its own lack of engagement with the life and needs of Russia's people. Politically Russia was poised between the abortive 1905 Revolution, and the one that would change it irrevocably in 1917. This is the world that Naimy entered.

The influence that Belinskii would have on the young Lebanese writer was closely tied to the effect that Russia – its culture and its literary life and its social conditions – had on him.

This article examines only one aspect of Niamey's numerous and multifaceted writings, which is his literary criticism that largely developed under the influence of Vissarion Belinskii, the outstanding Russian critic and journalist. Naimy's *al-Ghirbāl* (*The Sieve*, 1923), the one of the first Arabic collections of critical essays in literature, was called by Roger Allen, Professor of Arabic and Comparative Literature at the University of Pennsylvania and one of the leading figures in Arabic studies, "the pioneering work of criticism published in the '20s" [1, p. 225]. Naimy not only criticized the situation of Arabic literature by that time, but also drew up specific solutions for transforming it into the one that would meet the needs of modern society.

It is not surprising that Naimy together with several Arab men of letters made radical changes to Arabic literature under the influence of foreign literatures, as they incorporated into it the world best achievements in this area and followed modern world literary currents and art directions. Thus they converted the stagnant genres, topics and language of the traditional Arabic literature into modern ones that met the needs of both society and readers in the twentieth century.

The Scottish professor Hamilton Alexander Rosskeen Gibb, whose studies are concentrated on Middle Eastern history and culture, noted [43] that "contemporary Arabic literature in the strict sense" came from two sources. They were the new generation of Egyptian men of letters who created their revolutionary works and the *al-Mahjarī*<sup>1</sup> modernists, particularly represented by the Pen Association in the U. S. A., where Naimy used to live in 1916–1932 and productively working.

In its brief outline of its literary program, the Pen Association specified its role, noting that it must bring "the new spirit [into the Arabic culture], which is aimed at stepping out from stagnation and traditionalism towards innovation...through literary works, as well as bringing freedom to the worldview of [men of letters]... This is today's hope and tomorrow's direction" [47, p. 86]. Thus, it not only helped to further modern Arabic literature, but also influenced other literary schools and built an information conduit to facilitate the exchange of cultural, spiritual and moral values between Eastern and Western literatures.

---

<sup>1</sup> The literature created by the Levant Arab emigrants in North and South Americas during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The Pen Association's representatives were living far from their Motherland and very often did not receive a traditional Arabic education. They were exposed to world literature while remaining in the Arabic diaspora. Furthermore, their literary works absorbed the Eastern and the Western literary traditions and enabled them to work out an inimitable style that played a significant role in the foundation of modern Lebanese literature.

The emergence of *al-Mohair* literature is similar to that of the non-Egyptian descendants<sup>2</sup>. The future Arab-American men of letters usually began their education in missionary schools in the Levant where they learned Arabic, thereby linking themselves to the Christian and Islamic religious traditions. They "thus liberated [themselves] from its traditional grip," old-fashioned canons and were able to express themselves much more freely (Hafiz 170, 171). Emigration to other countries, naturally, provoked their crisis of identity that was deepened by both their failure to blend into the culture of the host country and their failure to resist it. The former life realities of the Arab men of letters were perceived by them differently while in distant America. From another side, they tried not to lose their authentic self as a psychological defense against losing their sense of identity.

The overwhelming majority of Naimy's peers from the Pen Association drew their inspiration from American and Western European sources, but Naimy's case was different. His heightened role in the formation of modern Arabic literature consisted of his ability to perceive and transform Russian literary tendencies and organically synthesize them with his national artistic traditions.

Not any source about Naimy that we have studied gives a clear reply to the question about why Naimy, who had a passion for literature in general, loved Arabic language and mastered his writings to a high degree even at the early age, was the one of the best students both at the high school and at Nazareth teacher's college (NTC), was a real Arabic patriot, and expressed a deep and constant curiosity for the Arabic history and culture, was at the same time so much ignorant about his native literature.

We can assume that the favorable Russian cultural environment that Naimy first encountered at the Russian school in his native village and in the NTC deeply influenced him and triggered his interest to the Russian culture. Both were founded by the Russian Imperial Orthodox Society (RIOS), which followed the best pedagogical and ethical principles.

Several other reasons may account for Naimy's love for Russian literature and his preference for it over Western one. First of all, he suffered tremendously over the eternal questions of good and evil, militant and aggressive clericalism, Orthodox religious theories, and social injustice. The young Lebanese writer was able to find answers in Russian literature to his questions and his philosophical reflections that absorbed him as it was heavily engaged as it was with philosophical and religious questions, proved to be both fertile and familiar ground for Naimy and thus provided him with fewer cultural and ethical barriers than non-Christian writers would have encountered.

This was hardly surprising, as Russian literature has always been characterized by its focus on moral and ethical questions over form, meanwhile in American and European literature esthetics and forms have mostly dominated over the ethical message of literature [65].

That is why Russian realism, and especially Russian critical realism, turned out to be not just the source of Naimy's inspiration, but formed the kernel of his world view. That perception changed with the years, but the impact of Russian literature and culture remained one of the dominant components of Naimy's world outlook.

---

<sup>2</sup> Egyptian literature and journalism at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were characterized by a high number of men of letters of Levantine descent, who were "as steeped in Egyptian literature as they... [were] in their own" [67, p. 258].

And it also was, certainly, Naimy's education at Poltava<sup>3</sup> where he arrived at the age of 16 to continue his education. Naimy spent there five long years during which he was shocked not only by the cultural differences, but by the dramatic Russian social upheavals, as his stay there in 1906–1911 took place during a period between two revolutions (of 1905 and 1917). Due to this situation many political, social and cultural issues penetrated his mind more deeply and helped him perceive Russian literature not from the vantage point of a curious onlooker or researcher, but as someone who was a part of the Russian society that was immersed in deep crisis.

There was yet another reason for Naimy's love for Russia. His Poltavan period was considered by him to be the one of the happiest in his life, as it not only presented a contrast to his childhood in a traditional Lebanese village family, but was also radically different from his life in America where he spent twenty years after living in Russia. With the exception of his participation in the Pen Association, he seemed never to be happy in the U. S. A., where he lived throughout the Great Depression. Naturally, he kept thinking back to Russia, where he had felt more comfort and happiness. Up until his last days he felt love and sympathy for the Russian people and gave much credit to what Soviet society achieved, as he had witnessed the common Russian people's sufferings in their pre-revolutionary country.

Naimy did not limit himself to his admiration for Russian literature and his passion for it. He was constantly comparing his native literature to that of Russia. At the end of the nineteenth century, Arabic literature bore mainly a journalistic character, touching mostly upon socio-political topics, or copying the old Arabic literature masterpieces.

Naimy wanted to bring to his native literature the best achievements from other cultures that could induce radical and positive changes in Arabic literature. He made a unique attempt to solve several pressing problems in what he perceived as the stagnation of Arabic literature by applying the tenets of Russian critical realism<sup>4</sup>. His revolutionary critical works were written under the influence of Russian writers who advocated for the special mission of writers and literary critics as enlighteners of their people. Thus, Naimy set new tasks and goals for modern Arabic literary critics, writers and poets.

### **Problem Statement**

Naimy's vast creative writings have been thoroughly studied. Many researchers devoted their works to his passionate literary criticism, but they have mostly focused on the influence of American and Western European writers. Meanwhile, the study of the Russian influence on Naimy's long creative career has been neglected despite its decisive impact on his works.

---

<sup>3</sup> Poltava is located today in the territory of Ukraine, but then this area was a part of Russia and the Russian Empire.

<sup>4</sup> Critical realism is a literary movement that emerged between the 1820s and 1830s in European literature. Many prominent Western European writers, such as Stendhal (Marie-Henri Beyle) and Honoré de Balzac in France, Charles Dickens and William Makepeace Thackeray in England as well as Russian writers, such as Aleksander Pushkin, Nikolaï Gogol, Ivan Turgenev, Fedor Dostoevskii, Lev Tolstoï, and Anton Chekhov applied it in their works.

Critical realism portrayed a relationship between people and their environment in a new way, whereby human nature is revealed in organic connection with social circumstances. Russian critical realism was developed before the October revolution (1917), after which it helped spawn socialist realism.

Critical realism was not limited to exposing the ugly side of life. It promulgated its positive sides, such as high moral and social ideals and values, by extolling the virtues of the hard-working and morally beautiful Russian peasantry as well as the aspirations of the Russian intelligentsia to help the peasantry (Gorkin).

At the same time, in undertaking such a study, it is necessary to take into account Naimy's sojourn in different countries at a time of radical changes in the world, his perfect knowledge of several languages that he was actively using for writing and reading literature in the original, and his hard but interesting and unusual job experiences that allowed him to meet different people from various social classes. All of these factors influenced his personality and impacted his literary works. They emerged as the result of the synthesis of different cultural traditions that enriched them by making them more complex and diverse. That is why it is important to deconstruct this conglomerate of influences and to study each of them separately and in combination with each other.

The current paper briefly touches on just one aspect of Naimy's works, that is his literary criticism. Because of the space limit, we briefly analyze only one, though for a while the most important source of influence on him, that is Belinskiĭ's literary criticism.

Naimy's attraction to him was due to the fact that Babinski, together with the other Russian writers of whom Naimy was fond of (Leo Tolstoĭ, Fëdor Dostoevskiĭ, 'Anton Chekhov, Ivan Nikitin, between numerous others), responded to very specific nineteenth-century Russian issues ("the accursed questions"), such as the degree to which Russia should follow the West and the role of art as a tool for social change.

Probably, it was Belinskiĭ's central belief was that literature must have a social purpose, that gained Naimy's attention first. The Lebanese writer was painfully suffering from the stagnation in Arabic literature. At the same time, Naimy, who was an activist and a creator was constantly looking for the solution to tormented him problems that he was facing. Since he was one of the few Arabs who had a chance to travel, study and live abroad, his world view was able to change rapidly with each passing year. Russia and America were home to many kinds of literary and philosophical currents that could offer a solution to the painful topical issues that absorbed him.

In Naimy's eyes, Arabic literature was not comparable to Russian and American literature. Moreover, he was looking for ways to improve his native literature through the works of the best literary critics. The leading Russian literary critic was still Belinskiĭ.

The very observant Naimy certainly could not miss the fire in Belinskiĭ's writings and the numerous philosophical and social essays by Tolstoĭ (and their discussion in the press and among the people themselves) that touched upon problems that were pressing for Naimy.

The other factor that drew the Lebanese writer's attention to the Russian critic, was Belinskiĭ's nature, which was passionately searching for the truth and could not make compromises in his fight for progress and justice. The Lebanese writer also admired Belinskiĭ's the love and respect for the common people that he shared.

### Literature Review

In spite of the fact that we were able to find about 1000 works that are wholly or partly dedicated to Naimy, and though practically all mention the Russian influence, none of them fully explore the question about what specific Russian ideas, literary methods and genres impacted him<sup>5</sup>? How were these influences reflected in his literary works?

Some of the European and Arabic scholars of Naimy's works mention the obvious influence of Belinskiĭ, including Fanous, Karam and N. Naimy, echoing what Naimy himself wrote in his own diaries.

Researchers in Arabic (Alwan, Ashtar, Dimashkiyah, Ibn Hasin and al-Tayyib, Fakhuri, Ghayth, Hamidi, Hammud, Hasan and al-Ghani, Jabr, Kāfūrī, Khūrī, Munir Sayyed, Sarrāj, Shayya), as well as

---

<sup>5</sup> Though Irina Bilyk in her dissertation [28] touched pon the last two issues. At the same time, the topic of her research was devoted to Naimy's literary work ad so, it did not touch his literary criticism at all.

works in English (Boullata, Bell, Chelala, Dabbagh, Fanous, Hine, N. Naimy, Nijland, Ramaḍān, Yun- ingish) are distinguished by a broad vision regarding the numerous aspects of his life and formation about the Russian influence on Naimy, but they provide little information for our topic. Between all the analyses of Naimy's literary criticism we would like to distinguish the argument brought up by in the doctoral thesis by Mohamed Fanous's from St. Anthony College (Oxford). Fanos mentioned Belinskiĭ as Naimy's source of inspiration together with Arabic folk art traditions, but expressed his doubts about whether young Lebanese writer was really as familiar the Western literary criticism tradition, as he claimed in some of his early works.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Russian scholars are responsible for the most detailed studies of the Russian impact on the Lebanese writer.

As it was mentioned in the beginning of our article, the Russian scholar of Arabic language and literature Ignatiĭ Krachkovskii was the first Arabic studies researcher to notice the talent of the then unknown Lebanese novice writer and was also the first researcher to note the Russian influence on Naimy in the early 1930s. He wrote about his first readings of Naimy: "...I could detect some echoes of Russian critical thought" [61, p. 223].

The Russian researcher highly praised Naimy's *The Sieve*, as the latter "was not afraid "to "sift through" [even] the most recognized of authorities" [58, p. 56] in modern Arabic literature, so the Russian scholar underscored again that Naimy "definitely felt the influence of Russian literature" [58, p. 57].

Naimy's works were naturally given primary attention in the profound studies by Soviet critics of Syro-American writers (Īmanquliyeva<sup>6</sup>, Dolinina, Muminov, Bilyk, between several others) because of the strong Russian influence on his works that contributed to the creation of modern Arabic literature.

During the Soviet period, when Belinskiĭ became something of an ideological trope, several Russian worked comparatively on Belinskiĭ's principles of critical realism and Naimy's critical articles, and in Naimy's case it became clear that Belinskiĭ's influence was deeply felt. His ideas had a profound impact on the young Lebanese seminarian. However, during Soviet times access to foreign sources was limited, and even today Russian libraries still do not provide all the necessary research opportunities for researchers. Thus, Soviet scholars were not able to make a comprehensive picture of the work that had been done on Naimy outside of Russia.

That is why we were able to only use the researches of the authors mentioned above as a foundation for the arguments developed in this article.

It is the young Naimy's diary that is the most important source of what was going on in his life and heart during his stay in Russia and in the U. S. A., where his literary and critical works reached their apogee.

In his early diary, it all dazzles with Naimy's spontaneous comments about the Russian writers and literary critics belonging to different epochs and literary currents laid the base of his position as a literary critic (Sab 173–284).

### **The special role of Belinskiĭ in Naimy's growth as a critic**

In Poltava Naimy fully immersed himself in Russian and Ukrainian life at a critical and formative period of his life. Here Naimy was finally able to make his passion for active involvement in cultural life that he had been seeking in vain for years in his distant motherland a reality. The Russian influence on him was deeper and sharper compared to that of American culture on his colleagues from Pen Association.

---

<sup>6</sup> The correct transliteration of her last name is Imanguliyeva. But we spell it according to the transliteration given by the Library of Congress and the WorldCat library system.

Naimy's background – his Orthodox Christian roots and his Russian elementary and middle schools, NTC together with seminary education in Poltava – prepared him for the world he was about to enter. Naimy's personality played no less a role in his interest in Russian literature than the factors mentioned above. As Imanquliyeva [50, p. 14] states, he was very impressionable from early childhood, was inclined to deep analysis, and was constantly seeking to understand the universal laws of harmony and perfection.

It was no wonder that an impressionable young man brought up on the best examples of Russian literature during the formative period of his life fully immersed himself in Russian life on the eve of the radical transformations in Russia.

His critical heritage had already influenced several generations of writers and critics. But it was Belinskiĭ who pointed the way towards new directions for literary development, who founded the Russian school of Critical realism and who advanced a number of critical principles that became key for other critical schools as well and that have not lost their relevance today. Belinskiĭ's writings rang with a passion that touched his audience of progressive thinkers profoundly. His aversion to hypocrisy, idolatry and social injustice resonated in Russian literary criticism as Russia struggled with an increasing social divide and poverty on the eve of the emancipation of the serfs in 1861.

Belinskiĭ's influence on Naimy was profound not only because of Naimy's fascination with Russian literature, but also because of his despair with the state of literary culture in his own land. Belinskiĭ's works suggested to him the practical ways in which this situation might be rectified. The state of his national literature as he saw it by the time of writing *The Sieve*, was one of the defining moments that inspired young Naimy to embark on his critical work just as Belinskiĭ had been inspired by the social and political situation in Russia during his time. Like many young people of his generation, Belinskiĭ considered himself to be a *predtecha* (the forerunner of the truth) and was convinced that it was possible to show the correct way of fighting for the solution to the political, social and cultural problems of his day through his writing.

Naimy employed the same tactics in his polemical articles and the same aggressive uncompromising tone as did Belinskiĭ. Both were convinced that their progressive thoughts and the truth as they perceived it would unite people and inspire them to follow the correct direction in the arts. Naimy and Belinskiĭ continued through all their writings to believe that the current state of their respective literatures and its literary criticism needed urgently to be improved. And it was the critic who would do this.

Naimy wrote in his letter to the Russian professor Krachkovskii: You can easily understand why my first literary... [writing] in Arabic carried mostly a critical character. There was hardly any literature that I could criticize when I started writing around 1913. Such literature was just emerging. But there was a lot of the so-called literature that needed to be suppressed... before the seeds of the new literature could put down roots [61, p. 225].

### **The Development of Critical Realism in Russia**

This literary current first appeared in the nineteenth century as a reflection of German philosophy's reaction to European idealist philosophy. As a precursor to Marx, critical realism stipulated that people's living conditions and their psychology are conditioned by their social environment. The flowering of this artistic method in the nineteenth century was explained by social tensions, the widening gulf between classes and the economic conditions that created the class conflict that Karl Marx sought ultimately to erase.

Vissarion Belinskiĭ belonged to the same cohort of so-called revolutionary democrats who were fighting for the abolition of autocracy and serfdom and supported the socialist transformation of the

country. Belinskiĭ was the founder and inspiration behind the school of critical realism, the most powerful literary force in Russia in the mid-1830s, whose aesthetic program he formulated.

To say that Belinskiĭ... was a very gifted anti-critic would mean nothing. He was in reality, at a very significant moment of a human evolution, a teacher and an educator of a Russian society, not only in art – its value, its purport, its comprehension – but also in politics, social questions, and humanitarian aspirations (Kropotkin 288).

In paying homage to Belinskiĭ Naimy wrote: ...as for Belinskiĭ, who is undoubtedly the head of the Russian critics... [he] opened to me the hearth of justice, power, goodness, and beauty in the literary activities... [he showed me] the greatness of the writer's role, [in case if a man of letters plays this role] ...well towards himself, the surrounding life, and his readers (*Ab'ad min Mūskū wā-Wāshintūn* 73 [50, p. 181]).

Belinskiĭ himself had his own sources of influence. He cut his teeth by reading the works of the Russian Romantics, and the civil writings of the Decembrists, he also remained under the influence of varying philosophical and social movements such as the Moscow *liubomudry*<sup>7</sup> [wisdom-lovers], some of the representatives of the Slavophiles<sup>8</sup> and the populists [82, p. 20–22], the political circle of Moscow University student-democrats, as well as the atmosphere in Russia after the Decembrist uprising, whose aim was the overthrow of autocracy and the reorganization of government structures.

Pushkin and Gogol provided Belinskiĭ with his second Russian source of inspiration. Through their works he “came to understand that true poetry [was] real; that it must be a poetry of lived reality” (Kropotkin 289). The German idealist philosophers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, especially Hegel, the French Romantic School, the Utopian socialists and British social reformers provided Belinskiĭ in all probability with food for thought [82, p. 44–46].

Belinskiĭ's merit was not in just taking Western ideas and applying them to Russian realities. He developed these thoughts into advanced political ideas and thus converted his journal of literary criticism into a historic-literature concept that later became a tool in the fight for the revolutionary-democratic ideal. Moreover, his aesthetic system and his literature of practical criticism became “his effort to integrate that literature into the “progressive” political movement among the Russian literary intelligentsia of which he was also a founder” [82, p. 9].

Among Belinskiĭ's other important achievements were his introductions to basic theoretical concepts, the creation of some of critical realism's terms as well as the creation of an aesthetic program for the realist school in literature. Many Russian writers and critics were brought up on “Belinskiĭ's school of ideas” [62, p. 142], and his organic aesthetic theory started to dominate Russian literary criticism and lay the foundations for the school of socialist realism that became the official canon of Soviet art throughout much of the twentieth century.

### **Naimy as a Founder of Modern Arabic literary Criticism**

Belinskiĭ's impact on Naimy can be especially felt in Naimy's first critical articles included in *The Sieve*. The title of this collection is quite symbolic, as it reflects the new function of a literary critic as defined by Belinskiĭ. A critic must be a literary “sieve” and examine what men of letters will write

---

<sup>7</sup> *Liubomudry* [Wisdom Lovers] were the members of a secret circle functioning in Russia in 1823–1825. Its members represented different social and political views, from radical to conservative. They studied various works of philosophy, mostly German ones, as well as aesthetic theories and literature.

<sup>8</sup> *Slavīanofily* [Slavophiles]– the religious, literature and philosophical Russian current of the 1840s that put forward the idea of Russia's originality and its special ways of development that were different from Western European ones.



using their intuition, taste, aspirations and competence. It is not a writer or a commercial editor who will decide what must be published or not, but the literary critic who will do this.

The Lebanese writer's first contribution to literary criticism started with his article "Fajr al-amal ba' ad leyl al-ya' s" ("The Dawn of Hope after the Night of Despair", 1913) in Arabic for the literary magazine *al-Funūn*. It was later included in *The Sieve*. In this work, Naimy first announced the arrival of "a new literature," welcomed it and provided a brief description of it. He also sharply criticized the stagnation and sterility that in his view still defined Arabic literature.

*The Sieve* encompassed a period of nine years of his critical writing activity. It contained a preface written by ʿAbbās Maḥmūd al-ʿAqqād<sup>9</sup>, the famous Egyptian writer and critic, whose thoughts on the state of Arabic literature reflected those of Naimy [73, p. 82]. Naimy from his side included his reviews on *al-Diwān*, the fundamental collection of critical essays by al-ʿAqqād and ʿAbd al-Qāder al-Māzinī, and al-ʿAqqād's collection of critical articles entitled *al-Fuṣūl* [*The Chapters*] in *The Sieve*.

Naimy belonged to the new generation of men of letters and literary critics who found themselves on the threshold of modern Arabic literature that was fed by the Arabic literary heritage<sup>10</sup> and the numerous Western and American literary currents that had arrived along with the expansion of cultural contacts between Europe, America and the Arab world. The role of the critic was key in managing the confluence of literary heritage and global currents.

The young Lebanese writer's two sources of inspiration were the emerging works of Arabic literary critics, particularly al-ʿAqqād's theories and his fellows Jibrān's and al-Riḥānī's thoughts [38, p. 320] expressed in Pen Association's brief literary program. His second source of inspiration that he took pride in was foreign literature [70, p. 128, 129]. Though the young Lebanese writer did not participate in any serious political circles, he remained under the influence of his intensive reading of progressive Western and Russian literature, which only strengthened his response to what he perceived as the stagnation of Arabic literature. Naimy expressed his admiration for foreign literature, comparing it to the Arabic tradition. He felt that that tradition had to be raised (by criticism, not by the writer) to the level of the Western canon.

I do not think that it will be so hard to raise one of the Arabic writers to equality of with Homer, Virgil, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, Byron, Hugo, Zola, Goethe, Heine and Tolstoy. They [the Arab poets] lived and died to sing of the doe of the desert, the scintillating swords, the cantering horses... (*"Al-Ghirbāl"* 8 [73, p. 84]).

"Why do we not drink from the springs of our neighborhood, especially if these springs are not forbidden to us?" he asked (*"al-Ghirbāl"* 126 [38, p. 312]).

Naimy's approach to both Western literature and Arabic literature was that of a self-proclaimed connoisseur determined to demonstrate the mastery of these repertoires. Naimy in 1916 was "quite keen" to show his broad knowledge of Western literature to readers [38, p. 325]. Similarly, he claimed in his article "The Fireflies", which is included in *The Sieve* (365–382), that he had reviewed all the Arabic literature from *Jahiliyah's* (pre Islamic) times to the modern era. His list of Arabic writers that he included in that article was quite short and "not convincing since it did not provide the reader with

---

<sup>9</sup> ʿAbbās Maḥmūd al-ʿAqqād (1889–1964) is an Egyptian writer and the member of the Arab Academy. He founded a poetic school (*al-Diwān*) together with Ibrahim Al-Māzinī and ʿAbd al-Rahmān Shukrī. al-ʿAqqād is an author of over 100 books about poetry, philosophy and religion.

<sup>10</sup> As for the Arabic literary criticism before the twentieth century, it mostly existed in the form of critical comments of men of letters in their works about their peers (Niqūlā al-Turk, Buṭrus Karamāh, Umar al-Yāfi and ʿAbbūd al-Baḥrī), so it can barely be classified as a professional literary criticism [38, p. 7].

any case studies under discussion" [38, p. 309]. His approach to both the Arabic tradition and the currents of American literature was that in their raw form, they expressed cultural strength, but it was the job of active criticism to mold them into literary excellence. That process seemed to foreshadow social progress.

We might justly conclude then based on his early biography that it was the Russian influence that predominated in Naimy's critical works. As described above, his first writings and most of his first, serious readings were in Russian. Hence, it was the major literary and critical heritage to which he was exposed in detail and under whose tutelage he remained particularly at the earlier stages of his literary writings. Many pages of Naimy's early diary written in Poltava dazzle with his spontaneous comments about exclusively Russian writers belonging to different epochs and literary currents.

Our second proof of our position about the predominance of the Russian Critical School in Naimy's works is the latter's deep and painful feeling of the sharp contrast between it and his native culture that was still poor and stagnant in his eyes by the time of writing *The Sieve*. He was still lacking in knowledge about the Arabic heritage in spite of his attempts to convince his readers and even himself of the opposite.

By the time he wrote *The Sieve*, Naimy still remained under the impression of Russian philosophical, critical, and social ideas and the literary school to which he had been exposed in depth for several years beginning in middle school. He remembered with anguish and vexation the moment when he moved away from Poltava: When I left Russia, I noticed literary stagnation in the entire Arabic speaking world. It hurt me painfully, it was enough to bring a person to tears who was brought up on [the examples of] Pushkin's, Lermontov's, and Turgenev's writings, on Gogol's "laughter through tears", on Tolstoy's fascinating realism, on Belinskiĭ's literary ideals, and, finally, on the high humanity of Dostoevskiĭ, the most powerful, deep, and the most penetrating of all the Russian writers [61, p. 224, 225].

In his collection of critical articles, Naimy, like Belinskiĭ, made pronouncements about the old literature and theorized the directions for the development of a new literature. He devoted considerable energy to the criteria according to which the new literature needed to be assessed.

### **The comparative Analysis of Belinskiĭ's Writings and *The Sieve***

Belinskiĭ's and Naimy's main critical writings touch upon numerous similar topics, bringing up close judgments. Since both of these writers cover different aspects, we will start our literary analysis from focusing first on their similar styles. Both their works are characterized by the same absence of compromise, by polemics and a sharp criticism of stagnant literature. Naimy's rich, eloquent, and versatile language is strikingly similar to the typical manner of Russian Critical Realist writings. Like Belinskiĭ and his contemporaries, Naimy's style can be difficult, even contradictory, in an attempt to bring forth "the new literature."

He was a great master of style, and whatever he wrote was so full of energy, and at the same time bore so truly the stamp of his most sympathetic personality, that it always produced a deep impression upon his readers.

These Kropotkin's (289) characteristics of Belinskiĭ can be fully applied to Naimy as well, as he managed to transfer into his native Arabic Belinskiĭ's passion, eloquence, as well as his great desire to make radical changes coupled with the lack of tolerance for popular, mass literature.

Naimy was certainly not only impacted by Belinskiĭ's style, but first and foremost by the content of his critical works. The Lebanese author set forth four of the most pressing goals for Arabic literature (390–391) in his article "Maqā'is al-'adab" ("Literary Standards") (387–394) included in *The Sieve*.

He was even more specific in his goals than was Belinskiĭ, particularly on the mission of criticism. But Belinskiĭ's critical articles themselves became a program for the new literary critics' generations.

#### *Three Main Directions*

Since the thoughts expressed by Belinskiĭ and Naimy in their works were so varied, we have identified their three main directions and have placed them in order of importance in Belinskiĭ's and Naimy's writings. First and foremost in their critical works is an analysis of and a manifesto on the directions in which the "new literature" should develop in order to reform and improve culture and society. Second, both see a special role for the literary critic as a kind of "meta-writer", a guide and advisor for writers engaged not merely in aesthetic work but also in cultural and social reformation. Only then, third, comes the role of the writer who produces the raw material of the cultural and social imagination of the future.

A 'new literature' as conceived by Belinskiĭ and Naimy had about a dozen specific functions in envisioning and promoting social change. Each function involved moving language, syntax, oeuvre and genre away from classical aesthetic ideals toward human realities and perceived social needs.

#### *A New Literature Must Reflect People's Life*

The first role of the new literature then was to document existing human realities. Kuleshov pointed out that Belinskiĭ laid the foundations of a new democratic aesthetic and created a program for Russian critical realism as a new literary movement through his sharp dispute with the reactionary opposition of idealistic aesthetics. He argued that since a human depends on a society and since his social life proceeds in accordance with its historical regularities, it was necessary for writers and poets to provide a critical picture of contemporary Russian reality by pointing out its negative sides.

Belinskiĭ's main principle then was verisimilitude. The Russian critic wrote that it was necessary to understand the artist's way of depicting reality not as an exaggeration, or lie, or a product of a child's imagination, but as a fact based in reality. At the same time that fact need not just be copied from the real world, but rather transformed through the imagination of the poet, illumined by its light of significance. A writer, according to Belinskiĭ ("Russian Literature in 1842" [13]), while reflecting the characteristic features of his character's personality and actions, must describe them in such a way that they reflect actual people's lives in a way that shows deep understanding. Belinskiĭ sharply criticized Russian contemporary novels about morality in his "Fiziologiia Sankt-Peterburga" ("St-Petersburg Physiology", 1845), attempting to show that modern writers had no knowledge of Russian society, and therefore their writings suggested more a primitive and simplified depiction of Russian life than a realistic picture.

Belinskiĭ's position was formed under the ideas of French utopian socialism (Gorkin). He was the one of the founders of the so-called Natural School in literature that was fighting for the ideological consciousness of advanced Russian literature [62, p. 142] aimed at building a socialist society based on the fraternity and equality that he saw as man's natural aspirations. The Western influence on Belinskiĭ and through him on Naimy will be discussed farther in this article. Belinskiĭ arrived at the idea of demolishing the current Russian social foundations. Belinskiĭ sought a literature that would reflect the realities of Russian life and that could incite people to fight against the inertia of autocracy and serfdom. His ideas became extremely popular among Russian men of letters in the middle of the nineteenth century. Belinskiĭ wrote: If [I was] asked about what the essential merit of the new school of literature was... [It has turned] from the [abstract] highest ideals of human nature and life... to the so-called "crowd" and has solely elected it as its hero, examines it with deep attention, and intro-

duced [this crowd] to itself. [This means] that the final turning of our literature, that wanted to become fully national, a Russian [one], [and] original and distinctive, [it also means] making [our literature] the mirror reflection of the Russian society [and] animating it with a vital national interest. The destruction of all that is false, fake, unnatural must be the necessary result of this new direction in our literature [that started with Gogol's works] ("Russian Literature in 1845").

Naimy in turn wrote that poetry had only one immeasurable and inseparable source, a life that was everywhere [74, p. 434]. The first thing that he was looking at while deciding whether a piece of writing was a real literary work was "a life breath" [74, p. 435]. Only after that did he analyze the next criterion, namely the depth of the writer's conceptions, and only then did he focus on the composition of the literary work, its melody and elegance. The values of the old literature, such as *arud* (the classical Arabic versification system), came last in Naimy's critical analysis [74, p. 435–437]. He wrote, "we are searching for ourselves in everything we do, say, or write" ("al-Ghīrbāl" 35 [38, p. 205]). Thus literature was for him the only area that presented a human "in all his spiritual and materialistic aspects" ("al-Ghīrbāl" 36 [38, p. 306]) and by doing so helped him to know life more deeply.

To the degree that human conditions and their influence on the mind were a basic principle of critical realism, it is possible to draw a parallel between Naimy's article "al-Riwāyah al-tamthīliyyah al-ʿarabīyyah" ("The Arabic Drama" [74, p. 359–364]) and Belinskiĭ's "Vzgliād na russkuĭu literaturu 1847" ("A View on Russian Literature 1847" [21, p. 642–723]), as was done by Imanquliyeva [50, p. 199]. The Russian critic spoke in "A View..." of the two types of writers: a painter, who cares about forms and who rivals Nature in his ability to create, and a scientist whose ability to think and to analyze prevails over the artistic side of his work, like Herzen (Belinskiĭ 944 [50, p. 199]). The "new literature" required a scientific as well as an artistic approach.

Naimy's ideas in the article mentioned above were similar to Belinskiĭ's. Naimy called upon Arab writers to explore the rich material of daily life for new ideas and plots instead of working on perfecting their written forms [69, p. 133]. Naimy understood that during this time of radical cultural changes there were two opposing ideas about the mission of Arabic literature. The disciples of the first idea considered literature a field where they could demonstrate their profound knowledge of Arabic rhetoric, grammar and vocabulary. As for the followers of the opposite camp, they were sure that the literature was "an exhibition of thoughts and emotions, of sensitive souls expressing their interaction with the universe, and of living hearts rendering in prose and poetry what they embody of the pulse of life" [69, p. 134].

#### *Meeting the Needs of the Times*

One of the most important of Belinskiĭ's critical principles was that literature needed to reflect modern realities and actively respond to the needs of the times, since those who live during an era of struggle and collision of ideas and opinions, understand their direct connection with art.

Belinskiĭ insisted that the modern men of letters had to paint a critical picture of contemporary Russian realities, paying particular attention to their negative sides. He saw as invalid the mere imitation of life in its external manifestations, and the slavish copying of random features.

Naimy held a similar position. He sharply criticized formalism and the tendency to distance both reader and critic from modern realities in literature. Imanquliyeva observed that sometimes the Lebanese critic accused all the Arab poets of blindly following the old system and paying too much attention to the theoretical side of *arud* instead of content. Meanwhile young Naimy randomly picked up some literary work from the old Arabic literary heritage that he knew much less than he thought. As a result, he wrote: "Have you heard of a man whose name was Abū ʿabd al-Rahmān al-Khalīl ben al-

Baṣrī al-Farāhīdī?.. [He died long ago, but we still emerged into] a host of concepts, such as applications and add-ons, defective and broken words, syllabi and syllabic transitions, omissions and gaps and breaches, reductions and other things (*al-ihāf*), so ‘poetry converted into a job, and a poet into an acrobat’ [74, p. 419].

#### *The Important Social Role of Arts*

In Belinskiĭ’s opinion, art was not just a tool for discovering the world’s beauty, but first of all it needed to play an important social role. In his work “Rech’ o kritike” (“A Speech on Criticism”, 1842) he wrote: [Criticism]... is also a social organ... and it carries pieces of art to people’s hearts. This mission is high and glorified. The most powerful forces that are the art and the community spirit are based upon [the criticism’s] wisdom and rightness. One [of these forces] entrusts it its glory... the other one confides to it its honor and its feelings’ of dignity...

[The criticism] through its analysis distinguishes some shortcomings [that naturally occur] as the result [of each epoch’s development]. It does not unsparingly punish writers who honestly served the art in the spirit of their time, for that they did not stop the stroke of fate and did not base their actions on their ideas that did not exist [at their time]. [The critics] pay everyone what they he deserves...

It is quite possible that Naimy was inspired by Belinskiĭ’s example when the former analyzed the literary works of the Arab men of letters. He paid special attention to their response to the modern social realities in addition to the forms of their writing. For example, in his analysis of Shawqī’s “al-Durah al-shawqiyah” (“Shawqī’s Mother of Pearl” [74, p. 448–455]), Naimy, skillfully employs wit, eloquence and passion, comparing mother-of-pearl, the topic of Shawqī’s poem, to its content. Naimy wrote that the poem reminded him of an inlaid shell rather than mother-of-pearl because of its artificial decorations, old-fashioned pathos, and the absence of “the pulse of modern life” [74, p. 196].

#### *Populism*

In addition to the previous ideas, Belinskiĭ was the one of the developers of populism (*narodnost’*) in the arts. *Narodnost’* is an aesthetic principal suggesting the connection between art and people, specifically how art is a condition of life, its struggle, its ideas, as well as people’s feelings and aspirations, and the expression of their ideals, interests and psychology (Polevoĭ). As Belinskiĭ wrote in “O ruskoĭ povesti i povestiakh Gogolĭa” (“On the Russian Novel and the Gogol’s Novels”), if life is depicted correctly, then this depiction matches this principle. Decades before the revolution, *narodnost’* was exemplified in literary portraits of the persistent inequities of Russian rural life.

Belinskiĭ’s works advocated for the working and exploited people and depicted their sufferings in their struggle against the landlords and government oppression. He argued forcefully against the prevailing idea that the common people’s rudeness was the result of their lack of development. He asserted that there is more poetry in a genius *muzhik* [peasant] than in a moronic nobleman, and in fact, if this peasant had been educated, then he would have become more of a genius (“Obshchaĭa ideĭa narodnoĭ poèzii”, “The Main Idea of People’s Poetry”, 1841). In this article he reflected the ideas of writers from Turgenev to Tolstoĭ who tended to idealize the spiritual world of the peasant perhaps out of gentry guilt at the inequities and abuses that serfdom had brought with it. Though, from another side, the power of the revolutionary-democratic literature was exactly in its organic unity with the description of people’s life and their perspective of it.

As for Naimy, it is possible to notice his adherence to the principles of *narodnost’*, the reflection of true reality and expression of historicism in his introductory article to his play Fathers and Sons [74, p. 359–364], the title for which he took from Turgenev’s novel, as it was mentioned earlier. The Lebanese man of letters speaks about the language of the common people in theater performances. He points out that: Under the rough shell of the language the nation’s philosophy is hidden,

[as well as] his experience, wisdom and faith. And if all of this is expressed in [*al-fushā*], it may sound like a bad translation from a foreign language. A writer who makes an illiterate fellah speak the language of poetry of divans<sup>11</sup> insults a fellah, and [also] himself, and his readers and listeners. Moreover, his characters look ridiculous if not comic<sup>12</sup> [74, p. 362, 363].

Naimy shared Belinskiĭ's concern that the absence of real life situations in performances eliminated an important component from the presentation and thus distorted the spectators' impressions of real life. He noted: Literature is based on life, and life is based on literature. And...the most precious literature is as broad as life, [and it] has its deep secrets as [life] has, [life] is reflected in literature, as [literature] is reflected in [life] [74, p. 359, 360].

A world of true beauty in arts against which Belinskiĭ and Naimy, following his example, were fighting made them critical of philosophical minds that constantly sought the human's place in the world and a human's soul. Vasilĭi Zen'kovskiĭ thought [84, p. 254] that the main reason why literature attracted Belinskiĭ from his childhood was not so much its artistry, but its humanism and its attention to a person's inner life and destiny. The same thing came to be said about Naimy, who, as was mentioned above, had a predisposition to philosophy from his early years.

#### *The Western Philosophy Principles*

In his "Literaturnye mechtaniĭa" ("Literary Dreams", 1834), Belinskiĭ rethought Schelling's natural philosophy principles. The Russian critic emphasized the inner world of a person paying special attention to "the eternal idea of [a person's] moral life" [84, p. 255], and the struggle between good and evil that filled the life of an individual and all of humanity. The essay is full of aesthetic humanism, pathos and an inspired call for the good and for creative work: "The whole infinite, perfect God's world is nothing other than a single breath of an eternal *idea* (God's single [and] eternal thought), which is manifested in countless forms, as a grand spectacle of the absolute unity in infinite variety. Only a burning sense of a mortal person can comprehend, in his enlightened moments, how great is this *body* of this soul of the universe..." (44.45).

For a while Belinskiĭ was fascinated by Hegel's philosophy, but later, when he felt that it did not contain an accurate enough assessment of the individual, he started to follow the aesthetic ideology of humanism that he incorporated into his study [82, p. 14; 84, p. 254, 255]. It considered a human to be the highest creation of Nature, a notion that prevailed in Russian secularism starting from Belinskiĭ's times. Increasingly, he turned to the question of the metaphysical justification of individualism, which was the driving force of the Russian thought of the nineteenth century. He wrote: "Even if I could have climbed to the highest rung of [a society] development ladder, [then] even from it I should have asked you to give me the report of all the fates of real life and the history of individuals..." ("Pis'mo k Botkinu", "A Letter to Botkin" from March 1, 1841).

These ideas led Belinskiĭ to socialist utopianism with its idea of the liberation of an individual from the tyranny of the present system [84, p. 256]. Fighting for people's freedom and happiness gradually became the chief mission of the new literature. Belinskiĭ, Herzen, Nikolaĭ Chernyshevskiĭ and Nikolaĭ Dobroliubov developed the critical realism's base in their works that not only forged a link between the two generations of nineteenth-century Russian writers, but immediately initiated the development of the revolutionary-democratic ideas in Russia [82].

<sup>11</sup> *Divan* is a collection of poems.

<sup>12</sup> Such judgments demonstrate Naimy's ignorance of Arabic playwriting, as, in fact, the practical solutions to Arabic diglossia existed there, especially in Egyptian plays. We explain Naimy's absence of awareness of this fact by the specific of Naimy's childhood spent in a poor village located far from big cities.

There is no more noble and high subject for arts in the world than a human...Where life is, there is poetry, but life is just where the idea is – and catch life's pulse, then capture the invisible, and the fragrant air ideas. There are no more noble and lofty subjects in art than a human, and in order to be eligible for art images, a person needs to be a human ("The Main Idea of People's Poetry").

We think that Naimy occupied the same position under the direct influence of Belinskiĭ, as we doubt that by the time he wrote *The Sieve*, Naimy had read the Western philosophical sources in detail as he claimed there. He considered a person's inner world to form the basis of his art and the main source of inspiration. A human's feelings, thoughts, his life, his struggles, the social structure, and the reclamation of Nature's forces – all of these components laid the base for literary works [50, p. 185, 186].

Naimy pointed out in his "Miḥwār al-'adab" ("The Literature of the Axe" [74, p. 354–358]), that a human was: the most skillful creature and the most mystical one. He does not know where he is coming from and he does not know where he is going. This world had existed for a long time, and [a human] is blinded by what he sees and the beauty of what he hears... so only a person can be a literature king, who will search in the deep corners of his soul. And only a writer, who will discover the world through searching within, is honored. ...Literature, if it is literature, is nothing but a messenger between a writer's and someone else's souls. And a writer who deserves being called a writer is the one who sends out this message from his heart... [74, p. 354].

#### *Meeting People's Needs*

For both Belinskiĭ and Naimy, literature was primarily a mirror in which society could, for the first time, see its own reflection. Any aesthetic manipulations made in the service of inherited traditions or in the name of novelty or creativity distorted that reflexivity and destroyed its utility.

In addition to serving as a reflective surface necessary for society to critically analyze itself, both Naimy and the Russian critics thought that literary writings played an important – almost therapeutic – role in an individual human's life. Belinskiĭ called literature "the real life truth" in "Gore ot uma" ("Woe from Wit" [7, p. 266]). In his "Soĥineniĭa Derzhavina" ("Derzhavin's Works"), he states that this gave "a disembodied idea a sensual life and a wonderful image" [15, p. 16] and expressed a subjective human side that made visible the sensibilities, feelings, and musicality that lay inside a person" [7, p. 266].

In what was clearly a reflection of Belinskiĭ's philosophy, Naimy in his article "al-Maqāīis al-'adabiyyah" ("Literature Scales", [74, p. 287–294]) defined several goals Arabic literature was facing at that time. First and foremost he saw literature as reflecting a human need in life [74, p. 378], and that it could serve as a light to guide people in all life situations. The second aim of modern literature was to disclose human inspirations and influences, such as "anticipation, despair, victory, failure, belief and doubt, love and hate, fear and satisfaction" [74, p. 391].

#### *Literary Criteria*

Belinskiĭ and Naimy both used their literary works as a platform for working out a number of other literary criteria, namely the role of music in fulfilling the human need for beauty. Already in "The Literary Dreams," one of Belinskiĭ's earliest works that was first published in 1834 when he was only 23 years old, the Russian critic pointed out that literature's mission was "to represent, reproduce [Nature's idea] in a word, in a sound, in the features and colors as a united and eternal art theme" [9, p. 47]. In his theater criticism Belinskiĭ called theater "a true temple of art" in his "The Literary Dreams" [9, p. 93]. However, for him it was literature and poetry that he saw as universals. They ...expressed in a free human word [with] ...sound and picture [in it]. Therefore poetry contains all the elements of the other arts, as if it ...is enjoying all the facilities that are given separately to each of the

other arts, [a lyrical poetry can be compared to music, as it is] a subjective poetry, an internal [one], the expression of the poet... [moreover] there are even lyrical works, which almost destroyed the boundaries between the poetry of the music... [A thought in a lyrical poetry is] "hidden behind the sensation and leads you to a contemplation, which is hard to translate into clear and specific language of consciousness... [9, p. 47].

As for Naimy, he included following in his list of modern literature's tasks: ...We need beauty in everything. The spirit thirsts for... [needs] only beauty... Our tastes argue about what we can call beautiful and what can be called ugly. We cannot deny that there is absolute beauty in this life, and in that our tastes do not differ... Our need in music. A soul has a surprising tendency towards sounds and melodies... It starts with the reverberation of thunder with water gurgling, with leaves rustling, but the dissonant sounds [make him uncomfortable] [74, p. 390, 391].

In addition to the need for beauty, both writers concurred on the importance of literary language.

Naimy considered language development inseparable from the historical development of the society that spoke it. Moreover, change in language is inevitable. He sharply criticized the old Arabic language amateurs, calling them croaking literary frogs in his article "Naqīq al-ḍafādi" ("Frogs' Croaking") [74, p. 406–418]. Without denying its beauty, Naimy mocked the numerous flashy modern men of letters who were trying to fit the old Arabic vocabulary and literary forms into their literary works, ignoring their real feelings and the depth of their thoughts [50, p. 190]. Naimy called on modern writers and poets to work on their literary language to achieve brevity and sharpness [74, p. 412].

After long discussions on what modern literature was, Belinskii developed in his "A Speech on Criticism" an idea of a literary scale, so different critical points must emerge from one united system [12, p. 638]. His main criterion was a work of art's response to the needs of the times. He noted in "Stikhi Lermontova" ("Verses by Lermontov") that "In our time [the same] poetry like it was with the ancient poets is hardly possible" [16, p. 431]. The modern writer needed to get rid of art for art's sake and reflect social consciousness, so that different critical points can emerge from one united system [12, p. 638].

Naimy expressed the same concern about improving the literary scale. He wrote: We do not need a stable literary scale. We have it. [We] need to improve the usage of this scale, especially now, as we are now [passing] through the transformation stage. We are in need of writers and poets measuring out what they are composing and writing using this scale. For they [could] move ahead and our literature could move with them in the right way. And in need of critics who distinguish between wretched poetry and the mature ones. So they will not call shells pearls and [name] the lighting bugs stars (394).

#### *Historicism*

Already in his first article "Literary Dreams," that is considered to be the first work of classical Russian literary criticism [62, p. 142], Belinskii passionately advanced the notion that the leading role of the critical writer is the fruit of the nation's feelings and aspirations. He also pointed out that a critics' study of literary works was closely tied to their historical epoch. This was as crucial to him as the aesthetic side of a literary work. Historicism for Belinskii must prevail over the other aspects of stylistic analysis. He considered that the new criticism's challenge consisted in reconciling "the freedom of creativity with the spirit of service to the historic time, with the service of truth" ("A Speech on Criticism").

Mashinskii considered the principle of historicism to be Belinskii's most important theoretical achievement, one that ultimately informed his esthetic views. As Mashinskii wrote, Belinskii's turn to this topic was natural for that time, as in the second half of the 1830s, Russian intellectuals aimed to reveal the internal connection between the past and the present, fascinated as they were by the philosophy of history and the apparent regularities and patterns of historical development. Belinskii



noted in his critical article devoted to Friedrich Lorenz's *The Guide to World History*: "Our age is for the most part an historic [one]. The historical contemplation [that was] powerful and compelling penetrated into all spheres of modern consciousness" [66].

Historicism became a principle of the academic study of both the world and art. Belinskiĭ wrote the following in his article "Idea iskusstva" ("The Idea of Art"): ...from the first awakening of [the first] forces and life elements, from the first movement of a substance through the whole [ladder]... which developed through the creation of Nature to its top – a human, from the first connection of humans [in the society] to the last historical... [developments] of our times... [This chain of development does not interrupt anywhere, [it is] a unified ladder from the Earth to the Heavens, where you cannot go up to a higher step without leaning to [the step that is] below it! In Nature and in history it is not blind chance that is dominating, but a strict, immutable inner necessity, because of which all the phenomena are related to each other by ties of kinship...

In his other article, "A Speech on Criticism," Belinskiĭ noted that each piece of art must be studied in its relationship to historical modernity, in an artist's attitude to the society [together] with the study of an artist's life...etc, that may help understanding its history...

Naimy's approach as pointed out by Imanquliyeva [50, p. 199–202] incorporated a similar view of history. In his analysis of the two collections of Jibran's works in his critical article "al-Sābiq" ("The Previous") [74, p. 467–472]. Naimy studied his friend's works in their historical development. Jibran used the form of parables and fables, trying to convey to people's minds his study about the constant world development [50, p. 200]. Naimy followed in Jibran's footsteps. He stated: All of us are precursors for ourselves. And our today's life will become our base when tomorrow will come. And our today's life comes from our yesterday's one... the life that comes after it will play its...role in the other life. This process will never stop. We sow [a grain] of the previous crops...then we collect the crops for sowing it for the life that will come after [74, p. 471–472].

Naimy meant by this statement that all what we do today is the result of our yesterday's deeds and that our tomorrow comes out from today.

In the conclusion to "The Previous," although Naimy's interest in the passage of time lacks the specificity of Belinskiĭ's, so much so that its engagement with parables and fables might be called ahistorical, nevertheless Naimy shared a broad interest in the nature of change and continuity that forms a backdrop for his social critique.

#### *Art for Art's Sake*

Another common direction in Belinskiĭ's and Naimy's literary criticism was an aggressive campaign against "arts for art's sake." The "Natural school's social topics represented by Belinskiĭ were aimed at a broad circle of readers, revealing the life truth, following the philosophy of Social Criticism and Realism fighting against artificial beauty and Romantic rhetoric [39, p. 621]. As Georgiĭ Plekhanov (1856–1918), the active leader of the international Marxist movement and philosopher noted, "the tendency of artists and people who are interested [just] in art [itself] occurs on the basis of their hopeless dissonance with the social strata that surrounds them" [81, p. 194]. Belinskiĭ aggressively fought against "arts for art's sake," writing in "A View of Russian Literature" that if we totally recognize that art must be first of all an art, we nevertheless think that the idea in the arts of something pure, vying in its own sphere ... is an abstract [and] dreamy idea. Such an art has never existed anywhere. It does not matter ...into what fractions you will divide life, it is still [a one whole thing]" [21, p. 667].

As for Naimy's resistance to "art for art's sake" in literature, he wanted to view the poet as a prophet, but not as an acrobat, just as he wanted to find inspiration in poetry, but not a gamesman-

ship, as was noted by al-Aqqād in his introduction to Naimy's "The Sieve" [74, p. 342]. The other example of Naimy's fight against "art for art's sake" can be found in his "The Fireflies", where he sharply criticized traditional Arabic poetry for its formal approach expressed in their artificial decorations, exaggerated emotions and bloated pathos instead of life and human thoughts and feelings [73, p. 84]. Naimy sought in his article "al-Shā'ir -al-shu'arā" ("A Poet and Poets") [74, p. 395–405] to clarify whether poetry was only people's fantasies or whether it was a drawing out of what existed in the real life. He came to a conclusion that ...All [what the poet brings up] is neither lethargy nor a fantasy. It is a perceptible reality... Poet's fantasies are a reality. A poet who deserves this title does not write and describe what his soul's eyes do not see, and what is not ripen by his heart so it becomes a reality, even if his eyes do not see it... he will deprive the real things of their existing qualities and endow them with the non-real characteristics... This is the difference between "a poet" and "feelings". A poet does not write about anything that his real senses did not experience or about something that did not touch his soul. His tongue speaks of his heart preference. As for a versifier, he tries to convince us that he had a dream that, we realize, did not really happen to him in his head, neither in his dream, nor in his waking life. He describes us the feelings that neither a human, nor a jinni, nor angels ever felt since the beginning of this world and till now [74, p. 400].

The real/unreal criteria were one of the main ways Naimy sought to evaluate literary works in his fight for Realism in the arts. He consistently pointed to the truth to life as the main idea in literature. In speaking about the process of the creation of a literary work, Naimy pointed out that those writers did not create anything like a hill, or a wood, or a sea. But they saw these things and felt them. Then they compared, evaluated, threw too much, picked up the necessary [things], lifted [them] up, threw the extra things, then framed up all your choice in a certain way, and got the picture created by your imagination. [They] ...did not change the reality, [they] ...did not create anything, but [they] ...have actually taken the objects and phenomena that exist in real life, have dropped extra [things], added the missing [ones], and put everything in the way that pleased [their] ...soul [74, p. 400].

#### *Subject and Object in Art*

Under the influence of German philosophy Belinskiĭ changed the common abstract metaphysical ideas that a human was a subject, and his sphere of activities was submitted to his mind [82, p. 11, 14]. He wrote in connection with this in "Proizvedeniĭa Pushkina, stat'ia 5": ...poetry is the fruit of the mighty thoughts that took over the poet. If we assume that this thought is only the result of the activities of his mind, we would kill not only art, but also the very possibility of art. In fact it would [be easy] to become a poet, and who would not have been able to [to become a poet] of necessity, for the benefit of or on a whim, if this had only come up with some idea and to force it into an invented form? No, not that it is performed by poets by [their] nature and vocation! ...Art does not allow... abstract philosophical, [and even] much less rational ideas: it allows only poetic ideas, and a poetic idea... is not a syllogism, not a dogma, not a rule, [but] a living passion, a [life reality] pathos" [14, p. 323].

Thus, Belinskiĭ pointed to the fact that the relationship between the subject (an artist) and an object (that which is depicted by an artist) is closely interrelated. It is not only the subject that affects the object, but it is also an object that impacts the subject.

Similarly, Naimy in *The Sieve* positions a person's inner world and human dignity above all other world values, together with common sense, justice and obedience to the law of human emotions (hope, despair, triumph, fear, crash, belief, doubt, love, hate, joy, pain, sadness, happiness, fear and courage) (287). The artistic value of a work, according to him, depend[ed] on how well it "satisfies [a human

need] to correctly navigate through life” [50, p. 186]. Naimy called it “the light of truth” of literature that it carried within itself [50, p. 187].

#### *Form and Content*

While deeply committed to literature’s social and historical function, the two critics spared no effort in defending the literariness of a work of art. Specifically both acknowledged that the unity of form and content were necessary.

Belinskii in “Stikhi Derzhavina” (“Verses by Derzhavin”) was convinced that the organic unity of form and content was the main condition for its harmony [15, p. 17]. It could exist only when the form was an expression of the content. He wrote elsewhere in “The Main Idea of People’s Poetry”: ...neither a form without content, nor content without a form can exist, and if so, in the first case... [they will look like] an empty vessel [that looks] strange and ridiculous, and in the second case... [they will look] as a mirage, which is visible to all, but at the same time they are considered to be non-existent objects. It is obvious only that a literature is really popular [narodnaĭ], which, at the same time, is a common human’s literature, and only this kind of literature [is] truly human, which at the same time is also popular [narodna]. [Neither any of these two components can exist without a second one]... If in an artwork a form prevails over the idea – it means that the idea is not quite definite and clear for... [its author], and so the form can be... beautiful, and the art product can even be ugly...

Naimy came of age at the time when the first Arabic literary critics began to consider a literary work to be in organic unity with life, and judged the importance and depth of a literary work according to the unity it manifested between form and the literary language.

In “The Fireflies”, where he compared Western and Arabic literatures, Naimy criticized traditional Arabic poetry for its passion for forms and stagnant themes, such as missing an abandoned place, or glorifying the poet’s tribe, or description of a battle. This approach on the part of Arab authors made their writings mere exercises in rhymes than literary works. Naimy lamented this tendency in *The Sieve*, writing: while the West [has] plunged deep into the human heart and lifted it up with the higher strata of truth and dazzling light, Arab writers still live and die to sing the praise of glittering swords, of desert camels and deer and of “traces of departed lovers”. Indeed their minds compose rhymes of a Patriarch, or a Pasha, or congratulate a friend on a medal, eulogize a dead notable or eulogize a new-appointed one [70, p. 132].

#### *Critic’s Aim*

The title of Naimy’s collection of critical works, *The Sieve*, has symbolic meaning. There had to be a shift in modern literature. It had to throw away the numerous pieces of writings of low taste, esthetic, social and historic value and leave the best that could be termed real literature. It was the critics’ job to do this. Both Naimy and Belinskii saw it as one of the main challenges of their respective literatures to create a literary “sieve” for modern literature. Belinskii in “On the Russian Novel and Gogol’s Novels” said that critics needed to decide whether a piece of literary writing was a real work of art, whether it was elegant, and whether an author was a real poet [10, p. 144]. For his part Naimy opens his collection of critical works with the article “al-Gharbalaḥ” (“Sifting”) (348–353) in which he pointed to the critic’s mission of sifting, i.e. “...sorting out what people produce: their thoughts, feelings and preferences – all that comprises what we use to term a work as belong to ‘a literature’” (347).

#### *Critic Qualities*

What then are the qualities that a critic must have in order to do literary analysis? In his article “A Speech on Criticism”, Belinskii pointed out that a critic must first and foremost possess a feel for aesthetic qualities. Without aesthetic analysis of a literary work, its value would be meaningless and

absurd even if it did address society's most burning issues. A critic said Belinskiĭ must also have "more love of the arts and more respect for himself".

In his other article, "Stikhotvoreniia Vladimira Benediktova SPb 1842" ("Benediktov's Poems, St. Petersburg 1842"), Belinskiĭ defined aesthetics as expressing a delicate, poetic feeling as well as the ability to accept elegance, and to distinguish real from false inspiration at first glance, separating out fancy rhetorical expressions from a real writer's feelings, and stagnant and artificial writing from the aesthetic side of life. Thus, a critic's assessment of a work of art must be based on authoritative aesthetic ideas, as well as his own inner poetic flair and ability to perceive what is elegant. Only when a critic has these qualities do other qualities such as extensive learning and a high level of education become meaningful and important. Aesthetic taste for Belinskiĭ is impossible to acquire; it is something one comes by naturally<sup>13</sup>.

Naimy thought that a critic through his analysis of a poet's works could change a poet's talent for the better. A poet must be brought up by the critics to the idea that not only do prosody and language determine poetic language, but the poet's thoughts and feelings do as well [73, p. 92].

The critic's mission for both of these men was ultimately that of an enlightener, one who would develop the reader's taste by separating the ore from the rock as Naimy noted (349).

Belinskiĭ for his part angrily rejected literary idolatry in his "Literary Dreams," claiming that in Russia where reverence for authorities was still common, there was a tendency among critics to glorify celebrity out of fear of saying anything negative about the person in question: "Where is criticism, whose goal is a formulation of taste, where is the truth that must be higher than all the authorities?" (157).

Belinskiĭ in his "A Speech on Criticism" fought against critics' manipulation in turning making mediocre men of letters into geniuses:

It is easy and funny for [this kind of a critic], he voluntarily bestows and demotes them, and they are trembling, write according to his orders... and there is no end to novels, stories and dramas... The crowd loves these geniuses with whom it can be too familiar; they are great, famous and glorious, and at the same time they cannot offend [it] by their excellence...

Ironically, this idea was to become more widespread than he recognized at the time. A century later in the Soviet era many mediocre writers and critics used his ideas as their model in seeking acceptance from the official literary establishment. Belinskiĭ was referred to as a great patriot, a fighter against predominance of estheticism predominance in Russian art over its ideological content, and as a leading figure in the founding of Russian realism by the official Soviet government.

Naimy also sadly noted that since most Arabic works of art were published in newspapers and magazines, these editions determine their literary scale by trying to pique the interest of their subscribers and financial supporters. That is why they proclaim any single poet who published his verses in the media, as a "genius," or "a distinguished writer", or "a liberator", and every single work was promulgated as "a rare pearl" [74, p. 393]. He was also concerned that the extraneous sentimentalism in literary works was useless and spoiled the reading audience's tastes (Imanquliyeva 197). Though, as Naimy remarked in *The Sieve*, ...if we would measure [this writer or poet] according to the scale of well-established literary principles, then we would discover that this person does not do anything

---

<sup>13</sup> Naimy occupied a similar position to Belinskiĭ in terms of his response to a critic's qualities. He pointed out in his introduction to *The Sieve* that the critic's duty was to separate out the good from the evil, the beautiful from the ugly, and the correct from the corrupt. Since beauty, aesthetics and harmony are broad and abstract concepts, a critic needed to draw on his intuitive feeling and his innate taste in order to distinguish between what contained real literary value, and what did not. These are the only criteria he must use [74, p. 349, 351, 355].

except make sounds [*al-rannah*]. And if there was any beauty [in his literary work], [then] there is no emotion. And if there is an emotion, there is no beauty and the truth. And if there was a truth there, it was trivial or distorted... looking at things from the point of their beauty and truthfulness requires hours of preparation on which a critic expends much spiritual effort and analysis. If a writer manages to correlate these two things, then the critic supports him loyally and enthusiastically [74, p. 356, 393].

#### *Role of Writer*

Both Belinskiĭ and Naimy considered a writer to be a prophet, reflecting both the people's needs and the current epoch. Belinskiĭ wrote in "Verses by Lermontov" that art does not emerge from a crowd, but from several people, the selected ones it comes out to a crowd... Poet – is the noblest vessel of a spirit, the Heavens' chosen favorite, the secrets of the Nature keeper, an Aeolian harp of feelings and sensations, the body of worldly life... everything that lives in this world and the world he lives... [echo] in his breast... A poet's [nature] is sensitive, irritable, always active... suffering more painfully than others, taking greater pleasure, loving more passionately hating more violently, and feeling things more deeply... When he is writing – he is a king, the lord of the universe, the trustee ...of the Nature, who looks into the mysteries of heaven and earth, nature and the human spirit... [16, p. 403–407].

As for Naimy in "al-Zihāfāt wa-al-'ilāl" ("Substitutions and Inversions"), he expressed a very similar view. He considered that the process of literary creation first originates in the human soul and after "an incubational period [that] precedes the actual poetic creation" [73, p. 87].

As for the poet, Naimy in *The Sieve* considered him to be also a prophet, a philosopher, a musician, a photographer and a priest at the same time [70, p. 128]. The real man of letters, according to Naimy, is the one who "sees through his heart's eyes what everyone cannot see, who derives for us from every scene life offers a rewarding lesson, and who, more than others, nature has endowed with a gift of detecting truth" [70, p. 128].

According to Nijland, "Naimy stressed the function of poetry as a receptacle and vehicle of meaning" and as a mediator between a poet's and someone else's souls (90). It is possible to notice the resemblance between Naimy and Belinskiĭ in their eloquent descriptions and ideas of the poet's personality. The Lebanese critic in "Frog's Croaking" beautifully and vividly describes an image of a lyrist as a person who... [is] stretching out his hidden fingers of his inspiration to the covering of your hearts and thoughts to lift up an edge of them, and to turn your glances to what lies folded up underneath so that you will see feelings and stumble over thoughts. At first you will reckon them to be thoughts and feelings of the poet. They are in reality your feelings and thoughts which the poet did not invent, create or wake up. He only lifted up a tip of the veil and directed all your glances towards them [73, p. 91]...

He also develops the point in *The Sieve*: A poet is a prophet, philosopher, a painter, a musician and a vicar. He is a prophet, because he sees with his spiritual eye what all the people do not see; a painter- as he is able to catch and embody in the beautiful forms what he sees and hears; he is a musician because he hears the balanced sounds while we do not hear anything except for roar and squawk... And finally- a poet is a vicar because he serves the Lords of the truth and the beauty... A poet, and what we mean [by this term] is not "a [poetry] arranger" does not take a pen in his hand until he is pushed by an inner motive power, and there is no any other force above it [for a poet]. He is a slave to this process.. From another side he is an absolute ruler at the time when he is sitting carving out his feelings. His thoughts are the sounds and rhymes' monuments, as he chooses from them what he wants [74, p. 400–403]...

*The Sieve* can be called an apogee of Naimy's critical writings if we do not take into account his other important writing about Jibrān (1934). Though this work was closer to being a biography of his

peer, it was still possible to find in it a reflection of Belinskiĭ's passionate, non-compromising tone. In the middle of the 1930s, Naimy finally turned to other literary directions and only occasionally returned to literary theory in his several essays.

### Conclusion

Naimy introduced into Arabic criticism the ideas of Russian Critical realism discussed above. He enriched modern Arabic literary criticism that was just emerging with Russian philosophical and critical thought that brought with it "that boundless love of the truth, which knows no barriers and pretensions" [63, p. 508]. Naimy tried to introduce a new criticism whose quality would be based on the high artistic principles of the most progressive literary currents of the early twentieth century. His creative writings under Belinskiĭ's influence can be characterized by many of the same traits that we can apply to Russia's "creative genius": they "united the social pathos and philosophical thought, aesthetic feeling and literary talent, the gift of scientific generalization and poetic fantasy" [63, p. 508]. In Belinskiĭ's footsteps, Naimy was fighting for the ideological content of literary works and for making literature both democratic and accessible to a broad range of readers.

### Author's notes

1. The transliteration of Arabic in this work follows the format of the Library of Congress. All Arab words are italicized, except proper names.
2. The correct transliteration of Naimy's name is Mikha'īl Nu'aymah (ميخائيل نعيمة in Arabic). It was decided to write it this way, as he preferred this spelling [70]. The same applies to Nadir Nu'aymah (نادم نعيمة in Arabic), Balamad University Professor Emeritus of Arabic language and literature, Mikhail Naimy's nephew and a keeper of his literary works, who decided to use the same transliteration for his last name [70]. At the same time, Mikhail Naimy's name in the Arabic references is transliterated according to Chicago style.
3. All translations into English, unless otherwise noted, are my own.

### References

1. Allen R. "Mikha'īl Nu'aymah: Promoter of the Arabic Literary Revival," review of Nu'aymah: Promoter of the Arabic Literary Revival by Cornelius Nijland // *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*. 1979. Vol. 38. No. 3. Pp. 224–226.
2. Alwan M. al-H. *Mikha'īl Nu'aymah: hayatuhu wa-tafkiruh*. Tunis: Dar Bu Salamah, 1986.
3. Abramovich G. L. *Vvedenie v literaturovedenie: uchebn. dliā stud. pedagog. in-tov*. Moscow: Prosveshchenie, 1979.
4. Aikhenval'd I. *Siluety russkikh pisatelei – spor o Belinskom*. 1910. URL: [http://modernlib.ru/books/yuliy\\_isaevich\\_ayhenvald/spor\\_o\\_belinskom\\_otvet\\_kritikam/read\\_1](http://modernlib.ru/books/yuliy_isaevich_ayhenvald/spor_o_belinskom_otvet_kritikam/read_1)
5. Ashtar A. al-K. *Funun al-nathr al-mahjari: al-maqalah, al-qissah, al-masrahiyah, al-Siyrah, al-amthal wa-al-rasail*. Bayrut: Dar al-Fikr al-Hadith, 1965.
6. Belinskiĭ V. G. Fiziologiya Peterburga // *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh*. Moscow: OGIZ, 1948. Vol. 2. URL: [http://azlib.ru/b/belinskij\\_w\\_g/text\\_1260.shtml](http://azlib.ru/b/belinskij_w_g/text_1260.shtml)
7. Belinskiĭ V. G. Gore ot uma // *Estetika i literaturnaia kritika: v dvukh tomakh*. Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1959. Vol. 1. Pp. 253–316.
8. Belinskiĭ V. G. Ideia Iskusstva // *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh*. Moscow: OGIZ, 1948. Vol. 2. URL: [http://azlib.ru/b/belinskij\\_w\\_g/text\\_0970.shtml](http://azlib.ru/b/belinskij_w_g/text_0970.shtml)
9. Belinskiĭ V. G. Literaturnye mechtaniia // *Estetika i literaturnaia kritika: v dvukh tomakh*. Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1959. Vol. 1. Pp. 35–117.
10. Belinskiĭ V. G. O russkoi povesti i povestiakh Gogolia // *Estetika i literaturnaia kritika: v dvukh tomakh*. Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1959. Vol. 1. Pp. 118–164.
11. Belinskiĭ V. G. Pis'mo k Botkinu ot 8 Sentiabria 1841 // *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii: v trinadsati tomakh*. Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1953. Vol. 12. Pp. 69–70. URL: <http://www.vgbelinsky.ru/texts/13/>

12. Belinskii V. G. Rech' o kritike, proiznesennaia v torzhestvennom sobranii Imperatorskogo Sanktpeterburgskogo Universiteta, marta 25-go dnia, 1842 goda ekstraordin. profes. doktorom filosofii A. Nikitenko. Sankt-Peterburg. 1842 // *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh*. Moscow: OGIZ, **1948**. Vol. 2. URL: [http://azlib.ru/b/belinskij\\_w\\_g/text\\_1080.shtml](http://azlib.ru/b/belinskij_w_g/text_1080.shtml)
13. Belinskii V. G. Russkaia literatura v 1842 godu // *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh*. Moscow: OGIZ, **1948**. Vol. 2. URL: [http://azlib.ru/b/belinskij\\_w\\_g/text\\_1842.shtml](http://azlib.ru/b/belinskij_w_g/text_1842.shtml)
14. Belinskii V. G. Sochineniia Aleksandra Pushkina // *Estetika i literaturnaia kritika: v dvukh tomakh*. Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, **1959**. Vol. 2. Pp. 130–569.
15. Belinskii V. G. Sochineniia Derzhavina // *Estetika i literaturnaia kritika: v dvukh tomakh*. Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, **1959**. Vol. 2. Pp. 7–75.
16. Belinskii V. G. Sochineniia Lermontova // *Estetika i literaturnaia kritika: v dvukh tomakh*. Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, **1959**. Vol. 1. Pp. 393–455.
17. Belinskii V. G. Sochineniia Nikolaia Gogolia // *Estetika i literaturnaia kritika: v dvukh tomakh*. Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, **1959**. Vol. 2. Pp. 76–83.
18. Belinskii V. G. Stat'i o narodnoi poezii // *Sobranie sochinenii v devyati tomakh*. Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, **1979**. Vol. 4. URL: [http://azlib.ru/b/belinskij\\_w\\_g/text\\_0420.shtml](http://azlib.ru/b/belinskij_w_g/text_0420.shtml).
19. Belinskii V. G. Stikhotvoreniia Vladimira Benediktova // *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh*. Moscow: OGIZ, **1948**. Vol. 1. URL: [http://azlib.ru/b/belinskij\\_w\\_g/text\\_0830.shtml](http://azlib.ru/b/belinskij_w_g/text_0830.shtml).
20. Belinskii V. G. Tarantas. Putevye vpechatleniia. Sochineniia grafa V. A. Sologuba. Sankt Peterburg 1845 // *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh*. Moscow: OGIZ, **1948**. Vol. 2. URL: [http://azlib.ru/b/belinskij\\_w\\_g/text\\_0860.shtml](http://azlib.ru/b/belinskij_w_g/text_0860.shtml)
21. Belinskii V. G. Vzgljad na russkuiu literaturu 1847 goda // *Estetika i literaturnaia kritika: v dvukh tomakh*. Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, **1959**. Vol. 2. Pp. 76–83.
22. Belinskii V. G. Zhurnal'nye i literaturnye zametki // *N. V. Gogol v ruskoj kritike*. Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, **1953**. 129–133. URL: <http://feb-web.ru/feb/gogol/critics/grk/grk2129-.htm>
23. Bell G. J. Mikhail Naimy 1889–1988 // *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, **2009**. Vol. 3. Pp. 251–264.
24. Bell G. J. Theosophy, Romanticism and Love in the Poetry of Mikhail Naimy. Diss. U of Pennsylvania, **2001**.
25. Bilyk I. E. K voprosu ob otrazhenii kulturnykh traditsii v tvorcestve Mikhaila Nuaima // *Problemy arabskoi kul'tury: pamiati akademika I. Iu. Krachkovskogo*. Moscow: Nauka, **1987**.
26. Bilyk I. E. Mikhail Nuaima i ruskaia kul'tura // *Arabist, khlebnikoved, chelovek: sbornik pamiati M. S. Kiktev, 1943–2005*. Moscow: Gumanitarii, **2007**. Pp. 66–83.
27. Bilyk I. E. Opyt konstruirovaniia novogo mifologicheskogo prostranstva v romane Mikhaila Nuaima 'Kniga Mirdada' // *Vestnik RGGU*. **2009**. №13. Pp. 219–238.
28. Bilyk I. E. Tvorcheskii metod Mikhaila Nuaima. Diss. Moscow State U, **1984**.
29. Boullata I. J. **1993**. Mikhail Nuaimy: Poet of Meditative Vision // *Journal of Arabic Literature*. **1993**. Vol. 24. No. 2. Pp. 173–184.
30. Dabbagh H. *Mikhail Naimy: Some Aspects of His Thought as Revealed in His Writings*. Durham, UK: U of Durham, **1983**.
31. Dimashqiyah A. *al-Inf'aliyah wa-al-iblaghiyah fi ba'd aqasis Mikhail Nu'aymah*. Bayrut: Dar al-Farabi, **1975**.
32. Dolinina A. A. Iz istorii rusko-arabskikh literaturnykh svyazei. ("Otcy i deti" Mikhaila Nuaima) // *Arabeski*. Sankt-Peterburg: Nestor-Istoriia, **2010**. Pp. 269–277.
33. Dolinina A. A. *Ocherki istorii arabskoi literatury novogo vremeni. Egipet I Siriia: (Prosvetitel'skiroman 1870–1914)*. Moscow: Nauka. **1973**.
34. Dolinina A. A. *Ocherki istorii arabskoi literatury novogo vremeni. Egipet I Siriia: (Publicistika 1870–1914)*. Moscow: Nauka. **1968**.
35. Dolinina A. A. Posleslovie // *Moi semdesiat' let*. Moscow: Nauka, **1980**. Pp. 222–236.
36. Dolinina A. A. Vvedenie // *Arabskaia romanticheskaja proza XIX–XX vekov: Adib Ishak, Mustafa Kamil', Mustafa Al'-Manfaluti, Amin Ar-Rejhani, Dzhebran Halil' Dzhebran, Mikhail Nuaima, Mejj, Abu-l'-Kasim Ash-Shabbi*. Leningrad: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, **1981**. Pp. 5–22.
37. Fakhuri R. *Tis'un Mikhail Nu'aymah: wuquffi al-muwajahah*. Bayrut: Muassasat al-Mawarid al-Thaqafiyah, **1981**.
38. Fanous M. W. S. Aspects of the Lebanese contribution to modern Arabic literary criticism. Diss. U of Oxford, **1980**.
39. *Natural'naiia shkola* / Ed. V. M. Friche. Moscow: OGIZ RSPFSR, **1934**. Vol. 7. Pp. 621–625. URL: <http://feb-web.ru/FEB/LITENC/ENCYCLOP/le7/le7-6211.htm>
40. Liubomudry // *Filosofskii slovar'*. Politizdat, **1981**. Pp. 445. URL: <http://filosof.historic.ru/enc/item/f00/s06/a000612.shtml>

41. Ghaith A. *al-Insān wa-al-‘ālam al-māwarā’ī ‘inda Mikhā’il Nu’aymah. Dirāsāt jāmi’iyah*. Bayrut: al-Maktabah al-Bulisiyah, **1986**.
42. Ghaith A. *La pensée religieuse chez Ġubrān Ḥalil Ġubrān et Miḥā’il Nu’ayma*. Leuven: Peeters, **1990**.
43. Gibb H. A. R. *Studies in Contemporary Arabic Literature // Bulletin of School of Oriental Studies*. Vol. IV. No. 28. Pp. 745–760.
44. Belinskiĭ // *Literatura i iazyk*. **2006**. URL: [http://dic.academic.ru/dic.nsf/enc\\_literature/590/%D0%91%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%BD%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B8%D0%B9](http://dic.academic.ru/dic.nsf/enc_literature/590/%D0%91%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%BD%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B8%D0%B9)
45. Hamidi al-H. *Falsafat al-khalas fi al-yawm al-akhir li-Mikha’il Nu’aymah*. Hammamat: Matba`at al-Khalij, **1983**.
46. Hammud M. *Mikhail Nu’aymah adiban: naqd, shi’r, qissah*. Bayrut: Dar al-Fikr alubnani, **2008**.
47. Hasan M., al-Ghani A. *Al-Sha’ar Al-‘arabi Fi-L-Mahjar*. Cairo, Egypt: N. p., **1955**.
48. Hine A. D. *Russian Literature in the Works of Mikhail Naimy*. Diss. University of London, **2011**. URL: <http://eprints.soas.ac.uk/14698/>
49. Ibn Hasin F., al-Tayyib I. A. *Falsafat Mikhail Nu’aymah Min Khilal “Al-Yawm Al-Akhir”: [Dirasah Wa-Tahlil]*. Tunis: al-Dar al-Tunisiyah lil-Nashr, **1985**.
50. Īmanquliyeva A. N. “Assotsiatsiia pera” i Mikhail Nuaime. Moscow: Nauka, **1975**.
51. Īmanquliyeva A. N. *Gibran, Rihani & Naimy: East-West interactions in early twentieth-century Arab literature*. Oxford: Inner Farne Press, **2009**.
52. Īmanquliyeva A. N. *Korifei novoarabskoi literatury: k probleme vzaimosviazi literatur Vostoka i Zapada nachala XX veka*. Baku: Elm, **1991**.
53. Īmanquliyeva A. N. *Russkaia literaturnaia i kriticheskaiia mysl’ i tvorchestvo Mikhaila Nuaime // Shārg filologīiāsy māsālālāri = Voprosy vostochnoi filologii*. Baku: Elm, **1986**. Pp. 3–48.
54. Iuzbashan K. N. *Palestinskoye obshchestvo. Stranitsy istorii // Istoricheskij Vestnik*. **2000**. No. 6–7. URL: <http://krotov.info/history/19/57/yuzb01.html>
55. Jabr J. *Mikhail Nu’aymah: fi siratihi wa-adabih*. Beirut: Nawfal, **2006**.
56. Karam N. *Khalil Gibran’s Pen Bond: Modernism and Manhattan Renaissance of Arab-American Literature*. PhD. Diss., Brandeis University, Ann Arbor, **2005**.
57. Kirpichenko V. N., Safronov V. V. *Istorija egipetskoĭ literatury XIX–XX vekov; v dvuh tomah*. Moscow: Vostochnaiā lit-ra. **2002**.
58. Krachkovskĭi I. Iu. *Nad arabskimi rukopisiami; listki vospominanii o knigakh i liudiakh. Izbrannye sochineniia*. Moscow: Izd-vo Akademii nauk SSSR, **1955**. Vol. 1. Pp. 11–139.
59. Krachkovskĭi I. Iu. *Vvedenie // Obraztsy novo-arabskoi literatury, 1880–1925*. Leningrad: Izd. Leningradskogo vostochnogo instituta imeni A. S. Enukidze, **1928**. Pp. I–XXV. Print.
60. Krachkovskĭi I. Iu, Gordlevskii V. A. *Arabskaia literatura v XX veke // Izbrannye sochineniia*. Moscow: Izd-vo Akademii nauk SSSR, **1955**. Vol. 3. Pp. 86–107.
61. Krachkovskĭi I. Iu, Gordlevskii V. A. *Mikhail Nuaime // Izbrannye sochineniia*. Moscow: Izd-vo Akademii nauk SSSR, **1955**. Vol. 3. Pp. 223–229.
62. Kuleshov V. I. *Istoriia russkoi kritiki XVIII–XIX vekov: uchebnik*. Moscow: Prosveshchenie, **1978**.
63. Lavretskĭi A., Gusev V. Belinskiĭ, Vissarion Grigoryevich // *Kratkaia literaturnaia entsiklopediia*. Moscow: Sovetskaia entsiklopediia, **1962**. Vol. 1. Pp. 503–510. URL: <http://feb-web.ru/feb/kle/KLE-abc/ke1/ke1-5032.htm>
64. Lebedev Ju. V. *Istoriia russkoi literatury v trèh chastiah*. Part One. URL: <http://www.litmir.net/br/?b=204929>.
65. Lukov V. A. *Osnovnye osobennosti russkoi literatury // Filologīia 5*. **2008**. URL: [http://www.zpu-journal.ru/e-zpu/2008/5/Lukov\\_russian\\_literature](http://www.zpu-journal.ru/e-zpu/2008/5/Lukov_russian_literature)
66. Mashinskiĭ S. I. **1979**. *Na pozītsiiah istorizma // Belinskiĭ V. G. The Collected works. In 9 Voumes*. Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia Literatura. Vol. 5. URL: [http://az.lib.ru/b/Belinskiĭ\\_w\\_g/text\\_2710.shtml](http://az.lib.ru/b/Belinskiĭ_w_g/text_2710.shtml)
67. Meyer S. G. *The Experimental Arabic Novel: Postcolonial Literary Modernism in the Levant*. Albany, NY: State U of New York P, **2001**.
68. Muminov Kh. K. M. *Nuaime kak teoretik kriticheskogo realizma v arabskoi literature*. Diss. N. p., **1975**.
69. Naimy N. N. *al-Fann wa-al-ḥayāh, dirāsāt naqdiyyah fi al-adab al-‘Arabī al-ḥadīth*. Bayrūt: Dār al-Nahār. **1973**.
70. Naimy N. N. *Mikhail Naimy; an Introduction*. Beirut: American U of Beirut, **1967**.
71. Naimy N. N. *Mikhā’il Nu’aymah : ṭariq al-dhāt ilā al-dhāt*. Bayrūt : al-Ṭab’ah al- kāthūlikīyah. **1978**.
72. Naimy N. N. *The Lebanese Prophets of New York*. Beirut, Lebanon: American U of Beirut, **1985**.
73. Nijland C. *Mikhā’il Nu’aymah: Promoter of the Arabic Literary Revival*. Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Institute Istanbul, **1975**.
74. Naimy M. Al-Ghirbāl // *Al-majmū’ah al-kāmilah*. Beirut, **1979**. Vol. 3.



75. Ob odnoi antipatrioticheskoi grupe teatral'nykh kritikov // *Pravda*. **1949**. 28 Jan. URL: <http://ihst.ru/projects/sohist/books/cosmopolit/100.htm>
76. Narodnost. URL: [http://dic.academic.ru/dic.nsf/enc\\_pictures/2192/%D0%9D%D0%B0%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%BD%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82%D1%8C](http://dic.academic.ru/dic.nsf/enc_pictures/2192/%D0%9D%D0%B0%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%BD%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82%D1%8C)
77. Ramadan H. I. H. The Development of the Hero in Mikhail Naimy's Novels. MA Thesis. American U in Cairo, **1993**.
78. Sarrāj N. *Thalāthat rūwād min al-mahjar*. Miṣr: Dār al-Ma'ārif, **1973**.
79. Sayyid S. *Mikha'il Nu'aymah: manhajahu fi al-naqd wa-ittijāhahū fi al-adab*. Cairo: 'Ālam al-Kutub, **1972**.
80. Shayya M. S. *Falsafat Mikhail Nu'aymah: tahlil wa-naqd*. Beirut, Lubnan: Manshurāt, **1974**.
81. Skvoznikov V. D. *Iskusstvo dlia iskusstva // Kratkaia literaturnaia entsiklopediia. 9 vols.* Moscow: Sovetskaia entsiklopediia, **1966**. Vol. 3. Pp. 194–197.
82. Terras V. *Belinskij and Russian Literary Criticism: The Heritage of Organic Aesthetics*. Madison, WI: U of Wisconsin P, **1974**.
83. Yuningsih Y. R. The Mystical Element in Mikha'il Nu'aymah's Literary Works and Its Affinity to Islamic Mysticism. MA Thesis. McGill U, **2001**.
84. Zen'kovskii V. V. *Istoriia russkoi filosofii*. Moscow: Akademicheskii proekt, **2001**.

Received 22.05.2016.

DOI: 10.15643/libartrus-2016.4.1

## **Влияние Виссариона Григорьевича Белинского на литературную критику Михаила Нуайме**

© М. Л. Свансон

*United States Naval Academy  
589 McNair Road, 21402 Annapolis, MD, USA.*

*Email: swanson@usna.edu*

Выдающийся ливанский исатель Михаил Нуайме является одним из основателей современной арабской литературы. Вместе с группой арабо-американских литераторов он основал «Ассоциацию пера», которая превратила арабскую литературу, тяжелой по форме и архаичной по содержанию, в современную мировую классику. Вклад Нуайме в современную арабскую литературу особый. Его критические статьи были написаны под сильным влиянием короля русской литературной и театральной критической школы Виссариона Григорьевича Белинского. Данное направление воздействия русской литературы на Нуайме недостаточно изучено и оценено, несмотря на особое место, отводившееся ему самим автором. Между тем, в предлагаемой работе подробно анализируется специфика отражения критики «неистового Виссариона» в творчестве и мировоззрении ливанского писателя. Статья возвращает академический интерес к вновь актуальной теме – влияние России и ее вклад в развитие арабской культуры.

Please, cite the article: Свансон М. Л. Влияние Виссариона Григорьевича Белинского на литературную критику Михаила Нуайме // *Liberal Arts in Russia*. 2016. Vol. 5. No. 4. Pp. 323–348.

*Поступила в редакцию 22.05.2016.*