

Literature in journalistic pers

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A clear distinction has existed between literature and journalism, though some overlapping has always occurred. In Pakistan, however, this difference has blurred over the past decade or so.

Journalism is obviously concerned with reporting of events and situations in one's own country and elsewhere in the world. In addition to this, it also involves, analyses and comments on these events and situations according to their immediacy, and repercussions at both the national and international levels. This has led to the inclusion of feature articles concomitant to the editorials and letters from readers, etc. Moreover, special supplements too go with the demands on the newspapers.

Over the past decade or so, literature has been incorporated into the newspapers, weeklies and other periodicals as well. Previously, the Press was content with the reviews of latest books etc, which also included literary works. But this got extended to the publication of literary piece: poems, short stories and critical articles. With the disappearance of the monthly literary magazine, so to say, the literary page (or two) of the newspapers came to be looked upon as a substitute for the literary monthlies.

This matter has gone beyond the reasonable limit which is amusing, if not exasperating. The yearly reviews of literary productions today comprise long, boring lists of poets, story writers, novelists and critics, etc. Their selection has not presented the reviewer (or the critic) with any problem, nor has elimination because it has just deteriorated to the level of likes and dislikes.

Literature is aesthetic creation which represents an experience that itself is a complex of ideas, relating to a problem or a situation coupled with the emotional response of the writer towards it, imaginatively visualised in isolation from the rest of the world or day-to-day reality. Its various forms, poetry, drama, fiction and prose, etc have their own critical criteria for their creation as well as their judgment. Each of these major forms has its own divisions in their own right. Poetry, for example, has its various forms like lyric, song, elegy, epic, etc.

Right from Aristotle, we have had principles and criteria of literary criticism according to which literary pieces have been evaluated. But the knowl-

edge of the critical apparatus is not enough, it has to be supported by almost complete knowledge of particular language in which it is written. But above all, it has to be furnished with refined taste without which no critic can do justice to authors or even to

more accomplished readers and critics of literature, though their opinions may vary but not contrastingly.

This work was previously done by the editors of literary magazines who felt highly responsible to the readership both for the presentation of new

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himself.

Literary taste is a subtle and intangible factor. But it has a solid underfoot. A good taste is eclectic and not exclusive obviously requiring a wide reading of literature at least in the language whose literature is being discussed. Apart from this, it requires a fine ear to respond to the rhythms of poetry as also of prose for that matter. Therefore, a country will have a few, if not

writings and their assessment. Not that they were always judicious in their selection or fair in their evaluation; it could, however, be said that their faults were minimal. We have had good editors as Mian Bashir Ahmad, Maulvi Salahuddin, Mirza Adeeb, Muhammad Tufail, besides some other good ones.

Firstly, polarisation entered the literary field on ideological grounds. Broadly speaking, these were the camp-followers