

Jadid Literature and its Study

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ABSTRACT

From the second half of the 19th century, a group of creators emerged from among the people, who, under the oppression of Russian colonial rule, lived without rights and under unparalleled injustices. At the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, this group spread the ideas of national identity and independence. They believed that achieving and preserving independence required first educating and enlightening the people. In this pursuit, they established “usuli jadid” schools, and for this reason, they were called “Jadids”, and the literature they created was termed “Jadid literature”. In modern Uzbek literary studies, the term “National Awakening Period Uzbek Literature” is also used in relation to the works of these creators. The Jadid creators were exceptionally talented individuals of their time, leading in various fields. Consequently, analyzing the works they created has become one of the most urgent issues of the emerging new field of Uzbek literary studies. Today, a specialized field known as “Uzbek Jadid Studies” has developed, dedicated to the study of Jadid literature. This article examines the stages Jadid studies have gone through since its inception to the present day, as well as the achievements and shortcomings encountered along the way.

Keywords: Usuli Jadid schools, Jadidism, national awakening, enlightenment literature, genre, classical literature, press, theater, Jadid studies

INTRODUCTION

Looking back at history, the social, cultural, and political situation in the Turkestan region was extremely dire in the late

19th and early 20th centuries. The local population lived without rights, education was still based on the old madrasa system, and the newly emerging press was under the control of colonial authorities. Amid such difficult circumstances, the selfless sons of the nation emerged on the stage of history. This period, which marked a significant turning point in the history of Uzbek literature, is closely associated with the Jadids. The Jadid movement encompassed nearly all fields of society, with one of its key branches being the development of Jadid literature.

The term “Jadid” is derived from the Arabic word meaning “new.” It was first used in Turkey during the reign of Sultan Selim III (1789-1802). At that time, “Nizami Jadid” referred narrowly to the modernization of the military system along European lines, and more broadly, it aimed at the modernization of science, education, industry, and agriculture. The contrast between “Jadid” (new) and “Qadim” (old) emerged in later centuries. Although the term was first used in a broad sense by the Tatar enlightener Ismail Bey Gaspirali in 1884, it entered Turkestan in the 1890s. “During this time (referring to 1894-1904), a conflict between the old and the new (Qadim-Jadid) began among the local population. The mullas (religious scholars) called those who read newspapers “Jadidchi” (supporters of the new)”, as noted. In the early years of the Jadids’ activities, they focused heavily on establishing “Usuli Jadid” (new method) schools and creating textbooks for them. However, starting from the early 20th century, they turned their attention to literature, which they considered “stronger than the atom” (in the words of Abdulla Qahhar), as a means to spread their ideas and awaken the nation from its slumber. The Jadids, as they did in other fields, reformed literature, thus paving the way for modern Uzbek literature. Today in literary studies, we examine Jadid literature as the Uzbek literature of the National Awakening period. This is because Jadid literature enriched Uzbek literature with new modes of expression, new genres, and new themes. In poetry, they shifted away from the classical Aruz rhythm, adopting the syllabic rhythm (barmoq), considered a national system by figures like Fitrat. They also focused on replacing Arabic and Persian words with Uzbek vocabulary, a goal they ultimately achieved.

The main factors behind the emergence of Jadid literature were:

- The inability of conventional genres and themes in classical literature to fully reflect social changes;
- Enlightenment literature;
- Enlightenment literature from Arab, Indian, and Tatar sources, as well as Turkish literature;
- Russian literature and, through it, familiarity with European literature;
- The social environment.

The frequent use of Arabic and Persian words in classical literature was partly due to the fact that many Turkic words did not fit into the Aruz rhythm. One of the main goals of the Jadids was to enhance the significance of the national language. Much of classical literature consisted of poetic genres, which limited its ability to fully address social changes. Enlightenment literature served as a bridge between classical and modern literature, inspiring the next generation to establish a new Uzbek literature - specifically, the Jadids.

Under the influence of Russian and other literatures, the first works in new genres were created, securing a strong place in Uzbek literature. The works produced by representatives of Jadid literature achieved a level in Uzbek literature that could stand on equal footing with world literature. The study of these works began not only in Uzbekistan but also abroad during that time.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The Jadids aimed to educate readers, awaken national consciousness, and thereby reform society through literature. This intention is evident in many of their works, giving Jadid literature a resemblance to European Enlightenment literature. Although European Enlightenment and Jadidism emerged at different times, the environments that produced both movements were strikingly similar. "Thus, many aspects of Enlightenment literature echo the principles of Jadid literature". Like the Enlightenment thinkers, the Jadids placed great importance on theater.

Almost all leading figures of Jadid literature wrote plays. This effort was initiated by Mahmudhoja Behbudi with his work *Padarkush* (The Parricide), the first drama in Uzbek literature. Eventually, drama became one of the leading genres in Jadid literature. One reason for this was the limited publishing opportunities at the time, with strict censorship hindering the publication of works. Additionally, a large portion of the population was still illiterate, and presenting a work to audiences on stage proved to be a more effective way to achieve creative goals. For these reasons, theater and plays gained a strong place in Jadid literature.

The large number of reviews written on plays in the early 20th century supports this idea. These reviews are highly valued as the first steps in Jadid studies, and, apart from classical *tazkirah* writing, they represent the earliest examples of Uzbek literary criticism, which began with reviews of plays. The Jadids also pioneered national journalism, starting with *Taraqqiy* in 1907. Literary criticism developed alongside journalism. Although newspapers like *Turkiston Viloyatining Gazeti* (1883-1917) existed in the Turkestan region before the Jadids, they were under colonial control. The development of a national press faced two obstacles: “first, economic backwardness; second, pressure from the government”. Despite this, the Jadids advanced national press, though the newspapers and magazines they launched were soon shut down by authorities. Nonetheless, journalism played a significant role in Jadid literature and in its study.

The study of Jadid literature began while its creators were still alive, although it was later criticized and banned under political pressure. While there was a resurgence of interest leading up to independence, it gained strong momentum after Uzbekistan gained independence. Today, research and application of Jadid literature remain relevant. Uzbek scholars like A. Aliyev, O. Sharafiddinov, B. Qosimov, N. Karimov, H. Boltaboyev, B. Karimov, D. Jabborova, N. Yo‘ldoshev, Sh. Hojiyeva, and others have contributed significantly to the development of Jadid studies in Uzbekistan and among related peoples.

The study of Jadid literature has not always followed a consistent path. At times it was praised; at other times, it was

openly criticized as ideologically opposed. In the post-independence era, it has even been evaluated in terms of national independence, which may lead to certain biases in the analysis of Jadid literary works. When analyzing any work of art, positive or negative biases can often cause a critic to deviate from objective theoretical analysis.

Professor Begali Qosimov, a renowned scholar of Jadid studies, suggests that the complex journey of Jadidism can be divided into the following stages:

1. 1900-1925;
2. 1925-1938;
3. 1938-1956;
4. 1956-1985;
5. 1985-1991;
6. The period after 1991.

Begali Qosimov rightly points out that the years 1900-1925 marked the emergence of the concept of “Jadidism” and its recognition as one of the most progressive movements of its time. However, as we have seen, Jadidism actually originated before 1900. Perhaps the scholar is referring to when the term itself entered the literary sphere. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that this first stage has been defined with exceptional precision. At the beginning of the century, ideas promoting the goals of Jadidism started to emerge in literary works. Although the Soviet revolution took place, initially it did not significantly influence literary criticism. Up until about 1925, literary criticism continued to analyze Jadid ideas and socialist ideals in a mixed manner. However, as the first quarter of the 20th century was drawing to a close, Soviet policy began to strongly influence Uzbek literary criticism, and year by year, methods aligning with Soviet interests were developed. Despite this, there was no harsh attack on works reflecting the ideas of independence and freedom. Another distinctive feature of this period is that some Jadid figures had high hopes for the October Revolution and even created works that praised it, which tempered the critical response to their work. During this period, most reviews focused

on stage performances, with articles such as 'Theater,' 'Theatre Nadur,' 'The Benefit of Theater,' published in Asia newspaper, Theater, and Oyna journals, and in the Turkestan Gazette.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The period of 1925-1938 in Jadid studies is characterized by extreme repression. This was a time in literary criticism marked by the establishment of Marxist-Leninist ideology. Censorship was imposed on creative freedom, and any idea that did not serve the regime was harshly condemned. "The Soviet regime and its Marxist-Leninist ideology, undoubtedly, greatly harmed the progress of our literature." During this period, the criticism of Jadidism turned into an outright threat. This was fueled by statements like that of Akmal Ikromov, who, on May 19, 1926, during the second plenary session of the Central Committee of the Youth Communist League of Uzbekistan (CCYCLU), declared, "The bourgeois ideology of Jadidism is the commercial ideology of the trading bourgeoisie. It has nothing to do with us. After all, it stands on one side of October, while we stand on the other".

The general message of this speech was equivalent to declaring the Jadids as enemies of the people. Inspired by such statements, "our critics" soon sharpened their ideological pens against Jadid literature. One critic remarked: "Jadid literature is the literature of the Uzbek bourgeoisie. Jadid literature reflects the thoughts and experiences of the Uzbek bourgeoisie, serves it, mourns, and laments for it."

Thus, Jadidism entered a new stage, marked more by losses than achievements. However, the class struggle continued in literary criticism, and some scholars still evaluated literature based on objective theoretical criteria. This can be seen in the debate on Cholpon's works that began in the press in 1927. In these debates, two main perspectives emerged. In the first, the poet's work was evaluated fairly, based on the essence of the poetry itself. Critics such as A. Qodiriy, V. Mahmud, A. Alaviya, partially Z. Bashir, and Oybek contributed articles and reviews with this approach. The second perspective, represented by Ayn, Usmonxon, Miyonbuzruk Solihev, and A. Sa'diy, analyzed Cholpon's works

purely from the viewpoint of “Marxist-Leninist” aesthetics. Unfortunately, such struggles ended with the victory of ideology after the mass repressions of 1938. However, during this period, there were still both biased ideological evaluations and purely scholarly, objective analyses. Additionally, reviews from this era are significant because they were written by the contemporaries of the Jadids while the latter were still alive.

During the period of 1938-1956, the study of the works of Jadid writers nearly came to a halt. They were not even mentioned critically, as any negative mention would still keep their names alive, which could reignite the spark of the flame they had lit. Thus, this era marked a pause in Jadid studies.

After “Comrade” Stalin’s death, the Soviet state began to rehabilitate the names of victims of mass repression. Starting in 1956, names of several Jadid writers, such as Qodiriy and Cholpon, were cleared. However, they were only rehabilitated as citizens, while the colonial authorities still feared acknowledging their creative works filled with themes of freedom and independence. A special commission formed to study Cholpon’s work effectively accomplished nothing; permission was granted on paper only. Meanwhile, works by Jadids considered “politically harmless,” like Siddiqiy-Ajziy and Ibrat, were published. Under the guise of addressing theoretical issues, attention was occasionally drawn to the works of Cholpon and Fitrat, but by the early 1970s, this too was restricted once more.

After 1985, samples of works by Jadid literary figures began to be published, accompanied by commemorative articles, such as “Cho‘lpon kim edi?” “Who Was Cholpon?” by Ahmad Aliyev in the *Yoshlik* journal (Tashkent, Issue 10). This period focused on reintroducing these works to the public, although significant initiatives were not yet undertaken.

From the earliest days of Uzbekistan’s independence, literary scholars began studying the challenging lives of Jadid literary figures, aiming to evaluate their creative contributions objectively and to introduce the Uzbek people to their historical service, as well as to restore their names. In 1991, academic Jadid researcher Naim Karimov was among the first to take on this task by publishing the booklet “Abdulhamid Sulaymon o‘g‘li

Cholpon”, which provided readers with a detailed view of Cholpon’s life, one of the major representatives of Jadid literature. The booklet covers each of his lyrical, epic, and dramatic works in separate chapters, acquainting readers with the events in his prose before analyzing the literary artistry. It offers in-depth analysis of Cholpon’s lyrical and dramatic works without expressing sharply critical opinions.

Following independence, collections of Jadid writers' works were published under the series Devotees of Independence, and extensive scholarly research, dissertations, and monographs were produced. Today, the study of Jadid literature remains one of the central topics in our literary scholarship.

CONCLUSION

At the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, the social, political, cultural, and artistic environment in Turkestan made the emergence of the Jadid movement and its branch, Jadid literature, a historical necessity. In response, the Jadid movement arose as a national awakening effort, with its authors initiating a new Uzbek literature.

The study of Jadid literature began alongside the development of Jadid literature itself. Figures such as A. Qodiriy and Fitrat can be seen both as Jadid writers and as scholars of Jadidism. In addition, contemporaneous literary critics like O. Sharafiddinov, A. Zohiriy, A. Sa’diy, and V. Mahmud were active researchers of Jadid literature.

In the 1930s, the works of Jadid writers were heavily repressed on ideological grounds, leading to their physical elimination in 1938. The Soviet regime did not stop there; they sought to erase the Jadids entirely from public life, resulting in a prolonged period during which their works were not studied within the former USSR.

With independence, the study of Jadid literature gained momentum, though much of this research initially took the form of introductory works. From the beginning of the 21st century, the scope of scholarly work in Jadid studies has expanded, achieving significant results.

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