

The Reflection of Western Culture in The Works of Uzbek Jadid Writers

Rakhmonova Dildora

Doctor of Philosophy in Philology, Senior lecturer of the Uzbek language and literature department of Tashkent State University of Law

Abstract: This article analyzes the issue of the attitude to European culture in the literature of the jadid period. Why European culture is often mentioned by representatives of jadid literature, their achievements in the field of science are exemplified in their works, the goals and reasons for consideration from the issues of the eastern and European comparison are revealed on the example of poetic and prose works.

Keywords: jadid literature, European culture, enlightenment, Jadid poetry, Jadid drama, oppressed East, Avloni, Tavallo, 20th century.



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Introduction

Many truths in the world are achieved through comparison and contrast. Examples are followed as models, and the deficiencies of phenomena that differ from them are analyzed. The activities of the Jadids, the ideological leaders of our nation at the beginning of the 20th century, were not far from this simple life reality. In the context of comparisons such as despotism and independence, oppression and justice, ignorance and enlightenment, the issue of the West and the East was also addressed. In many cases, Europe served as the standard of science, culture, and progress for the Jadids.

The Jadid writers often referred to various aspects of European life in their works, with a primary focus on European science and progress. Naturally, several objectives were pursued in this regard: first, by studying European culture, they sought to engage in dialogue as equals with other nations; secondly, by understanding the factors that contributed to Europe's development, they aimed to prepare themselves mentally for independence.

Literature Analysis and Methodology

The spiritual roots of the topic trace back to Ismailbek Gasprali's 1885 work "Ovrupo madaniyatiga betarafona bir nazar" (A Detached Look at European Culture). The author argues that Europe cannot always serve as a model, particularly highlighting the inevitable decline of European governance, a fact repeatedly proven by history. He explains that European morality and attitudes toward humans are not as perfect as those in Islam, offering examples to support his

argument. Gasprali's views are not aimed at rejecting Europe, but rather at basing his conclusions on the principle of "drawing the correct lessons from the wrong". The author justifies the need for striving toward European life, explaining: "Europe is an old age, with much experience — we respect its old age. We learn from its experience, but we do not repeat its mistakes. We, too, will build our own schools and universities. But as much as we illuminate our minds, we will also strive to fill our hearts with "truth". What we see in Europe, we will not blindly pursue like a child. We will, instead, thoughtfully ask: "What is this? What will be its consequences? Does it align with conscience and truth?" Gasprali emphasizes that he does not deny the value of European sciences, discoveries, and innovations [1; 251-252-b.].

The views of Uzbek Jadids also developed in this direction, with European culture being interpreted in their works as a contrast to the local backwardness and ignorance.

Professor Nurboy Jabborov, while providing a scholarly evaluation of the issue of European culture in Jadid literature, states: "The approach to comparing Eastern and Western cultures on the basis of universal human criteria, considering the fundamental nature of the issue, and evaluating it from the standpoint of national and societal interests, is a key feature of the spiritual and moral teachings of the Jadid thinkers" [2; 11-b.].

Ulugbek Saidov, a scholar who studied the literature of the national awakening period in comparison to European enlightenment literature, approaches the issue in the following way: "The Jadids of Tatarstan and Central Asia such as I. Gasprali, A. Fitrat, M. Behbudi, Muzaffarzoda, Cholpon, and others advocated for the advancement of society through the study of Western science and culture. Specifically, Muzaffarzoda viewed the use of other nations' achievements for the economic, cultural, and scientific development of one's own nation as a natural course of action. Mahmudkhoja Behbudi expressed even stronger views, writing in his article "Ehtiyoji Millat" ("The Needs of the Nation"): "To survive in the world, secular knowledge and science are necessary. A nation deprived of the knowledge and sciences of the time will be trampled by other nations". One of the Jadids' main goals was to become familiar with European culture and establish dialogue with other nations and states in the world" [4; 12-13-b.].

Discussion

One of the prominent Jadids, Abdulla Avloni, writes in his "Mahbublarima Bir Xitob" (A Speech to My Beloved):

Ko‘b zamondur yovrupolularg‘a bo‘ldung oshno,
Jurmi ne bo‘ldi, bizim zulmatda qoldi Osiyo,
Amriqo vahshiylari nuringdin oldilar ziyo,
Qoldimiz biz Amriqo, Oqyonussiyolardan fano,
Ittifoqu ilm, Islom ahlina go‘star jamol,
Tobakay hajringda bizlarni qilursan poymol.

When the poet addresses solidarity and knowledge, he identifies the lack of both as a key reason for the nation's dire situation. He depicts knowledge as something that has long been associated with the "Europeans" and even the wild inhabitants of America are benefiting from it, while Asia remains in the darkness. He urges the Islamic world to look toward unity and knowledge as a means of improvement.

In his poem "Biz, Millat" (We, the Nation), although he does not explicitly mention Europe, it is clear from the descriptions and metaphors that the Europeans are being referenced. While progressive nations are acquiring the tools of science and craftsmanship, the poet laments that our nation is preoccupied with empty rituals, expressing his sorrow by writing:

Tamaddunfeshalikdan o‘zgalar ruhi mujassamdur,
Hayota qobil ermas, surati devor – biz, millat.
Hama ilm-u hunar asbobini olmaqni istarsa,
Chafon, chalma, riyo sotmoqg‘a xo‘b tujjor – biz, millat.
Tafakkur soyasida o‘zgalar shahd-u shakar yer-sa,
Tururmiz baqrayib har go‘shada bekor – biz, millat.
May-u minosini tark aylasa ag‘yor, bizlar, oh,
Ichib jomi jaholatdan, hamisha zor – biz, millat.
Hama kasb-u kamolot etsa hosil ilm-fan birla,
Shifirguchi, yamoqchi, xayrchi – ko‘b xor – biz, millat.

In the poet’s view, the foundation of all perfection is science. There is no other path to salvation. The terms “others,” “everyone,” and “foreigners” represent the lyrical hero’s adversaries, while a nation that remains inactive, like a wall, is depicted as being ignorant of the events occurring in the world around it.

Is‘hoqkhon Ibrat, who demonstrated his progressiveness not only through his works but also through his lifestyle, continues these ideas in his “Madaniyat haqida masnaviy” (Masnavi about Culture), where he describes a person familiar with culture as someone who lives as if in paradise. When asked, “Who can be called cultured?” he answers, “One who is conquered by ethics and knowledge.” He then lists the cities from which one can draw examples of progress:

Madaniy shahar hozir olamda,
O‘n ikkidur hisob odamda.
Misr, Istanbul, Farish, Berlin,
Lundun va Madrid, Vashulg‘itun.
Vena, Petergrad ham Tukiyo,
Madaniyatda bo‘lg‘uvchilar bu.
Birisini oti erur Rumo,
Madaniyatni(ng) yeri erur Doniyo.

Ibrat had visited these cities and familiarized himself with their ways of life, attempting to implement some of their achievements in his homeland, Toraqorgon.

He frequently emphasized in his works that the products of science and technology such as railways, airplanes, telephones, heating systems for winter, cooling stoves for summer, electrical equipment, and surgical practices are all products of civilization.

The influence of European culture was also reflected in the works of the Jadid poet Tavallo, though in a unique way. Unlike others, Tavallo’s works not only focus on the European way of life but also explicitly link this with the pursuit of scientific and technological advancement.

Firstly, writing about European culture in Tavallo’s poetry increases the possibility of comparison.

Through the comparison of Europe and his homeland, the poet reveals the image of a nation sinking into ignorance. “The poet looks at the lives of the peoples of Europe and America. On one side are the nations that have integrated science, technology, and innovations into their everyday

lives, making their burdens lighter and their existence more prosperous. On the other side is Turkistan, clinging tightly to obsolete production methods and tools, which have been outdated since the time of Adam, yet it still holds on to them like a final miracle of the world” [3; 87-b]. The poet contrasts these two realities, and this comparison, of course, carries a satirical tone. In this process of comparison, we witness not only the emergence of new images but also the creation of new lexical items in poetry. As the poet expresses the idea, a distinctive, assimilated lexicon begins to form.

Toshkandning fayzi asosi tamosho bog‘ida,

Ne go‘zallar sayr etarlar, boqsangiz har yog‘ida, –

said Tavallo. Through this, Tavallo expresses regret over how public spaces like parks, which should ideally serve as places of leisure and cultural enrichment, are instead misused by the local population, reflecting their lack of culture and ignorance. He laments that instead of fostering a sense of community and learning, these spaces often highlight the cultural shortcomings and the absence of knowledge in the society. In another instance, he observes:

Dedim: “Ahvolingizga Yovro‘po, Amriko, Masqovlar,

Taajjub aylayub, hech kulmag‘on totor, yo‘x, yo‘x, yo‘x”, –

In his works, Tavallo turns to his fellow countrymen with a call for self-improvement. He emphasizes that there is no nation as backward as ours in the grand stage of the world, urging them to draw lessons from those who have made progress. This call becomes more pronounced in his “Olamga bir nazar” (A Glance at the World), where he highlights everyday inventions from Europe such as “wireless” communication (the telephone), the “cannon”, the “gramophone” capable of spreading a single note across distances, and the “airplane” that makes humans soar through the sky as symbols of progress.

Tavallo calls for his people to look to Europe as an example in their quest for knowledge and scientific advancement. Through these references, he underscores the importance of pursuing knowledge and embracing modernity, urging his fellow countrymen to learn from those who have already progressed and to strive for cultural and intellectual growth:

Ko‘r, Yovro‘po ahli nedan, tinmay o‘qurlar ilm-u fan,

Ko‘krak ochuq, sizlar chafan, inson bo‘lolmaysiz hanuz.

Millat kelajagi bo‘lgan yoshlarga qarata:

Bizlarni Yovro‘poda yurguzmayur piyoda,

Ko‘krak ochuq yaqoda o‘tmasun oy-yilingiz, – he warns by saying.

In his ghazal titled The Difference Between the Crafts of Europeans and Ours, he describes the vices that have led to the backwardness of the children of Turkistan and the consequences of these issues through the art of contrast. Specifically, he compares “zanburak” (a type of small cannon) to “sobqon,” “aftomobil” (automobile) to “Ho‘qand arava” (Khokand cart), “ayropilon-u gidropilon” (airplane and hydroplane) to “varvarak”, and “zobut tovari” (a product or commodity) to “bo‘yra, bordon” (types of traditional items)... These serve as symbols of the current state of Turkistan, which has fallen into ignorance and backwardness due to a lack of knowledge and development.

In his ghazal titled “Boshqa millatlar va biz” (Other Nations and we), he asserts that by leaving the homeland and traveling to Europe, and by studying “various sciences” as the “nations of the world” do, one can achieve the advancement of a nation.

Results

By striving toward Europe and seeing it as a model, the Jadids sought to demonstrate to the youth that “Yovro‘pa ilmiga rag‘bat qilish” (“encouraging interest in European science”) could be a solution to the root cause of many problems—ignorance. Tavallo’s line from the ghazal “Uyonmaz ersa millat...” (“If the nation does not awaken...”) — “Ko‘tar boshingni qayril Yovro‘po ilmiga rag‘bat qil” (“Lift your head, turn toward European science”) — aligns with this idea.

The poet, concluding that science was what elevated Europe to the heights, asserts:

Riyozat chekmayin ilm fununni yaxshi o‘rganub,

Ko‘r emdi Yovro‘poni, sayr aylar osmon, do‘stum, – says.

The poet concludes that if we do not engage in reflection and fail to learn from the events around us, even the experiences of Europe would be of no use. This is because taking lessons from others motivates individuals and strengthens their life goals. However, if the mind is not ready for such reform, then even looking at Europe or beyond it will be of no benefit. The poet thus reaches the conclusion that:

Qo‘shnimizdin ibrat olmaz ersamiz bizlarga bil,

G‘arbdin mashriqni kezgan Yovro‘polardin na sud?

Another Jadid writer, Siddiqiy-Ajziy, in his mukhammas of “Faxriya”, written in a satirical style, addresses his fellow countrymen who fail to appreciate the scientific achievements reached by Europe. He criticizes those who are unable to understand what is happening in the world and, on top of that, view the use of scientific inventions as a form of blasphemy. The poet uses irony to highlight the narrow-mindedness and ignorance of those who reject progress and technological advancements.

Aftomobillar, tramvaylar, qaro vopurlar,

Barchasi behuda shaylardur sarosar dardisar,

Kufr o‘lmasmi bu bid‘atlarg‘a solmaqliq nazar?

Hikmati jindorlik bergay biza g‘aybi xabar,

Mo‘miniz, hikmat bizimdur, bizda hikmat vordur.

In Abdurauf Fitrat’s play “Chin Sevish” (True Love), we can see a fundamental shift in his views regarding European culture. The play reveals that knowledge and awareness of modern developments do not always guarantee true humanity, as demonstrated through the fate of the protagonist. The words spoken by Karimbakhsh reflect the Jadid perspective: “In Europe, there is knowledge, but there is no fairness. Europe’s knowledge is like the tooth or claw of a tiger—something that rips apart the weak, having accomplished much in terms of destruction...” “...To study in Europe is not to praise Europeans as just and fair, but rather to protect ourselves and become as sharp as they are”. These words encapsulate the Jadid critique of European progress: while they acknowledged the importance of acquiring scientific and technological knowledge, they also warned against blindly imitating Europe without understanding its ethical and moral shortcomings. This perspective highlights the complex relationship between progress, morality, and the desire for self-preservation.

Conclusions

Through their aspiration towards European culture, the Jadids aimed to demonstrate the results of science and technology to their contemporaries. Consequently, in their works, modern inventions such as newspapers, journals, theaters, telephones, trams, airplanes, and electrical equipment were

portrayed in connection with Europe. When depicting progressive-thinking characters, the influence of Europe was evident: in the play “Padarkush”, the character of the “domla” “teacher” is portrayed as a “clergyman with modern ideas”, the “intellectual” is described as someone who is “educated in European fashion, a nationalist Muslim”, and in Avloniy’s “Biz va siz” (We and you), Kamol is described as a “young man who studied in Europe”.

While the East had once been the cradle of science and knowledge, many of these works emphasize that the West, particularly Europe, has now claimed this position. Siddiqiy-Ajziy’s article “Orzu va xayol” (Dreams and fantasies) captures this shift, with the phrase, “O Muslims! Awaken from the sleep of ignorance and heedlessness, for the light of knowledge is rising from the Maghreb”, reflecting the views of many Jadids.

In certain instances, the authors use terms such as “others”, “foreigners”, and “the whole world” to refer to Europe. However, the primary focus was on comparing the advanced Europe with the declining state of Turkistan under the grip of stagnation, with the aim of awakening the nation. Through this juxtaposition, the image of a nation left behind by progress, caught in the grip of ignorance, was fully revealed. The image of Europeans in their works symbolized aspirations related to knowledge, intellectual potential and civilization.

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