

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Genesis and Gradual Development of Religious-Enlightenment Motifs in Uzbek Prose

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Abstract

This article scientifically analyzes the role of religious-enlightenment motifs in the stage of formation and development of Uzbek literature, particularly prose, their genesis, and the stages of their historical-gradual improvement. In the study, beginning with our classical prose heritage, the religious-enlightenment and moral concepts in Uzbek prose from the Jadid period to the end of the twentieth century are highlighted through the prism of poetic transformation. The specific features of referring to religious-enlightenment motifs in each literary period are explained on the example of concrete works.

KEY WORDS

Religious-enlightenment motif, genesis, qissa, symbols, Jadid prose, Uzbek literature of the Soviet period, national identity.

INTRODUCTION

Fiction is a mirror that reflects the spiritual and mental world, way of thinking, and values of any nation. When we look at the centuries-old history of national Uzbek prose, from its emergence to the present day, we witness that the Islamic-enlightenment worldview, Qur'anic stories, and religious-enlightenment motifs inspired by hadiths have been among its leading foundations.

In Uzbek literary studies of the independence period, the scientific study of literary works free from ideological patterns, in harmony with national and religious values, has become one of the important problems. Indeed, the manifestation of religious-enlightenment motifs in the epic type is not merely a formal element, but is considered one of the leading criteria determining the semantic layer of the work, the psychology of the characters, and the author's aesthetic concept.

The tradition of referring to religious-enlightenment motifs in classical Uzbek prose has deep historical roots and is initially connected with works of a religious-historical, didactic, and

Sufi spirit created in the early Middle Ages and subsequent periods. In the formation of the prose thinking of Eastern peoples, particularly Turkic peoples, Nosiruddin Burhoniddin Rabghuzi's work "Qisasi Rabghuziy" served as a standard. In this work, the stories of the prophets mentioned in the Holy Qur'an are narrated in an artistic and at the same time simple prose language, and in a certain sense formed the aesthetic taste and religious-moral views of the people. The work consists of 72 stories, each of which carries its own poetic content. The author's purpose in presenting the stories was not simply to provide information, but to strive for innovation in the style of expression. If attention is paid, in world literature, particularly in European literature, the qissa, which is a middle genre of the epic type, is not observed. In the nineteenth century, considered the golden age of Russian literature, it became customary to call this genre povest. It is known to many that the genre of works translated from Russian was named qissa based on the above-mentioned

word, whereas the qissa genre was formed in classical Eastern literature under the influence of the Holy Qur'an. If it is permissible to say, "Qissasi Rabghuziy" may be called the first written qissa in the Turkic language. In this work, in addition to qissa, we encounter such classical genres of the epic type as rivoyat, hikoyat, latifa, and khabar. The author has a specific creative purpose in using each genre. In all the genres we have listed, a certain religious plot appears either in its original form or in a reworked form.

By the fifteenth century, Hazrat Mir Alisher Navoi continued Rabghuzi's traditions in a certain sense. Alisher Navoi's work "Tarixi anbiyo va hukamo" can be evaluated as the highest peak of the religious-enlightenment concept in classical Uzbek prose. Unlike "Qissasi Rabghuziy," the work has a relatively complex scientific character; at the same time, it cannot be said to be devoid of artistry. One of Navoi's specific features in illuminating the stories of the prophets is that he used the Holy Qur'an as the main source. In addition, the work presents stories of Arab and Ajam kings. In the course of narrating these stories, depending on the topic, the author gives instructive events connected with companions such as justice, Umar ibn Khattab, and generosity, Usman ibn Affan, as examples.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, as in all fields, a process of renewal began to occur in Uzbek prose as well. The writers of that period, such as Abdurauf Fitrat, Abdulla Qodiriy, and Cho'lpon, introduced a completely new socio-reformist spirit into religious motifs.

The Jadids saw Islam, free from superstition and innovations, as a means of conveying true enlightenment to the people and awakening the nation. For example, in Abdurauf Fitrat's stories such as "Qiyomat," "Zahroning iymoni," and "Musulmonning sevgisi," and in prose works such as "Munozara" and "Bayonoti sayyohi hindi," false religiosity, ignorance, and the use of religion for one's own interests are sharply criticized, and ideas of true enlightenment are put forward.

In Abdulla Qodiriy's novels "O'tkan kunlar" and "Mehrobdan chayon," issues of Islamic morality, piety, and fairness are also raised to the level of an aesthetic ideal through the images of the main characters, Yusufbek hoji, Otabek, and Anvar. The author interprets religious values as the basis of national identity.

During the period of Soviet colonialism, religious themes were officially banned and placed under ideological censorship.

However, Uzbek prose was not completely cut off from its national roots. In Uzbek prose of the 1960s–1980s, historical novels such as Odil Yoqubov's "Ulug'bek xazinasi" and "Ko'hna dunyo," and Pirimqul Qodirov's "Yulduzli tunlar" appeared. In these works, even though through hidden references, religious and Sufi themes, national values, and customs, for example death, worship, and ancient rituals, found expression in a distinctive allegorical way. Later, in Shukur Xolmirzayev's novel "Qilko'prik," which narrates our recent history, the struggles of representatives of the national liberation movement to preserve our national and religious values were depicted. Tog'ay Murod's story "Oydinda yurgan odamlar," written on a relatively modern theme, can be called, in the full sense, a synthesized form of religion and mythology. In the story, a wide place is given to religious motifs; in particular, the sufferings of a family seeking a solution to the problem of childlessness, and as a result, the inclusion of Islamic concepts such as prayer and repentance, as well as the images of prophets and saints such as Khizr and Sufi Olloyor, serve as evidence of our opinion.

In conclusion, the study of the centuries-old principles of development of Uzbek national prose shows that the genesis of literary thinking and its historical-gradual evolution cannot be imagined separately from the Islamic-enlightenment worldview and Qur'anic and hadith motifs. On the basis of this study, the following scientific conclusions were reached regarding the features of the poetic transformation of religious-enlightenment motifs at different stages of the history of Uzbek literature:

- Genesis and the traditions of the classical period: The formation of small and medium epic genres in Uzbek prose, particularly the qissa genre, is directly connected with the influence of the Holy Qur'an and religious-historical plots. Nosiruddin Rabghuzi's work "Qisasi Rabghuziy" is not only an example of the first written qissa in the Turkic language, but also a fundamental source that shaped the religious-moral and aesthetic views of the people. By the fifteenth century, Alisher Navoi, through his work "Tarixi anbiyo va hukamo," brought this tradition to its highest scientific-artistic peak and raised exemplary ideas such as justice and generosity to the level of an artistic criterion through the example of the lives of the companions.
- Social reformism in Jadid prose: By the beginning of the twentieth century, religious motifs began to perform a completely new social and enlightenment-reformist function in

the literary text. Jadid writers such as Abdurauf Fitrat and Abdulla Qodiriy sharply criticized false religiosity, superstition, and ignorance in their works and interpreted the true essence of Islam as a means of awakening the nation and understanding national identity, as well as a high aesthetic ideal.

- Soviet-period censorship and hidden symbolism: Even during the period of Soviet colonialism and strict ideological restrictions, Uzbek prose was not separated from its national-religious roots. In the historical and social novels of writers such as Odil Yoqubov, Pirimqul Qodirov, and Shukur Xolmirzayev, religious and Sufi values, as well as national rituals such as death, worship, and prayer, were brought to the artistic surface through symbols and hidden allegorical references.

- Modern prose and mythological synthesis: In Uzbek prose of the second half of the twentieth century and on the eve of independence, particularly in the work of Tog'ay Murod, a synthesis of religion and mythology is observed. The inclusion of human spiritual suffering, prayer, repentance, as well as the images of saints and prophets such as Khizr or Sufi Olloyor, shows that the philosophical-psychological layers of religious-enlightenment motifs became even deeper.

In brief, religious-enlightenment motifs in the historical development of Uzbek prose did not remain merely a plot element or a formal component, but served as a fundamental criterion determining the semantic architectonics of works, the psychology of characters, and the creator's aesthetic-philosophical concept. Studying the historical evolution of these motifs is of great importance in researching today's Uzbek literary studies free from ideological patterns and in harmony with national values.

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