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A New Interpretation of the Fairy Image in Uzbek Jadid Poetry

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A B S T R A C T
This article analyzes one of the pressing issues in Uzbek literary studies—the use of artistic images in Jadid poetry and their artistic-aesthetic functions. In particular, the image of the fairy (pari), widely used in folk oral literature, is examined, and it is shown how Jadid poets endowed this image with new meanings and content. This has enabled the author to gain a deeper understanding of the secular and social essence of Jadid poetry.
The article studies interpretations of the fairy image in early twentieth-century Uzbek poetry through examples from the works of Jadid poets and draws specific conclusions.

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Introduction

One of the traditional images in the oral literature of Eastern peoples is the fairy (*pari*). Its emergence and entry into Uzbek poetry are directly connected with folk mythology. According to popular beliefs, there are various kinds of fairies, each performing specific functions.

According to shamanistic beliefs, fairies dwell on Mount Qaf or in the Garden of Eram, and it is considered natural for a fairy to fall in love with a human and for a human to fall in love with a fairy [1].

According to these beliefs, fairies live eternally; they may take revenge on humans, love art, disappear from sight, sometimes harm people, and even drive them mad.

The Russian folklorist **A. Afanasyev** notes that among the ancient Slavic peoples, natural phenomena such as rain and wind were believed to be protected by fairies or water nymphs [2].

In the *Avesta*, **"payrika"** is the name of a mythological character and is recognized by specialists as the archaic genetic form of the fairy image. According to **A. E. Bertels,** the root of the word *pari* is the Indo-European proto-language lexeme *pery*, which in pre-Zoroastrian mythology was the proper name of the goddess of beauty and love [3].

In classical Uzbek poetry, the fairy image was used to express the idealized beauty of the beloved. The introduction of this image into the history of Uzbek literature and its artistic-aesthetic functions in poetry have been studied to a certain extent in scholarly research [4].

In the ghazals of **Ogahiy,** we encounter the image of a water fairy depicted in folk oral literature:

The sun that has risen to the peak of beauty is abundant,

In rank, it may be compared to you, O ocean fairy.[5]

Seeking a comparison from nature for the exalted status of the beautiful beloved, the poet likens her to the bright and radiant sun, to the seas and oceans shimmering in its light, and to a water fairy.

Researcher **D. Nazarova,** while studying poems related to fairies in Huvaydo's poetry, notes that many verses contain addresses to the beloved as "O fairy," "That fairy," or "A fairy." To support her view, she cites the following example:

Your pain entered my heart like madness, O fairy,

In the end, I renounced the whole world and became a stranger.[6]

Review of Literature

In Uzbek literary studies, even at the beginning of the 20th century, the issue of the influence of classical poetic traditions on Jadid literature began to be examined. However, under the influence of communist ideology, from the 1930s onward, the study of the creative legacy of the Jadids was banned, and this process was halted for a certain period.

Nevertheless, in the 1960s–1980s, some research efforts began to emerge. For example, the scholarly works of H. Yoqubov, E. Karimov, B. Qosimov, A. Aliyev, and the Tajik scholar Kh. Mirzozoda are noteworthy in this regard. Unfortunately, such beneficial initiatives were later obstructed[7,8].

In the late 1980s and during the independence period, literary scholars such as O. Sharafiddinov, U. Normatov, N. Karimov, B. Qosimov, B. Nazarov, B. Do'stqorayev, and Sh. Turdiyev carried out significant research aimed at an objective scholarly evaluation of Jadid writers' personalities and literary heritage, and at studying the developmental principles of this literature based on the ideology of national independence[9].

In the works of H. Boltaboyev, Sh. Rizayev, I. G'aniyev, D. Qurbonov, Z. Abdurashidov, N. Afoqova, Z. Mirzayeva, M. Tojiboyeva, R. Sharipov, and Sh. Hojieva, various theoretical issues were analyzed, such as Jadid literary criticism, the poetics of Jadid drama and prose, interpretations of enlightenment ideas, symbolism in poetry and formal innovations, depiction of social reality, the study of Jadid literature abroad, and the lyrical heritage of individual writers[10].

Research Methodology

In presenting the topic of the article, contextual analysis methods were used, including sociological, historical-cultural, historical-comparative, and comparative-typological approaches.

Results and Discussion

By the 1920s, literature that had become closer to real life was aimed at awakening the spirit of the nation. Jadid poets attempted to depict new themes in new genres and through new types of imagery. They also began to use traditional images not in their conventional meanings, but in a renewed and original way.

In the works of Jadid poets, traditional images were used in connection with social issues such as individual and national freedom, awakening the people, and justice.

For instance, Cho'lpon writes in his poem "Ket" ("Go"):

Go, O nine fairies, beautiful black bird,
Leave my broken chest, fly away.
Go, enemy of my love, do not appear,
Do not wander beside me spreading curses [11].

Cho‘lpon was a knowledgeable scholar and translator of world literature. Therefore, references to world literature are also observed in his works. In this poem, the poet alludes to Victor Hugo’s (1802–1885) historical novel *“The Hunchback of Notre-Dame”* (1831). The events of the novel take place in the Middle Ages and depict the tragic love of Quasimodo, who watches his beloved gypsy girl from the bell tower.

In our view, the phrase “nine fairies” refers to the sculptures on the main façade of the Notre-Dame Cathedral on the Île de la Cité in Paris. This cathedral was built on the site of the early Christian church of Saint Stephen and even earlier on the foundation of a Roman temple dedicated to Jupiter. According to legend, the Devil himself also took part in the construction of this magnificent cathedral.

Cho‘lpon emphasizes that anything involving the Devil cannot be blessed. He rejects deceptive idols of foreign culture—externally beautiful but misleading figures promoted as symbols of progress, namely the false promises of the Soviet ideological system that destroyed ancient values and caused repression. He understands deeply that there is no salvation on this path. Even though his soul suffers, his heart does not accept deception:

Go, do not read tales of angels,
Go, do not fabricate baseless stories.
Go, give peace to my beloved heart,
Go, for you have opened your arms to the black earth.
Go, tormenting spirit that tortures my soul,
Go, false light that deceives my heart [12].

The real-life and psycho-biographical basis of these ideas is that Cho‘lpon, in life, searched for his own path and sometimes hesitated about which way to go. However, he never succumbed to the “great enemy.” This was connected to his emotional experience of the brutal suppression of the Turkestan Autonomy in February 1918, and later the uncertain fate of the Bukhara People’s Republic established in 1920. The poem fully corresponds to the poet’s mood in 1922.

In Cho‘lpon’s poem “Suygan choqlarda” (“In Moments of Love”), the image of the fairy is also used:

Have you seen the fairies and angels of my imagination,

Dressed in bright red?

Did you walk on paths where flowers grew from my sorrow,

Spreading life from the cosmos?

On your paths, even the rustle of a fallen leaf,

Brings music to my ears;

When will your musical voice

Tell me that you love me? [13].

The poet portrays the beloved as the queen of beauties with a celestial appearance. Even the rustling of a withered leaf on her path sounds like music to the lover. The lyrical hero is a hopeful and pure-hearted lover. Even at the moment when he is close to falling into despair, he draws strength from the sacred flame of love for the homeland.

In Cho‘lpon’s poetry, characterized by its unique melody and musicality, the image of the “fairy” is frequently used. Many of his lyrical poems have been set to music; the most popular among them is the poem “Uyqu” (“Sleep”):

Be silent, do not make noise, the fairy is asleep,

Do not walk, O wind, if you do, go far away for a while.

In the sky, a group of angelic girls began the song of sleep,

They abandoned the lively tunes they once played [14].

In Jadid poetry, even descriptions of love carry social meaning. Because Jadid enlighteners placed the fate of the nation above all else, their personal identities were intertwined with ideas of freedom and liberation.

The fairy image, which for centuries expressed notions of love and beauty, in such poems is redirected toward themes of freedom and independence.

The same image also appears in Fitrat’s poem “Yana yondim” (“I Burned Again”):

Her eyes, heavy and gracefully gazing,

Looked like fairies who had once drunk wine.

I do not know why she was thinking…

My heart, like a pigeon circling the Kaaba,

Circled for hours around those eyes [15].

At the core of this poem is also a social meaning. The lyrical hero, worried about the future of his homeland, feels as if a deep fire is burning in his heart, as if long-standing hopes have collapsed. Despite despair, he still wishes for hope to return. No matter how wounded the soul may be, it cannot live without hope. Here, the image of the fairy serves to express the poet’s emotional and ideological message.

Conclusion

Uzbek Jadid poets creatively used forms, rhythms, and imagery characteristic of folklore and classical literature, introducing a new style, form, and socio-educational spirit into 20th-century national poetry.

They enriched traditional images and symbols by using them to express urgent social issues such as the freedom of the individual and the nation, awakening the people, and the struggle for justice and truth.

The fairy image, widely used in folklore and classical literature, acquired a new meaning and function in Jadid poetry. In this period, it was widely employed to express emotions such as freedom, independence, and concern for the future of the nation and homeland.

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