

Development of The Modern Uzbek Women's Literature in Afghanistan

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Abstract

The history of Afghanistan and its social and cultural conditions were the basis for the continuation of the Chagatai literature of the classic and late periods. The Modern Uzbek Literature in Afghanistan develops the traditions of the Chagatai literature, because it still practices the classic quatrains in the style of ghazal and rubai in prosodic rhythm. In Afghanistan the Uzbek women's poetry uses motifs of Layla and Majnun, the imagination of a kerosene lamp, romantic candles, roses, and nightingales singing. This article studies the works of Shafeeka Yarkeen, Asifeh Shadab, Fereshteh Zeyai, who were the pioneers of the contemporary Uzbek women poetry in Afghanistan.

Key words: Afghanistan, Uzbek poets, Uzbek poetry, female poets, Uzbek women's literature in Afghanistan

Introduction

The paper briefly reviews the common characteristics of the Uzbek literature and its women representatives in Afghanistan. The research discusses the literary innovations by Shafeeka Yarkeen, Asifeh Shadab and Fereshteh Zeyai, who stand out as the pioneers of the modern Uzbek women poetry in Afghanistan.

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The Uzbek literature in Afghanistan completely preserves the traditions of the Chagatai literature. (Ercilesun, 2004) Afghanistan did not join the administration of the Russian Tsarist Empire, but the country was under the rule of the Soviet Union. The Soviet regime did not last long enough to show its effect on literature; it also prevented the influence of Russian on the Uzbek language in Afghanistan. (Saray, 1997) At the same time, this situation preserved the relationship and closeness in language, literary features of poetry and prose, sound, form, and motif with the Chagatai literature. (Akyuz, 2012, s. 40-41)

Although the influence of the Russians and the Russian language is not observed in Afghanistan, the effect of Farsi (Dari, Persian) is very strong. The impact of Farsi grew due to the official status of Farsi in education, art, daily life and all kinds of social environments, especially in big cities where Uzbek and Turkmen live; the absence of Uzbek and Turkmen medium education in schools, the absence of press and media in these languages for the decades reinforced the influence of Farsi. (Jarring, 1939) The forms and motifs in the Uzbek literature in Afghanistan have much resemblance with the motifs in the Chagatai literature. Also, one of the points that should be taken into consideration in this study is the long years of war and internal turmoil in Afghanistan. (Akyuz, 2017)

The ongoing conflict and war environment have been continuing in Afghanistan for more than thirty years; the wars have caused Afghanistan people to live in isolation and far from the outside world. Currently, 80% of the country does not have electricity and this rate is 100% in rural areas. (Oguz, 2001)

This situation makes people live a life hundred years back. Neighbor relations and oral literature traditions continue with all vitality in the villages and rural areas as in the past. We argue that electricity and other technological innovations have just started to change daily life in Afghanistan, but these transformations are generally valid for the urban areas; the innovations are not yet introduced in villages and rural areas. (Akyuz, 2017) Therefore, people still sit under the lamp light with candles and lamps, they still manually fetch water from the well on the shoulder or on the animals, they do manual house cleaning, they still build straw houses by mixing hay with mud, they still continue to use a black plow. In this context, the literary motifs are almost the same as the motifs used in the Chagatai literature. (Akyuz, 2012) The female

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poets generally create their poems with a male perspective due to the social restrictions in Afghanistan. In other words, they write verses on behalf of male names Mecnun, Kareem etc. They depict female names - Layla and Asli as their sweethearts. If an author is not displayed at the end of a poem, then it remains unknown if the poem was written by a man or a woman. In this regard, poets with feminine feelings and thoughts, have recently started to express themselves. Shafeeka Yarkeen, Asifeh Shadab and Fereshteh Zeyai have emerged as the leading women poets at this point. (Akyuz, 2017) The lack of electricity, and the inability of technology possibilities in many places in Afghanistan are the natural reasons for the use of the outdated poetic motifs as sword, bow, arrow, kindling, candle, kerosene lamp in the women's poetry. (Akyuz & Toplu, 2017)

The classic Mugham, Ghazal, and Rubai rhythmic quatrains are applied both in the Afghanistan Uzbek literature and Afghanistan Uzbek women's literature. (Mallaev, 1963) In recent years, the development of technology and the increase in cultural relations between countries affected the birth of poetry with free prosodic rhythmic structure in the women's literature. In this regard, Shafeeka Yarkeen, Asifeh Shadab and Fereshteh Zeyai appear as pioneering female poets. The paper presents the short biographies and poems of these women poets, who were the pioneers of the Uzbek women's literature in Afghanistan.

1. Shafeeka Yarkeen. Dr. Shafeeka Yarkeen was born in 1954 in the city of Sar-e Pol. She was the daughter of Muhammed Kaseem Kadzizade (Amini M. K., 2006a) After finishing the primary and secondary school of the Sultan Razia High School in Mazar-i-Sharif, she attended and finished Rabia Balkhi High School in Kabul in 1972. (Amini M. K., 2006b) Later, she entered the Journalism Department of the Faculty of Languages and Literature at the Kabul University and earned her bachelor's degree in 1976 (Akyuz & Toplu, 2017) Afterwards, Shafeeka Yarkeen continued her graduate education in Uzbekistan; in 1999 she graduated from the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 1999. Shafeeka Yarkeen earned doctorate degree, defending her thesis "The life and oeuvre of Kamran" in Uzbekistan. (Yarqeen, 2009)

Shafeeka Yarkeen started her career as a teacher and wrote 30 books and more than 300 scholarly articles in Uzbek and Dari. Shafika Yarkeen's academic personality and poetry, being the first woman to write a poet biography deserve to be addressed and introduced in a separate article. Her biographic work "Silk Tales" (Ipek Taleleri) also needs special study. She used free style of poetry in her work poems "A Voice from Far" (Alysdan Bir Ses) and "My mister, why

I can't love you" (Begim, Sizni Nige Suyemen?). She expressed his feelings towards her husband and these poems are enough to study the literary heritage of Shafeeka Yarkeen (Yarqeen, 2009)

2. Asifeh Shadab. Asifeh Shadab created her works under the pen name "Shadab" in the contemporary Uzbek literature in Afghanistan. She was born in 1963 (in 1341 according to Hijri Calendar) in Tenurek district of Maimana city, Faryab province in Afghanistan. She completed her primary, secondary and high school education in Setareh (Yulduz) High School in that region. Asifeh Shadab graduated from Chemistry-Biology Department of Faryab University and started teaching. She worked as a teacher in Faryab and Jawzjan Provinces for many years (Amini M. K., 2006b)

She started her academic career at Faryab University since 1997. Shadab participated in the parliamentary elections held in 2005 and she became Maimana Member of the Afghanistan Parliament. (Akyuz, 2017). Her interest in literature started since 1979. Her poems in Uzbek and Dari are "Faryab", "Yulduz", "Jawzjan", "Jevandun" and others were published in poetry and literature magazines; unfortunately, her poems have not been collected and published. (Yarqeen, 2009) Asifeh Shadab started to write her poems in classical style and used the syllabic verse in her later poems, and she became one of the pioneers of her literary community in this regard. Her "Girls of our country" is a poem that attracts scholarly attention in terms of female gender issues. The poem is a syllabic verse that reveals the values of women and young girls, as well some womanish advice is offered. (Akyuz, 2012, s. 249)

3. Fereshteh Zeyai Begum. Fereshteh Zeyai Begum was born in 1979 as a daughter to Jamaluddin Zeyai and granddaughter to Kadi Ziauddin and Abdul Hakim Serapuli in Mazar-e Sharif. She finished high school in 1995 and entered Medical Faculty of Balkh University in 1996. As a result of the Taliban occupation of Mazar-e Sharif in 1999, the family of Fereshteh Zeyai Begum immigrated to Sweden and settled there.

Fereshteh Zeyai Begum has been involved in literature since 1990, and her poems have been published in periodicals in Afghanistan and other countries; but they have not been published as a book. Fereshteh Zeyai usually writes poems in Dari, she has a small number of poems in Uzbek. (Akyuz, 2012)

Fereshteh Zeyai stayed in Turkey and Uzbekistan for a while before settling in Sweden; she had the opportunity to follow the new movements in poetry of Uzbekistan and Turkey.

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Fereshteh Zeyai was able to study the styles of women's poetry in these countries and she could combine them with her artistic poetic skills in their own poems. (Yarqeen, 2009) Fereshteh Zeyai owns sweet poetic language, her language has similarities with Turkish. Readers feel Turkish influence in her verses.

The main poetic topic of Fereshteh Zeyai's poetry is love and affection. Fereshteh Zeyai writes her poems from male perspective, but as she expresses her feelings as a woman directly too. She writes her poems in syllabic verse or uses free prosodic rhythm. (Akyuz, 2017)

Conclusion

The Uzbek literature in Afghanistan continues to preserve the features of Chagatai literature in the classical and late periods both in terms of form, style and motifs due to the historical, political and social conditions of the country. Poets are written in rhythmic structures of Mugham, Ghazal, and Rubai; motifs of rose, nightingale, Layla and Majnun are used frequently like in the poems of Chagatai classical period. The female poets generally create their poems with a male perspective due to the social restrictions in Afghanistan. In other words, they write poems on behalf of male names Mecnun, Kareem etc. They depict female names - Layla and Asli as their sweethearts. If an author is not displayed at the end of a poem, then it remains unknown if the poem was written by a man or a woman. The Uzbek literature in Afghanistan attempts to abandon the classical quatrains of poetry; it starts to apply prosodic rhythmic structure and free verse style that had never been used before. Mainly, the women poets do not hesitate to express their feminine feelings as a woman instead of practicing men's expression of poetry. In this regard, Shafeeka Yarkeen, Asifeh Shadab and Fereshteh Zeyai appear as pioneering female poets. They represent new trend and set an example for female poet-successors in the Uzbek literature in Afghanistan.

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