

## THE DISTINCTIVE ESSENCE OF WORLD AND UZBEK LITERATURE

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### *Abstract:*

This article explores the distinctive features of both world literature and Uzbek literature, delving deeper into their historical development and highlighting the unique characteristics that define each literary tradition.

*Key words:* World literature, Uzbek literature, Modern world literature, Modern Uzbek literature, Differences between world and Uzbek literature.

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### The Distinctive Features of World and Uzbek Literature

Literature is the heritage of a nation; it holds a special place in human life. As long as humanity exists, literature will continue to thrive. Two powerful forces ensure the immortality of literature: its profound educational and enlightening impact, and its ability to bring joy and inspiration to people. Indeed, throughout any era or circumstances, humans cannot live without literature—it nurtures their intellect, educates them, and provides aesthetic pleasure. Therefore, truly great works of literature with deep moral and artistic value never fade away. In contrast, works created merely to serve political agendas or written in a superficial style lack artistic depth and have short-lived relevance. Unfortunately, many such works were produced in the 20th century.

Discussing the history of Uzbek literature, we must acknowledge its development alongside key historical events, such as the emergence of the Jadid movement, the fall of Tsarist rule, the re-establishment of autonomy, and the struggle to build the Soviet society. Despite enduring oppression, colonial rule, and social injustice, the Uzbek people never succumbed to despair. The resistance movement of the 1920s, known as the "Basmachi" uprising, is a testament to this spirit. Historical records indicate that over 4,500 uprisings and protests occurred in Turkestan during 130 years of colonial rule.

Prominent figures such as Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy, Hamza, Munavvar Qori, Abdulla Avloni, Fitrat, Siddiqiy-Ajziy, Abdulqodir Shakuriy, and Hoji Muin Shukrulla—pioneering intellectuals and literary figures—dedicated themselves to addressing the challenges faced by their nation. The contributions of these Jadid writers were instrumental in shaping the trajectory of Uzbek literature. Their movement, often called the "National Awakening," played a crucial role in promoting enlightenment through media, education, literature, and the arts. The Jadid writers aimed to combat ignorance and encourage intellectual and social progress, making their literary legacy invaluable.

Turning to the history of world literature, its early development is often associated with the Renaissance period, which began in Italy. Dante Alighieri, one of the era's greatest poets, is regarded as a herald of the Renaissance. He initially wrote poetry and was influenced by the philosophy of Ibn Rushd (Averroes). During the 15th century, Italian lyric poetry was shaped not only by Latin literature but also by Arabic poetic structures, a trend evident in Dante's works. His most remarkable poems are found in the collection *La Vita Nuova* (The New Life). Later, he transitioned to philosophical and scientific themes.

Another key figure of the Italian Renaissance was Giovanni Boccaccio, who significantly contributed to the development of the novella genre and laid the groundwork for modern realistic storytelling. The foundations of world literature were largely built in Italy, but France soon became a major literary hub. François Rabelais, with his novel *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, merged realism and satire, embedding deep philosophical messages in his works.

English humanist literature evolved through three distinct stages. The first phase, spanning the late 15th to mid-16th centuries, saw the emergence of early Renaissance ideas. The second phase—often called the "Shakespearean era"—lasted from the late 16th century until William Shakespeare's death in 1616. Shakespeare revolutionized drama, transforming it into a universal art form. His predecessors, such as Christopher Marlowe and Robert Greene, laid the foundation for this transformation by focusing on complex characters, national identity, and poetic storytelling. The third phase of English humanist literature, from the

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early 17th century to the 1640s, marked a decline in Renaissance ideals, as political turmoil led to the closure of theaters and a shift away from humanistic values.

The Renaissance also left a profound impact on Spanish and Portuguese literature. The period's first significant Spanish work was *Celestina* by Fernando de Rojas, while Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote* became a defining masterpiece, symbolizing the transition to modern literature. Shakespeare and Cervantes played pivotal roles in shaping world literature—Shakespeare by transforming drama and Cervantes by pioneering the modern novel.

Looking at modern Uzbek literature, the 20th century brought both challenges and achievements. The literary advancements of this era must be preserved and critically analyzed to ensure they become part of the nation's cultural heritage. When evaluating an author or a literary work, it is crucial to consider artistic quality rather than the ideological constraints of the period in which it was written. Literature and writers are inevitably shaped by the societies they belong to.

Unfortunately, during the Soviet era, literature was often interpreted narrowly, serving political and ideological interests rather than artistic expression. As a result, many works lacked literary depth, leading to an increase in mediocre writing. However, with Uzbekistan's independence, literature was freed from ideological constraints, allowing for greater artistic exploration. This newfound freedom has paved the way for richer, more diverse literary achievements, making the future of Uzbek literature bright.

In the context of globalization, modern world literature reflects universal themes and concerns, bridging cultural gaps and fostering a shared literary heritage. The distinction between national literatures is becoming less pronounced as literature becomes a global phenomenon. Today, popular literature, including detective fiction and adventure novels, coexists alongside more sophisticated, elite literary works.

For instance, contemporary American literature showcases a wide variety of styles and themes. Literary critic Catherine Vanspanckeren notes that American writer William Kennedy, in works such as *Ironweed* and *Very Old Bones*, masterfully portrays the struggles of ordinary people in New York, blending realism with poetic narrative.

Many literary traditions that were once considered peripheral, such as those of formerly colonized nations, have now become integral to world literature. Uzbek literature, too, continues to develop, finding its place in the global literary landscape. The unique characteristics of both world and Uzbek literature persist, evolving with each passing day.

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