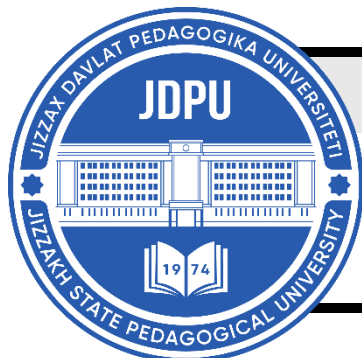


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METHODOLOGICAL JOURNAL**<http://mentaljournal-jspu.uz/index.php/mesmj/index>**LITERATURE AS A DRIVER FOR INDEPENDENCE:  
AMERICAN AND UZBEK LITERATURE IN COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS****Jasur Khudoyberdiev**

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E-mail: [jhudoyberdiev@wiut.uz](mailto:jhudoyberdiev@wiut.uz)**ABOUT ARTICLE**

**Key words:** literature, independence, politics, Enlightenment, American literature, Uzbek Literature, Jadid, Paine, Fitrat, Turkistan, Literary politics

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**Abstract:** It was commonly believed that literature focused on aesthetic purposes while politics occupied a separate realm with distinct characteristics. However, a number of literary figures could demonstrate the ability to skillfully employ literary genres to convey in their writings their political agendas explicitly addressing political issues. This research delves into the realm of American Enlightenment and Uzbek Jadid literature, examining how the politics of colonialism, national resistance, and the formation of national identity influenced the emergence of new literary genres. The research focuses on the works of renowned American Enlightenment writers and Uzbek Jadid writers, shedding light on the literary forms and genres they produced. A comparative analysis reveals that the literary works of the period in question lend themselves well to contrasting and comparing experiences, themes, and strategies utilised within British and Russian colonial contexts.

**INTRODUCTION**

Literature has acted as a mirror of society in general, the transformations in it in particular, in other words, literature and society are interrelated. If literature is separated from society where it is emerged, then it will become improper. As literature is a social

phenomenon, everything occurring in a particular setting is very much reflected in the literature of that nation. We can even feel it while analyzing the in the texture of its literature. Similarly, a new reflection, idea and manifestation emerge when we study American and Uzbek literatures as a reflection of the spirit of the age.

Observing the period of Enlightenment in North America, we can clearly see that it was actually a movement originally initiated in 18th-century Europe. European Enlightenment proposed concepts such as reason, liberty, and scientific method; therefore, this period is occasionally called the Age of Reason as well. The literary pieces produced thus served as the end product of the Enlightenment which rested upon the belief that life could best be lived through the power of reason and the empirical processes that best explained nature. Analyzing the American literature of Enlightenment, we can see a variety of genres, ranging from pamphlets to essays and poetry to speeches. All genres were thoroughly infiltrated with the advanced ideals of the Enlightenment movement, such as justice, liberty, and equality as the natural rights of man. The Enlightenment provided the foundation for gradual shift from an agrarian to a more advanced urban world. Ordinary folks of the British colonies started to question the authority of the divine-right king monarch and looked up to the ideals of parliamentary and democratic government. This was actually the start of the American Enlightenment, a philosophical movement in the same period. The prominent scholars, writers of the movement in British colonies were inspired by Newton, Bacon, and Rousseau. Later, the shift in ideology brought about the American Civil War.

Meanwhile, in Turkistan, the period commenced almost a century later and manifested a similar trend. Scholars all agree that the Jadid movement in Turkestan operated in the following three areas, including education (opening new Jadid schools, updating teaching methods, designing curricula), the arts (literature, theatre) and the press (printing Jadid enlightening newspapers and journals). The main goal was to enlighten the nation, to raise its moral level, and, as a result of the combination of these two aspects, to bring up an educated person who clearly understands his rich national background, identity, and role in society (Boltaboyev, 2000). Jadids, including Fitrat in their works, vividly laid the foundation for the Turkistani nation's generation in contemporary Central Asian countries. In short, our Jadid forefathers, Fitrat, Kadiri, Chulpon, Behbudiy and others, paved the way towards our identity constructions and nation-building. This article will discuss the great Jadid scholar Fitrat as a nation-building ideologist and provide some evidence from his poems that support this argument. Moreover, you can also encounter the discussion of the relationship

between nation-building, literature, and intellectuals across different geographical locations, such as the USA and Turkistan.

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

Employing postcolonial theory to explore the impact of imperialism and colonization on local societies and cultures, the study critically analyzes American Enlightenment literature from the 18th century alongside Uzbek Jadid literature from the early 20th century. Having experienced the introduction of new literary traditions such as historical fiction, poetry with new themes and styles, and dramatic works, these literary developments, in conjunction with historical trends, fostered the emergence of intellectual elites in both regions, invigorating civil society in the pursuit of greater freedom, combating backwardness, engaging and educating the public, challenging conventional norms, and inspiring social and cultural transformation.

When it comes to nurturing revolutionary ideas and thoughts and producing the whole cohort of generation immersed with forward thinking ideal, American literature's role was immense. Several writers wrote a number of masterpieces depicting their unique stances which was occasionally resembled to the literature's influence on military and political transformation. Take for example David Ramsay. He assertively argues, 'In establishing American independence, the pen and the press had merit equal to the sword' (Howell, 2011). In other words, American Enlightenment Literature and the press contributed to shifting the events in the right direction. Overall, American Enlightenment literature was a period of writing that was predominantly characterized by the celebration of European Enlightenment thinkers and their ideas about liberty, justice, and equality.

It is widely believed that national literature's history mixes with the country's history from which it emerges. The most evident reason lies in the fact that while the nation is being built, the issue of having a common language emerges, and here, the literature plays a non-dispensable role in nation-building as well as in the formation of the standard language. There has been quite a strong, keen interest in the exploration of Uzbek literature not only inside the country but also beyond its borders.

Fitrat played a core role in this process as a great representative of modern Uzbek literature, science and culture. His contribution to the knowledge is immense, and his well-rounded figure encompassed a number of areas. He is a scholar with encyclopedic knowledge, a literary theorist, a sharp linguist, an original playwright and poet, a courageous political publicist, a publisher, a journalist and a talented statesman (Malik, 2015). Having been raised in a relatively well-off family by a merchant father who travelled extensively to

Kashgar, Ottoman Turkey and Iran and an educated mother, Fitrat received his education in the old religious school of Bukhara, and later he went on to study in Mirarab madrasah (Boltaboyev, 2000). Fitrat, who was absolutely fluent in Persian and Arabic, besides Chigatai Turkic/Old Uzbek, showed a keen interest in the socio-political events of his time occurring in his motherland and beyond.

In his memoirs, he admits initially opposing the Jadid movement and then joining the movement once he ultimately realized its essence and core values. As we know, he later grew up to become one of the most outspoken publicists of Jadidism after he received higher education in Istanbul, which was supported and guided by Jadid representatives. It was after that that he began to look at Turkestan life from the perspective of transformations and reforms in advanced countries, particularly Turkey, which was initiated by the Young Turks Revolution (Boltaboyev, 2000). This trip from 1910 to 1914 moulded his identity as a supporter of enlightenment, nation-building and reforms.

### RESULT AND DISCUSSION

It is widely believed that Enlightenment both in Europe and North America championed rationalism, empirical observation, and humanism, laying the foundation for democratic ideals. In this regard Thomas Paine's role is of pivotal importance. He emerged as a key figure during this period, particularly through his influential pamphlets like "Common Sense," which advocated for American independence from the British Empire and presented complex political ideas in accessible and plain language for ordinary citizens of 13 colonies. Paine's key masterpieces: "Common Sense" and "The Rights of Man" promoted democracy and criticized British monarchy shaping public opinion and encouraging critical thought about governance and individual rights which was in line with core Enlightenment values and principles.

Being originally from Britain, Thomas Paine (1737-1809) was an English philosopher involved in the American independence movement. His outreach went beyond the colonies and reached Britain, France as well. In his political pamphlet '*Common Sense*', he put forward a number of political agendas where he contemplated their feasibility, whether they were morally right, and what consequences they might lead to if carried out (Rosenfeld, 2008). He had firsthand awareness of the hardships borne by the underclass and the poor by the time he was first introduced to the Enlightenment ideas of freedom, equality and democracy in the 1770s. Ostensibly, therefore some literary critics praised Paine for having a pen worth more than twenty thousand soldiers during the war (Grogan, 2011). It was his works which inspired the ordinary people as a real American and fight for the independence with

profound hope and utmost enthusiasm. Another famous American politician and statesman, Tomas Jefferson authored *The Declaration of American Independence*, moreover he also enjoyed a great fame as a literary figure. All founding fathers of the nation produced several political prose pieces and many letters, which later were collected into ten large volumes (Imholt, 2000). Literary contributions of the Enlightenment scholars were deeply intertwined with the political climate of his time. Their arguments for innate rights and representative democracy resonated particularly with the working classes, who found in his writings a voice for their struggles against oppression and poverty (Sun, 2023). Generally, literary output of that period is a testament to the profound interplay between literature and politics. The works not only articulated the aspirations of a revolutionary age but also established a solid framework for understanding the role of literature as a means of political expression, thought and mobilization of the nation.

One of the most significant contributions of American literature to the independence movement was its ability to bravely articulate the desire for a unique American identity and a different narration of the governance. A volatile period necessitated some great thoughts to encourage and convince the ordinary American countrymen to stand up and fight against the colonists. Americans claimed a literature that could be solely considered as distinctly American, reflecting their cultural and historical context. This quest for a unique literary voice was pivotal in shaping the national consciousness and fostering a sense of unity among the colonies. Writers like James Otis (1725-1783), born in Massachusetts and received his higher education at Harvard, where he studied literature for two years in 1761 delivered his speech "*The Writs of Assistance*". This work is considered a masterpiece among most literary critics. A prominent scholar Farell (2014) argues that the second President of the United States, John Adams, said "*Then and there the child Independence was born*" which highlights the importance of Otis in the liberal processes taking place in America. It was Otis who grappled with the challenge of developing a distinctly American literary style that could resonate with the themes of independence and self-definition.

It was poetry and poetic genres that played a significant role in stimulating liberal and democratic ideas was poetry. Although political independence had been achieved earlier, the literary movement slowly but surely followed general trend of the time. A collective known as the Hartford Wits, comprised mainly of three Yale university alumni—Timothy Dwight (1752-1817), Joel Barlow (1755-1812), and John Trumbull (1750-1831)—sought to bring their poetic expressions to the forefront of colonial life. Dwight, in particular, began crafting verses in Connecticut, including "The Conquest of Canaan," which is recognized as the first

epic poem in American literature. This work allegorically narrates the conquest of Connecticut from British forces, featuring grand and morally uplifting themes (Imholt, 2000). The legacy of Hartford Wit's writings continues to resonate in contemporary discussions about the relationship between literary art and political action, highlighting the significance of literary politics in shaping democratic ideals and social movements.

In his writings, revolutionary poet Freneau lampooned the careless actions of the colonists from England and astutely forewarned that such conduct could spark armed conflict, which began in 1775 and came to be known as the Revolutionary War (Halleck, 2019).

*When a certain great king, whose initial is G,  
Shall force stamps upon paper and folks to drink tea;  
When these folks burn his tea and stamp paper like stubble,  
You may guess that this king is then coming to trouble*

Philip Freneau integrated aspects of the Enlightenment and Romanticism in his poetry, steering away from mimicry and unclear abstractions. He held a strong enthusiasm for democratic ideals and progressive values.

Switching from North America to Central Asia, the premier of Fitrat's first collection, "*Saykha*", as rightly noted by Fayzullo Khodjaev, was that "*the idea of Bukhara's independence was first expressed in a bright national form.*" Because of this, Amir Alimkhan and his admiration opposed the publication of this collection in Bukhara. Nevertheless, he managed to publish "*Saykha*" in 1910 in Turkey (Istanbul) at his own expense. The poems in the collection were published in Persian, 15 of which were published in the newspaper "Sadoi Turkiston" with an Uzbek commentary in 1914 (Fitrat, 2010). The collection is full of poems about love for the Motherland, compassion for the people and encouragement to eliminate oppression.

Fitrat's one of the most common topics in his literary works is patriotism, national consciousness, and liberty. This is true patriotism, which encompasses all members of society's interests, no matter their background. One can see the emotional praise of patriotic feelings in his initial work, "*Sayha*", printed in Istanbul in Farsi. Almost all of his poems in that collection fall into the category of highly patriotic. For Fitrat, it was absolutely impossible to talk about the homeland peacefully and relaxedly. His pain was endless, his injuries were fatal. The poet lamented its "ruin", horrible condition, and worn-out clothes dress. He sought happiness and salvation for his motherland.

One of the poems included in "*Sayha*"-"Mihani mo" starts

*Binmo sahari azmi tavofi vatani man,  
Oh-oh, chi vatan, sajdagohu jonu tani man.  
Ham mohi manu osoyishi , izzu sharafi man,  
Ham Ka`bai man, qiblai man, ham chamani man.*

Another patriotic poet from Bukhara, Isroil Subhani, translated Fitrat's poem into Uzbek and published it in 1992 in the magazine "Navqiron Bukhara"(Karimov, 1992):

*Tongla tavof aylagali chiq, Vatanimdur,  
Oh-oh, ne Vatan, sajdagohu jonu tanimdir.  
Izzat , sharafim, tinchimu arshimda to`lin oy,  
Ham Qiblamu ham Ka`bamu va ham chanimdur .*

In the poem, one can observe the passionate feelings of the poet; he is deeply saddened and shaken by the fact that the backwardness of life in Bukhara Emirate and Russian colonial policy, tyranny and oppression are destroying his beloved homeland, where he was raised. He praises his motherland to such heights as the Qibla, the Ka'bah, and the place of worship. This situation encourages the poet, all readers to fight for the defence of the motherland, to be heroic.

Now, let us look at another masterpiece produced by Fitrat, which arouses sorrow and sadness for Motherland and provokes patriotic feelings and pride for his nation and identity. *Yurt Qaygusi/ The Pain about Motherland* is a poem written in Aruz form and published in the Hurriyat newspaper on December 29, 1917, No. 62.

### **Yurt Qaygusi/ Pain about Motherland**

*Onam! Seni qutqarmoq uchun jonmi kerakdir?  
Nomusmi, vijdon bila imonmi kerakdir?  
Temur bila Chingiz qoni toshdi tomrimizdan,  
Aytgil! Seni qutqarmoq uchun qonmi kerakdir?  
Yov suqg'ali kelgach qilichini yuragingga,  
Tush oldiga, ol ko'ksumi — qalqonmi kerakdir?  
Boq, boq, mana turk tengizi toshqun qila qoldi,  
Turon yovini quvg'ali to'fonmi kerakdir?  
Turon, yigiting, barchaga boq, qalqdi oyoqg'a,  
Yurtda qorovul qo'yg'ali arslonmi kerakdir?*

The poet actually called three of his poems with the same title, *Yurt Qaygusi/ Pain about Motherland*, which is full of deep, sad voices coming from the bottom of his heart. In the first two lines, the writer resembles his motherland directly to his mother, which might

require his life. He is ready to sacrifice himself to rescue and protect this land, and his conscience and belief will support him in his mission. Next, the writer refers to the nation's forefathers, like Amir Timur and Genghis Khan, who established powerful empires and strong nations. Pleading the nation, he even further says perhaps you need our blood to save you. In the third verse of the poem, he implies that his heart acts as a shield for the sword of a foe. Later, the scope of the coverage got much broader, encompassing the whole of Turan/Turkistan, the heartland of all Turkic nations in the world. The Turkic ocean can be struck by massive storms, wiping out enemies and destroying everything on its way. In the last lines, Fitrat puts himself and a reader in the centre of a battle, saying, "Just look at me, your strong young man stood up in his feet to act like a lion to safeguard you, Mother Turon.

These lines are bright examples of the patriotic verses of the poet, which is quite common for representatives of Jadids who routinely invoked Timur and the nation in the hopeful days of the volatile period (Khalid, 2015). Fitrat and other Jadids ardently strived for the hope that the moment of national regeneration was approaching. By provoking the national feelings of the readers, they wanted to accelerate the process of enlightenment and reforms that were taking place in the minds of local Turkistanis.

### **CONCLUSION**

To conclude, the American Enlightenment during the late 18th and early 19th centuries was defined by notable political and social transformation and upheaval, with literature being instrumental in these transformations. Enlightenment writers and poets began to scrutinize religious doctrines and customs through the lens of reason and scientific investigation. The thinkers of this period generated an extensive array of literary pieces that celebrated justice, freedom, and equality as fundamental human rights.

Despite the life-threatening danger overcasting on them, Jadids, including Fitrat produced a number of masterpieces in Uzbek literature, which still attract a lot of attention from local and international literati and researchers. In the light of Jadid literature and thoughts, the whole nation and other fellow Jadid intelligentsia came to have a deep fascination with the idea of reforms, patriotism, national heritage and cultural identity, for only Jadid enlightenment could deliver the whole nation from its horrific backwardness. It is hardly surprising that Jadid writer Fitrat stood out as a key leader in this movement. In a comparable fashion, the American Enlightenment of the late 18th and early 19th centuries was distinguished by notable political and social shifts, with literature playing a pivotal role in these changes. Writers and poets began to critically assess religious beliefs and traditions through reason and scientific reasoning. A comparative analysis reveals that the literary



works of American Enlightenment and Uzbek Jadid literature writers lend themselves well to contrasting and comparing experiences, themes, and strategies utilised within British and Russian colonial contexts.

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