

# Turkish World and Literary Relations of the East

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**Abstract:** All Turkic literature has a common cultural framework. A substantial confirmation of this fact comes from the national spiritual heritage, which has become the basis for the further development and flourishing of the verbal art of Turkic peoples. First of all, these are *Китабы Деде Коркут* of the Oghuz, the Kyrgyz heroic epos *Манас* (*Manas*), *Идегей* (*Idegei*) – the variants of which were widespread among the Kazakhs and the Tatars, the famous *Чура батыр* (*Chura Batyr*) among the Tatars, etc. The works such as *A Thousand Nights and a Night* (*Мың бір түн*), *Shakhname* or *Shakh-Name* (*Шахнама*), *Kalila and Dimna* (*Кәлила мен Димна*), *Leili and Majnun* (*Ләйли-Мәжнүн*), *Zhusip-Zylikha* (*Жүсіп-Зылиха*), *Takhir-Zukhra*, *Farkhad-Shyryn* or *Khosrov-Shyryn* (*Хұсрау-Шырын*) have exerted a significant influence on the development of literature. The article concludes that, despite the national differences of the Turkic peoples, they are united by common literary background, common goals, and interests, moral, spiritual, and cultural values. It is proved out again that the literature of the Turkic peoples is abundant in authors and works, characterized by a variety of genres and poetic forms, ideological and thematic wealth, and a high artistic level. Emphasis is also put on the fact that in the eastern tradition, there are many samples of word-of-mouth literature of the general plot and cultural heritage of the Turkic peoples who had inhabited the eastern lands since ancient centuries.

**Keywords:** Tatar Literature, Kazakh Literature, Turkic Literatures, Folklore, Literary Relations.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The history of East Turkic art and culture spans millennia. Within the scientific scope, it is indisputable that the writing of the Turkic people brought up such geniuses as al-Farabi, al-Biruni, al-Fergani, al-Khorezmi, Ulugbek; their science and culture was long before the European ones appeared and left an indelible mark on the history of all mankind (Sever, 2020).

P. A. Grinzer states his thoughts about the medieval cultural ties between East and West as follows, "Together with the Mongols and the Arabs, and partially beside them, many fabulous plots have migrated to Europe, which can be found both in European folklore as a whole, and in German shwanks and French fabliaus, and works by Sacks, Boccaccio, Chaucer, Margaret of Navarre, Cervantes, Shakespeare, Lesage, and others." (Grinzer 1997; Urmanche, 1994; Balci, & Hazar, 2020).

This point of view of the scholar is a very daring and impartial conclusion about the influence of East Turkic culture and art on literature, the peoples of Europe, and the peoples of the world.

## 2. LITRTURE REVIEW

General issues concerning the formation and development of literature and literary criticism are examined

by both Russian and foreign scientists. The issues of evaluating the literary process and determining its further development, as well as literary interactions remain topical problems of literary criticism up to the present time (Bloom, 2002:560; Thorpe, 1990:216; Barthes, 2007; Culler, 2002; Frye, 2000; Eagleton, 2002). It should be noted that «European scientists have been interested in Tatar culture, folklore, and ethnography since the 19th century» (Sayfulina *et al.*, 2014: 116-119). As noted by modern literary critics «National literatures considered in the context of global literary processes are unique mental and practical formations» (Yusupova *et al.*, 2016: 213-222). "In the 20th century, a similar attitude towards the age of industrialization began to take shape in Europe" (Zakirov *et al.*, 2017; Turhan, & Bahçecik, 2020).

At present, one of the important tasks of Tatar Literary Studies is the issue of interrelationships and a literary dialogue among the Turkic people, existing at the beginning of the last century. The topic is especially timely in connection with the possibility of restoring relations lost in the Soviet period in the post-Soviet space.

It should be noted that the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century was characterized by the active development of the Enlightenment movement of the Tatar people, who belonged to one of the nationalities that made up tsarist Russia (Sever, 2020).

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During that period, the Tatars began to intensively develop their education, reforming the system of education for children, it was the time of a large-scale renewal process of the entire Tatar society.

It was at the beginning of the twentieth century that conditions were created for the publication of books, newspapers and magazines, new educational establishments were opening everywhere: schools and madrassas. There emerged a whole galaxy of the Tatar national intellectuals, such as writers, publishers, translators, journalists, teachers of new-method schools and madrassas, who made great contributions to the course of educating the Tatars and other Turkic peoples (Balci, & Hazar, 2020).

The scientists note that «The beginning of the 20th century is defined as a period of emerging Tatar scientific thought, theory of literature, serious discourse about the literary terminology and concepts, as well as the time of achievements in this area» (Gilazov *et al*, 2015: 508-517).

At the beginning of the 20th century, the advanced part of the Tatar youth, who sought to replenish the knowledge gained in local madrassas, had the opportunity to get education in the cultural capital of Turkey - Istanbul. Here they received religious education, got acquainted with Turkish literature and culture, and also had the opportunity to get acquainted with European, especially French and Italian literature, which at that time influenced the Turkish creative youth (Sayfulina, 2014; Sever, 2020).

It was Turkish literature, one of the first of the Turkic literatures, that turned its attention to the culture and literature of Western Europe, enriching itself with new genres and themes.

The development of Tatar literature of the last quarter of the nineteenth century is determined, among other things, by the fruitful influence of Turkish literature.

Then we were the shakirds of Ottoman literature" (shakird means a student in a Muslim college), G. Ibrahimov wrote about this influence later (Ibragimov, 1978: 366).

The beginning of the 20th century, in connection with certain political changes in Russia, was marked by migration processes, when the Tatars of Russia emigrated to the Ottoman state, where their ancestors still live, partly preserving their way of life and cultural traditions (Sayfulina, 2013; Turhan, & Bahçecik, 2020).

The activity of the numerous Tatar advanced intellectuals - writers, scholars, Turkologists, historians, theologians, political figures who emigrated for various reasons in the first years of Soviet power to Turkey, such as Yusuf Akchura (1876-1935), Sadri Maksudi (1879-1957), Musa Jarullah Bigiyev (1875-1949), Gayaz Iskhaki (1878-1954), Fatih Karimi (1870-1937), Gabdrasit Ibragimov (1857-1944), Akdes Nigmati Kurat (1903-1971) rendered an invaluable service in the development of political, social, scientific and cultural spheres of the Ottoman state, and in the future, of the republican Turkey.

The well-known Tatar poet of the early twentieth century G. Tukay proudly speaks of Yusuf Akchur and Fatiye Karimi, who reliably covered the creative and political life of the Turkish state in the periodical press (Tukay, 1985, 351). It is important to note that in the work of G.Tukay, the reality of the contemporary Turkish world is reflected on an equal footing with the Tatar and Russian realities.

If the development of Turkish literature and culture of that time was facilitated by political and economic ties with European countries, the relationship between Tatar and Turkish culture and literature was mainly influenced by the unity of traditions, religion, and world views. Groups of scientists from Tatarstan and Azerbaijan study the common roots of folklore and literature of the Turkic peoples in the article "General Roots, General Spirituality: Literary Interrelations of Literatures in the Aspect of Cultural Dialogue" (Gimadieva *et al.*, 2017; Balci, & Hazar, 2020).

Lazzat in her article discusses the ways of studying Kazakh literature in the period of independence, "new names" that came to literature, the theme raised in their works, genre search, and the nature of the development of general literature. The historical and cultural heritage of the Kazakh people as an integral part of the spiritual, moral and aesthetic wealth of the country is studied. The results of traditional and theoretical research in the field of folklore and modern Kazakh literature are presented. The problems of literary translation, receptive poetics, hermeneutics, stylistics, literary comparative and communicative poetics are considered (Lazzat, 2019).

Assanov and his colleagues worked on the Edigey-Heroic epic "Edigey" is included to the best works of world literature, and graces among the folklore, not only of the Kazakh people, but also of other Turkic people living in the territory of the CIS- and believe that

the heroic epos "Edigey" remained among the Turkic people living in the south from Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to Siberia, as well as in foreign countries: Turkey and Romania. "Edigey" epos has more than 40 versions, some of which consist of fifteen or sixteen thousand lines. Therefore, a narrow study is not enough for in-depth analysis of the nature of the epic. The archaic and contemporary versions of the epic, the diversity of its national versions contribute significantly to the study of the dynamics of the epic tradition of literature of Turkic-speaking people. The general laws of these phenomena in science were determined through a comparative analysis. However, a similar study of national versions of the epic, in our opinion, is currently being implemented or not implemented not so often. The development of this topic also meets the objectives of the state program "Cultural Heritage". "Edigey" epic allows us to consider the main literary traditions of the Turks, which connect real historical events and personalities, with fictitious hyperbolized scenes. It reveals the attitude of Turkic people to described historical realities, shows the impact of these events on the worldview, of the Turks (Assanov *et al.*, 2016; Turhan, & Bahçecik, 2020).

### 3. METHODS

Comparative literary criticism, the founder of which is A. N. Veselovsky is concerned with the interaction of national literature. The application of the comparative approach to the literary interplay of Turkic literature involves identifying the nature of inter-literary communication, which, according to D. Dyurishin, falls into two types: genetically contact literary ties (direct and indirect, external and internal, influences and borrowings) and typological convergence manifested at the level of the literary method, genre features and specifics of being in a particular national environment (Dyurishin 1979:100). A typological study of literature allowed literary scholars, folklorists, linguists, and culturologists to consider linguistic and literary interdependence in the context of a system-integrated study of languages, literature, and art, within the framework of integration studies of humanities and social sciences, the interaction of conceptualism, methodology and research methods inherent in various areas of social science (Galimullina & Galimullina, 2016; Dautov *et al.*, 2018; Mingazova *et al.*, 2014; Garifullin, & Sabirova, 2016; Arzamazov, 2018).

In the writings of the scholars above mentioned, the continuity of the literature of the Turkic peoples with ancient Turkic monuments concerning stylistic, poetic,

and linguistic aspects is scientifically substantiated. Especially when the Turkic peoples gained their independence, which entailed changes in the social and spiritual life of the entire Turkic world, it was that time when several impactful scientific works characterizing the community and unity of the Turkic-speaking peoples appeared. Some of the discussions are dedicated to the study of poetics, the aesthetic and literary system of works representing the Golden Age of Turkic culture, as well as the poetics of works that arose during the Golden Horde, their ideological and literary features, and the continuity of traditions.

### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Further, continuing P. A. Grinzer's narrative, it should be noted that the plots of many oriental tales, legends, story-tellings, epic poems underlie the formation of Tatar, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Karakalpak, Uzbek, Turkmen folklore (Grinzer 1997). In the Eastern tradition, there are many samples of folklore literature of the general plot and cultural heritage of the Turkic peoples inhabiting the eastern lands since ancient centuries (Zhu, 2017). Note that during the dissociation of the Turkic tribes, then their unification, the construction of a large state, ancient monuments had a special effect on the inspiration of heroes, the people as a whole. Any work of folklore and a literary monument reflects the patriotic spirit of the people, their human qualities. Natives of the Turkic people, possessing such noble qualities, freely inhabited the lands from the Altai to the Danube (Grintser, 1997; Keaton, & Giles, 2016).

All Turkic literatures have common cultural roots. A national spiritual heritage, which became the basis for the further development and flourishing of the verbal art among the Turkic peoples, is a truly reliable evidence of this. This, first of all, folklore and mythology, reflects the worldview, philosophy, morality, ideals and life experience of ancestors. A significant part of the oral materials developed into separate works afterwards. The most famous of them are "Oguzname", "Alpamysh", "The Book of Grandfather Corkut" and, of course, the famous "Manas". It should be emphasized that the oral and written forms of verbal art have been interacting with each other for many centuries and interpenetrate each other. For example, during the creation of Kyssai Yusuf (1212-1233) by Kul Gali, "The Legends of the Prophets" ("Kyissa al-anbiya", 1310) by Rabguzi, the folklore and mythological materials, the poetic achievements of oral folk art were used abundantly. In more than a thousand-year history of Turkic literature a

great number of writers created a huge number of works. Only one enumeration of their names would occupy several volumes.

But there are sign figures among these authors, who played an important role not only during their life, but also in the subsequent fate of verbal art history. Among them we can name some important figures in here such as: Ahmed Yasawi (died in 1166) and Kul Gali (1183-1230s), Yunus Emre (1250-1320) and Saif Sarai (1321-1396), Ahmedi (1329-1413) and Nasimi (died in 1417), Navoi (1441-1501) and Makhtumkuli (18th century), Isma-il Haspraly (1851-1914) and Mirza Fatali Akhundov (1812-1878), Akmullah (1831-1895) and Abai (1845-1904), Ahmed Midhad (1844-1913) and Riza-eddin Fahreddin (1858-1936), Gabdulla Tukai (1886- 1913) and Konstantin Ivanov (1890-1915) *et al* (Gimadieva *et al*, 2017, p 498).

Continuing to develop thoughts about the spiritual exchange of Turkic peoples within the framework of exploration target, note that in general, the proximity of the East Turkic peoples was facilitated not only by their neighboring settlement. At the same time, their social lifestyle and forms of customs and rites, as well as universal cultural characteristics, had a strong influence. Folklore pieces and ancient literary monuments of the Tatar, Kazakh, Azerbaijani, Bashkir, Uzbek, Kyrgyz, Turkmen peoples and nationalities, historical data, archival documents serve as a proof of the unity and solidarity of the Turkic world.

Legends and stories, dastans associated with the heroes of Kozhanasyr, Zhirenshe sheshen, Aldar kose, heroic poems *Алпамыс (Алпамыс)*, *Кобланды (Кобланды)*, *Коруглы (Коруглы)*, lyric-epic poem *Козы Корпеш – Баян сүлү (Козы Корпеш – Баян сүлү)*, etc. are great works of peoples, which clearly demonstrates that from ancient times Turkic peoples had the experience of imaginative thinking, aesthetic development of their past and present. The Kazakh people, as one of the representatives of the great Turkic world, created spiritual monuments not only about their history but also managed to capture the entire Turkic world because the roads traveled by each people were similar.

Further, the examples of cultural heritage that are the property of the entire Turkic world, Orkhon-Yeniseian monuments (Орхон-Енисей жазбалары), Blessing Knowledge (Кутадгу Билиг), Dictionary of Turkic Dialects (Диван лугат-ат турк), Диуани Хикмет, Кодекс куманикус, and other literary monuments

speak for the closeness and kinship of our peoples. This is confirmed by the works of prominent Turkic scholars V. Bartold, V. Radlov, S. Malov, C. Valikhanov, A. Divayev, N. Baskakov, A. Kononov, A. Shcherbak, H. Korugla, G. Arasla, and many others. For example, B. Uakhatov, a specialist in folklore, comes to the following conclusions, "The kinship and community of narrative heritage are not determined by superficial similarity; in order to expose the laws of conformity, the application of serious and complex principles is necessary. Given these causes and characteristics, three types of typological similarity in folklore are distinguished. These are historical-genetic, historical-cultural, historical-typological harmonies, and similarities." (Uakhatov, 2018:186-195).

The scholar relies upon literary monuments and ancient pieces of cultural heritage that are common for Turkic peoples.

The pieces of narrative heritage originate in religious beliefs, as they appear in the ancient period in the history of humankind during the dominance of the mystical thought system. In all likelihood, this is why the examples of East Turkic folklore – fairy tales, proverbs and sayings, folklore poetic narratives (in translation "қисса"), legends, and traditions are based on the Holy Book of the Quran and hadiths. Religious scholar T. Barlasuly says the following about this, "Sermons of the prophets who lived and worked before Prophet Muhammad (may God bless and greet him), who called people to God-fear, approached stories and traditions, fairy tales, and then found their continuation in the Quran (Turhan, & Bahçecik, 2020).

In order to fully and deeply understand the spiritual content of such genres of folklore, we turn to surahs, ayats (chapters) from the Koran. Along with this, it should be noted that the folklore works of the entire Turkic world are contiguous to the origin of the ancestors in historical sequence.

Hence, we consider folklorist S. Kaskabasov's opinion on the ancient monuments of the Turkic peoples to be fair. The heroic epic *Алпамыс (Алпамыс)* sprang up and was variously known and indifferent volumes among the Kazakh, Tatar, Uzbek, Bashkir, Kyrgyz peoples, and nationalities, as well as among the Altai people. Legends, narratives associated with Korkut, are widely spread among the Kazakh, Bashkir, Turkmen, Azerbaijani, Turkish peoples. The Kazakh, Bashkir, Tatar, Altai, Uighur peoples have preserved the pieces of the lyric-epic poem *Козы-Корпеш и*

*Баян-сулу*. The emergence and popularization of one legend among many nations is certainly not accidental. Focusing on the fact that the first examples of the epic work *Alpamys, Kozy-Korpesh, and Bayan-sulu*, the epic monument *The Book of My Grandfather Korkut* appeared in the form of little narratives in the era of the unity of the Turkic peoples, the scholar concludes, "Therefore, The Turkic Kaganate, a large medieval state, was founded before the 6th century and had reigned for about ten centuries. So, the sheer certainty that the Turkish state arose two thousand years ago."

The literary heritage and oral tradition of the Turkic peoples are characterized by community and harmony. The epic work of Kazakh verbal folklore *Қырымнан қырық батыры* is similar in structure to the Kyrgyz epic *Manas*. In connection with the neighboring settlement of peoples, universality in identity, other genres of folklore were in tune. For example, proverbs and sayings "Научись искусству, овладей умением" / Learn art, master skill ("Өнерді үйрен, үйрен де жирен"), "Добро народа – в его красноречии, добро джигита – в меткости" / The good of the people is in eloquence, the good of the dzhigit is in accuracy ("Ел қазынасы – ескі сөз, ер шырағы – екі көз"), "Дальняя дорога испытывает коня, тяжелый путь – джигита" / The long road tries the horse, the hard path – the dzhigit ("Ат арыса – тулақ, ер арыса – аруақ"), "Айрылған ел азар, қосылған ел озар" *Ayrylған el azar, қосылған el ozar* differ in the general text style and a single basic idea.

"It is known that Tatars and Turkmen make the part of the same group - the Turkic one - in the ethnic and linguistic plan. The Oguz tribes, which dominate the ethnogenesis of the Turkmen, also belonged to Tatars partially. For many centuries our ancestors communicated closely, and the interpenetration took place. Long years they lived together in the same states.

Islam and common Islamic values (primarily in the form of Arabic, Persian-Tajik classical literature), the general Arab graphics served as a unifying, convergent factor for Turkmen, Tatars and some other peoples. Ancient Turkic verbal art was our common heritage, the basis for national Turkic literatures. Many Tatars studied and worked in Central Asia, also in Turkmenistan. Turkmen colleagues mention the role of the Tatars in the field of education, science and culture with gratitude. An outstanding Turkmen writer, the author of the famous novel "The Decisive Step" Berdy Kerbabaev (1894-1974) wrote: "I love Galimjan

Ibrahimov as much as the Tatar people love him. Together with the Tatar people, Tatar writers, I learned a lot from Galimjan. Galimjan made a great contribution to the development of Tatar literature and also to the development of Soviet literature among the peoples of Central Asia ..." It should be noted that Berdy Kerbabaev translated the verses by G. Tukay and M. Jalil into Turkmen. There are works in Tatar literature where the subjects related with Turkmen are reflected more or less. Zahir Bigiyev in his book "Journey through the Mesopotamia" (1893), describing his impressions of Turkestan, writes with bitterness and respect about Turkmen who fought heroically in 1881 against the colonial troops of tsarism" (Gimadieva, 2017, p 499).

Confirmation of this is "the dastans, poetic works of the Kazakh people admired by the whole world community, such as *A Thousand Nights and a Night* (Мың бір түн), *Shakhsnameh* (Шахнама), *Leyli and Majnun* (Ләйлі-Мәжнүн), *Zhusip-Zylikha* (Жүсіп-Зылиха), *Takhir-Zukhra*, *Kalila and Dimna* (Кәлила мен Димна), *Farkhad-Shyryn* or *Khosrov-Shyryn* (Хұсрау-Шырын) and others" (Dautov et al., 2018). Of course, in the relations of peoples, the role of scientists and masters of the word is great, since the people draw closer to the people thanks to the great sons and minds of these peoples.

In this regard, it is worth mentioning the bearers of the light of the East, renowned all over the world, such as Rudhaki, Ferdowsi, Rumi, Hafez, Omar Khayyam, Sagdi, Zhami, Marjani, Abai.

At the same time, turcologists C. Valikhanov, V. Radlov, V. Zhirmunsky, A. Margulan, R. Berdibai, H. Zakharov, I. Sagitov, I. Ybrayev believe that the similarity of ideas, images, motifs of epic works of related peoples is explained not only by their genetic relationship but also by the characteristic typology of epic works on the whole. According to academician V. Zhirmunsky, epic works of eastern and western peoples are also characterized by their distinctive features (Zhirmunsky, 1979:209). For example, the miraculous birth of a hero, his rapid growth, choice of a horse speaking a human language, racing like a whirlwind, meetings with all kinds of monsters and mysterious creatures, the victory of rivals, search for a bride, marriage to the daughter of the enemy, etc. Such motifs, image features are characteristic of the East Turkic epics. These analogies are the distinguishing features of the epic works of the Tatar, Kazakh, Karakalpak, Kyrgyz, Bashkir peoples.

Each of these epics reflects the distinctive national features of these people, their originality, customs and traditions, their interests, and aspirations. The wide distribution of folklore pieces among related peoples shows their ethnic territorial proximity, the historical community of their destinies, in addition, indicates the close cultural ties between these peoples.

The narrative legends entered *The Book of My Grandfather Korkut* contains ethnic characteristics of the Turkic-speaking peoples: it describes the struggle of the Oghuz heroes against foreign invaders, against the internecine turmoil among the tribes for the establishment of a single rule. A. Egeubai mentions, "Despite the fact that the Turkic world is fragmented into different territories, nations and nationalities, the linguistic, literary, cognitive processes characteristic of the Turkic-speaking peoples find their continuation. This is observed in the literary and cultural relations of these peoples. The basis of the literary process lies in the nature of cultural heritage." (Egeubai, 2002:18). The scholar researching into poetics, the aesthetic and artistic system of the ancient Turkic literary heritage, believes that the works that form the basis of Turkic civilization – *Кутадгу Билиг* (Blessing Knowledge), *Диван лугат-ат турк* (The Dictionary of Turkic Idioms»), *Диуани Хикмет*, *Reverence for the Truth* (*Хибатул хақайық / Ақиқат сыйы (Iguneki)*), clearly demonstrate a close interaction at synchronic and diachronic levels. The researcher notes, "When we talk about feasible rhymes, popular wisdom, proverbs and sayings, winged words and famous phrases, we are faced, first of all, with the rich spiritual heritage of the Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Uigur, Tatar, Nogai peoples, and nationalities. The homogeneity of the peoples' identities, the universality of the laws of nature, the customs and traditions, the nature and form of behavior, the kinship of human nature are presented in the above-mentioned narrative tales and dictionaries" (Egeubai, 2002:24).

## 5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Names of places, figurative expressions that take place in the literary heritage of the Turkic-speaking peoples, are an indication of the identity of their worldviews, historical destinies. The ancient Turkic literary monuments can serve as the rationale for this standpoint.

During the time of the Russian Empire and during the Soviet period, the literary heritage, which is the property of the entire Turkic world, was presented as a personal spiritual value of particular people.

For example, the Azerbaijani and Uzbek peoples considered *The Book of Grandfather Korkut* as their property. Scholars, the representatives of the Kazakh, Bashkir, Tatar intelligentsia, tried to explore it through the prism of their language. Precisely such an idea can be expressed in relation to the literary monuments *Диван лугат-ат турк* (Dictionary of Turkic Idioms), *Кутадгу Билиг* (Blessing Knowledge), *Кодекс куманикус*, etc.

This approach provides broad options for ample consideration of the aforementioned literary monuments within the language of a particular nation but does not facilitate the full disclosure of the historicity and poetics of ancient monuments, their aesthetic, and literary forms. The study object is treated within the limits of the characteristics of only one people, outside the national-specific characteristics of the entire Turkic world. Consequently, the work is not considered from the standpoint of historical truth, which hinders the full and comprehensive study of the cultural and literary heritage on the whole.

Thus, despite the national differences, the Turkic peoples are united by common literary background, goals and interests, moral, spiritual and cultural values, ethical standards, the desire to preserve and develop the traditions inherent in Turkic culture. At the same time, they solve a common problem: preserving the national identity of the language, literature, culture of the people, on the one hand, and maintaining the unity of the multicultural literary space in the context of globalization, on the other hand.

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