

THE PORTRAIT OF WOMEN IN THE SHORT NOVELS OF CHINGIZ AITMATOV AND NORMURAD NORKOBILOV

YAKHYAEVA N. 

Yakhyaeva Nigina – PhD doctoral student, Bukhara state university, Bukhara, Uzbekistan
E-mail: nigina.yakhyaeva93@gmail.com, <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-2270-1905>

Abstract. This article examines the representation of the image of a woman in the stories of Chingiz Aitmatov and Nurmurod Nokobilov. Through a comparative–typological approach, the study focuses on the artistic, moral, philosophical and ecological values embodied in the image of women and examines their role in revealing the relationship between society and nature. The research includes comparative–typological hermeneutic, and artistic–analytical methods to identify common and distinctive features of the image of woman in the stories of two writers. According to the findings, Aitmatov’s prose demonstrates female characters as romantic–philosophical ideals, symbolizing spiritual purity, moral strength, and human perfection. Norkobilov presents women as realistic and ecopoetic figures that associate with national traditions and natural environment. In conclusion the female characters in both authors' works represent human values such as kindness, spiritual integrity and respect for life. The comparative analysis reveals the significant aesthetic and ideological function of female characters in expressing the worldview and artistic thought of Turkic literature.

Key words: female image, women’s representation, story, artistic thought, ecopoetics, anthropocentrism, realism, romanticism.

Introduction

The image of a woman in fiction is regarded in modern literary criticism as a multi-layered phenomenon. It is understood not only as a gender category but also as a semantic centre reflecting the relationship between man, society and nature. In particular, in the literature of the Turkic peoples, the image of a woman is often interpreted in relation to concepts such as moral purity, patience in life, and harmony with nature. As Yuri Lotman, who studied the relationship between literary space and image, noted: «Literary space is not a passive arena where characters are located, but an active component of artistic meaning» [1]. This idea supports interpreting the image of a woman as a semantic centre in the work. From this theoretical perspective, the image of a woman is considered the moral and spiritual centre of the text, a means of revealing the hero’s inner world, and a meaning-forming element of artistic space.

Gaston Bachelard’s views on poetic space are also relevant here: «La maison est notre coin du monde. Elle est... notre premier univers». («The house is our corner of the world. It is our first universe») [2]. This idea supports analysing the female image in relation to space, especially in the works of Aitmatov and Norkobilov.

Within this topic, many literary scholars have conducted research on the work of Chingiz Aitmatov. In particular, there are various scientific views on the relationship between man and nature, moral values, and the spiritual and aesthetic essence of the image of a woman in the writer's works. Researchers interpret the images of women in Aitmatov’s stories primarily as symbols of spiritual purity, loyalty, love, and human perfection. In particular, the philosophical and romantic interpretation of the female character in the writer’s works, such as «Jamila», «Sarvqomat dilbarim», and «Alvido, Gulsari», has attracted special attention.

In research on the work of Normurod Norkobilov, the writer’s rural life, harmony between man and nature, ecological thinking, and the skill of reflecting the national spirit were analysed. Literary scholars evaluate the images of women in Norkobilov’s stories as closely connected with real life and formed under the influence of the national mentality and social environment. At the same time, it is noted that in the writer's works, environmental problems and human responsibility towards nature are also highlighted through female images.

In world and Turkish literary studies, the issue of the female image has been widely studied in the areas of feminist criticism, psychological analysis, comparative literary studies, and ecopoetics.

However, a comprehensive study of female images in the stories of Chingiz Aitmatov and Normurod Norkobilov from a comparative-typological and eco-poetic perspective has not been sufficiently carried out. This study seeks to fill this scientific gap and aims to shed light on the artistic and aesthetic function of the female image in the works of the two writers on a comparative basis.

Materials and methods of research

This study used comparative-typological, artistic-analytical and hermeneutic methods. The images of women in the stories of Chingiz Aitmatov and Normurod Norkobilov were selected as the object of research. The characters, spiritual experiences, and relationships with nature and society of the female characters in the works were studied through textual analysis.

Using the comparative-typological method, the common and distinct aspects of the portrayal of women in the works of the two writers were identified, and their artistic and aesthetic functions were compared. In particular, the interpretation of the image of women in the stories of Chingiz Aitmatov as a romantic-philosophical ideal, a symbol of spiritual purity and human perfection, was analysed, while in the works of Normurod Norkobilov, the portrayal of women as an eco-poetic image, inextricably linked with real life and reflecting the ecological environment and national lifestyle, was analysed.

During the research, special attention was paid to poetic means, symbolic images, psychological image methods, and the author's concept in the literary text. The ethical, aesthetic, and ecological views expressed through the image of a woman were also scientifically interpreted using literary-aesthetic principles. The results obtained serve as an important source for illuminating the artistic interpretation of the image of a woman and its aesthetic function in modern Turkish literature.

Results and its discussion

The problem of the spiritual essence of women occupies a special place in the artistic world of Chingiz Aitmatov. The female images of the writer are not limited to the family and household space, but acquire deep philosophical significance. They become bearers of moral ideals, keepers of the memory and spiritual culture of the people. Through the fates of Jamila, Tolgonai, Bekey and other heroines, the author reveals the issues of human dignity, individual freedom and responsibility to future generations. In this regard, female characters act not only as artistic images, but also as important concepts of the author's worldview.

In Aitmatov's works, the image of a woman is closely linked to the category of memory. A woman becomes an intermediary between the past and the present, between a man and his historical roots. From the point of view of spatial poetics, Aitmatov's female characters also perform an important semantic function. Their images are organically integrated into the natural space of the steppe, mountains, fields and rivers, which become not just the background of the narrative, but active participants in the artistic action. This unity of man and nature reflects the traditional worldview of the Turkic peoples, based on the idea of harmonious coexistence with the outside world.

In Aitmatov's work, the image of a woman is often interpreted as a high spiritual ideal. His characters strive for inner freedom, resist social stereotypes, and elevate love to the highest value. For example, the main character in the story «Jamila» opposes the patriarchal system, chooses personal happiness and love, and, in general, becomes a symbol of female freedom. Here, the image of a woman is also presented as a subject of existential choice [3].

In another story by Chingiz Aitmatov, «The White Ship», although images of women are relatively few, they play an important role in revealing the work's spiritual and philosophical content. In particular, the images of the mother (the child's mother) and Aunt Bekey illuminate the tragic aspects of love, suffering, loneliness, and women's fate. Although the mother does not participate directly in the story, she carries an important semantic load throughout the plot as a symbol of lost love and protection. The child misses his mother and imagines her in an idealised way. The child's Aunt Bekey is depicted as a woman who endures her husband's (Urozkul's) oppression because of her childlessness. She is one of the most tragic female images in the work. Through this image, the writer shows women's helplessness in a patriarchal environment, their fate under social pressure, and their spiritual oppression [4].

The main character of the story «Mother Earth» - Tolganoy - is an ordinary village woman, a

mother who is a symbol of patience and perseverance. The war separates the mother, who is raising her children with love, from her sons. Despite the difficult trials that befell her, Tolganoy continues to live with perseverance. Aitmatov depicts his heroine in harmony with nature - Tolganoy overcomes her pain by sharing it with nature. The image of Tolganoy is not an ordinary woman or mother, but a symbol of the mothers of all mankind. In the story «Mother Earth», the image of Tolganoy is revealed through the space of the field. The field here serves as a symbol of life and fertility, a place of memory, and a space for dialogue between the past and the present. Tolganoy converses with the earth as if it were a living being. As a result, the space becomes sacred [5].

In Chingiz Aitmatov's poetics, the image of a woman is not treated as a separate entity but as an integral part of the category of artistic space. Female images serve as the central axis of the work's artistic structure. This aligns with the views of Vladimir Toporov, who understands space as text and text as a space of meaning [6]. Aitmatov's women are often depicted amid difficult trials: war, separation, social pressure, etc. However, these trials do not break them but rather spiritually elevate them. For the heroes, tragedy is not a degradation but a source of spiritual elevation.

In Normurod Norkobilov's work, the image of a woman is depicted in harmony with real life, nature, and instinctive existence, creating an ecopoetic approach. The woman in his works is represented as a part of the natural world, existing in close connection with national culture, traditions and the ecological environment.

One of the characteristic features of Norkobilov's poetics is the use of zoomorphic and natural images to reveal the inner world of the characters. Due to this, the image of the mother acquires a universal character and is considered as a manifestation of the general laws of nature. Maternal instinct, caring for offspring, and the ability to sacrifice are interpreted by the author as fundamental values that unite humans and wildlife.

The ecopoetic aspect of female images allows us to consider Norkobilov's works in the context of modern environmental research. The writer shows that the violation of harmony between man and nature inevitably leads to moral losses. Therefore, the female characters in his works often become symbols of the preservation of natural balance, spiritual purity and cultural continuity.

In the writer's «Ena bo'ri» («Mother Wolf»), a parallel is drawn between the image of a woman (mother) and a female wolf. Just as a nanny protects her wolf cub from danger, a person protects their own child in the same way. Through this, the writer relativises the boundary between a person and a creature, showing the maternal instinct as a universal phenomenon [7].

The main character of the story «Kurash» («Fight») – Hamida Momo – is portrayed as a symbol of courage, honesty, nobility, and determination. Hamida Momo, who has wrestled in various circles since her youth and has won, becomes angry when she sees her son win a competition. When she comes home, she fights with him. On his first journey, he breaks his arm, but in the next fight he defeats his son. The work also features images of an eagle and a swallow, with the eagle equated with Hamida's mother and the swallow with her son Shomurod [8].

Despite the differences in artistic methods and aesthetic principles, a number of common features in the depiction of female characters can be identified in the works of Chingiz Aitmatov and Normurod Norkobilov.

First of all, both writers are characterized by the perception of women as the moral center of the artistic world. Female images are carriers of spiritual values such as kindness, mercy, loyalty, patience, and responsibility to family and society. Through the fates of their heroines, the authors reveal the problems of moral choice, human dignity and the preservation of moral guidelines in difficult life circumstances.

Another important common feature is the close connection of the female characters with nature. Although this connection is realized by various artistic means, in the works of both authors, a woman appears as an intermediary between a person and the world around her. Nature helps the heroines overcome life's difficulties, maintain inner harmony and find spiritual support. In this regard, female images become symbols of natural order and vital stability.

The writers' appeal to the topic of motherhood is also common. Motherhood in the works of Aitmatov and Norkobilov is considered not only as a biological function, but also as the highest moral

mission. The image of a mother is associated with the ideas of self-sacrifice, caring for the future generation and preserving the cultural memory of the people. Due to this, the female characters acquire a universal sound and go beyond the specific artistic plot.

In addition, both artistic systems have a psychological depth in revealing female characters. The authors pay attention to the inner world of the heroines, their experiences, feelings and spiritual searches. The woman is portrayed not as a minor character, but as an independent personality capable of influencing the development of the plot and the formation of the author's concept of the work.

Thus, despite the romantic and philosophical orientation of Chingiz Aitmatov's female images and the realistic and ecopoetic nature of Normurod Norkobilov's depiction of them, both writers consider a woman as a guardian of spiritual values, an intermediary between man and nature, as well as a bearer of national and universal culture. It is these common features that allow us to speak about the unity of the humanistic tradition in the works of both authors.

Conclusion

To summarise, in Chingiz Aitmatov's work, a woman is idealised, presented as a high spiritual and philosophical image, whereas in Normurod Norkobilov's stories, women are portrayed as an artistic expression of vital realism and harmony with the laws of nature. In Aitmatov's works, a woman is depicted primarily as a symbol of love, loyalty, selflessness, and spiritual purity, elevated to an ideal that represents the inner beauty and moral perfection of the human psyche. Through images of women, the writer illuminates philosophical problems such as the spiritual crisis in society, the erosion of human values, and spiritual loneliness.

In Norkobilov's work, the image of a woman is closely connected with everyday life, the national environment, and ecological thinking. His characters reflect the joys and sufferings of ordinary people and the philosophy of living in harmony with nature. In particular, the writer seeks to create an artistic picture of the balance between man and nature, ecological values, and the national lifestyle through the female character. Therefore, naturalness, sincerity, and realism are of paramount importance in the portrayal of women in Norkobilov's stories.

The images of women in the works of both writers are an important artistic phenomenon that reflects the aesthetic thinking of the literature of the Turkic peoples. Through the female characters they created, the spiritual world of man, his place in society, and his relationship with nature are explored in depth, with a philosophical and psychological dimension. The results of the study show that although the image of women is expressed in different poetic forms in the works of the two writers, the idea of glorifying humanity, kindness, spiritual purity, and life values is dominant in all of them. In this regard, these stories serve as an important scientific source for modern literary criticism not only for their artistic and aesthetic qualities, but also for their spiritual and educational significance.

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ШЫҢҒЫС АЙТМАТОВ ПЕН НҮРМҮРОД НОРҚОБИЛОВ ПОВЕСТЕРІНДЕГІ ӘЙЕЛ БЕЙНЕСІ

ЯХЯЕВА Н. 

Яхяева Нигина - PhD докторант, Бухара мемлекеттік университеті, Бухара қ., Өзбекстан
E-mail: nigina.yakhyaeva93@gmail.com, <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-2270-1905>

Андатпа. Бұл мақала Шыңғыс Айтматов пен Нұрмұрод Нокобиловтың әңгімелеріндегі әйел бейнесінің көрінісін зерттейді. Салыстырмалы-типологиялық тәсіл арқылы зерттеу әйел бейнесінде көрініс тапқан көркемдік, моральдық, философиялық және экологиялық құндылықтарға назар аударады және олардың қоғам мен табиғат арасындағы байланысты ашудағы рөлін қарастырады. Зерттеуде екі жазушының әңгімелеріндегі әйел бейнесінің ортақ және ерекше белгілерін анықтау үшін салыстырмалы-типологиялық, герменевтикалық және көркем-аналитикалық әдістер қолданылады.

Зерттеу нәтижелеріне сәйкес, Айтматов прозасында әйел кейіпкерлері рухани тазалықты, моральдық күшті және адам кемелдігін бейнелейтін романтикалық-философиялық идеалдар ретінде көрінеді. Нокобилов әйел бейнесін ұлттық дәстүрлермен және табиғи ортамен байланысты реалистік әрі эколопоэтикалық тұлғалар ретінде сипаттайды. Қорытындысында екі автордың шығармаларындағы әйел кейіпкерлері мейірімділік, рухани тұтастық және өмірге деген құрмет сияқты жалпыадамзаттық құндылықтарды бейнелейді. Салыстырмалы талдау түркі әдебиетіндегі дүниетаным мен көркем ойды ашуда әйел бейнесінің маңызды эстетикалық және идеялық қызмет атқаратынын көрсетеді.

Түйін сөздер: әйел бейнесі, повесть, көркем ойлау, эколопоэтика, антропоэзектік, реализм, романтизм.

ПОРТРЕТ ЖЕНЩИНЫ В ПОВЕСТЯХ ЧИНГИЗА АЙТМАТОВА И НОРМУРОДА НОРКОБИЛОВА

ЯХЯЕВА Н. 

Яхяева Нигина - PhD докторант, Бухарский государственный университет, г. Бухара, Узбекистан
E-mail: nigina.yakhyaeva93@gmail.com, <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-2270-1905>

Аннотация. Данная статья рассматривает репрезентацию образа женщины в рассказах Чингиза Айтматова и Нурмурада Нокобилова. В рамках сравнительно-типологического подхода исследование сосредоточено на художественных, моральных, философских и экологических ценностях, воплощённых в образе женщины, а также анализирует их роль в раскрытии взаимосвязи общества и природы. В работе применяются сравнительно-типологический, герменевтический и художественно-аналитический методы для выявления общих и отличительных особенностей образа женщины в рассказах двух писателей.

Согласно результатам исследования, в прозе Айтматова женские персонажи представлены как романтико-философские идеалы, символизирующие духовную чистоту, нравственную силу и человеческое совершенство. Нокобилов изображает женщин как реалистические и эколопоэтические образы, связанные с национальными традициями и природной средой. В заключение отмечается, что женские персонажи в произведениях обоих авторов воплощают общечеловеческие ценности, такие как доброта, духовная целостность и уважение к жизни. Сравнительный анализ выявляет значимую эстетическую и идеологическую функцию женских образов в выражении мировоззрения и художественного мышления тюркской литературы.

Ключевые слова: женский образ, повесть, художественное мышление, эколопоэтика, антропоцентризм, реализм, романтизм.