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NATIONAL-CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FEMALE CONCEPT IN O‘TKIR HOSHIMOV’S NOVELS

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ABSTRACT: This article examines the national-cultural characteristics reflected in the representation of female images in the prose of the prominent Uzbek writer O‘tkir Hoshimov. The study focuses on the artistic interpretation of motherhood, womanhood, and female identity in such works as *Dunyoning ishlari* (*The Affairs of the World*), *Ikki eshik orasida* (*Between Two Doors*), and *Tushda kechgan umrlar* (*Lives Passed in Dreams*). Particular attention is paid to the linguistic, stylistic, and cultural means through which the author portrays women as embodiments of moral strength, compassion, endurance, self-sacrifice, and spiritual resilience. The article analyzes the image of the mother as a central conceptual and aesthetic category in Hoshimov’s artistic worldview and investigates its role in expressing national values and cultural memory. The study further explores the functions of narrative discourse, speech polyphony, monologue, dialogue, and symbolic imagery in constructing female characters. The findings demonstrate that Hoshimov’s female figures transcend individual characterization and emerge as symbolic representations of Uzbek womanhood, reflecting the historical experiences, ethical principles, and cultural traditions of the Uzbek people. The research concludes that the writer’s depiction of women contributes significantly to the formation of a national literary identity and reveals the close relationship between language, culture, and artistic representation.

Keywords: female image, motherhood, O‘tkir Hoshimov, Uzbek literature, national-cultural values, womanhood, linguocultural analysis, literary discourse, speech polyphony, maternal image, cultural identity, artistic representation, female concept, Uzbek woman, narrative discourse.

The image of a woman is revered as a sacred figure in the perception of many nations and cultures. She is manifested primarily through the figure of a mother, who is regarded as one of the most significant and influential subjects within society. Although the image of a woman has been represented in various literary traditions, the underlying idea in most of these representations is that of the mother as an embodiment of boundless love, compassion, and self-sacrifice. The portrayal of this image is often evaluated from the perspective of the author's artistic mastery and his ability to reveal the profound moral and emotional qualities associated with motherhood. Indeed, the roots of the noblest and most humane feelings existing in the human heart are closely connected with maternal affection and care. This can be explained by the fact that the foundations of a person’s upbringing, education, and moral development are formed within the family environment, where the mother plays a central role.

Uzbek literature offers numerous examples of writers who have created remarkable and unforgettable representations of motherhood. Among those authors who succeeded in depicting the beauty, uniqueness, and spiritual richness of the mother figure, O‘tkir Hoshimov occupies a special place. One of the most significant and recurrent images in his literary works is the image of the mother. In many of his writings, which have gained immense popularity among readers, the mother

figure is assigned a special artistic and ideological significance. Such works as *Between Two Doors* (*Ikki eshik orasida*), *The Affairs of the World* (*Dunyoning ishlari*), *Lives Passed in Dreams* (*Tushda kechgan umrlar*), *The Last Victim of the War* (*Urushning so'nggi qurboni*), *The Voice of Man* (*Odam ovozi*), *Where There Is Light, There Is Shadow* (*Nur borki, soya bor*), and *The Uzbeks* (*O'zbeklar*) all demonstrate the important role played by female characters, particularly mothers, within the artistic structure of the narratives.

As the writer himself emphasized, *The Affairs of the World* was created as a tribute to all mothers. While reading this work, the reader inevitably recalls his or her own childhood and remembers the mother who occupied a special and irreplaceable place in those cherished memories. Many of Hoshimov's literary works vividly portray the hardworking, self-sacrificing, compassionate, and kind-hearted women of the previous century. Each of his stories possesses the emotional power to soften even the hardest heart and fill it with noble feelings, warm memories, and sincere reflections. It is difficult to imagine Hoshimov's creative legacy without this image, as the mother figure serves as one of the central pillars of his artistic worldview. In particular, *The Affairs of the World* consists of a series of interconnected short stories through which the writer expresses profound respect and admiration for the Uzbek mother. In this work, Hoshimov presents various memorable episodes from his own life and transforms them into artistic narratives that resonate deeply with readers.

Stories such as *Lullaby* (*Alla*), *The Owl* (*Haqqush*), *Supplication* (*Iltijo*), *Carpet Socks* (*Gilam paypoq*), *Betrayal* (*Xiyonat*), and *Debt* (*Qarz*) vividly portray the relationship between mother and child. The image of the mother functions as the unifying element that connects all of these narratives into a coherent whole. Evidence of this idea can be observed in the following passage:

"And what about your mother? Has your mother ever betrayed you? Not once, not even a single time? Anyone may deceive anyone, anyone may betray another person. But a mother never betrays her child. Perhaps the reason human life has continued for so many centuries is precisely because of this" (Hoshimov, 2014, p. 72).

This passage clearly illustrates the writer's perception of motherhood as the highest moral value and as a symbol of unconditional loyalty, devotion, and selfless love. Through such representations, O'tkir Hoshimov elevates the image of the mother to the level of a universal ethical ideal, thereby emphasizing her indispensable role in both family life and society as a whole.

The passages cited above may be regarded as some of the most emotionally powerful expressions in the work. In fact, the distinguished Uzbek writer Said Ahmad once remarked that he would prefer to describe *The Affairs of the World* (*Dunyoning ishlari*) not as a novella but as an epic poem, stating: *"I would call The Affairs of the World an epic poem because it is read like a song. While reading it, we inevitably think about our mothers. We begin to ask ourselves whether we have managed to repay even a small part of the lifelong debt we owe to those compassionate and long-suffering mothers. This work calls upon us to be humane and to respect other people."* This assessment highlights the profound emotional and ethical impact of the work, particularly in its portrayal of motherhood as a universal moral value.

O'tkir Hoshimov's novel *Between Two Doors* (*Ikki eshik orasida*) is a remarkable literary work that skillfully depicts the hardships of the war years, the suffering experienced both on the front lines and on the home front, as well as such universal themes as love and hatred, famine and

deprivation. The author presents these events through the voices and perspectives of individuals belonging to different social strata and age groups. The narrative encompasses viewpoints ranging from the innocent perception of a young child to the mature reflections of elderly characters. When events are narrated through the voice of a child, the reader is introduced to the world as perceived by the young protagonist Muzaffar. One of the reasons why *Between Two Doors* captivates readers is the richness and diversity of its characters. Within the novel, female figures such as Qora Amma, Robiya, Saodat, and Qumri are portrayed in considerable depth, each contributing to the broader representation of womanhood in Uzbek society.

The female image in the novel is presented through multiple perspectives and artistic approaches. Among these characters, Qora Amma occupies a particularly significant place and is portrayed through qualities such as kindness, compassion, sincerity, and self-sacrifice. Linguistically and stylistically, her characterization is constructed through lexical and descriptive elements associated with patience, endurance, warmth, maternal affection, and resilience in the face of adversity. Through her image, Hoshimov creates a representative portrait of Uzbek mothers who lived through the difficult years of war. Despite the immense trials she faces, Qora Amma preserves her dignity, inner strength, and faith in life. Having lost six of her children, she raises only one surviving son, Kimsan. When the war begins, she sends her only son to the front. However, Kimsan never returns. Although others accept the news of his death, the mother refuses to believe it. Even after many years have passed, she does not surrender to mourning in the conventional sense. Instead, she remains unwaveringly devoted to her son and continues to wait for his return. While the community gradually accepts Kimsan's death, Qora Amma steadfastly rejects this reality and spends decades hoping for his homecoming. Through this character, Hoshimov vividly embodies the collective image of Uzbek mothers who endured the tragedies of war with remarkable patience and faith.

The passage discussed above demonstrates O'tkir Hoshimov's creative approach to constructing the maternal image. The writer himself repeatedly emphasized the creative and life-giving essence of womanhood, particularly motherhood. His reflections on the image of a woman reveal his deep admiration for the maternal role in human existence: *"The power of a mother's love lies precisely in this. Perhaps this is why expressions such as motherland, mother tongue, and mother country emerged. Perhaps this is also the reason why we speak of Mother Earth. For this reason, I often compare the Earth itself to a woman."* Such statements illustrate the writer's conceptualization of motherhood as a universal source of life, continuity, and spiritual strength.

From this perspective, *Between Two Doors* can justifiably be regarded as a unique literary monument dedicated to the courage and resilience of mothers. Naturally, this assessment represents only one dimension of the novel's artistic significance. Throughout the narrative, even in seemingly minor episodes, the boundless love of a mother for her child is conveyed with extraordinary emotional intensity and artistic persuasiveness. Literary scholar B. Sarimsoqov emphasizes that *"Convention, as a criterion of artisticity, serves the full expression of the central idea of a literary work. A genuinely artistic work contains numerous ideas, yet all of them ultimately converge around the principal idea and contribute to its complete and vivid realization."* According to the scholar, *Between Two Doors* reveals on a broad scale the tragedy experienced by the Uzbek people during the war period, particularly through the destinies of three generations. Nevertheless, the various personal stories, everyday scenes, psychological depictions, supplementary narratives, and episodic characters are all united by a common artistic purpose, forming an integrated and coherent

literary whole. For instance, the episode concerning the captive woman serves the same overarching objective. Likewise, the images of Qora Amma and the mourning Mother statue harmonize with the central idea of the novel by symbolizing the suffering and perseverance of women during wartime.

This idea is vividly illustrated in the following passage:

"Among the statues appeared the figure of a sorrowful Mother gazing into the distance. She sat with her large hands, marked by protruding veins, resting on her knees, her head bowed, while her eyes reflected endless grief... and hope. Suddenly, I shuddered. Why, it was my aunt... it was Qora Amma herself! I had seen her sitting in exactly the same way whenever I visited her home in Nog'ayqo'rg'on."

The statue of the grieving Mother functions as a symbolic representation of Uzbek motherhood as a whole. Through the eyes of the protagonist Muzaffar, the similarities between the statue and Qora Amma are perceived with remarkable sensitivity. The bowed head, hands resting upon the knees, and eyes fixed upon the horizon in silent sorrow all serve as symbolic references to Qora Amma's tragic destiny. More than twenty years after the end of the war, she continues to wait for the return of her son Kimsan. The psychological condition of a mother who has lost her child is further revealed in another emotionally charged episode:

"My child! The cry that rang beside my ear made me tremble. My child who has gone to his mother's grave! My aunt pulled herself free from my father's grasp and, overcome with emotion, rushed toward the statue of the young soldier. Running forward, she embraced it tightly. Kimsan, who left his mother in sorrow! My dear child, my beloved child! She began kissing the helmeted head of the statue. Her scarf slipped from her shoulders and became caught on the statue's rifle. Her snow-white hair scattered in all directions" (Hoshimov, 2012, p. 86).

This episode powerfully conveys the immeasurable pain, unwavering devotion, and enduring hope that characterize maternal love. Through such emotionally charged artistic details, Hoshimov succeeds in elevating the image of the mother from an individual character to a universal symbol of sacrifice, fidelity, and spiritual endurance.

Time and space, understood broadly as the categories of temporality and spatiality, occupy a significant position in literary discourse. There is hardly any literary work in which the events depicted do not occur within a specific temporal and spatial framework. Indeed, it is impossible to imagine a literary text without the dimensions of time and space. The characters involved in a narrative emerge as distinctive embodiments of the historical period, geographical setting, and social environment represented in the work. This principle constitutes one of the fundamental requirements of literature, as it contributes to the creation of realism, authenticity, and a close connection to the life of the people. It is self-evident that the revelation of consciousness through monologue represents one of the most important factors determining the scope of formal experimentation and the poetics of artistic content. Within this process, the continuity of expressive representation and the intensity of emotional reflection acquire a dialectical interrelationship. In this regard, a comparative-typological examination of O'tkir Hoshimov's novels Lives Passed in Dreams (Tushda kechgan umrlar) and Between Two Doors (Ikki eshik orasida) clearly

demonstrates the interconnection between realism and artistic expression in both the speech of the characters and the authorial narrative voice.

O‘tkir Hoshimov carefully selects those scenes, situations, and details that possess the capacity to develop a system of events united by a common ideological foundation and transforms them into artistic material. In this way, artistic consciousness brings together the aesthetic focal points of creative expression. In many of the writer’s novels, novellas, and short stories, the phenomenon of speech polyphony manifests itself through several distinctive dimensions:

Speech competence clarifies living and authentic communicative relationships, thereby assisting in the aesthetic evaluation of real-life environments and situations.

The classification and organization of speech forms constitute one of the crucial factors ensuring the artistic integrity of a literary work, while simultaneously embodying the ideological burden through which psychological conflicts become apparent within broader philosophical generalizations.

Monologues and dialogues serve as effective means of expressing the essence and meaning of life through realistic artistic forms.

Speech material performs such functions as explaining the essence of character, interpreting specific ideas, and describing the process of the development and complication of consciousness and intellectual awareness.

In prose, the phenomenon of polyphony signifies multilayeredness, equality of voices, and diversity of perspectives within the narrative structure.

The artistic representation, evolution, and gradual development of the maternal image in O‘tkir Hoshimov’s prose form an internally organized polyphonic system. In The Affairs of the World (Dunyoning ishlari), for example, the dynamic portrayal of the character Poshsha Khola reveals a wide spectrum of qualities traditionally associated with Uzbek women. One of the writer’s notable artistic achievements lies in his ability to concentrate characteristics that could serve as the basis for numerous characters within a single literary figure. Similarly, in the novel Between Two Doors, Hoshimov embodies the virtues characteristic of Uzbek women through a range of female characters such as Qora Amma, Xolposh Khola, Robiya, Ra’no, Bashorat, Fotima, and Zuhra. Although these women differ significantly in profession, worldview, social status, and physical appearance, each of them contributes to the representation of qualities traditionally associated with Uzbek womanhood. Through these diverse female figures, the author creates a multifaceted artistic panorama that reflects the moral values, psychological resilience, social roles, and cultural identity of Uzbek women, while simultaneously enriching the polyphonic structure of the narrative.

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