

THE POETICS OF CHARACTERIZATION IN THE NOVEL

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Abstract: *The article focuses on the manner in which the author's viewpoint is expressed through the characters of Abdullah Qodiriy's novel "O'tkan kunlar" (Bygone Days), regarded as the first example of Uzbek novel-writing. The structure of the work, particularly its opening part, is subjected to a separate analysis, and the scope of the initial sentence within the scale of the novel genre is examined. By analyzing the actions of the main characters in the novel, the extent to which the author's purpose is clearly reflected in the work is observed.*

Keywords: *novel, author, purpose, idea, character.*

The novel "O'tkan kunlar" created by the great writer Abdullah Qodiriy has, for a century now, been worthy of the highest recognition. It is no coincidence that a group of readers who have read the novel acknowledged the author as "the best among writers."

"1264 AH, the seventeenth day of the month of Dalv, one of the winter days, the sun has set, and the evening call to prayer is heard from the surroundings..."

The novel "O'tkan kunlar" does not begin with an artistic depiction of an ordinary bright and sunny day, but precisely with the description of the time after the sun has set. Winter and the setting of the day possess a particular harmony that complements each other. However, the sound of the adhan heard from the surroundings places in the reader's imagination a state different from the above description. It leaves the impression as if a small light is being sought from the depths of dense darkness, as if there is hope. It is as though the entire purpose of the author is embodied in this very first sentence.

What does this book give to every individual, family, society, and humanity as a whole? If one reflects on this question in the era of globalization today, it is possible to find a definitive answer to the issue of the author's purpose and what the reader may gain from the work.

First of all, the work artistically reflects what a true human being should be like. As long as a genuine human being exists, it means that he or she is the child of a certain noble family. Relationships within the family—between parents and children, fathers-in-law and mothers-in-law with daughters-in-law (or sons-in-law), husbands and wives—indeed, detailed guidelines are presented regarding how a true person should behave in various situations. While reading the work, every reader, comparing

themselves with the characters, sets out on a path toward recognizing themselves and their identity.

At first glance, the work gives the impression of narrating the passionate love of two young people. Initially, through the image of Kumushbibi, who captivates Otabek and later Hasanali, Uzbek oyim, Yusufbek hoji, and all members of the family (except Zaynab), not only the national identity, manners, moral beauty, and elegance of Uzbek girls are symbolized, but also the author's high ideal of what a true human being should be from the perspective of humanity. First of all, it is important to say that Kumush is, in her own way, a literate and educated woman. Her manners and attitude toward others correspond to this. When she is being given in marriage (even though her own opinion is different), she fully submits to her parents' will. Even when one day she becomes a victim of her parents' wish and faces the fate of having a co-wife, she expresses all her pain and suffering secretly through her tears. When she comes before Otabek, she expresses her attitude toward this matter with the words: "I agree, I accept..." This is the rarest and most exceptional state that is difficult to find in a woman's nature. More precisely, it is the author's creative ideal. Through the image of Kumushbibi, the author reflects that any woman is valued primarily not for the comfort of her own desires or wishes, but for her duties as a woman before her life companion, her obedience, humility, and respect. Because of the true position of a woman as a wife and companion, our nation has always considered the family sacred, emphasizing that harmony is primarily strengthened by the woman's obedience to her husband, the head of the family. The episode in which Kumushbibi, even while lying in the throes of death, attempts to rise out of respect upon seeing her father-in-law has become proverbial among our people. Her behavior toward her own parents, her husband, and her in-laws arouses admiration in everyone.

Girls reading the work imagine themselves as Kumush. Parents dream that their daughters will be like Kumush. Kumush is a character who fully embodies the image of the true daughter of the nation.

Her constant conflicts with Zaynab are also depicted as real human flaws of a mortal being. If the author had portrayed this character as free from such flaws, this artificiality would have cast a shadow over the artistic quality of the work. Taking these aspects into account, the writer presented his ideal character to the reader not as Oltinbibi, but as Kumushbibi.

The death of Kumushbibi occurred due to the poison of ignorance caused by petty selfishness in domestic life.

Standing at the center of the work and reflecting the author's greatest ideas and purposes is Otabek. Otabek was brought up in a truly Uzbek and national family. He received education in one of the advanced centers of learning of his time. He is one of the young people who has his own opinion, a sharp outlook, and the ability to act for the future of himself, his family, and his nation. Although he has just entered into trade

and is young and inexperienced, he becomes worthy of the respect, honor, and recognition of the great merchants of Margilan. Otabek had several qualities that amazed prominent traders such as Ziyoyshohich, Akramhoji, and Mirzakarimquidor. First of all, he was a young man who served as an example to others in manners and knowledge; another aspect that impressed his hosts was that he possessed an independent and objective opinion about the society in which he lived. However, Otabek's activities when traveling to other cities for trade completely astonished experienced and skillful merchants. The reason is that when traders go to another city for business purposes, they primarily aim for their affairs to go well and to return with greater profit. Their entire thoughts are focused on this. Otabek, however, unlike such merchants, carefully observes the systems of state governance and administration in the cities he visits. He searches for the causes of the current decline of his nation and worries about its future happiness. Compared to a few coins that would fill his pocket, this second aspect was far more important for Otabek.

For a young man with open thinking, who does not hold any official position in his nation, to care about the fate of his country and nation and to engage in such matters was a rare virtue for that time, and even today—after more than a century—it remains a rare and scarce quality.

It is well known that placing the interests of the homeland above one's own benefit or loss, living with the concerns of the nation under any circumstances, and having a moral responsibility for the future of the nation are qualities of a perfect human being. In Otabek, who has just reached the age of twenty-four, such qualities have already become his way of life. For him, earning a large profit through trade and living off it is not a worthy pursuit. There exists a matter far greater and more important than the concerns of sustenance and livelihood—this is the concern for the future of the nation. Otabek considers himself always responsible for the nation's future and strives, as much as he can, for its well-being. He constantly struggles against injustice, localism, conflicts driven by the pursuit of rank and position, selfish desires, and petty disputes and intrigues. He even demands this strictly from his own father. Through this characteristic, many acknowledge that Otabek stands above the leaders of the system (such as Khudoyorkhan, Musulmonqul, and Azizbek). In this respect, Akramhoji's statement, "If it were in my hands to raise a khan, I would raise Otabek as khan," is not an exaggeration. From the very name of this character, it is evident that, in the author's view, Otabek is the true master of the land. Therefore, the fear of the tragic days that would befall the country led him as far as Almaty, the threshold of the homeland. He was among the first to struggle for the independence of the country and became a martyr. In fact, what killed him was the ignorance of his own compatriots.

The household that raised a young man like Otabek also embodies the author's ideal. Yusufbekhoji, who raised Otabek as a patriotic hero, in fact intended such upbringing for every member of society. Unfortunately, reckless beks and nobles, officials and

aristocrats did not heed his words. They even attempted to send the hoji to the gallows. Yusufbek hoji, however, advocated for a calm, balanced approach both in the family and in society, promoting a peaceful and just life. In the family, Uzbek oyim, who did not follow his advice, sought out a “sharp-breathed mullah” and wandered from door to door, yet gained no benefit. The son who did not inform his father of his condition traveled uselessly for years between Tashkent and Margilan. The daughters-in-law who did not heed the advice of their father-in-law met tragic ends: one perished, and the other fell into a condition worse than death.

The depiction of the setting sun at the beginning of the work symbolized a nation trapped in the mire of ignorance. Having lost its path in the darkness, the nation abandoned its true mission and advanced along the path of vain desires. Forgetting the concerns of the nation and the future, people began to sharpen swords against one another. The true enemy was not considered. Taking advantage of this situation, others began to erase this great and powerful nation from the world stage. The nation as a whole began to decline.

Through the words of Otabek, the author presents the sentence: “Who would hear the call ‘hayya ‘alal falah’ in the cemetery?” “Hayya ‘alal falah” is a phrase within the adhan that calls people to salvation. Such a call is of no benefit to the deceased. If there are people in the nation with living hearts like Otabek and Yusufbek hoji, they must hasten toward salvation. The sound of the adhan presented at the beginning of the work was also a great call awakening the people from the sleep of ignorance and urging them toward salvation. Unfortunately, since there was no one who could hear and understand this call of the author, he himself was placed among the ranks of the deceased on October 4, 1938 – one day before the sentence was carried out. However, the life of goodness cannot be ended with a single bullet. The great call initiated by Abdullah Qodiriy – reminding every individual of their connection to the future of the nation – continues to resonate in the form of the great works he left behind.

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