



THE SOCIAL-HISTORICAL COLOUR IN KHALED HOSSEINI'S WORKS

Mustafoeva Durdona Ilyosovna

History and philology department

Asia International University Bukhara, Uzbekistan

Abstract: *Khaled Hosseini's literary works occupy a significant place in contemporary world literature due to their profound representation of Afghanistan's turbulent social and historical realities. This article analyzes the social-historical colour in Hosseini's major novels by examining how collective memory, political upheaval, ethnic conflict, migration, and cultural traditions are artistically reconstructed through narrative discourse. Relying on sociological and literary theories proposed by scholars such as Georg Lukács, Pierre Nora, and Raymond Williams, the study demonstrates that Hosseini's fiction functions not merely as storytelling but as a literary archive of Afghan social history. The research highlights that social-historical colour in Hosseini's works is conveyed implicitly through character destinies, symbolic spaces, and emotionally charged yet restrained narration rather than explicit historical exposition.*

Keywords: *social-historical colour, Khaled Hosseini, Afghan society, collective memory, literary sociology, historical trauma*

Introduction

In modern literary studies, the concept of social-historical colour refers to the artistic reflection of a specific society's historical conditions, social relations, and cultural atmosphere within a literary text. Khaled Hosseini, as an Afghan-American writer, has emerged as one of the most influential voices depicting Afghanistan's recent history through fiction. His novels provide a vivid panorama of Afghan life before and after decades of war, political instability, and mass migration.

According to Raymond Williams, literature serves as a "structure of feeling" that captures lived social experiences often absent from official historical narratives (Williams, 1977). Hosseini's works exemplify this idea by transforming Afghanistan's collective trauma into emotionally resonant narratives. This article aims to analyze how social-historical colour is embedded in Hosseini's works through narrative strategies, character construction, and symbolic representation, relying on established literary and sociological theories.

Social History as Narrative Background

Hosseini's fiction is deeply rooted in Afghanistan's socio-historical context, particularly the periods of monarchy, Soviet invasion, civil war, Taliban rule, and diaspora life. However, as Lukács argues, the true historical novel does not merely recount events but reveals how history shapes ordinary lives (Lukács, 1962). In



Hosseini's works, large-scale historical transformations are filtered through the personal experiences of characters, making history an implicit yet powerful force. Rather than providing chronological historical accounts, Hosseini reconstructs history through domestic spaces, childhood memories, and disrupted family relationships. This narrative approach reinforces the social-historical colour by allowing readers to perceive history as lived reality rather than abstract data.

Ethnicity, Class, and Social Stratification

One of the most striking aspects of social-historical colour in Hosseini's works is the depiction of ethnic and class divisions within Afghan society. Literary sociologist Pierre Bourdieu emphasizes that social hierarchies are often reproduced through everyday practices and symbolic power (Bourdieu, 1984). Hosseini's narratives reflect this notion by portraying unequal relationships shaped by ethnicity, lineage, and economic status.

The tension between dominant and marginalized groups functions as a historical constant, revealing how social injustice predates political conflict. Through such portrayals, Hosseini implicitly critiques entrenched social structures without overt ideological commentary, thereby strengthening the authenticity of the social-historical colour.

War, Trauma, and Collective Memory

Social-historical colour in Hosseini's works is inseparable from the theme of collective trauma. Jan Assmann's theory of cultural memory suggests that societies preserve historical experiences through narrative transmission (Assmann, 2011). Hosseini's novels operate as vehicles of cultural memory, preserving Afghanistan's traumatic past for both local and global audiences. War is not described through battlefield scenes but through its psychological consequences: silence, guilt, displacement, and fractured identities. This indirect representation aligns with Cathy Caruth's assertion that trauma often resists direct narration and instead manifests through emotional and symbolic expressions (Caruth, 1996).

Migration and Diasporic Social Experience

Another crucial layer of social-historical colour emerges through migration narratives. Hosseini's characters often exist between homeland and exile, reflecting what Homi Bhabha describes as a "third space" of cultural identity (Bhabha, 1994). Diaspora life is portrayed as a continuation of historical struggle rather than an escape from it. The contrast between Afghan traditions and Western social norms highlights the persistence of historical memory in shaping identity. This duality reinforces the idea that social-historical colour extends beyond geographical borders, following individuals across generations and continents.

Conclusion

The analysis demonstrates that social-historical colour in Khaled Hosseini's works is constructed through subtle narrative mechanisms rather than explicit historical



commentary. By embedding Afghanistan's social realities into character experiences, emotional landscapes, and symbolic settings, Hosseini transforms personal stories into collective historical testimony. Drawing on theories by Lukács, Williams, Assmann, and others, the study confirms that Hosseini's fiction functions as both literary art and socio-historical documentation. His works preserve the cultural memory of a nation while offering universal insights into war, injustice, and human resilience. Consequently, Hosseini's novels serve as an essential resource for interdisciplinary research at the intersection of literature, history, and sociology.

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