

The Artistic Expression of The Female Psyche in Isajon Sultan's Novel "Alisher Navoi"

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aims to explore the artistic expression of the female psyche in Isajon Sultan's novel "Alisher Navoi," focusing on the portrayal of historical and fictional female characters within the socio-cultural and political context of the Timurid era. **Method:** Utilizing a qualitative literary analysis approach, the research examines the narrative techniques, character development, and psychological portrayal employed by the author to depict female characters, such as Qutbiya, Gavharshodbegim, and Khadijah Begum. **Results:** The analysis reveals that Sultan effectively integrates historical authenticity with artistic imagination to highlight women's roles in historical processes, emphasizing their emotional depth, socio-political influence, and maternal instincts. The nuanced depiction of their inner worlds not only enriches the narrative but also challenges traditional literary stereotypes by presenting women as complex, multidimensional figures. **Novelty:** This study contributes to Uzbek literary criticism by offering a comprehensive interpretation of female representation in historical fiction, illustrating how Sultan's work transcends conventional gender portrayals through a blend of historical realism and psychological insight.

INTRODUCTION

In most cases, the greatest works of any art form were created dedicated to women. In particular, in literary works, a woman is also a person to whom love is directed, so she serves as a source of inspiration for the creator, and in this regard, it is rather difficult to imagine literature without the image of a woman. As the literary critic Z. Isomiddinov noted in his article "Two Women", "Literature, which is an anthropology, is first of all a science of women, that is, the study and development of women. If we observe, the oldest works are also dedicated to women, they form a conflict with women and things related to them. It can even be said that the development of literature is closely related to the artistic study of the female theme, its deepening" [1-47]. According to these aspects, women have been a constant heroine of literature. While Uzbek literature is adorned with images such as Kumush, Zaynab, Rano, Uzbekoyim, and Oftoboyim, "In world literature, special attention is paid to the image of women in works created in the second half of the 20th century. The problem of depicting a woman's figure at the first level of a work, revealing her social status as a person, has never lost its relevance" [Muhammedova N.]. In accordance with these aspects, the analysis and interpretation of women's images in Uzbek literature is one of the most important issues. In particular, a full-fledged depiction of women's images in historical novels, or the creation of works about women who lived

in history, is one of the important needs of today. There are not so many works in modern literature that reflect the image of historical women or are dedicated to them. The same need is felt in the work of Isajon Sultan. The image of women in it is presented in a state of certain consistency and artistry.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research method with a focus on literary analysis to explore the artistic expression of the female psyche in Isajon Sultan's novel *Alisher Navoi*. The analysis is conducted through a detailed examination of the narrative structure, character development, and the use of literary devices to portray female characters such as Qutbiya, Gavharshodbegim, and Khadijah Begum. By utilizing textual analysis, the research identifies recurring themes related to the social, political, and emotional roles of women within the historical and cultural context depicted in the novel. The study also integrates comparative analysis with relevant historical and literary sources to highlight how the author's artistic choices reflect broader societal norms and the psychological depth of female characters. This approach allows for an in-depth understanding of the methods Sultan employs to represent the female psyche and its significance in the narrative.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In the process of epic depiction, each element, artistic means is of great importance. A perfect plot process is formed from a perfect epic depiction. In this regard, each element requires great attention and skillful approach from the writer. The image of the heroes, their inner world, and their rise to the level of character during the epic depiction are one of the most important stages. Isajon Sultan, without neglecting this aspect in the novel, strives to draw the image of each hero in the work in a complete way. Since the novel "Alisher Navoiy" is a historical novel, there are not so many images of women in it. Nevertheless, several female characters appearing in the work are formed by the writer as characters of particular importance. The image of women is of great importance in the compositional integrity, the consistency of the plot line, and artistic uniqueness. The author does not use the image of women in a historical work in vain, he assigns them certain aesthetic and artistic functions. In the novel, the image of women is mainly depicted in two groups:

The image of historical women;

Artistic weaving female image;

The writer's artistic goal in depicting images in this way is also two fold:

To show the traditions and laws of the era, and the life of the people, by showing the place of women in everyday life;

Through women, the palace environment, socio-economic life, the influence of women in the evolution of the historical process, etc.

As can be seen, the image of a small number of women in the novel, their spiritual image, character and living conditions serve to reflect important artistic functions and

serve to reveal the artistic intention of the creator. The image of women in the work The artistic texture By showing the place of women in everyday life, the traditions and laws of the era, the life of the people are served and serve as an artistic tool for the author. In particular, "... each historical piece of information that embodies the reality of the era serves as the basis for the artistic texture and is further supplemented during the development of the plot and becomes an impressive reality. In this way, historical truth is elevated to the height of artistic truth"[3-91]. The image of Qutb in the work is also an image that reflects such artistic functions. The author gives his thoughts about her in the opening parts of the work: This girl, whose real name was Qutbiya, was brought with him by Ghiyosiddinbek Shokhrukh Mirza during his campaigns in Iraq, because she had no one, and she had now matured like a moon, and had become a beautiful girl with a white, clear face and long eyelashes. Girls were required to wear a veil at the age of nine, and from then on she was forbidden to go outside. The author, in addition to providing information about the image of Qutbiya and introducing her to the reader, also cites a number of important historical information:

Shokhrukh Mirza's campaign in Iraq;

Ghiyosiddinbek's accompanying him during these campaigns and entering the battle as part of the army;

Ghiyosiddinbek's bringing Qutbiya from Iraq also shows who will win in this campaign.

The author, while introducing the reader to Qutbiya alone, introduces the reader to many such details. This is actually like a method of presenting a story within a story. In this way, the author avoids dry narration and boring information for the reader. The writer does not limit himself to this when conveying information. While introducing the reader to the image of Qutb, he also aims to convey the laws and regulations specific to the society, which apply to women:

Qutb's wearing a veil from the age of nine, this law and regulation indicates that there is a religious rule not only for Qutb, but also for all girls in this society, and reveals the image of that era;

Their inability to go out (outside) after the age of nine without permission also allows us to imagine a certain social and political image of society and the conditions of the historical environment. At one point in the work, the writer quotes a short thought from the Qutb language. Qutb, who was waiting for Alisher to come outside, says: wash your face and hands, stay. Don't let that old man shout again. The author explains the girl's thoughts as follows: By "that old man," she meant the gardener. The gardener was a cruel, evil man who would not stop chasing the maids and servants, and sometimes, if someone went out into the outer courtyard, he would shout and growl. This short thought, while helping us to more clearly understand reality and the laws and regulations of society, also allows us to more fully imagine the image of women. After that, the writer introduces the reader to the appearance of the heroine. While describing Qutb's beauty, he also emphasizes the grace inherent in Iraqi girls in her beauty. But the information does not end there, the author continues to provide interesting information

about the important social environment: Another quality of Qutb was his knowledge of music, and sometimes he would play the oud and sing Iraqi songs. His voice was clear, painful, and so beautiful that it enchanted a person. The aspect that attracted our attention at this point is Qutb's knowledge of music, that is, playing the oud and singing. So, we can conclude from this that when Ghiyosiddinbek brought him from Iraq, he must have been able to recognize Qutb's mind. Because he had already taken music lessons in his homeland. It is known that a girl must be at least seven or eight years old to learn to play the oud and memorize Iraqi melodies. Moreover, it is known that in most cases, girls from noble families grew up knowing about art, literature, and music. At this point, the reader wonders if Qutb was also the child of a wealthy family. However, according to the traditions of Herat, as well as the entire Khurasan system, in any case, even on the enemy side, special attention was paid to the issue of lineage, even the women of the enemy's family were shown special respect and honor. So, if Qutb had been a child of a noble family, she would not have been allowed to serve Ghiyosiddinbek's family as a concubine in any case. It seems that the people of Iraq were music lovers and art lovers. As a result, it is clear that music also plays an important role in the life of the people. This is most likely the reason for Qutb's good knowledge of music. It is here that the creator's ability to absorb extremely extensive information into a small reality, a fragment, is demonstrated. Such a method also helps to enrich the reader's thinking and not bore him with excessive narration. But here, the most noteworthy aspect of the information is that Isajon Sultan does not ignore the most delicate, sensitive, painful aspects of the hero's psyche and inner world. After all, the external image alone cannot be enough to fully imagine the hero. The author does not ignore this aspect either. After all, *"Another important point of the rule regarding the issue of artistic texture in historical novels is that, in addition to the fact that the artistic texture corresponds to the logic of history and real life, it must also comply with the laws of art. Naturalness in the events of a work of art, sincerity in the image, integrity and wholeness in the composition are important elements of artistic law"* [4-200]. Isajon Sultan, following the laws of art, introduces the reader to the hero's inner world and feelings, and seeks to infect the reader with the spiritual experiences of the image. The fact that Qutb's voice was clear, painful, and so beautiful that it enchanted people is proof of our fics. The pain in her beautiful voice touches the listener's heart. Because the pain in the voice does not appear in vain. In it, the beautiful girl has a longing for her homeland and loved ones who are far away. Although there are people she loves, she cannot be as dear to anyone as her homeland. The fate of King Babur is an example of this. The pain in the girl's songs reflects this very pain of alienation and longing. The reader who realizes this involuntarily feels moved and moved. He imagines the heroine more clearly. At this point, the author turns to a psychological portrait, skillfully using the image of the ud in detail to imagine Qutbiya more clearly and vividly, and creates a model of a psychological portrait. Therefore, *"In a psychological portrait, the author's main attention is focused on a unique detail that reveals the character of the hero, expresses his thoughts and experiences. Such a detail, filling the image with psychological and moral-spiritual content, acquires a unique character in the portrait. Through it, the psychological characteristics of the hero*

are clearly visible" [5-94]. The introduction of the reader to Qutbiya in the work is not so great. However, as we have analyzed, a small episode reflects major social issues, allowing the reader to fully understand and imagine the hero. In the novel "Alisher Navoi", such image places are observed in many places, not only in the image of episodic characters, but also in the image of the main characters. The characters of the artistic texture usually help to reveal the author's creative intention, to describe the emotionality of the novel, and to reflect the everyday life of the people. In this way, the author also achieves many of his artistic goals. The specific aspects of creating artistically woven images are clearly visible in the novel. In addition, artistically woven images are also important as an important artistic tool in the manifestation of the writer's creative intention. Historical works cannot be created without historical female figures. In this regard, Isajon Sultan, introducing the images of historical women into the work, reveals many artistic and aesthetic aspects through these characters. Therefore, usually the author assigns historical female characters to appear as a part, a segment of society. Through them, he sets the primary goal of showing the palace environment, socio-economic life, and introducing the reader to the role of women in this process. The character Gavharshodbegim is important in the manifestation of such goals of the creator. This character is a bit difficult for a writer to create. There are several reasons for this:

First of all, several writers have addressed the image of Gavharshodbegim, trying to create his image that is specific to their works. For this reason, it was necessary for Isajon Sultan to create an image of Gavharshodbegim in his work that is completely different from Gavharshodbegim in other works, but does not contradict historical reality;

Secondly, Gavharshodbegim is a controversial historical figure. Everyone approaches and evaluates his activities at the palace and his relationship with his children differently. The author had to be able to choose the most appropriate position, adhere to the principle of objectivity, and be neutral towards historical reality.

Isajon Sultan was able to well understand these aspects that were before him. Therefore, first of all, when creating the image of Gavharshodbegim, he avoids excessive artistic embellishment and pathos, and tries to depict reality as coldly and from the side as possible. First of all, he resides on her place in the historical process, her political power and significance, choosing the most appropriate way to clearly and concretely describe reality: Malika Gavharshodbegim was in a cherik with Shahrukh Mirza, after Shahrukh Mirza's death, she handed over the army to Abdullatif Mirza and sent a letter to his grandson *Alouddawla to Hiri, saying, "Strengthen the capital."* Abdullatif Mirza learned of this, arrested his grandmother Gavharshodbegim, and headed for Jaihun. Here, the writer also tries to clarify the whole purpose through the context: Malika Gavharshodbegim was in a cherik with Shahrukh Mirza... in this very expression, Gavharshodbegim's position, his place in the palace, in government affairs, is clarified. Therefore, the fact that he was in a cherik is of great importance. Because, according to the custom of the rulers, the king's family did not accompany his wife on all his campaigns. There must have been certain reasons for this. One of such reasons is that a woman has great respect and privileges before her

husband, and in addition, she also has a certain political position. After the death of the current ruler, his transfer of the army to Abdullatif Mirza also has a great meaning. If we pay attention, the author uses the expression "transferring the army."

It is also at this point that Gavharshodbegim has great political power, even the ability to influence the army. The writer does not dwell on his political power, emphasizing his strength, intelligence, and intelligence. Despite this, there is no aspect or characteristic of Gavharshodbegim's image that he does not ignore. He tries to describe this image in a complete way, and most importantly, in a style that is unique to him, to introduce it to the reader. As soon as he reads a short passage, the reader begins to notice the power of this image, its place in the palace, and its purpose. However, the writer does not take a firm stand on one side while creating this image, leaving the conclusions and attitude to reality to the reader. In turn, the reader does not know exactly what his attitude towards this character is, how to react to him, and it seems that he has difficulty understanding his purpose. In the passage given above, *we can read the expression that Hiriy sent a letter to his grandson Alouddawla saying, "Strengthen the capital."* The author does not comment on this, it seems as if he left this issue open. However, this conversation, or rather, the dialogue, makes it clear that this is not the case. In addition, Isajon Sultan shows through this dialogue that there are different approaches to the character of Gavharshodbegim. Some justify him, some condemn him, some understand him, and some do not understand the true purpose of his actions. Therefore, "The creator of a historical work is not limited to the factual materials collected in his hands. Because it is impossible to complete a work on a historical topic with facts, information, and data alone. The psyche of the people of the past, the subtleties of living standards, the uniqueness of the worldview, the individual characteristics inherent in each person have reached us to a sufficient extent through books or other means. The creator who wants to embody the image of a specific real historical person in the art of words finds himself in an even more difficult situation" [6-54]. As we have noted above, Isajon Sultan had the same difficult task. For this reason, although he wants to leave the answer to all questions to the reader, he also emphasizes his relationship in various ways:

What about Princess Gavharshodbegim? The mind is still awake to the actions of that woman, she is always on the alert. Every action is a conspiracy, she wants to seize every place.

In this dialogue, it becomes possible to fully and more clearly understand the character of Gavharshodbegim. If someone considers her a complete den of intrigue and corruption, the author uses the language of another character to show that he is trying to justify her, as if he wants them to understand her to some extent: "Don't say that," *the craftsman said angrily. "If you are a carpenter, your mind will not go beyond the needle and thread. My queen Gavharshodbegim is a queen. All she wants is for her descendants to sit on the throne. That is always the mother's motto."* At this point, the author seems to have looked into my queen's inner world and tried to show it to the reader. No matter how strong a woman my queen Gavharshodbegi is, no matter how intelligently she evaluates and manages the affairs of the kingdom, she is, first and foremost, a mother. This feeling can motivate her to do anything, and even to refrain from sins if necessary. The feeling of

motherhood can make a woman the strongest and most powerful person in the world at the right time, or at the wrong time, it can make her so weak and vulnerable. The writer emphasizes this aspect through the dialogue between two people: *This is always the essence of a mother.*

In the novel "Alisher Navoi", the image of women is not so common. They are not in the main plot of the novel. Nevertheless, the few images are formed in a memorable and artistic way. The writer makes them participants in the most important places of reality. In the triad of style, artistic skill and artistic purpose, he brings female images to the level of character, shapes their behavior in the process of achieving the perfection of the plot line. One of the female images that is important in the plot of the work and its development is undoubtedly the image of Khadijah Begum. It is natural that this woman, who influenced the fate of the entire Timurid empire, has her own place and task in the work. Introducing the reader to this image, the writer places special emphasis on the beauty of the queen. After all, "The writer assigns a great and serious task to the appearance of heroes and characters: the appearance of beloved heroes and characters is made positive, while the appearance of negative characters emphasizes that they are evil and wicked people" [7-17], writes literary critic G. Murodov.

But this does not always have the level of a strict law. Therefore, in today's literature, the old traditional laws that the inner and outer worlds should be the same are a somewhat outdated example of style. Along with Khadijabegim's beauty, the writer also emphasizes that she was a person of high intelligence: *This delicate princess was actually one of the concubines given to Sultan Abusaid Mirza. When Abusaid Mirza died in Iraq, Hussein Mirza liked her because of her incredible beauty and sharp passion and married her. Because Khadijabegi was able to find a way to the ruler's heart, she soon became a beautiful queen and had two sons from the sultan.* Isajon Sultan usually skillfully uses details to reveal the soul of women. In this regard, the writer concludes that in fully describing the image of Khadijah Begum, the author concludes that describing the beauty of the image is not enough, and uses the queen's playing of the oud to create high art: *Khadijah Begum was an unparalleled master of the oud. Her delicate, magical fingers would produce such wonderful sounds from the strings with imperceptible movements that the listener would faint and be immersed in the spell of the melody. With insight, she would notice the subtle changes in the sultan's mood, and would choose a melody or song accordingly, whether cheerful and joyful or painful and sad.* Isajon Sultan usually skillfully uses details to reveal the soul of women. In this regard, the writer concludes that in fully describing the image of Khadijah Begum, the author concludes that describing the beauty of the image is not enough, and uses the queen's playing of the oud to create high art: *Khadijah Begum was an unparalleled master of the oud. Her delicate, magical fingers would produce such wonderful sounds from the strings with imperceptible movements that the listener would faint and be immersed in the spell of the melody. With insight, she would notice the subtle changes in the sultan's mood, and would choose a melody or song accordingly, whether cheerful and joyful or painful and sad.*

The writer does not emphasize the beauty and intelligence of the queen for nothing, in our opinion. Although Khadijabegim was the murderer of Momin Mirza, Isajon Sultan, as if trying to understand and justify her, tries to show that the root of all events is primarily maternal feelings and love, and in our opinion, he himself thinks so. Perhaps this is why he is careful not to portray her in negative terms, to add dark colors to her beauty and charm. This is clearly seen in the thoughts given below.

The wise queens of the kingdom should see the future prospects so that their descendants will not be humiliated, and the princes will live a comfortable life amidst the pleasures of the world. When the time comes, they will grow up and enter the struggle for power and the throne. The sharp mind of the queen noticed that the Khorasan kingdom was falling apart due to the conflicts between the crown princes. It seems that the author approached these actions of the queen as an act of motherhood, a vision of the future, and a lament for the fate of the princes. True, each creator "translates events into works of art based on his own world of thought in order to ensure the readability of his works. In this translation, interpretations are reflected in the same forms as the writer's style and skill" [9-91]. In this regard, Isajon Sultan has the right to react to reality based on his worldview. However, in a situation where history never acquits Khadijabegim, literature also has the obligation not to wash away the sins of the sinner. It seems that the writer's images contain a claim that the queen should be acquitted or understood. However, the writer may not have tried to completely justify her, but on the contrary, in this case, in his desire to reveal the inner feelings and psyche of the image of a woman, a mother, he may have failed to bring the image to its full potential. Because nowhere in the work is it mentioned that Khadijabegim was punished, or that she was left in a state of regret, or at least that her name became a black woman in the eyes of history. In our opinion, it was a necessary need for the author to pay special attention to these aspects and not to ignore them. No matter how independent and free the author is in the process of creating images and characters, he also has the task of conveying information to future generations through literature.

There is also the image of Volida Beka, which is not fully revealed in the work, and the author does not dwell on this image enough. He does not often mix her into the plot or the dialogues in it. This is the image of Alisher Navoi's mother. Since there is not enough information about Alisher Navoi's mother in historical sources and works of art, Isajon Sultan cannot sufficiently illuminate this image. He only summarizes it by using the image of Qutb, saying that *"Ghiyosiddinbek and his brothers were martyred, and their beloved mistress died in the fire of grief."* But there is no limit and comparison to a mother's love. When a child dies, no one is more saddened by it than a mother. Considering that his mother left this bright world at the moment of Alisher Navoi's death, the writer uses the image of Qutbiya in this place to make the sadness of Navoi's death even brighter in the work. That is why the writer returns to the image of Qutb, who is almost absent from the plot throughout the work: Qutb cried bitterly and, according to his custom, mourned for a year. He would say, *"My dear Alisher."* *His cries would reach the sky. Sometimes he would wave his hands, sometimes he would scratch his face, and cry.* His tears were like silver

hair, and they looked like stars that appear when the sun sets. Through this, the author tries to show his unique artistry, the true pain and scale of the tragedy of Navoi's death. He tries to increase the pathos even more, to make the reader feel the grief closer. He compares Qutb's tears to stars scattered after the sun sets and quotes Navoi's lines:

Every moment a tear falls from my eyes,
I think, a star will appear, a future sun will be hidden.

Through this, he aims to further enhance the artistry of the work and enhance the pathos. In our opinion, this situation is not entirely justified. Because any excess or artificiality in the work is clearly noticeable and annoys the reader. The author's unexpected return to the plot of a character who hardly participates in the plot, showing his lamentations and artificially connecting him with Navoi's extremely famous lines, is not justified. On the contrary, it causes situations such as artificiality and falsity in the work. Therefore, as Doctor of Philology A. Rahimov noted: *"In fact, the degree of realization of the artist's intention, the depth of revealing the essence of images, the clarity of the idea, in general, the integrity, readability and artistic and aesthetic power of the work of art are largely related to the perfection of the plot and composition, the degree to which they correspond to the content. In order for the plot and composition of the work to be holistic, the writer-artist must deeply perceive the interdependence of phenomena in existence"* [10-8]. The action taken to increase the pathos in Isajon Sultan, namely, the immersion of Qutbiya in the grief of Navoi's death, undermines the coherence of this plot and other elements in it, and in a sense, the author's intended goal remains unfulfilled.

In Isajon Sultan's novel "Alisher Navoi", each character has its own function. The author treats them based on their place in the work, brings them into the plot or removes them from the plot. That is, the fate of the characters, their actions are based on a strict principle. He treats the few female characters in the work in the same way, striving to portray them perfectly, harmoniously, along with their mental suffering. The author does not leave out their most delicate experiences as women. By bringing each character to the level of character, he achieves the formation of strong characters. Therefore, in this process, that is, in revealing the entire psychological state of the female character, the author turns to three important factors:

The effective use of dialogues in the process of revealing the character of female characters;

Making detailed characters serve to reveal the subtle aspects of the female psyche;

To portray the female psyche through the language of another character in the work;

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding: This study has revealed that Isajon Sultan's novel "Alisher Navoi" presents a nuanced artistic expression of the female psyche, where both historical and fictional female characters play critical roles in enhancing the narrative's depth. Sultan's methodical approach integrates the inner worlds of these women with the socio-political dynamics of their time, allowing for a vivid portrayal of their emotional and

intellectual complexities. **Implication:** The findings suggest that the representation of women in historical literature is not merely supplementary but foundational in reflecting cultural values and societal transformations. This emphasizes the potential for historical novels to serve as powerful mediums for exploring gender roles and the evolution of women's positions within different historical contexts. **Limitation:** A notable limitation of this research is its focus on a single novel, which may constrain the generalizability of the conclusions drawn. Additionally, the analysis heavily relies on textual interpretation without incorporating broader comparative studies with other works of historical fiction, which could provide a more comprehensive understanding. **Future Research:** Future research should consider a comparative analysis involving multiple historical novels to examine the consistency of female character portrayals across different cultural and temporal landscapes. Moreover, interdisciplinary approaches incorporating historical, sociological, and psychological perspectives could enrich the understanding of female representations in literature and their impact on contemporary gender discourse.

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