

Thoughts on The Mirage

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Abstract: This article analyzes the novel *Sarob* by Abdulla Qahhor, a prominent figure in Uzbek literature, from the perspective of contemporary literary theory. The study examines how narrative techniques characteristic of realism, modernism, and postmodernism in twentieth-century literature, as well as the phenomenon of discursive fragmentation, are manifested in the artistic structure of the novel. Through the use of stream of consciousness, interior monologue, psychological depth, and fragmented thought, the work explores the protagonist Saadiy's inner crisis, the erosion of values, and the problem of spiritual emptiness. The author evaluates *Sarob* as one of the first fully developed psychological novels in Uzbek literature, emphasizing its profound artistic and aesthetic depiction of the nation's fate and the tragedy of the intellectual elite. Furthermore, the article summarizes critical discussions and scholars' perspectives surrounding the novel, demonstrating, on the basis of scientific conclusions, that *Sarob* continues to retain its relevance in contemporary literary discourse.

Keywords: Uzbek literature, Abdulla Qahhor, *Sarob*, psychological novel, stream of consciousness, modernism, realism, literary fragmentation.

Introduction: By the first quarter of the twenty-first century, humanity had adapted to living under the influence of accelerated and intensified temporal laws, learning to operate according to the principles of virtual space and time [1], and establishing interpersonal relations through the practice of discursive communication between minds [2]. This process affected all areas of human life, including literature. The art of literature absorbed these transformations and developed new methods for their artistic expression. It is well known that this process began in the twentieth century, leading literature to be regarded as an experimental field. Narrative techniques that evolved within realism, modernism, and especially postmodernism aimed to depict the complex processes occurring in human consciousness—such as transformation, decomposition (fragmentation), disruption of logical continuity, and ambiguity in the form of mental play [3]—while simultaneously seeking logic within this very irrationality. From a scholarly perspective, the phenomenon of discursive fragmentation emerged, whereby the narrative discourse is artistically and

aesthetically broken into fragments. This fragmentation disrupts the textual unity and allows the creation of a complex mosaic-like narrative composed of autonomous fragments. Such narrative techniques enabled writers to depict the changes occurring in the consciousness of twentieth-century individuals in a fully realistic and comprehensive manner. These methods made it possible to model the fragmentation of the protagonist's inner "self", to reflect the flow of seemingly illogical thoughts within a character's consciousness, and to portray the intricate interweaving of time and memory. In short, in literary studies, discursive fragmentation manifests as a method of constructing narrative, wherein the integrity of a literary text is deliberately disrupted and replaced by autonomous units that are meaningfully interconnected and convey artistic-aesthetic significance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

When referring to these characteristics of contemporary literature, the work of A. Qahhor, particularly his novel *Sarob*, draws our attention in

terms of how it aligns with this process. It is well known that while the laws of literary development require adherence to certain rules and structures, occasionally there emerge writers capable of transcending existing boundaries and norms, creating artistic worlds of entirely new dimensions. In our view, A. Qahhor was one such gifted writer.

Let us examine these assumptions through an analysis of the novel *Sarob*. In this work, the author depicts changes in the consciousness of his nation, caught in the vortex of historical-political, moral-social, and ideological problems of his era, through the technique of stream of consciousness. Transformations and evolutions in the psyche of the novel's protagonist, Saadiy, are revealed through the method of psychological characterization. According to Uzbek literary scholar B. Mo'minov, the novel fully corresponds to the laws of artistic literature and retains its value to this day because it truthfully reflects the mentality of people of that period as well as the changes occurring in society. Most of the characters are members of various social strata, particularly intellectuals who are aware of societal realities and capable of responding to existing circumstances. The author realistically portrays the transformations in their thought processes and psyches, and through depicting the decline of moral and ethical standards, presents the prevailing social order and reality with artistic fidelity.

RESULTS

U. Normatov evaluates the character of Saadiy not as a mere instrument subordinated to a specific ideological function, but as a vivid personality with natural human contradictions, comparable to similar character types in world literature [4]. The fragmentation of Saadiy's psyche, the collapse of his system of values, his descent into ideological emptiness, the disruption of logical continuity in his stream of consciousness, and the break in chains of thought and reasoning lead to irrationality, inner disarray, and disturbance of psychological balance in the protagonist. His indecisiveness, hesitation in decision-making, duplicity in relations with close ones, and lack of inner tranquility result in the proliferation of conflicting "selves" within his consciousness [5]. This condition appears as a stable characteristic of the human type depicted in contemporary literature.

Thus, A. Qahhor emerges as a writer ahead of his time in creating characters and depicting reality, and it is no exaggeration to say that he produced the first true psychological novel in Uzbek literature [6]. The novel sparked debates over an extended period, and not without reason. The author himself struggled to fully comprehend the novelty of the methods he employed, repeatedly revising the text. Moreover, contemporary critics were unprepared to analyze such a style, as evidenced by the fact that only later scholars such as O. Sharafutdinov, M. Qo'shchonov, and U. Normatov were able to provide an objective assessment of the work [6].

In the novel, the uncompromising fates of various types of intellectuals are presented as a central thematic concern, and their conflicting struggles are skillfully illuminated through profound psychological processes. Qahhor demonstrates a rigorous commitment to objectivity in the depiction of these intellectual figures, portraying both their strengths and vulnerabilities without resorting to ideological bias. Consequently, the narrative refrains from valorizing or condemning the existing socio-political order; instead, it presents the characters' interactions and inner conflicts in a nuanced and realistic manner, allowing readers to observe the inherent tensions within their consciousness and moral reasoning. This approach underscores Qahhor's ability to render the psychological complexity of individuals amidst socio-political turbulence, positioning the novel as a pioneering work in the psychological-realistic tradition of Uzbek literature.

In this context, through *Sarob*, Qahhor not only constructs individual psychological portraits but also provides an in-depth analysis of the socio-psychological state of the nation. The internal conflicts and contradictory thought processes of the characters, along with the disruption of values and the problem of spiritual emptiness, reflect the moral and ethical challenges of society during that period. From the perspective of contemporary literary studies, this approach is significant for understanding psychological realism and discursive fragmentation. The analysis indicates that Qahhor integrates modernist and postmodernist techniques into psychological realism. Modernism allows attention to the character's inner monologue and mental processes, while

postmodernism, through the fragmentation of time, memory, and consciousness, creates a complex and multi-layered narrative. Consequently, readers can perceive the irrationality, internal disorder, and conflicting “selves” within the protagonist’s consciousness both in individual psychological and socio-psychological contexts. Moreover, the novel offers a prophetic perspective on the nation’s future, moral decline, and the crisis of values. Through discursive fragmentation and montage-like compositional methods, the text conveys complex psychological and social structures to the reader. Therefore, Sarob is not only pivotal in the development of the Uzbek psychological novel but also serves as an experimental work that embodies global literary tendencies, blending realism, modernism, and postmodernism in a sophisticated manner.

As U. Normatov emphasizes, Sarob constitutes a valuable artistic document that manifests the internal laws and the intrinsic power of realism [4]. In agreement with his assessment, it can be argued that Qahhor’s novel is not written with the purpose of exposing “bourgeois nationalism”; rather, it becomes a rare work that essentially expresses human vulnerabilities and their tragic consequences [5]. The author successfully integrates methods that enhance the internal psychological depth characteristic of modernism into the realist framework, while simultaneously incorporating features of postmodernism, such as fragmented consciousness and ambiguous narrative structures. Through this intricate blending, Qahhor is able to construct a complex, multi-dimensional artistic fabric in which realism is enriched with modernist attention to the human psyche and inner monologue, and postmodernist narrative fragmentation and open-endedness. The resulting narrative is, at times, seemingly absurd, yet upon closer examination, reveals a sophisticated synthesis of realism, modernism, and postmodernism, enabling a naturalistic and psychologically credible representation of reality.

This amalgamation of narrative techniques produces a multi-layered texture, whereby the montage-like compositional method introduces a third dimension: the protagonist suspended in an open space, caught between two paths, symbolically reflecting the uncertainty of the nation’s future. Qahhor, like A.

Qodiriy before him, uses the tragic fates of his characters—Saadiy in Qahhor’s case, Otabek and Kumush in Qodiriy’s—to prophesy the future of the Uzbek nation [6]. While Qodiriy relies on historical characters and pure realist depiction, Qahhor achieves a psychological portrayal of the nation’s precarious state in the early twentieth century by fusing realist, modernist, and postmodernist techniques. Through this method, the novel conveys the nation’s vulnerability, moral decline, and the threat of cultural and societal erosion, emphasizing the intimate connection between individual destiny and collective fate.

CONCLUSION

This article provides a comprehensive analysis of Abdulla Qahhor’s novel Sarob from the perspective of contemporary literary theory. The findings demonstrate that Sarob is not only the first fully developed psychological novel in Uzbek literature but also a work that masterfully integrates the principles of realism, modernism, and postmodernism, creating a complex and multi-dimensional artistic fabric. Through the protagonist Saadiy, the novel depicts the profound transformations within the national consciousness, reflecting the vortex of historical-political, moral-social, and ideological challenges of the period. Using stream of consciousness and interior monologue techniques, Qahhor explores the protagonist’s inner crisis, the erosion of traditional values, and the problem of spiritual emptiness. Psychological characterization and discursive fragmentation allow the author to realistically portray the flow of seemingly illogical thoughts, complex temporal structures, and interwoven memories within the characters’ minds.

The analysis shows that Qahhor combines the structural foundations of realism with modernist attention to internal psychological processes and the postmodernist techniques of fragmented consciousness, ambiguous narratives, and discursive fragmentation. This synthesis enables the novel to depict not only individual destinies but also the collective fate of the nation, providing a psychologically credible representation of societal and cultural conditions. According to U. Normatov, B. Mo’minov, O. Sharafutdinov, and M. Qo’shchonov, Sarob is a singular achievement in Uzbek literature in terms of artistic mastery, psychological depth, and narrative

innovation.

Qahhor's objective approach to character creation, his portrayal of conflicting internal processes, and his neutral stance in representing the social order allow for a rigorous scholarly analysis. Furthermore, the novel employs a montage-like compositional technique, which provides readers with a three-dimensional perspective on the uncertainty, despair, and potential decline facing both the individual and the nation. This approach highlights Qahhor's mastery of modern psychological realism and experimental narrative techniques. In conclusion, *Sarob* represents a pivotal moment in the development of the psychological novel in Uzbek literature. By combining realism, modernism, and postmodernism, Qahhor produces a nuanced psychological portrait of both individual and national fate. The novel continues to maintain its relevance for contemporary literary studies and serves as a rich object for scholarly research in Uzbek literary scholarship.

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