



Article

The Place of Nazr Eshonkul in Modern Uzbek Literature

Guzal Amirkulovna Khimmatova^{*1}

1. Doctor of Philosophy in Philology (PhD), associate professor, Termiz State University, Uzbekistan.

* Correspondence: guzalximmatova@mail.ru

Abstract: The main purpose of this article is to analyze the literary feature of one of the deepest and philosophical writers of modern Uzbek prose Nazar Eshonkul. His artistic evolution covering pre-independent and independent Uzbekistan can serve as a microcosm of national self-identity, historical consciousness and spiritual resurrection. Although Eshonkul has great fame on national and international levels, there are not sufficient analytical elaboration to the philosophical, psychological and stylistic complexities of his prose on the base of East-West literary bridge. The research used descriptive and analytical methods based on the content analysis of some of his main works; You Can't Catch the Wind, The Man Led by a Monkey, The Trap of Imagination, etc., which are dominant themes, stylistic devices, and philosophical currents. Interpretive methods of comparative literary analysis are also used to draw parallels with Western modernism and the existentialism. The paper indicates that Eshonkul's prose is a combination of realism and existentialism, focusing on man's internal conflict, sense of morality, and the Individual vs societal and spiritual crisis. In his stripped-down but emotionally-commanding narrative style, everyday realities become vehicles for deep philosophical contemplation. Eshonkul's social and artistic vision combined national identity with modern global humanistic values, and these things together redefined literature in contemporary Uzbekistan. His oeuvre has largely defined stylistics in Uzbek prose writing, and contributed to the intellectual and moral thinking of post-independence literature, establishing him as a link between classical realism and philosophical modernism.

Keywords: Nation, Prose, Modern, Writer, Philosophy, Society, Artistic, Social, Idea, Hero, Memory, Era, History, Intellectual

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1. Introduction

The writer finding inspirations in the plight of the nation on the road to independence, the activism of the Intelijensiya, and their commitment in the battle for the mother tongue. In addition, the author should not be regarded merely as someone who lived through these struggles — his contribution was also one of sacrifice. In each of his work, the author does not just show the human heart, instead he shows the human heart, interprets that and again he interprets again that.

The way our prose revived in the 1980s–1990s, while not entirely untraditional, exposed features capable of being parallel to those of the evolution of artistic trends in the West towards the close of the 19th century and in the early decades of the 20th century. In this respect, the prose, especially the short story, of the writer Nazar Eshonkul had a unique voice and soul. He represents one of those writers that balance this genre alongside the traditions of Eastern and Western writing. His first work was the novella “War People” (1989) [1]. Thereafter, a number of his books were published: “Grandmother’s Lullaby”

(1991), "The Scent of Mint" (1996), "The Sun Beyond the Horizon," "The Man Led by a Monkey" (2004), "You Can't Catch the Wind" (2005), and "Peach Blossom" (2011) [2]. He translated into Uzbek F. K. Anitti's "Stories and Novellas," A. Camus's "Essays," and Chekhov's short story "The House with the Mezzanine."

Nazar Eshonqul is a profound and uniquely explorative young voice in contemporary Uzbek literature. Though the creative process dates back to the years prior to independence, his making and acceptance as a writer largely takes place in the years of independence. A number of important processes of national self-awareness, restoration of historical memory and rediscovery of spiritual values are characteristic of this period in the literature of Uzbekistan. Such large-scaled processes are intricately linked to all the minute processes of creative development such as that of Eshonqul. His philosophical take on problems of life and his search for deep inside information on the human psyche earned him notice even in his early stories and novellas [3].

2. Materials and Methods

This research is based on qualitative methods in descriptive, analytical and comparative literary analysis. The research is aimed at the scientific modeling of philosophical-psychological and aesthetic images of a writer-artist based on the creative landscape of Nazar Eshonqul in the total level of modern Uzbek literature. In doing so, the study methodically analyzes a selection of the author's significant short stories, novellas, and novels, such as *You can't Catch the Wind*, *The Man Led by a Monkey*, *The Trap of Imagination*, and *The Pleasure of Pain*. By close reading and interpretative analysis, this study aims to uncover common themes such as man against himself, search of identity, moral awareness, and man against society. Hermeneutic interpretational dimensions are also still used to us to reveal the its philosophical root and deeper symbolic value of Eshonqul's narrative technique. Comparative method is employed to draw similarities between Eshonqul's prose and a range of Western literary movements including modernism and existentialism, as well as Eastern traditions of philosophical fiction [4]. Data collection utilizes textual evidence from the original works of the author, critical essays, and scholarly commentaries for proper triangulation and contextual accuracy. This scholarship provides a methodological approach to Eshonqul's works, focusing on their form and content, which affords to gain insights about the way Eshonqul redefined Uzbek prose in the synthesis of realism, modernism, and moral reflection. Such an integrative analytical framework lays the groundwork for understanding his role in the spiritual and intellectual development of present-day Uzbek literature.

3. Results and Discussion

The following: In the author's early works, the lives of ordinary people in civil society their hopes and dreams, spiritual torments, and psychological difficulties are depicted. In these pieces, you see a blending of realism and existentialism. Eshonqul's body of work was formed and matured during the 1990s, and so these same decades have a particular significance. Even in a period when a process of spiritual revival was getting stronger in the literature of Uzbekistan in the years of independence, he also tried to philosophically analyze the conflicts of society and man in his works, taking them as a very important subject in the the means of artistic expression [5]. The literature, there can be no other domain so much capable to reignite human thought and or seed some ideas into consciousness. Through a broad scholarly-aesthetic analysis and research into the writer art of stories created in certain period of time such as *You Can't Catch the Wind*, *The Man Led by a Monkey*, *The Trap of Imagination*, *The Coffin*, *The Sandstorm*, *The Pleasure of Pain* Stories which is considered as certain form of this phenomenon one can observe how literature characteristics of so-called Western modern literature formed and received a dignified place in Uzbek short fiction. Indeed, everything distinctive for the characters of his works, the way the events are represented passing sometimes in the background

through gestures, and, above everything, the way the events are narrated in the 1st person ('I'), permanent self-examination and self-analysis as well as a frank confession of one's sins all of this is a material for study as the new stylistic direction in literature not only in Uzbek short fiction of the national independence period but in our prose as a whole [6]. These key realities, as observed in the slow development of novels, correspond to the 1990s as depicted in the writer's works. Backgrounds — such as struggles of the nation towards independence, activism of the intelligentsia, and efforts put in by the intelligentsia in fighting for the mother tongue — constantly serve as underpinnings for the writer. Besides, the point cannot be lost on anyone that the author was a contemporary of these struggles living a life of unparalleled altruism. In each of these works, the author does not so much present the human heart; he reflects primarily on the experience of the heart and what that experience means [7]. That, therefore, for him, "The Literature is the max knowledge of the human heart, the max research. The author examines the human heart in his works through the eyes of a philosopher open to everything and describes its conditions with a sense of calm. To be exactly such "equanimous" you need a wide heart and patience. To me, this is the eye of a blue waters philosopher. Nazar Eshonqul is on the uppermost rung of artistic-philosophical thought; he thinks in high register and reaches world-scale conclusions. Notice what the author speaks of the sorrows and that sufferings of the human person. Which indicates the wish of the writer from human to be loved. Enlighten us, O people and nation But what is an ill-mannered ignorance? A Person who combats ignorance and wins over his self (nafs) without belittling the denizens of other states but, holding his own country values close to heart and displaying national pride and solidarity, is where patriotism starts. Patriotism is the quintessence of the creative idea in the writer's oeuvre. Eshonqul gives wide scope to different aesthetic-expressive searches in his work. His artistic world uniquely balances the traditions of classical realism with the linguistic flexibility of modern literature [8].

Beginning in the 2000s, his/ her striving against spiritual and moral crisis and values and conscience came to be further deepen themes in Eshonqul's work. While denouncing social, political and ethical issues in modern society, he highlighted the inner life of a person and the necessity of spiritual purification. The weight of Eshonqul's works is a unique place in modern Uzbek prose. This writer is unlike any other writers of his time, in style, in dealing with reality, in representation and interpretation. A remarkable feature in his works is the representation of the Man in competition with himself on the way to the discovery of himself; the spiritual face of the resentful one who did not find his niche in the society; his discoveries and feelings of his soul are revealed in the completely new lights. Dozens of this same writer's stories, like "The Man Led by a Monkey," "Separation," "The Unopened Door," "Treatment," "The Coffin," "The Pleasure of Pain," "The Hand," "Bahauddin's Dog," "Qultoy," "You Can't Catch the Wind," and her two novellas, "Bars of the Night," and "The Black Book," and her novel, "Gor-o'goli or The Water of Life," have turned into exquisite examples of modern Uzbek prose. His contribution in forming Uzbek philosophical aesthetics through his educational services is specially mentioned [9]. His articles on the pearls of world literature are significant in the history of the formation of Uzbek artistic thought. Beyond simple information, these essays are scholarly analyses and interpretations that a scholar would recognize as scholarly literature.

We all know that a wide range of opinions about Nazar Eshonqul exist in the realm of literary studies. Possibly related to the character and the being of the writer. His disposition is not one that allows for flattery, obsequiousness, thirst for fame, and striving for office. Those who follow his output do not see vices of "need" like "reading the room" or sucking up for papers and promotion [10]. The creative development of Eshonqul is organically connected with the processes of development of Uzbek literature in the years of independence. With his works, the author had introduced philosophically rich contemporary depth to Uzbek prose, while opening novel realms of psychological and moral investigation. His work is distinguished by a focus on the artistic illumination of

pressing topics — national self-awareness, the revival of historical memory and the safeguarding of spiritual values. Just a name among others, Nazar Eshonqul is an author whose artistic explorations and perceptions of aesthetics make a solid contribution to Uzbek literature

In Uzbek literature, Nazar Eshonqul has a recognizable voice and style. His body of work was prominent in the revitalisation of Uzbek prose during the 1980s–1990s. He infused a novel spirit to Uzbek prose by unifying the artistic traditions of Eastern and Western literature in his writing. His books like *“War People”*, *“Nanay”*, *“Aroma of Peppermint”* and *“You cannot catch the Wind”* paved the way to new horizons in the literature of Uzbekistan. With these works, the Uzbek literature has done great steps to enter the international arena. Eshonqul embeds profound philosophical content into the artistic images [11]. His tale, *The Hand*, for instance, shows in diversity of the artistic images, all uniting in the harmony of the rational and emotional. His is a creative laboratory marked by the use of metaphorical, associative linguistic units. Which literary scholars have explicitly honored in this way. Numerous academic studies have been compiled on the writer's work. For example, the creation of artistic images and their mission in the works of the poet were analyzed by researchers at the Alisher Navoi Tashkent State University of the Uzbek Language and Literature. Moreover, views have been shared regarding his potential to interpret and feel the compositions of European and Latin American writers through his works. Eshonqul has charted new paths in Uzbek literature, and his works have received international recognition. Sincerity is perhaps one of the most vital virtues a creator can possess; where it resides no act or disingenuous disposition can be found [12]. Creativity is an expansive playing field with all of us writing from the heart as intentionally as we can. Today we present to you Eshonqul with his arduous labor, the influence of Uzbek short fiction, its utility for the young generation, and its essence and reflections of his present-day practice in prose and many more. Eshonqul's stories are characterized by the image of the human spiritual world, inner torments, conflicts with time, extremely subtle and psychoanalytical. In his tales, the worldly phenomena, the violent pivots that many anticipate, usually sit off-stage; the heart of the matter is in spiritual conflict within the human breast. This is reflected in his stories, which put relations between time and society, the value of the human being and the erosion of moral principles in the centre stage. The ordinary, everyday appearances of life allow great philosophical ideas to blossom in the imbroglio of Eshonqul's work, presented with rich realistic flow. With a minimalist style he states the painful truths of life in a simple short and not overly described manner without embellishment. Many of his characters are slightly melancholy, in some existential crisis. It is a demonstration of the meandering wizardry of contemporary journey, of knowing oneself and how to fit in the world. One more common property of Eshonqul's stories is the burning soul of society critique. He brings out vices like moral worthlessness, self-interest, and predicament of human relations, showing how they are symptoms of the damage that the day and age are inflicting on a man. In this respect his kind of storytelling, as a literary-school or style, has drawn a new aesthetic trend determining the paradox of an individual versus the age of culture in the contemporary Uzbek prose [13]. The most common themes reflected in the stories of Eshonqul are complicated relationships of the individual with the society, struggle of the individual with his own dreams, understanding of truth, and struggle with illusory concepts of life. The author characterizes his protagonists as people whose lives have been deceived, forced to abandon their dreams, or have failed to align their moral conscience with social expectations. This approach not only deepens the social and philosophical dimension of Eshonqul's stories, but also opens up newer ways of expressing the inner crises and spiritual turmoil of the individual in our short fiction. Uzbek literary studies see a value of Eshonqul's contribution in the whole fabric of storytelling as a system of interpretation that helped clarify the development of modern principles of realism and how they served the same functions — revealing the nature of the interrelations between

individual and society under the psychological and sociological analysis and critique [14]. In portraying simple, real-life situations, the author unravels profound social and spiritual implications and by artistically depicting inner conflict, spiritual suffering, and moral dilemmas, has formed a unique school of modern Uzbek short fiction.

For his creative path and labor, Nazar Eshonqul has been deemed worthy of great recognition. Many scholars have expressed warm opinions about him. In particular, one of them, Ibrohim G'afurov, a Hero of Uzbekistan, made the following remark about the writer: "In my view, Nazar Eshonqul is one who has deeply studied the most advanced currents and methods of world literatures in our Uzbek literature and promoted them in his works." Indeed, through his works it is not difficult to recognize new facets of the short story. Likewise, Bahodir Xoliqov, professor at the Alisher Navoi Tashkent State University of the Uzbek Language and Literature, emphasized that Eshonqul's works create an opportunity to understand the works of European and Latin American writers. According to B. Jovliyev, a researcher of Eshonqul's oeuvre, the writer's assessments of many figures of world literature and the views expressed in his literary analyses can be applied to his own works as well. For example, in several of Eshonqul's works we see confirmation of the interpretation of the motif of fear in the literary text, as mentioned above. The writer's story "The Trap of Imagination," written in 1994, begins with the narrator-protagonist returning from a two-year journey to learn that a young man he once knew well, named Voqif, has disappeared without a trace. The protagonist makes every effort to find him, but Voqif "had vanished like a pearl dropped into water; he could not be found among the living or the dead." Here we perceive an interpretation of mythological space the understanding of this world and the other. Thereafter, the mythological mode of depiction deepens, and the narrator-protagonist begins to feel as if he is walking in a mythologically terrifying forest: "My attempts to get to the bottom of the matter were in vain as with a hunter lost in the forest, no matter which way he goes, he encounters only hungry and rabid wolves, so too at every step I encountered Unknownness and Non-Existence, standing like matchless statues along my path and stirring fear and dread in a person; then, like a sly and crafty spy infiltrating the realm of my heart, the suspicion crept in that perhaps those bears of Unknownness and Non-Existence had devoured Voqif as well."

During his creative activity, Nazar Eshonqul was awarded several prizes and awards. In 1999, he was a recipient of the "Shuhrat" (Fame) medal which is a decoration awarded in Uzbekistan for notable and remarkable contributions in the fields of culture and literature [15]. He was also the 2024 Mundus Artium Press "Writer of the Year," as selected by the U.S. publisher. For the depth of his literary vision and the mastery of his reflection of cultural truth, he received this award. Dec 25, 2024: On this date, the University of Texas in Dallas's international publisher, Mundus Artium Press, announced the winners of its biennial awards for distinguished literature. The prestigious "Book of the Year" category awarded on March 4, 2025 at a ceremonial event was won by famous Uzbek writer Nazar Eshonqul; "Best Book of Poetry" and the "Book of the Year" main categories. Gjekë Marinaj-poet, writer, and director of Mundus Artium Press-presented the award. They were followed by Hero of Uzbekistan Ibrohim G'afurov, translator Qosimjon Mamirov, the popular poet Odil Ikrom and other guests who congratulated the author cordially. Receiving this award not only served as recognition of Eshonqul as a creative writer, but also which is a further proof of the international popularity of Uzbek literature, and the also confirmed once again that level of the recognition that Eshonqul have reached within the literary community. Such an event would be a proud and honorable moment for Uzbek culture and literature.

4. Conclusion

The works of Nazar Eshonqul are a unique symbiosis of philosophy and psychology, of Uyghur national character with general human values, traits, and so occupy a prominent position in modern Uzbek literature. The results suggest that his prose

synthesizes Eastern and Western traditions; employing spare yet resonant narrative to expose the ethical and spiritual dilemmas of the individual in a society changing around him. In reshaping these aspects of Uzbek prose, his art invented modern forms of self-reflection and intellectual inquiry that correspond so well with the Uzbek Republic's post-independence renaissance. This study suggests the importance of Eshonqul, in contributing to a larger narrative in national literature and in global literature as well due to his integration of realism with theories of the modernists mind. Future scholarly work might also pursue his impact on younger Uzbek writers and his contribution to linking Central Asian literature to global currents in contemporary world literary forms.

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