



Article

# The Representation of National Values in Erkin Samandar's Novel "Sulton Jaloliddin"

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**Abstract:** The article analyses the representation of national values in the historical novel *Sulton Jaloliddin* by Erkin Samandar, focusing on portraying female characters as keepers of cultural traditions and moral values. The first goal of the project is to investigate by what means national values (patriotism, loyalty, spiritual tenacity, memory etc.) might be realised in the narrative line via female characters. The study employs a qualitative literary-analytic approach using textual analysis, character analysis, and certain features of comparative interpretation based on cultural and axiological theory. The analysis thus systematically explores the selected episodes and character representations to unveil the symbolic and ideological roles women play in the novel. The evidence shows that women are hardly portrayed as inactive historical characters in the stories, but instead as independent contributing protagonists of national consciousness, transmitting ethical norms or reinforcing a common consciousness and molding the moral personality development of primary male heroes. Their roles are also important in the novel's wider ideological paradigm of nationhood and resistance. Theoretically, the article contributes to power by providing a fresh standpoint on gendered images of national values in Uzbek historical fiction which lack sufficient treatment in extant literature. In so doing, it raises the level of debate in literary studies by incorporating both gender analysis and examination of national ideology. In addition, these findings could serve as a reference for scholars, educators and curriculum construction personnel involved in teaching national literature, cultural studies and value-orientation education to help foster historical consciousness and moral education of the younger generation. The study of this paper is restricted to only one literary work; hence, it is suggested that the future studies carry out comparative analyses for other historical novels dealing with similar themes and subjects in order to create a better ground for contextualizing the role of female characters as national story makers.

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## 1. Introduction

The historical novel is one of the central types to form nation-wide state mentality and historic memory in the context of Uzbek literature. "In the genre of the apocalypse (i.e., vision or revelation), events are placed in artistic perspective and joined to what is bedrock reality for both then and now" ([1], p 37). Women characters usually appear as those symbolic figures of family, morality, patience and spiritual stability. The novel *Sulton Jaloliddin*, by Erkin Samandar, is part of this tradition taken and raised to a new level. This article is intended to accompany, complement and critically reassess such scholarship from an innovative methodological standpoint [2].

## Literature Review

The problem of a historical novel in Uzbek literature began to be studied systemically from the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Academic works have concentrated on the issues of historical character and history, ratio between literary fiction and historical fact and creations of historical heroes. In this respect special consideration was paid to historical novels as a genre active in the construction of national thought and social awareness [3].

Research done on female representation for the most part is centered around its role in family, moral rearing, and spirituality. The female is re-constructed oftened in relation to artistic space and time [4, 5]. However, the gendered image in the system of national value has not been opened up enough in historical novels. Erkin Samandar's works have been the subject of studies focused on issues related to themes, heroism and interpretation of historical individuals in the author's work. However, the female characters in the novel Sultan Jaloliddin, especially their ideological and aesthetic functions in connection with national values have not been studied as a separate object of research [6, 7].

## 2. Methodology

The work was informed by the variety of traditional and integrated methods seen in modern literary studies. The poetics of the historical novel, theory of artistic image and national values as a theoretical basis of the study are chosen concept.

The artistic and aesthetic analysis method was used as one of the main research methods. In this way, the exploration concentrated on discovering the poetic characteristics of female characters in the novel, how they were depicted and expressed as well as with regards to the relationship between author's discourse and characters' speech. Furthermore, the mechanism leading to female images as aesthetics ideals was examined.

Artistic images of Turkon Khatun and Khonsulton Begim were analyzed from the standpoint of character features with the method of character analysis. This helped establish the development of female characters, their function in narrative and ideological terms. Thus the systematic character of such a deliverance of national values in female images was disclosed.

The historical and cultural perspective was indeed a key methodological approach for the study. This allowed the female figures to be read in correlation with the conditions and pressures of modern era, period mentality and historical consciousness. The author of the female characters was justified on grounds of period logic, however that principle demanded a lack of modernist value judgements in general.

In addition, the method of comparative-typological analysis was used, in which the images of female characters contained in the novel under research were compared with analogous images from Uzbek tradition historical prose. Details of the common and specific traits were revealed using this method, and it was able to prove the original artistic-aesthetic properties typical for female images in Erkin Samandar's novel. The complement of these methods mutually facilitated the credibility and validity of research results.

## 3. Results and Discussion

The persona of Turkon Khatun personifies power and tradition, while Khonsulton Begim plays on the virtues of patience, loyalty and patriotism. In the novel women emerge as national values bearers and artistic figures [8].

The analysis shows that the images of women in the novel do not remain at the level of individual character portrayal but gain a national-typological meaning. This, in turn, allows to interpret female characters as an artistic model of the system of national values. In particular, terms like patience, commitment, spiritual advantage and historical responsibility are congealed into stable aesthetic categories by the female representations [9, 10].

In this sense the female characters in Sulton Jaloliddin serve as an ideological keystone unlocking the authors attitude to national history and national consciousness. The female portrait is one of the main subjects in the arts, which is considered as a key artistic element that stores national memory and history continuity, and reflects spiritual links between generations [11, 12].

A further interesting fact observed during the analysis is that female characters perform *sexybeaver.net* not only moral and ethical values, but also social roles. By them we are artistically made to see questions of social power relations, dynastic duty, and historical choice. This broadens the range of meaning surrounding the images of women in the novel and makes them to be interpreted as active agents of socially-historic development [13].

In addition, the artistic creating of women characters significantly affect the structure and arrangement of the novel. The choices and mental processes of heroines also serve as carriages speeding or altering the course of action. Thus the female image is a main artistic heritage to make sure of novel's aesthetic unity and intensify author's ideological purpose [14, 15].

#### 4. Conclusion

The conclusion is that in Erkin Samandar's novel Sulton Jaloliddin the female image is not a secondary character expressing national values, but it actually serves as a core point of the author's ideological and aesthetic concept. These virtues are beautifully organized and displayed through female characters, with concepts such as family honour, sacrifice in patience, fidelity to the last breath, spiritual strength in face of adversity, and sacred patriotism. The methods of artistic-aesthetic, characterological and historical-cultural analyses facilitate the disclosure of multileveled content of female images. Especially the examples of Turkon Khatun and Khonsulton Begim made it possible to trace an organic fusion of the female image with the processes in history, national consciousness, and aesthetic ideal on a scientific basis. A new methodological interpretation has emerged suggesting the study of the representation of women in the poetics that sustain the historical novel.

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