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THE DEPICTION OF UZBEK CUSTOMS IN TOGAY MUROD'S NOVELLA "OYDINDA YURGAN ODAMLAR"

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Abstract
This article analyses "Oydinda yurgan odamlar" ("People Walking in the Moonlight"), a novella by Togay Murod, People's Writer of Uzbekistan. The novella has a unique form and content. It is written as the thoughts of the main character about his late wife and his memories of almost 30 years of married life, which now belong to the past. As you read it, you see the writer's skill and how hard he worked on the text and on creating characters with strong personalities. The article also points out the strengths and weaknesses in the way the novella depicts Uzbek customs.

Keywords: Togay Murod, novella, Uzbek prose, plot of the work, retrospection method, depiction of Uzbek customs.

Introduction

The characters in Togay Murod's novella "Oydinda yurgan odamlar" are honest, modest, kind-hearted, simple, and sincere. No two characters have the same personality. They live in a village far from the centre and earn their living by hard work, through silkworm breeding and gardening. Their daily struggle to survive has become the meaning of their lives. They are honest, hardworking people of our time, and they are content with what they have.

The novella has seven chapters. Each chapter begins with the main character's conversation with Momo, and this conversation ends in the final part of the work. The novella begins with the words "Listen, old woman, listen," and at first the

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reader may not understand who is being addressed. The reader can only understand that Momo has died after reading the final part. In Chapter VII, according to the words of the son of Oymomo's brother, the "young lover," the forty days of mourning for Momo are not yet over.[1]

Almost all the nature scenes in the work and the events told by the main character support one another. In other words, the suffering and regret in the mind of a person who has lost a loved one, together with his memories of the past, bring the work to a logical end in Chapter VII. In the words of literary scholars, the plot is written with the technique of retrospection, that is, going back in time.

The novella follows the rules of its genre fully, and the writer created the life and adventures of the hero with delicate feeling and high taste. It is no accident that Said Ahmad, People's Writer of Uzbekistan, called "Oydinda yurgan odamlar" "a song of love." The reason is that the work is written as the hero's thoughts about his late wife and his memories of almost 30 years of married life, which now belong to the past. This is what the genre requires, and the size of the novella is not big: it has only 102 pages. Even so, its structure is different from that of ordinary novellas. The work has seven chapters and 164 short parts in total. For example, Chapter I tells about the wedding (nikoh toy) of Qoplon and Oymomo in 37 parts. In Chapter VII, the story returns to the present day.

While reading this work by Togay Murod, we see that the author describes with love the way of life, customs, and holidays of the Uzbek people, and even their food and national games.

In "Oydinda yurgan odamlar," the wedding is described differently from the wedding of Otabek and Kumushbibi in the novel "O'tkan kunlar" ("Days Gone By"). Two bright representatives of our literature describe the Uzbek wedding in two ways because of the difference in place and time: Otabek lives in the city, and Qoplon lives in the village.

The wedding of Oymomo and Qoplon brings to life, before our eyes, a wedding in Khojasoat village in Surkhandarya region, where the writer was born and grew up. We see this through many customs and beliefs: the decorated house with the bridal curtain (chimildiq); the suzanas, mirror bags, tea bags, and zardevors

[1]Togay Murod. Tanlangan asarlar [Selected Works]. – Tashkent: "Sharq" Publishing and Printing Joint-Stock Company, 2018. – p. 599.

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(embroidered wall decorations) that the bride made with her own hands; the holiday gifts sent to the bride; the holiday shirt, waistcoat, belt, and handkerchief sent to the groom; the nine plates; the breaking of bread; the fotiha wedding; the bride price (qalin); the bride walking around the bonfire; the cloth (poyondoz) laid under the bride's feet; stepping on the bride's foot before she enters the curtain; and the bride's greeting (salom). In the same way, nature descriptions such as "The wild breezes turned the poplar leaves inside out," "The sparrows hopped from branch to branch," "The girls picked qoraqosh," "The leaves of the huge walnut tree on the hillside rustled sadly," and "The grasshoppers chirped" help us imagine the place where the characters live. It is a simple, quiet, peaceful, paradise-like land with beans, melons, and wild herbs, and with the smell of olqor.

Togay Murod brings to life many customs. Some of them are familiar to us: putting boychechak (snowdrop) on the eyes as a medicine (tutiya); the nine plates at the wedding; throwing wheat over the groom's head; pulling a thread with an unknotted end through the robe on the groom's shoulder; giving the bride the "white blessing"; throwing flour on the faces of the in-laws (qudas); making the bride bow to the threshold; putting food in the dog's bowl; dripping oil on the fire; putting a baby in the bride's hands; "the bride did not eat pilaf"; the bride's invitation; and the customs called yuzochar, soch siypalar, qo'l ushlatar, and oyna ko'rsatar. Others are "unwritten rules" that are not written anywhere but are still practised among the people, such as it g'irillatar and kampir o'ldi.

The writer also uses folk oral art. He uses proverbs and sayings such as "The wedding guests left, the wedding house remained"; "One who has a son exists, one who has a daughter leaves a trace"; "A jug does not break every day, but one day it breaks"; "May the cauldron be full of pilaf and the pillow full of heads"; "Run from the bad and be saved, or deny and be saved"; "Even if you speak jokingly, speak thoughtfully"; "A woman who has become the talk of the town has fifty words of gossip about her"; and "If you throw a stone into the mud, it will splash on your face." He also uses riddles, for example "A tall, tall one has gone, a tall girl has gone, her qasava crackling and her forehead hitting the ground"; "The pilaf of a small cauldron is sweet"; "Looking from that mountain, looking from this mountain, she wrapped a Balkh scarf, thinking it suits her"; and "It plunders the mountain." In addition, he uses the songs of the bride's greeting

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ceremony, songs sung while milking animals, lullabies (alla), laments sung at funerals, and elegies (marsiya) in the right places.

About Navruz, the favourite national holiday of our people, the writer says: "The people did not wait for loud calls, decisions, slogans, appeals, announcements, or posters. The people went out to the hills of their own free will to enjoy the festival." This is how he describes the festival. For the holiday, national dishes such as shirguruch, sumalak, pilaf, halim, kok patir, kok somsa, and kokosh are prepared. The writer also gives information about the skullcaps that girls wear on their heads: bodomcha, iroqi, chorgul, and bakhmaltepa. In the novella, more than ten names of women's headscarves are given: doka (gauze), iroqi, farangi, ottuyoq, shol, balkhi, qulpi, shotut, sim, harir, and silk scarves.

On holidays, wearing atlas fabrics suitable for their age, such as Olashaqshaq, Zarkokil, and Khonatlas, was the dream of girls, young women, and brides. However, we know only a few types of atlas today. The author writes about atlas: "Our people moved the rainbow onto fabric. Its name became atlas. Our people moved the seasons onto fabric."[2] He mentions the original names of more than 20 types of atlas fabric used for women's national clothing. He also describes the jewellery that brides and women wear: tillaqosh, earrings, zebigardon with eight silver badges, chest amulets, nozigardons, shokilas with three rows, necklaces with four rows and five badges, almond-shaped silver curls on the solinchaks, and ornaments with small mirrors.

From the outside, it seems that the writer has only described customs, beliefs, rituals, names of objects in use, and events that we all know but do not notice in our daily life. However, we can conclude that, until today, no other writer has written in the national spirit with such poetic charm and such a unique tone as Togay Murod.

The work was written during the former tyrannical Soviet system, which for a long time forced us to give up our religion and even our identity. Even so, the reader learns about many religious practices: the holiness of the Night of Power (Laylatul-Qadr) in the holy month of Ramadan; the Islamic calendar; washing and dressing well on Ruza Hayit (Eid al-Fitr); wearing clean clothes;

[2]Togay Murod. Tanlangan asarlar [Selected Works]. – Tashkent: "Sharq" Publishing and Printing Joint-Stock Company, 2018. – p. 507.

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remembering the dead; giving holiday gifts to orphans, helpless people, widows, and the poor; and receiving the prayers of humble people.

The hero visits the shrine of Sufi Olloyor in the hope of having a child, and he prays to Allah, the Creator: "In my weakness, in my helplessness, in my humility, I said: 'O God, protect me! O God, help me!' I did not say: 'O Party, protect me! O Komsomol, help me!' How many have turned away from their religion, how many have turned away from God!" This cry was impossible for the readers of that time to accept. We do not know whether Qoplon received a religious education in his family, but he is a person who knows about God, a person who "has God inside." For my peers and for other older people, it was impossible to accept and understand such words at that time.

Writing about Qurbon Hayit (Eid al-Adha) was in itself an act of courage. The writer describes believers sacrificing animals and shedding blood, and he describes the almost forgotten custom of sending holiday gifts to the bride and the groom. Yes, today, 40 years later, it is easy for us to talk about these things. The work was written in 1980. Look what happened seven years later: based on the decision of the Communist Party of the Uzbek SSR on 7 March, there was an attempt to celebrate Navruz not on 21 March but on 10 April, and even then under the name "Navbahor," as a tree-planting holiday, in order to turn it into a new Soviet custom. In Jizzakh, it is also true that people who went to celebrate at "Navruzbuloq" were driven away.

Togay Murod also explains the meaning of the customs before seeing a person off on the last journey: asking for forgiveness (rozilik), sitting in a circle for sadr, calling people to the funeral prayer (janoza), iskot, giving oq yirtish, and covering the coffin with white cloth. He also gives the Quran that is read at a condolence and the Khutbah that is read at a nikoh, first in Arabic and then in Uzbek.

As you read the novella, you see the writer's skill and how hard he worked on the text and on creating characters with strong personalities. You come to the conclusion that Togay Murod was a talented and careful person with wide and deep knowledge, a good memory, and a rich worldview.

Unfortunately, none of the literary sources gives readers enough information about Togay Murod's works. There is no information even in the "Dictionary of

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Literary Studies," published in 2010, or in other textbooks and manuals. However, the writer's last work was written in 1998.

I would recommend reading this book to people who care about the spiritual heritage of their people, to literature lovers and linguists, and to those who are interested in the historical meaning of our national customs.

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