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# **NATIONAL AND CULTURAL CODES AND GENDER REPRESENTATION IN TRADITIONALIST PROSE: CROSS-MEANINGS OF RUSSIAN AND UZBEK LITERATURES**

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## **Abstract**

The article examines national and cultural codes as fundamental elements of a literary text, in which collective values, historical memory and models of gender identity are fixed. Special attention is paid to how these codes function in the traditionalist prose of Russian and Uzbek literature, forming stable representations of the feminine and masculine principles. genre structures, but also in the deep cultural symbolism that replicates the images and roles enshrined in the historical tradition. The comparative approach makes it possible to identify the similarities and differences in the mechanisms of the formation of gender models in the literary consciousness of the two peoples, whose cultural systems developed in different religious, philosophical and social contexts. It is emphasized that traditionalism does not impede literary evolution, but, on the contrary, forms a platform for the renewal of national identity, while preserving stable semiotic markers. The study reveals the transformations taking place in the system of gender representation in the context of modernization and global cultural pressure, while demonstrating how national and cultural codes adapt without losing their deep connection with the past.

**Keywords:** National-cultural codes, gender representation, traditionalism, literary identity, Russian prose, Uzbek prose, cultural memory, artistic discourse, comparative analysis



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## **Introduction**

National and cultural codes are the most important component of a literary text, through which values, norms and archetypes that determine the mental structure of the people are transmitted. These codes serve as a supporting system of meanings embedded in the artistic discourse, giving the work a deep symbolic saturation. practical significance, since the stability of literary tradition depends on the ability to preserve and adapt national meanings. In this context, it becomes especially relevant to study how national and cultural codes function in the literature belonging to the traditionalist direction, and how gender ideas in society are formed through them.

Russian and Uzbek literatures are vivid examples of cultures in which traditionalism has not only been preserved, but also continues to develop actively. These literary systems have a rich heritage shaped by religious doctrines, folklore, historical memory, and philosophical teachings. It is within the framework of traditionalism that the cultural code is revealed, which is able to integrate the ideas of masculine and feminine, proper and permissible, ideal and ordinary. Gender representation in traditionalist prose becomes an integral part of the general system of national meanings. It embodies not just roles, but also spiritual landmarks, symbolic values built into the collective consciousness through literature. This makes a literary text both a mirror of culture and a tool for its reproduction.

The relevance of this study is also determined by the fact that the problem of the correlation between cultural codes and gender representation today acquires an interdisciplinary sound, going beyond the framework of narrow literary analysis. At the intersection of cultural studies, gender theory and literary criticism, a new optics of reading a literary text is being formed, which allows us to take a fresh look at traditional narratives and their hidden semantics. At the same time, comparative analysis allows us to see not only the similarities and differences between the two literary traditions, but also how common archetypes manifest themselves in different cultural settings, transform depending on the social context, and are preserved through symbolic forms. This is the practical and theoretical significance of addressing the topic of national and cultural codes and



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their interaction with the gender system in the prose of Russian and Uzbek literature.

### **Materials and Methods**

In order to achieve the research goals, a corpus of works of fiction was formed, in which national and cultural codes and gender ideas are expressed with the greatest completeness and symbolic density. In the Russian literary tradition, the emphasis was placed on the works of such authors as Leo Tolstoy, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Valentin Rasputin, Yevgeny Vodolazkin and Zakhar Prilepin. Referring to Orthodox religiosity, folk epos and historical memory, in which the representation of female and male images is built as a system of meanings, inseparable from the general worldview horizon.

In Uzbek prose, attention is focused on the work of Aibek, Gafur Gulyam, Abdulla Kahhar, as well as modern authors - Erkin Azam and Mamadali Makhmudov. These writers appeal to the cultural layers that have developed at the intersection of Islamic thinking, folklore ethics and Eastern philosophy, attaching the meaning of spiritual and social stability to gender models. The artistic worlds constructed in their works are saturated with cultural symbols, metaphors and semiotic reference points that contribute to the consolidation of certain gender roles in the literary picture of the world.

The methodological basis of the study is interdisciplinary approaches that combine elements of literary criticism, cultural studies and gender analytics. First of all, the comparative method is applied, thanks to which it became possible to identify structural and substantive analogies, as well as functional differences in the representation of gender roles in the two literary systems. This approach not only helps to reveal the uniqueness of each tradition, but also allows us to understand how the same archetypes are embodied differently depending on the national context.

Structural and semiotic analysis made it possible to identify stable cultural codes built into a literary text through images, symbols, plot constructions and genre forms. With its help, it is traced how certain lexical fields, motive rows and metaphorical schemes form a system of meanings aimed at transmitting



traditional values. This method also made it possible to decode the hidden forms of ideological and socio-cultural attitudes fixed in the artistic fabric of works.

In this study, the gender approach is used not as a way to describe biological differences, but as a tool for analyzing cultural constructs that reflect, consolidate and rethink ideas about masculine and feminine. Particular attention is paid to how a literary text forms expectations related to gender identity, and how these expectations are embedded in a broader national and cultural narrative. The intertextual method was used to identify echoes with folklore, religious and philosophical sources represented in the artistic narrative, which made it possible to establish the continuity of cultural meanings, as well as to understand the specifics of their transformation within the framework of traditionalist poetics.

The methodological system of the research is based on a holistic approach that combines macro-analysis of national literary models and micro-analysis of poetic mechanisms that provide cultural and gender representation in Russian and Uzbek prose.

## **Research Results**

The analysis of literary texts of Russian and Uzbek prose has shown that national and cultural codes in the structure of a work of fiction play the role of meaning-forming elements, forming a stable system of coordinates within which gender representations unfold. function between the historical and cultural past and the present, ensuring the ideological and aesthetic continuity of the national tradition. In Russian literature, cultural codes are formed on the basis of Orthodox spirituality, Slavic folklore and philosophical and ethical concepts, such as the idea of the people's soul, repentance, redemption, Christian love. Female characters in this discourse are often represented through images of self-sacrifice, meekness, and moral leadership. For example, the heroines of F.M. Dostoevsky or L.N. Tolstoy are endowed with inner fortitude, their fate is often tragic, but it is through suffering that they become moral points of orientation. The male image, on the contrary, often goes through the path of internal bifurcation, doubt, crisis of faith, which emphasizes the importance of spiritual search as an integral part of the national male archetype.



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Uzbek prose is dominated by another type of cultural code: it is built around the concepts of collective responsibility, respect for the elderly, patriarchal order, Islamic norms of morality, and reverence for tradition. The female character here is the keeper of family foundations, the bearer of spiritual balance, morality and wisdom. This model is especially pronounced in the classic works of Aibek and Abdullah Kahhar, where women are presented as the moral pillars of the community. The male image bears the functions of a defender of honor, order and authority, and its strength is determined not only by physical or social qualities, but also by the ability to maintain a balance between tradition and change. However, in modern Uzbek prose, there is a tendency to complicate these images, especially in the prose of Erkin Azam and Mamadali Makhmudov, where the characters experience internal doubts, violate previously unshakable norms and come into conflict with socio-cultural expectations.

As a result of the comparative analysis, it became obvious that, despite the differences in historical, religious and philosophical foundations, both literary discourses resort to the use of stable symbolic constructions that represent gender roles through images deeply rooted in cultural memory. In Russian prose, the cultural code is activated through a narrative of suffering, repentance, and moral transformation, while in Uzbek prose, through a narrative of harmony, order, and service to the community. In both cases, female and male figures are not so much individuals as symbols that perform the function of conveying cultural meanings through the artistic word.

Particular attention is paid to how national and cultural codes adapt to modern literary realities. In the post-Soviet literature of both regions, there is a rethinking of traditional gender models. A woman ceases to be exclusively an object of patronage and begins to perform a subjective role - to reflect, choose, oppose. A man, in turn, loses his monopoly on active action and becomes an object of inner doubt, often the bearer of historical guilt or identity crisis. This leads to the complication of poetics: traditional archetypes are preserved, but filled with new content that reflects social and cultural transformations. An example is the novel "Laurel" by E. Vodolazkin, where the male image combines the features of a saint, a holy fool and a philosopher, or the stories of Erkin Azam, in which female



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characters go beyond the patriarchal scheme, while remaining in the logic of the national code.

The results of the study also showed that national and cultural codes are not static: they are capable of transformation, dialogue with modernity, and interaction with new narratives. It is thanks to traditionalist poetics that they get a new life without losing their semantic depth. Through the prism of gender representation, the complex relationship between individual choice and collective norm, between the expectations of society and inner desires, between sacralized memory and modern reality is revealed. And in this interaction of cultural layers, literature turns out to be not only the keeper of identity, but also the laboratory of its rethinking.

## **Conclusions**

The comparative analysis of Russian and Uzbek prose within the framework of traditionalist poetics has revealed the stable functioning of national and cultural codes as key mechanisms for the formation of gender representation. These codes, which go back to folklore, religious and historical foundations, retain the power of influence in modern literary texts, despite the radical social changes taking place in society. Literary text In this context, it acts not just as a reflection of social reality, but as an active participant in the process of reproduction and transformation of cultural norms, where gender roles are fixed not only as social expectations, but also as symbols of collective identity.

In Russian prose, the national and cultural code is structured through the Christian worldview and historical tragedy, which gives the gender representation philosophical depth and internal dramaturgy. The female image here is not so much a social role as a moral metaphor, while the male image is presented as a path of spiritual search and existential crisis. In Uzbek literature, national and cultural codes are formed through Eastern ethics, collectivism, and Islamic values, where the female figure plays the role of the keeper of traditions and the moral center, and the male figure is the stabilizing principle that ensures social balance. However, in both literatures in the post-Soviet period, there is a movement towards the complication of these constructions, their rethinking and dramatization.





The analysis showed that traditionalism does not impede literary evolution, but on the contrary, provides a stable semantic platform for creative renewal. Through appeals to enduring cultural archetypes, writers maintain a connection with historical experience, while providing the reader with space to reflect on current transformations. Gender models built into a literary text turn out to be both stable and flexible: they continue to perform cultural functions, but are filled with new content that is relevant to the modern reader.

It can be argued that traditionalism in Russian and Uzbek literature not only contributes to the preservation of cultural heritage, but also performs an important adaptive function, ensuring the continuity of national discourse in the context of globalization. Gender representation within these codes becomes not just a reflection of social attitudes, but a space for cultural expression, comprehension of identity and redefinition of roles, which makes the topic of national and cultural codes and gender especially significant for further literary and interdisciplinary research.

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