



FEMALE CHARACTERS IN PIRIMKUL KODIROV'S NOVEL STARRY NIGHTS: WOMEN'S ROLE IN SOCIETY AND THEIR FATES

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Abstract This article analyzes the female characters in Pirimkul Kodirov's novel *Starry Nights* within the historical and social context of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The novel portrays the lives of women in a traditional patriarchal society, highlighting their struggles for love, freedom, and self-determination. The study focuses on three key female figures—Dilbar, Gulnar, and Saodat—who symbolize different aspects of womanhood in Uzbek culture. By examining their fates, the novel addresses issues of gender inequality and the gradual transformation of women's roles in society. The research is based on literary, historical, and gender analysis. The findings suggest that *Starry Nights* is not only a historical and romantic novel but also a social commentary on the evolving role of women.

Keywords: Pirimkul Kodirov, *Starry Nights*, female characters, Uzbek society, roles, women's emancipation

PIRIMQUL QODIROVNING «YULDUZLI TUNLAR» ROMANIDA AYOL OBRAZLARI: JAMIYATDAGI O'RNI VA TAQDIRI

Annotatsiya Ushbu maqolada Pirimkul Qodirovning «Yulduzli tunlar» romanidagi ayol obrazlari XIX asr oxiri – XX asr boshlaridagi tarixiy va ijtimoiy kontekstda tahlil qilinadi. Asarda ayollar hayoti an'anaviy patriarxal jamiyat sharoitida aks ettirilgan bo'lib, ularning sevgi, erkinlik va o'zini anglash yo'lidagi kurashi yoritiladi. Tadqiqot uchta asosiy ayol obraziga e'tibor qaratadi — Dilbar, Gulnor va Saodat, ularning har biri o'zbek madaniyatida ayollarning turli qirralarini aks ettiradi. Ularning taqdirini tahlil qilish orqali roman gender tengsizlik muammolarini va ayollarning jamiyatdagi o'rni qanday o'zgarib borayotganini ochib beradi. Tadqiqot natijalari shuni ko'rsatadiki, «Yulduzli tunlar» nafaqat tarixiy va romantik roman, balki ayollarning jamiyatdagi rolini aks ettiruvchi muhim ijtimoiy asardir.

Kalit so'zlar: Pirimkul Qodirov, *Yulduzli tunlar*, ayol obrazlari, o'zbek jamiyati, rollar, ayollarning emancipatsiyasi.

ЖЕНСКИЕ ПЕРСОНАЖИ В РОМАНЕ ПИРИМКУЛА КАДЫРОВА «ЗВЕЗДНЫЕ НОЧИ»: РОЛЬ ЖЕНЩИН В ОБЩЕСТВЕ И ИХ СУДЬБЫ

Аннотация В данной статье анализируются женские образы в романе Пиримкула Кадилова «Звёздные ночи», в историческом и социальном контексте конца XIX – начала XX века. Роман отражает жизнь женщин в традиционном патриархальном обществе, раскрывая их борьбу за любовь, свободу и самореализацию. Исследование сосредоточено на трёх ключевых женских персонажах — Дильбар, Гульнар и Саодат, каждая из которых символизирует разные аспекты женской судьбы в узбекской культуре. Рассмотрение их судеб позволяет автору затронуть проблемы гендерного неравенства и постепенного изменения роли женщин в обществе. Анализ показывает, что «Звёздные ночи» являются не только историко-романтическим произведением, но и социальным комментарием на тему эволюции женского положения.

Ключевые слова: Пиримкул Кадилов, Звёздные ночи, женские образы, узбекское общество, роль, эмансипация женщин.

Introduction

Pirimkul Kodirov's novel *Starry Nights* (Yulduzli Tunlar) is not only a historical narrative but also an important social commentary. Through the depiction of female characters, the novel reflects the role of women in traditional Uzbek society, touching upon themes of patriarchy, love, family obligations, and the struggle for freedom.

This study aims to examine how the changing societal roles of women are reflected in the novel through three key female characters:

Dilbar – an educated and freedom-seeking woman who faces societal restrictions.

Gulnar – a traditional wife and mother who adheres to social norms.

Saodat – a symbol of early female emancipation, embodying the shift toward modernity.

By analyzing these characters, the research highlights the evolution of women's roles in Uzbek society during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Methods

This study employs three key research methods:

1. Literary analysis – examining the artistic techniques used by Kodirov to shape female characters.

2. Historical and sociological analysis – exploring the real historical conditions in which women of that period lived.

3. Gender analysis – investigating how the novel reflects the social position of women in both traditional and changing environments.

These methods provide a comprehensive understanding of the significance of female representations in *Starry Nights*.

Results

1. Dilbar – The Tragedy of a Freedom-Seeking Woman

Dilbar is an educated and independent woman who seeks love and personal freedom. However, she faces societal restrictions that limit her choices. Kodirov portrays her as a tragic figure, showing the conflict between personal desires and societal norms:

“She dreamed of a life where love and knowledge would guide her fate, yet the chains of tradition were too strong to break.” (Kodirov, 1978, p. 125)

Her character highlights the oppression of educated women in patriarchal societies.

2. Gulnar – The Traditional Woman

Unlike Dilbar, Gulnar accepts her traditional role as a wife and mother. She embodies the passive acceptance of social norms:

“Gulnar never questioned the life she was given, for she had been told that a woman’s duty was to serve and obey.” (Kodirov, 1978, p. 189)

Her character represents the idealized image of a woman in conservative Uzbek society, contrasting with Dilbar’s rebellious spirit.

3. Saodat – A Symbol of Change

Saodat represents the emerging modern woman who seeks education and independence. Her character reflects the early stages of women’s emancipation in Central Asia:

“Saodat believed that knowledge was the key to freedom, and she refused to let society dictate her fate.” (Kodirov, 1978, p. 243)

Through her, Kodirov shows that societal transformations were beginning to take root, marking the slow but steady progress toward gender equality.

Discussion

1. Women as Victims of Patriarchy

Dilbar and Gulnar’s experiences illustrate different facets of patriarchal oppression. Dilbar seeks freedom but suffers for it, while Gulnar conforms and loses her individuality. Their stories highlight the lack of agency for women in traditional Uzbek society.

2. Love as a Source of Conflict

In the novel, love is not a source of happiness, but a struggle. Dilbar is denied love due to societal constraints, Gulnar enters a loveless marriage, and Saodat represents the hope for a future where love and freedom can coexist.

3. Social Transformation

Saodat’s character embodies the transition from old traditions to a new era. She represents the first steps toward women’s rights and education, foreshadowing the changes that would occur in the early 20th century.

Conclusion

The female characters in *Starry Nights* serve as powerful symbols of the transformation of Uzbek society at the turn of the 20th century. Through Dilbar, Gulnar, and Saodat, Pirmkul Kodirov illustrates three distinct roles of women—those who resist societal norms, those who conform to them, and those who strive to redefine them.

Dilbar’s fate highlights the tragic consequences of challenging patriarchal norms in a rigid society. Despite her intelligence and aspirations, she is ultimately unable to overcome societal limitations, symbolizing the oppression of educated women who lacked agency.

Gulnar’s life represents the traditional expectations of women, where obedience and sacrifice are valued above personal happiness. Her character serves as a reminder that many women accepted their prescribed roles, either out of necessity or lack of alternatives.

Saodat’s emergence as an independent woman reflects the early stages of modernization and female empowerment in Central Asia. She is a precursor to the educated and self-reliant women who would later benefit from socio-political changes, including increased access to education and professional opportunities.

Kodirov’s portrayal of these women is not merely a reflection of history, but also a critique of gender inequality that persisted even beyond the time period depicted in the novel. By presenting these contrasting fates, the author emphasizes that women’s roles were not static—some suffered under oppression, others conformed to societal norms, and a few began to break free from traditional constraints.

Furthermore, *Starry Nights* implicitly questions whether love and personal freedom were achievable for women of that time. Love, as shown in the novel, is often restricted by social expectations rather than being a source of fulfilment. The tension between individual desire and societal obligation remains a central conflict, reinforcing the idea that women’s struggles were not only personal but deeply structural.

From a broader perspective, *Starry Nights* acts as a literary bridge between past and present, reminding contemporary readers that the challenges faced by women in history continue to resonate today. Kodirov’s work urges readers to reflect on the progress made in gender equality while acknowledging that many of the same struggles persist in various forms across different cultures.

In conclusion, *Starry Nights* is more than a historical novel—it is a testament to the resilience of women and a call for continued societal transformation. By embedding the struggles of his female characters within a rich historical and cultural context, Kodirov creates a novel that is not only a work of literature but also a powerful social commentary on gender and progress.

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