

THE LITERARY REPRESENTATION OF MIRZO ULUGBEK'S IMAGE IN UZBEK LITERATURE

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Abstract

This article presents a comparative typological study of the literary representation of Mirzo Ulugbek in Maqsdud Shaykhzoda's tragedy Mirzo Ulugbek and Odil Yoqubov's historical novel Ulugbek's Treasure. It examines the artistic reinterpretation of historical reality, the relationship between dramatic conflict and epic narration, the tension between scientific inquiry and political power, and the symbolic significance of scientific heritage. Particular attention is paid to the observatory, stars, and books as literary elements that reveal the protagonist's intellectual and spiritual world. The comparative analysis identifies the genre-specific features of both works, their methods of characterization, and their contribution to the representation of historical memory.

Keywords

Mirzo Ulugbek, Maqsdud Shaykhzoda, Odil Yoqubov, historical character, historical memory, literary poetics, dramatic conflict, historical novel, tragedy, symbolism, scientific heritage.

Introduction

The literary representation of historical figures demonstrates the capacity of national literature to preserve historical memory, interpret spiritual and moral values, and facilitate an aesthetic understanding of human experience. In historical literary works, past events are not merely retold; rather, the social contradictions of a particular era, human character, and moral choices are artistically reconstructed through literary imagination. From this perspective, the artistic nature of a historical character is determined not only by historical facts but also by the author's aesthetic perspective and methods of representation.

In Uzbek literature, Mirzo Ulugbek is one of the most significant literary figures embodying the ideals of historical memory and scientific thought. His

historical activities as both a scholar and a ruler provide rich opportunities for constructing a complex literary character.

On the one hand, Ulugbek relies on science, observation, and intellectual inquiry; on the other, the instability of political power and dynastic conflicts profoundly influence his life and activities. Maqsud Shaykhzoda's tragedy *Mirzo Ulugbek* and Odil Yakubov's novel *Ulugbek's Treasure* are particularly noteworthy for their representations of this historical figure through different literary genres.

In the tragedy, dramatic conflict and intense confrontations determine the protagonist's fate, whereas the novel explores the historical environment, interpersonal relationships, and the question of scientific heritage through an extensive epic narrative.

The relevance of the present study lies in the necessity of examining the image of Mirzo Ulugbek not merely as the literary portrayal of a historical personality but as a poetic system manifested differently across literary genres.

Research Aim and Methodology

The primary aim of this study is to compare the literary representation of the central character in Maqsud Shaykhzoda's tragedy *Mirzo Ulugbek* and Odil Yakubov's novel *Ulugbek's Treasure*, while identifying the poetic functions of historical memory, dramatic conflict, symbolism, and scientific heritage. The research employs comparative-typological, historical-literary, descriptive-analytical, and poetic analysis methods. Particular attention is devoted to comparing the generic characteristics of the works, the representation of the protagonist's personality, and the systems of symbolic imagery. The primary research materials consist of the 2019 edition of Maqsud Shaykhzoda's tragedy *Mirzo Ulugbek* and the 2019 edition of Odil Yakubov's historical novel *Ulugbek's Treasure*.

State of Research and Scientific Novelty

Previous studies of Maqsud Shaykhzoda's tragedy *Mirzo Ulugbek* have focused on its artistic style, expressive devices, dramatic contradictions, and system of motifs. In particular, Zamira Ayimbetova's study, published in the journal *Tamaddun Nuri* in 2026, examines the system of motifs in the tragedy, the conflict between knowledge and political authority, and the artistic functions of such images as the observatory, stars, and books (Ayimbetova, 2026, pp. 100–106). Unlike the aforementioned research, the present article does not confine its analysis to the system of motifs within a single tragedy. Instead, it focuses on the generic relationship between tragedy and the historical novel, examining how the same historical personality is artistically constructed through two distinct literary forms.

Scientific Novelty of the Study

The scientific novelty of this study lies in its comparative examination of Mirzo Ulugbek's literary representation in tragedy and the novel, the identification of the distinctive functions of dramatic conflict and epic narration in revealing the protagonist's character, and the integrated analysis of the symbolic and aesthetic significance of scientific heritage in both works.

Main Discussion

1. The Artistic Reconstruction of Historical Reality

The construction of a literary character in historical fiction involves selecting historical information, organizing it according to specific aesthetic objectives, and revealing the protagonist's inner world through artistic devices.

Consequently, the literary representation of a historical personality is not an exact reproduction of historical documents but an artistically interpreted reconstruction of the past. In the literary portrayal of Mirzo Ulugbek, his activities as a scholar and ruler are presented as interconnected aspects of his personality. Scientific investigations, astronomical observations, and the activities of his scholarly school shape the protagonist's intellectual and moral identity, while the political environment and dynastic conflicts complicate his personal choices. From the opening pages of Odil Yakubov's novel, the two contrasting dimensions of the protagonist's environment—scientific inquiry and political instability—are presented simultaneously. The novel begins with a description of the observatory: "It was past midnight. The observatory was immersed in profound silence." (Yakubov, 2019, p. 1; translated from Uzbek). This brief description not only establishes the setting but also emphasizes the connection between the characters' activities and the scientific environment. A meaningful contrast emerges between the tranquility of the observatory and the political tensions that develop in subsequent events. Scientific observation requires discipline, patience, and intellectual reflection, whereas political struggle is associated with urgent decisions and the exercise of power. Thus, the representation of space becomes a poetic device contributing to the development of the novel's central conflict.

Understanding historical reality through literary interpretation requires more than knowledge of the chronological sequence of events. Equally important are the circumstances in which the protagonist makes decisions, his responses to particular situations, and the artistic details emphasized by the author.

2. Dramatic Conflict and Characterization in the Tragedy Mirzo Ulugbek

In Maqsd Shaykhzoda's tragedy Mirzo Ulugbek, dramatic conflict performs the principal function in revealing the protagonist's character. The confrontation

between Ulugbek's enlightened worldview and competing interests within the political environment, together with the conflict between father and son, constitutes a major factor determining the protagonist's tragic destiny. A defining characteristic of the tragedy is the integration of historical events with the protagonist's internal contradictions. Ulugbek is represented not only as a ruler obliged to participate in state administration but also as a scholar who regards scientific inquiry as the fundamental spiritual purpose of his life. The tension between these two roles contributes to the psychological complexity of his character. The confrontation between Ulugbek and Abdullatif cannot be adequately interpreted as a purely familial disagreement. It acquires broader significance through its connection with political authority, succession, and moral values. Accordingly, the conflict between father and son transcends personal relationships and represents a confrontation between competing values within the historical environment. Dialogue is one of the primary artistic devices through which the characters' worldviews and intentions are revealed in the tragedy. Conflicting perspectives intensify the protagonist's decisions, heighten dramatic tension, and determine the development of events. As a result, Ulugbek is portrayed not merely as a symbolic embodiment of noble ideals but as a complex individual compelled to make difficult choices under political pressure and emotional strain. The tragic essence of the work becomes particularly evident in this contradiction: the protagonist's devotion to science and enlightenment cannot protect him from political conflicts. Through his fate, the author artistically expresses the incompatibility between the moral greatness of a historical personality and the complexities of political life.

3. Epic Representation and the Poetics of Scientific Heritage in Ulugbek's Treasure

In Odil Yakubov's novel *Ulugbek's Treasure*, the image of Mirzo Ulugbek is developed through a broad historical panorama, interpersonal relationships, and the progression of narrative events. An important artistic characteristic of the novel is that, alongside the protagonist's political destiny, the continuity of his scientific heritage emerges as a central ideological concern. At the beginning of the novel, descriptions of the observatory and stars occupy a significant position. The setting associated with scientific observation establishes a poetic foundation for understanding the protagonist's inner world and intellectual aspirations. The observatory can therefore be interpreted not simply as the location of events but as a literary space symbolizing scientific thought, observation, and intellectual exploration. The contrast between the scientific environment and political instability is equally significant. In depicting struggles for the throne, the author demonstrates

their influence on scientific activity and the protagonist's psychological condition. In particular, political instability within the state and Abdullatif's opposition to his father establish the intensity of the historical circumstances in the opening chapters (Yakubov, 2019, p. 2). The concept of "treasure" in the novel's title also possesses particular poetic significance. Interpreting this concept exclusively in terms of material wealth would considerably restrict the semantic possibilities of the novel. In relation to the protagonist's activities, the symbolic meaning of treasure also encompasses scientific knowledge, manuscripts, scholarly traditions, and cultural heritage. However, to substantiate this symbolic interpretation academically, it is necessary to analyze relevant episodes, characters, and authorial commentary in their interrelationships. Only through such an approach can the relationship between the narrative function of the treasure and its broader symbolic meaning be fully explained.

The character of Ali Qushchi also plays a significant role in understanding the continuity of scientific heritage. Through the relationship between teacher and disciple, the novel artistically conveys the transmission of scientific knowledge from one generation to another and the idea that a scholar's intellectual legacy may survive beyond his physical existence. Consequently, the historical protagonist's destiny expands beyond an individual tragedy to encompass broader questions of scientific development and historical memory.

4. A Comparative Analysis of Characterization in the Tragedy and the Novel

The similarities between the two works are evident in their artistic treatment of Mirzo Ulugbek's devotion to science, his confrontation with the political environment, and the significance of his historical legacy. Nevertheless, these thematic elements are expressed through different generic and artistic devices. In the tragedy, dramatic conflict, dialogue, and emotionally intense situations occupy a central position. The protagonist's character is revealed primarily through his decisions and confrontations with other characters. By contrast, the novel constructs a broader literary panorama through its depiction of the historical environment, spatial descriptions, chronological development, and interpersonal relationships. One of the principal findings of the comparative analysis is that historical tragedy is represented predominantly through direct dramatic confrontation in the play, whereas in the novel its meaning is expanded through the themes of scientific heritage, memory, and intergenerational continuity. Although both works portray Ulugbek as a symbol of enlightenment and scientific thought, his literary significance cannot be reduced to a collection of positive

personal qualities. His political decisions, inner suffering, and conflicts with those around him contribute to the complexity of his characterization.

Thus, the tragedy and the novel offer different aesthetic interpretations of the same historical personality. These differences concern not only generic classification but also the organization of conflict, the artistic function of space, the representation of psychological states, and the literary reconstruction of historical memory.

5. The Literary Representation of Scientific Heritage and Historical Memory

The moral and aesthetic significance of Mirzo Ulugbek's image is closely connected with the historical continuity of his scientific heritage. Through the representation of his life and destiny, literary works address fundamental questions concerning the individual's place in history, the role of science in social development, and the preservation of moral and spiritual values. The continuity of scientific heritage receives particularly extensive treatment through the artistic possibilities of the historical novel. Ulugbek's scholarly activities, the intellectual environment surrounding him, and his relationships with his disciples elevate historical memory from the level of individual experience to that of a shared spiritual and cultural value. From this perspective, the image of Mirzo Ulugbek functions not only as a literary embodiment of the past but also as an important source of intellectual and educational meaning for contemporary readers. His representation encourages reflection on such values as devotion to science, freedom of thought, the preservation of historical heritage, and individual responsibility.

Conclusion

The literary representation of the historical personality in Maqsud Shaykhzoda's tragedy *Mirzo Ulugbek* and Odil Yakubov's novel *Ulugbek's Treasure* is realized through the distinctive artistic possibilities of different literary genres.

In the tragedy, dramatic conflict and tragic circumstances constitute the principal means of revealing the protagonist's character, whereas the novel emphasizes epic representation, the historical environment, and the symbolic meanings associated with scientific heritage.

The comparative analysis leads to the following conclusions.

First, the artistic complexity of Mirzo Ulugbek's character is determined by the contradiction between his roles as a scholar and a ruler.

Second, the tragedy and the novel reconstruct historical reality through different generic devices. Direct confrontation between opposing forces

predominates in the dramatic work, whereas the novel emphasizes a broad historical panorama and interpersonal relationships.

Third, images associated with the observatory, stars, books, and scientific heritage provide important opportunities for revealing the historical protagonist's intellectual and moral world. Identifying their symbolic functions requires close attention to the literary texts and a systematic analysis of specific episodes.

Fourth, the image of Mirzo Ulugbek acquires particular significance as a literary symbol uniting historical memory, scientific knowledge, and moral values. His literary representation extends beyond the depiction of an individual historical destiny and stimulates reflection on the continuity of intellectual heritage and human responsibility toward society.

Therefore, examining the image of Mirzo Ulugbek through the poetics of tragedy and the historical novel contributes to a deeper understanding of the mechanisms through which historical personalities are artistically constructed in Uzbek literature.

This analytical approach may be further developed through comparative investigations involving other works of historical literature.

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