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THE ESSENTIAL LITERARY CRITICISM OF JOHN STEINBECK'S “THE PEARL” AND ODIL YAKUBOV'S “MUKADDAS”

Abstract: John Steinbeck and Odil Yakubov are great literary representatives whose contribution to the development of world literature cannot be denied. The following article draws some views about the comparison of the works “The Pearl” by the Nobel Prize winner John Steinbeck and “Mukaddas” (“Sacred”) by Odil Yakubov. The similarities between the literary themes, main idea, conflict, title and characters of the works are discussed in the paper.

Key words: John Steinbeck, Odil Yakubov, literary theme, main idea, conflict, title, character.

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Introduction

In the era of globalization where international relations are developing day by day the impact of literary representatives to one another can be clearly noticed. According to literary critic A. Kasimov, in the current developmental stage of the society the growth of the literary criticism's position is having a great influence on the culture trends and literary creativity.[8,83] The different forms of the literary relations are considered to be the important factor for the literature and its development. In the novellas “The Pearl” and “Mukaddas” this influence can be observed, too. Both authors lived in the XX century and their works belong to realism. They tried to reveal the poignant depths of life depicting the fate of their characters.

John Steinbeck was an American novelist, story writer, essayist and war correspondent. He was born in 1902 in California, USA. He is the author of the works as “Cup of Gold”, “Tortilla Flat”, “Of Mice and Men”, “In Dubious Battle”, “The Grapes of Wrath”, “The Winter of our Discontent”. He was honoured with many prestigious Awards for his literary works including Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1940 and Nobel Prize for Literature in 1962.

Odil Yakubov was Uzbek novelist, story writer, essayist and playwright. He was born in 1926 in Turkestan, Kazakhstan. His novels as “Ulugbeg's Treasure”, “Honesty”, “The Old World” have been the foundation of psychological novels in Uzbek literature, novellas “Golden ring”, “Matluba”, “Mukaddas” express human relations, the destiny of people and social evils. Furthermore, he is the author of several famous plays as “True Love”, “Heart should burn”, “When Apple blossomed” which were staged on the theatres of the country.

Literature Review

John Steinbeck's literary activity as the representative of the Modern American literature has been the locus of many researches. Russian literary critics O. Osmukhina, L. Jdanova carried out their researches about the author's novels, M. Mendelson and A. Mulyarchik analyzed the writer's literary activity as a novella writer and stated the peculiarities of his works. Especially M. Mendelson in his work “About John Steinbeck and his two novellas” described the writer's the whole literary activity as a writer and a publicist. In 1990s authors as W. French “John Steinbeck's Fiction Revisited”, J. Parrini “John

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Steinbeck: A Biography”, D.Benson “Looking for Steinbeck’s Ghost”, J. Timmerman “The Dramatic Landscape of Steinbeck’s Short Stories”, A. Welsh “Lanselot at the Crossroads in Malory and Steinbeck” investigated the writer’s literary activity and described not only the influence of the works by famous psychologists as Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung but also the impact of the mythological parallels on his works. Besides an Indian researcher K. Sreenivasan in his research on the theme “The Novels of John Steinbeck - A Study of his Image of Man” divided his novels into seven distinct groups and suggested the major approaches in Steinbeck’s image of man.

Odil Yakubov began his career in the middle of the XXth century and the author became the founder of psychological novels in Uzbek literature. M. Kushjanov, S. Mamajanov, O. Sharafiddinov discussed mostly his novels and characteristic features of the works in their researches, U. Normatov, H. Umurov, E. Karimov analyzed literary peculiarities of the writer’s works. Especially, in the dissertation “Psychologism in Odil Yakubov’s novels” by A. Kholmuradov three issues – psychological analysis of the contradiction between social life and historical development, psychological analysis of the relations between person and society, psychology of the time are profoundly discussed.

Discussion

It is undoubted that the foundation of literature is life and as it is always in the stage of development, rebirth and reformation, the literature also develops, renews and grows permanently. According to Audrey Farley, social evil is one element of modernism. [7] “The Pearl” and “Mukaddas” are also the works that convey the depths of the real life and they show how the drawbacks of the society can destroy the people’s lives. The writers highlight that social evils influence on the fate of the people where they live. In both novellas the events take place in the countries that have been owned by colonists. Depicting the difficulties of Kino and Juana’s family living in Mexican shores possessed by Spanish colonists, Steinbeck shows the social discrimination, inequalities and hardships of all common people. Though Kino believes to his prosperous future when he finds the world’s pearl, but at the moment when he loses his son that pearl loses its real value and he throws it back to ocean. The author himself stated that as ‘the story has been told so often, it has taken root in every man’ mind. And, as with all retold tales that are in people’s hearts, there are only good and bad things and black and white things and good and evil things and no in-between anywhere. If this story is a parable, perhaps everyone takes his own meaning from it and reads his life into it.’[1,150]. The main character also realizes the difference between the good and bad, kindness and evil having all these contradictions in his

life and that fact includes the moral significance of the novella.

Describing Sharifjon’s poignant story in the country owned by Russian colonists, Odil Yakubov also emphasizes how colonial system destroys the life of ordinary people. In the novella the story of the adults trying to begin their life independently and facing several hardships of real life is depicted. As the author states, ‘a person should behave according to high moral principles beginning from the first steps of his independent life in order not to be lost in the way of life chosen by him and should keep it pure without any spots. These principles should be very sacred for the person, because to give up or betray to them can bring misfortune or anxiety’ [11,196]. The novella also ends with the misfortune of these two young people, because they spoil the principles of the life, especially Sharifjon becomes greedy in order to possess both a prosperous life and his love. But he loses both of them and cannot reach either at the end.

It is true that both works include several literary themes. As the theme conveys the meaning of the work, “The Pearl” includes the following literary themes:

- a) *greed* - Doctor, dealers and priest want to own the pearl;
- b) *family*- Kino and Juana’s, Juan Tomas and Apolonia’s family ties, their respect and loyalty to each other;
- c) *happiness* – characters are happy having their families and relationships, their canoes, children, traditions;
- d) *fortune*- mastering the pearl of the world;
- e) *hope for future* – Kino believes that his son will be educated, he hopes that the pearl will bring him freedom;
- f) *loyalty* – Kino and Juana’s, Juan Tomas and Apoloniya’s support to each other in any situation of life, they struggle together in any case;
- g) *grief* - they lose Coyotito, their future;
- h) *corruption by material wealth*- Doctor requires something in order to treat Coyotito when scorpion bites.

Steinbeck points out that nothing can replace family and the close people in the life, that’s why the pearl becomes the symbol of unavailing fortune.

The novella “Mukaddas” contains the following literary themes:

- a) *family* – Sarifjon’s family ties, the relations with his step-father and mother;
- b) *love* – love between Sharifjon and Mukaddas;
- c) *happiness* – the main characters’ happiness of having tender feelings towards each other;
- d) *friendship* – Sharifjon’s faithful friends who are ready to help in difficult situations;
- e) *betrayal* – Sahrifjon betrays Mukaddas completely by chance, not knowing that he destroys her future;

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f) *corruption in the society* – in order to admit to the institute Sharifjon’s step-father cheats thinking that he is helping;

g) *apathy* – apathy in the society show value of the people around the person.

The author states that determination and patience, honesty and justice are sacred personal feelings, friendship and love requires only pure relations in the person’s life. The following approach to the problem gives the work fascinating vitality and makes the readers to be careful in their lives.

As a Russian writer A. Chekhov states, the main idea is a fundamental part of a literary work [14, 32]. Description of Kino and Juana’s struggle for survival and their loss of hope for future in “The Pearl”, Sharifjon’s struggle for injustice and Mukaddas’ poignant fate in “Mukaddas” explain that colonial society oppresses and destroys the people’s lives. That is the reason why the characters’ fate makes the reader feel sorry though that has been the result of the main character’s mistake.

It is true that conflict is a struggle between two opposing forces or characters in a literary work. In these novellas conflict occurs externally – between characters themselves and society. In “The Pearl” *external conflict* takes place when Kino struggles against Juana, Doctor, the pearl buyers and Priest. F.E.:

a) *Kino vs. Juana* – Juana sees the pearl as evil and a threat. She tries to sneak away with the pearl and throw it back into the ocean; however, Kino catches her and beats her to get the pearl back;

b) *Kino vs. Juan Tomas* – when Kino and his family lose their home, they go to Juan Tomas to see if he will hide them. Juan Tomas is worried about the escalating problems that the pearl has brought and thus is briefly indecisive about helping Kino and Juana;

c) *Kino vs. the doctor* – the fact that the doctor refuses to help Coyotito because his parents are poor is an example of *Man vs. Society*. The doctor’s ignorance to help them because of the social class is a social issue.

Internal conflict happens in the novella when Kino hesitates whether to throw the pearl back to ocean or not as he sees hope for a good future in it. Furthermore, internal conflict can be noticed when Juana does not know whether to give the doctor her baby for checking or not as she does not believe in him.

In the novella “Mukaddas” *external conflict* occurs when Sharifjon struggles against his step father, teacher at the University and friends working at the factory with him. F.E.:

a) *Sharifjon vs. coworkers* – Sharifjon struggles against his coworkers who are against him as he wants to study at the University;

Sharifjon vs. stepfather – Sharifjon does not want his stepfather interfere with his study; though in the end it becomes clear that Sharifjon becomes student instead of Mukaddas. Internal conflict can be seen when Sharifjon fails at the entrance exam and tries to cheat in order to become a student. When he stays alone, he thinks only to be together with Mukaddas.

Undoubtedly, the title of a literary work expresses the meaning of the whole work and it attracts the reader from the early beginning. In both works the titles carry the main message of the authors. John Steinbeck entitles his novella as “The Pearl” because it conveys the meaning of the story described in the work. Pearl is the precious stone that is found deep inside the ocean; therefore it is the most valuable stone in the world. In the work Kino’s freedom, life, family, son, house, canoe are the most important and valuable. At the end of the novella he loses the most precious person – his son, his hope for future.

Odil Yakubov entitles his work with one of the main female character’s name. Mukaddas is the young girl who comes from the country in order to study at the University. She is the only daughter and her father’s hope for future. She symbolizes purity, beauty, sincerity, love, honesty and the society destroys the future of Mukaddas. “Mukaddas” means “sacred” in English, thus the author gives hint to the reader that they should appreciate feelings as purity, beauty, sincerity, love, honesty and keep them in order not to lose in their lives as Sharifjon loses Mukaddas forever.

Conclusion

To sum up the points we have had, it should be stated that both authors are realist writers. Though they lived in different countries and conditions, they depicted the truth of life in their works. Both writers explain that colonial society destroys the common people’s lives and they are oppressed having no hope for future. The themes as family, greed, apathy betrayal, corruption connect these works with each other. In the works main characters Kino and Sharifjon struggle for a better future but they face with misfortune. Having read the novellas, we feel upset for their fates and grieve for them. In “The Pearl” and “Mukaddas” conflict occurs externally, between character and society. Finally, both titles convey the main message sent by authors. In both works we understand that sacred feelings are precious and they should be kept by the people who do not want to lose forever.

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