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DIFFERENCES IN THE PRINCIPLES OF CREATING HISTORICAL IMAGES IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK HISTORICAL NOVELS

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Abstract
This article examines the principles of creating historical images in the traditions of the English and Uzbek historical novel. Using works by Walter Scott, Hilary Mantel, Peter Ackroyd, Pirimkul Kadyrov, and Odil Yokubov, it analyzes the fundamental differences in approaches to depicting historical figures, the relationship between fiction and fact, the role of national memory, and narrative strategy. It concludes that the English tradition gravitates toward romantic individualism and psychologism, while the Uzbek tradition favors epic glorification, collective identity, and the didactic function of historical narrative.

Keywords: historical novel, historical image, English literature, Uzbek literature, narrative strategy, historical figure, fiction.

Introduction

The historical novel occupies a special place within the system of literary genres, as it is simultaneously a literary text and a form of collective historical memory. Since Walter Scott, generally considered the founder of the genre, European and world literature has developed diverse strategies for artistically reclaiming the past. However, the principles of creating historical images vary depending on national cultural tradition, historiographical paradigm, and ideological context.
English and Uzbek historical novels developed in fundamentally different cultural, political, and literary contexts. The English tradition spans over two centuries and is closely linked to European Romanticism, Realism, and Postmodernism. The Uzbek tradition, rooted in classical Persian-Turkic literary

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culture and simultaneously formed during the Soviet and post-Soviet periods, possesses its own systematic principles for depicting history.

A comparative analysis of the two traditions reveals not only national specificities but also universal patterns in the functioning of historical narrative. This study focuses on the principles of creating historical images: methods of depicting historical figures, the relationship between documentary and artistic principles, the role of psychologism, narrative strategies, and the didactic function of the text.

The historical novel as a genre found its classic expression in the works of Walter Scott. Georg Lukács in his seminal work “The Historical Novel” pointed out that Scott’s innovation lay in his depiction of history as a living process in which ordinary people act, while great historical figures remain on the periphery of the narrative: the protagonist is, as a rule, a "mediocre man" drawn into the maelstrom of epochal events [1, p. 33]. “Great historical figures are never the main characters in Scott’s works. They appear only in those moments when their activities directly intersect with the lives of ordinary people.”

This observation by Lukács is fundamentally important for understanding the English tradition. In the novels “Ivanhoe”, “Quentin Durward”, and “Kenilworth” Scott constructs a historical image through Specific details of everyday life, psychologically authentic dialogue, and the clash of personal interests with historical context. Historical figures such as Richard I, Mary Stuart, Elizabeth I appear in precisely crafted episodes that reveal their character through their behavior in situations of choice.

A fundamental feature of the English historical novel is its psychologism. Even in Scott, a striving for the internal motivation of actions is evident; in George Eliot’s “Middlemarch” psychological analysis reaches its highest sophistication. This tendency intensified in the 20th century. Robert Graves, in “I, Claudius”, creates the image of the emperor through a first-person autobiographical narrative, deliberately destabilizing official historiography.

A special stage in the development of the English historical novel is associated with the postmodern rethinking of history. Peter Ackroyd, in “Hawksmoor” and “London: The Biographies”, disrupts the linearity of historical time, combining

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eras in a single narrative space. Julian Barnes, in "A History of the World in Ten and a Half Chapters", questions the very possibility of reliable historical knowledge. The most significant achievement of the English historical novel of the early 21st century was Hilary Mantel's trilogy about Thomas Cromwell: "Wolf Hall", "Bring Up the Bodies", and "The Mirror and the Light".

Mantel radically reinvents the genre by using present-tense narrative, creating a sense of immediacy in historical experience. Critic Laura Miller wrote of the novel: "Mantel creates Cromwell from within his own mind – it's not a reconstruction, but a recreation. The reader doesn't observe history, he lives it [2]."

The principle of demythologization plays a special role in the English tradition. Historical images are often reinterpreted in defiance of established canons: Mantel transforms Cromwell from the villain of official history into a tragic pragmatist, while Josephine Tey's Richard III in "The Daughter of Time" becomes the victim of historical slander. Skepticism toward the "official version" is a persistent feature of English historical narrative.

The Uzbek historical novel as a genre emerged during the Soviet period, but its ideological and aesthetic origins date back to a much earlier tradition. Classical Persian-Turkic literature such as dastans, tazkiras, and historical chronicles developed consistent principles for the artistic depiction of historical figures: the glorification of rulers, moral didacticism, and the glorification of military valor and wisdom.

The founder of the Uzbek historical novel in its modern form is generally considered to be Oybek (Musa Tashmukhamedov), whose novel "Navoi" became a model embodiment of the principles of socialist realist historicism. However, the genre truly reached its peak in the work of Pirimqul Kadyrov, author of the multi-volume historical epics "Starry Nights".

Uzbek writers create images of Ulugh Beg, Alisher Navoi, and Ibn Sina as embodiments of national genius. A characteristic feature of his poetics is the combination of historical documentary (the author meticulously studies primary sources) with the epic scale of the image. Researcher A. Rasulov noted: "… the historical figure is presented primarily as a national symbol, as the embodiment

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of the people's spirit. Psychological analysis is subordinated to the task of majestic depiction [3, p. 112]."

This observation points to a fundamental difference between the Uzbek and English traditions: while Mantel and Ackroyd create a historical image through contradiction, internal conflict, and psychological ambiguity, Oybek and Yoqubov create it through glorification and monumentalization. In the Uzbek novel the historical figure functions as a cultural hero embodying the collective values of the people.

One of the key principles of creating historical images is the way documentary material is handled. Both the English and Uzbek traditions recognize the need to rely on historical sources, but their hierarchy and function differ fundamentally.

In the English tradition, documents and facts often become objects of reflection and even deconstruction. In her essay "Hearing Voices" Hilary Mantel wrote about the fundamental unreliability of historical sources: history is always an interpretation, a reconstruction, a voice from the void. It is precisely this awareness that fuels the tension between "what was" and "what might have been." In "Biography of London" Ackroyd demonstratively mixes historical evidence, legend, and fiction, rejecting the hierarchy of sources.

Postmodernist English prose introduced the concept of "historiographic metafiction" (Linda Hutchison's term): a text that simultaneously depicts the historical past and reflects on the conditions of its depiction [4, p. 105]. The historical figure becomes not only an object of depiction but also a subject of epistemological questions about the nature of historical knowledge.

In the Uzbek tradition the approach to documents is fundamentally different. Here historical accuracy is a sign of respect for the national past, a prerequisite for the legitimacy of the image. While working on "Starry Nights" Kadyrov conducted many years of archival research in the libraries of Tashkent, Samarkand, and Moscow. Scholar B. Nazarov emphasized: "Kadyrov's artistic invention is always subordinated to historical truth. The author allows himself to invent dialogue, internal monologue, and everyday scenes but never distorts historically established facts [5, p. 78]."

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This principle harks back to Soviet historiographical aesthetics, according to which fiction is intended to popularize scientifically substantiated historical knowledge, not to question it. It is noteworthy that in the post-Soviet period, some Uzbek authors have begun to move toward greater artistic freedom in their handling of historical material, but reconsideration of established national narratives remains rare.

The two traditions' different attitudes toward historical anachronism are also indicative. The English postmodern novel often embraces deliberate anachronism as an artistic device, revealing the conventionality of historical reconstruction. The Uzbek tradition generally strives to match the spirit of the era viewing historical accuracy as an aesthetic and ethical imperative.

Perhaps the most significant difference between the two traditions is manifested in the relationship between psychologism and epicism in the creation of historical images.

The English historical novel, especially since the 19th century, has steadily moved toward psychological realism. The English novelist is primarily interested in historical figures as human beings with contradictions, fears, doubts, and weaknesses. Robert Graves's Claudius is a stutterer and a freak, forced to feign foolishness to survive; Mantel's Anne Boleyn is neither a demon nor a martyr, but a complex, intelligent, and vulnerable woman, a victim of political gamesmanship.

It's telling that English critics highly value the historical novel's ability to "humanize" a historical figure. A reviewer for "The Guardian" wrote of "Wolf Hall": "Mantel gives back to Cromwell what official history has taken from him: his inner life. What we have before us is not a monument, but a man [6]."

In the Uzbek literary tradition, the historical image gravitates toward the epic type. This is due both to the influence of classical dastans and to the didactic function that the historical novel is intended to fulfill. Yoqubov's portrayal of Ulugh Beg is that of a wise scholar-ruler who died tragically at the hands of fanatics; Oybek's portrayal of Navoi is that of a great poet and humanist, embodying the people's bright ideals. Internal contradictions do exist within the image, but they are generally subordinated to a general idealizing logic.

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At the same time, it would be an oversimplification to portray the Uzbek tradition as devoid of psychological dimension. In "Umid" Yoqubov achieves considerable psychological depth. The contemporary Uzbek novelist Ulugbek Hamdam introduces a psychoanalytic dimension in his novels of the post-Soviet period, previously uncharacteristic of the genre. Thus, we are not talking about absolute differences, but rather about dominant tendencies.

The principles of depicting historical conflict also differ. In the English novel conflict is most often constructed as a clash between the personal and the historical, the particular and the universal: the hero faces an impossible choice, and it is in this choice that his character is revealed. In the Uzbek novel conflict often takes the form of a confrontation between progress and reaction, enlightenment and fanaticism, good and evil – a confrontation in which the author's moral position is unambiguous.

The fundamental difference between the two traditions also manifests itself in the historical novel's attitude to national identity and didactics.

In the English tradition, the historical novel's role in constructing national identity is undoubtedly significant, especially in Scott, who essentially created a mythology of Scottish and British history. However, as the genre developed, its didactic function weakened, giving way to aesthetic complexity and critical reflection. The postmodern English novel often directly challenges national myths and official versions of history.

In Uzbek literature, particularly in early post-Soviet periods, historical fiction is inextricably linked to the formation and affirmation of national identity. This process gained particular intensity after the declaration of independence in 1991: invocations of the figures of Amir Temur, Ulugh Beg, Babur, and Alisher Navoi became instruments of national self-definition. Researcher Sh. Turdiev wrote: "The post-Soviet Uzbek historical novel performs the function of national myth-making, creating a pantheon of cultural heroes designed to substantiate the historical depth and originality of the Uzbek civilization [8, p. 203]."

This observation captures the fundamental teleology of Uzbek historical fiction: the image of a historical figure is created with a focus on semantic integrity, on

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affirming values significant to contemporary national identity. Fiction does not destroy historical "truth" but rather deepens and embellishes it.

In the English postmodernist tradition, such teleology would be perceived as ideologically suspect. Julian Barnes in "Flaubert's Parrot" ironically notes that history is "confidence in one's own point of view plus an archive" [9, p. 62]. This fundamental openness, the incompleteness of historical meaning, distinguishes the English narrative from the Uzbek one.

Conclusions

The conducted comparative analysis allows us to formulate a number of systemic differences in the principles of creating historical images in the English and Uzbek traditions of the historical novel.

Firstly, the English tradition is oriented toward psychologism and the individualization of the historical image, while the Uzbek tradition is focused on epic monumentalization and the embodiment of collective values. The historical hero in the English novel is complex, contradictory, and often demythologized; in the Uzbek novel, he is great, tragic, and possesses the traits of a cultural hero.

Secondly, the relationship between fact and fiction is different: while English postmodernist prose actively reflects on the conditions of historical knowledge and allows for the deconstruction of documents, the Uzbek tradition views historical authenticity as a prerequisite for artistic legitimacy.

Third, the narrative strategies of the two traditions differ in the degree of narrator authority, their relationship to temporal structure, and the function of narrative perspective. The English tradition moves toward narrative polyphony and an unreliable narrator; the Uzbek tradition retains the authoritative voice of an omniscient narrator.

Fourth, the didactic and identifying functions of the historical novel are significantly more pronounced in the Uzbek tradition, where historical prose serves as an instrument of national self-definition. The English historical novel has evolved toward critical reflection on national myths.

At the same time, it's important to recognize that these two traditions are not monolithic: each exhibits divergent tendencies, and the boundaries between

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them are gradually becoming more permeable under the influence of global literary integration. A promising direction for further research is to explore these points of intersection, as well as analyze specific texts in a comparative context.

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