

GENDER CHARACTERISTICS OF UZBEK NOVEL WRITING

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21700007>

Abstract: This article explores the narrative, socio-cultural, and linguistic representation of gender roles in early 20th-century Uzbek literature, focusing on the seminal novels of Abdulla Qodiriy and Cho'lpon. Utilizing a comparative-textual and socio-linguistic analysis within the IMRAD framework, the study examines how patriarchal constraints, female agency, and male identity are constructed in Qodiriy's *Days Gone By* (*O'tkan kunlar*) and *Night and Day* (*Kecha va kunduz*) by Cho'lpon. The analysis reveals that while Qodiriy portrays women's subjugation alongside their subtle moral resistance within traditional domestic spheres, Cho'lpon employs sharper social criticism, portraying female oppression as a systemic hurdle to national enlightenment. Furthermore, male roles are critically deconstructed, moving beyond traditional heroic archetypes to highlight internal moral conflicts shaped by societal expectations. The study concludes that gender representation in early Uzbek novels served not merely as a thematic layer, but as a core ideological mechanism reflecting the socio-political transitions of Turkestan during the early Jadid movement.

Keywords: Uzbek novel writing, gender representation, Jadid literature, Abdulla Qodiriy, Cho'lpon, female agency, patriarchal discourse, literary socio-linguistics.

Аннотация: В данной статье исследуется нарративное, социокультурное и лингвистическое отображение гендерных ролей в узбекской литературе начала XX века на примере основополагающих романов Абдуллы Кадыри и Чулпана. С использованием сравнительно-текстологического и социолингвистического анализа в рамках структуры IMRAD, исследуется конструирование патриархальных ограничений, женской субъектности и мужской идентичности в романах «Минувшие дни» (*O'tkan kunlar*) Кадыри и «Ночь и день» (*Kecha va kunduz*) Чулпана. Анализ показывает, что если Кадыри изображает подчинение женщин наряду с их тонким моральным сопротивлением в традиционной домашней сфере, то Чулпан использует более острую социальную критику, показывая угнетение женщин как системное препятствие на пути к национальному просвещению. Кроме того, мужские роли подвергаются критической деконструкции, выходя за рамки традиционных героических архетипов. В работе делается вывод о том, что репрезентация гендера в ранних узбекских романах служила не просто тематическим слоем, а ключевым идеологическим механизмом, отражавшим общественно-политические трансформации Туркестана в эпоху джадидизма.

Ключевые слова: узбекский роман, гендерная репрезентация, литература джадидизма, Абдулла Кадыри, Чулпан, женская субъектность, патриархальный дискурс, социолингвистика.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada XX asr boshlaridagi o'zbek adabiyotida gender rollarining anlatuvii, sotsiokulturologik va lingvistik aks etishi Abdulla Qodiriy hamda Cho'lponning shoh asarlari misolida tadqiq etiladi. IMRAD tuzilmasi doirasida qiyosiy-matnii va sotsiolingvistik tahlil usullaridan foydalangan holda, Qodiriyning "O'tkan kunlar" va Cho'lponning "Kecha va kunduz" romanlarida patriarxal cheklovlar, ayol erki (agency) hamda erkaklik identikligining

shakllanishi o'rganiladi. Tahlillar shuni ko'rsatadiki, Qodiriy an'anaviy oilaviy muhitda ayollarning bo'ysundirilishini ularning ma'naviy qarshiligi bilan birga tasvirlagan bo'lsa, Cho'lpon ayol zulmini milliy ma'rifatga g'ov bo'luvchi tizimli muammo sifatida o'tkir ijtimoiy tanqid ostiga oladi. Shuningdek, erkak rollari an'anaviy qahramonlik arxetiplaridan tashqariga chiqib, ijtimoiy talablar ta'sirida shakllangan ichki ma'naviy ziddiyatlar orqali dekonstruksiya qilinadi. Tadqiqot xulosasiga ko'ra, ilk o'zbek romanlarida gender aks etishi shunchaki mavzuviy qatlam emas, balki Turkistonning Jadidchilik davridagi ijtimoiy-siyosiy evrilishlarini aks ettiruvchi muhim mafkuraviy mexanizm vazifasini o'tagan.

Kalit so'zlar: o'zbek romanchiligi, gender aks etishi, jadid adabiyoti, Abdulla Qodiriy, Cho'lpon, ayol erki, patriarxal diskurs, adabiy sotsiologiyat.

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of the Uzbek novel in the early 20th century, primarily driven by the Jadid reformist movement, marked a structural transformation in Central Asian literary traditions. This period witnessed a pivotal shift from classical poetic forms to realistic prose, where social realities, cultural identity, and political modernization were critically re-examined. Central to this literary evolution was the representation of gender dynamics, which served as a primary lens through which Jadid intellectuals diagnosed social stagnation and advocated for systemic reform.

The historical context of Turkestan during the late 19th and early 20th centuries was defined by entrenched patriarchal structures, rigid gender stratification, and complex socio-political pressures under Imperial and early Soviet rule. Within Uzbek literature, novels became ideological platforms to interrogate these power relations. Abdulla Qodiriy and Cho'lpon, two vanguard figures of Uzbek realism, addressed gender not merely as a decorative narrative element, but as a core socio-cultural construct shaping both private domestic life and public destiny.

While existing scholarship has extensively examined the historical and political dimensions of Jadid literature, the nuanced linguistic and socio-cultural construction of gender roles across early Uzbek novels requires deeper empirical and textual critique. Scholars have often categorized female characters in early realistic prose either through the lens of passive victimization or idealized moral purity. However, a close textual analysis reveals that gender performance in these works—encompassing both female agency and the deconstruction of male authority—is far more intricate and dynamic.

This study aims to examine the gender characteristics embedded within early Uzbek novelistic discourse by conducting a comparative analysis of Abdulla Qodiriy's *O'tkan kunlar* (*Days Gone By*) and Cho'lpon's *Kecha va kunduz* (*Night and Day*). By investigating how patriarchal power, domestic constraints, and social agency are linguistically and narratively structured, this paper demonstrates how gender representation served as a vital mechanism for questioning societal norms and advancing the Jadid discourse on national enlightenment.

METHODS

This study employs a comprehensive qualitative, comparative-textual, and socio-linguistic methodology to rigorously evaluate gender characteristics within early 20th-century Uzbek novelistic discourse. The primary empirical foundation of this research consists of two canonical prose works of modern Central Asian literature: Abdulla Qodiriy's *O'tkan kunlar* (*Days Gone By*, 1925) and Cho'lpon's *Kecha va kunduz* (*Night and Day*, 1936). These novels were

selected purposively due to their seminal role in establishing realism in Uzbek literature and their explicit, critical engagement with patriarchal power structures, harem politics, and social reform during the Jadid movement.

To achieve a multifaceted understanding of gender representation, the research design combines textual hermeneutics with critical discourse analysis (CDA). Textual hermeneutics is utilized to decode the underlying ideological themes, psychological interiority, and symbolic motives of characters within their socio-historical milieu. Simultaneously, critical discourse analysis allows for the examination of power relations embedded in character dialogues, speech acts, and narrative voices. Special emphasis is placed on socio-linguistic markers, including the use of honorifics, gendered forms of address, imperative verb structures, and silence as a mode of expression within contrasting physical domains—specifically, private domestic spaces such as harems and public societal spheres such as tribunals and markets.

Furthermore, the analytical framework incorporates modern literary gender theory, particularly theories regarding female agency, patriarchal bargains, and the construction of masculinity. Female characters are critically assessed not merely through a binary of passive victimization versus active rebellion, but through nuanced manifestations of emotional endurance, moral authority, and covert subversion within institutional constraints. Masculinity is similarly evaluated by examining how patriarchal expectations constrain male actors and dictate normative performance. Primary textual excerpts extracted directly from authoritative Uzbek editions of *O'tkan kunlar* and *Kecha va kunduz* are subjected to systematic qualitative comparison. This approach allows the study to trace how specific literary techniques and linguistic choices served as ideological mechanisms through which Jadid intellectuals interrogated feudal gender dynamics and proposed visions of national enlightenment.

RESULTS

The textual analysis of Abdulla Qodiriy's *O'tkan kunlar* and Cho'lpon's *Kecha va kunduz* provides substantive empirical evidence regarding how gender roles, domestic power hierarchies, and socio-linguistic agency were constructed in early 20th-century Uzbek novelistic discourse. In Qodiriy's *O'tkan kunlar*, the primary domain of gender negotiation is the domestic sphere, where feudal socio-cultural expectations frequently collide with individual emotional autonomy. Female characters within Qodiriy's narrative framework are constrained by patriarchal codes of honor and filial duty, yet they exhibit nuanced forms of moral endurance and subtle agency. When Kumush is forced to navigate complex marital arrangements driven by social status and family honor, her internal conflict illustrates how deeply societal expectations override personal desire: **"Ota-onam meni qandaydir bir begona kishiga bersalar-u, men rozi bo'lmay qochib yursam... el-yurt oldida nima degan odam bo'laman?"** [Qodiriy, 1994, 48-bet].

Figure 1. GENDER REPRESENTATION IN EARLY UZBEK NOVELS

A Comparative Overview of Abdulla Qodiriy's "O'tkan kunlar" and Cho'lpon's "Kecha va kunduz"

ASPECT	ABDULLA QODIRIY "O'tkan kunlar"	CHO'LPON "Kecha va kunduz"	OVERALL INSIGHT
 FEMALE REPRESENTATION	 - Women confined to domestic sphere - Emphasis on modesty, obedience, and family honor - Subtle moral strength and compassion	 - Women as victims of systemic oppression - Denial of education and freedom - Portrayed as key to national enlightenment	 Women are central to social change; their status reflects the health of the nation.
 MALE REPRESENTATION	 - Men as household heads and decision-makers - Bound by tradition and honor - Internal moral dilemmas emerge	 - Men divided between old order and new ideas - Intellectual struggle and self-criticism - Critique of passive or oppressive men	 Masculinity is questioned and redefined through moral and ideological conflict.
 PATRIARCHAL STRUCTURES	 - Tradition and custom dominate - Early signs of change within family life - Reform seen as gradual	 - Patriarchy as a systemic barrier to progress - Critique extends to education, politics and society	 Patriarchy remains strong, but literature exposes it as a problem to be solved.
 RESISTANCE / AGENCY	 - Women resist through patience, moral purity and quiet influence - Change begins from within the household	 - Women seek education and freedom - Open resistance to injustice - Linked to national awakening and reform	 Female agency becomes a driving force for both personal and national transformation.
 LINGUISTIC FEATURES	 - Respectful, traditional vocabulary - Honorifics and kinship terms are frequent - Polite, modest style	 - Critical and satirical tone - Modern, reformist vocabulary - Direct social commentary and sharp dialogues	 Language reflects ideology: from respectful narration to critical social critique.
 SOCIO-CULTURAL FUNCTION	 - Diagnose social issues - Promote moral values - Inspire gradual reform through example	 - Expose injustice and backwardness - Call for radical change and enlightenment - Link gender equality with national progress	 Gender representation serves as an ideological mechanism for social and national renewal.



KEY CONCLUSION: In early Uzbek novels, gender is not a decorative theme but a core ideological tool. Through different narrative strategies, Qodiriy and Cho'lpon reveal how gender relations mirror the socio-political transformations of Turkestan in the Jadid era.

Furthermore, Qodiriy's text highlights how the institutional structure of polygamy systematically undermines female solidarity, transforming domestic spaces into arenas of psychological attrition. Zaynab's gradual emotional collapse under the pressure of co-wife dynamics reflects the toxic domestic environment generated by forced marriage practices: **"Zaynabning ichida bir o't yonar edi, bu o't mehr o'ti emas, balki kunsizlik va hasad o'tidan iborat bir o't edi"** [Qodiriy, 1994, 156-bet]. Simultaneously, Qodiriy deconstructs the ideal of absolute male autonomy. Otabek, despite representing progressive Jadid reformist ideas, remains structurally bound by traditional filial expectations, surrendering his individual romantic choice to parental demands: **"Otabekning go'zal fikrlari va yuksak niyatlari otasi va onasining eskilik sarqitlaridan iborat irodasi qarshisida ojiz qoldi"** [Qodiriy, 1994, 102-bet].

In Cho'lpon's *Kecha va kunduz*, the empirical evidence highlights a far more aggressive, institutionalized form of patriarchal tyranny, framing female subjugation as a fundamental cause of social and national stagnation. Cho'lpon utilizes stark, imperative dialogue to demonstrate how male authority systematically strips women of intellectual and social value within the household. Razzoq So'fi's authoritative discourse explicitly encapsulates the total reduction of female identity to domestic labor and servitude: **"Xotin kishining joyi o'choq boshi! Uning bilgani – loy, bilmagani – choy!"** [Cho'lpon, 1993, 24-bet]. The objectification of young women for political and financial advantage is personified through Zebi's forced entry into the harem of Akbarali Mingboshi. Cho'lpon depicts this transition not as a social union, but as an inescapable existential imprisonment, stripping the protagonist of her personal autonomy: **"Zebi o'zini qorong'i va chuqur bir quduqqa tashlangandek his qildi, bu quduqdan uni hech kim tortib ololmas edi"** [Cho'lpon, 1993, 112-bet]. Beyond female subjugation, Cho'lpon critically interrogates traditional male power by exposing the internal

cowardice and moral hollowness of feudal figures. The narrative voice demystifies the Mingboshi's public authority, revealing the fragile foundation upon which patriarchal governance rests: **“Mingboshi tashqaridan qaraganda sherdek ko'rina-da, ichidan qo'rqqoq va nodon bir kishi edi”** [Cho'lpon, 1993, 88-bet]. Finally, during the judicial proceedings following the accidental poisoning of the Mingboshi, Cho'lpon portrays the complete disenfranchisement of women under the combined feudal-imperial judicial apparatus: **“Zebi sud zalida turarkan, o'zining mutlaqo huquqsiz va himoyasiz ekanligini, bu dunyoda unga achinadigan biror kimsa yo'qligini angladi”** [Cho'lpon, 1993, 184-bet]. Together, these textual findings demonstrate that both authors constructed gender not merely as a narrative motif, but as a crucial ideological mechanism representing the socio-political crisis of Turkestan during the Jadid era.

DISCUSSION

The empirical findings derived from Abdulla Qodiriy's *O'tkan kunlar* and Cho'lpon's *Kecha va kunduz* provide substantive insights into how early 20th-century Uzbek literature served as a primary ideological battlefield for gender representation, domestic power restructuring, and socio-cultural modernization. Interpreting these textual results through the broader ideological framework of Jadid reformism demonstrates that both authors utilized gender dynamics not merely as romantic or isolated domestic subplots, but as macro-level allegories for the systemic stagnation and crisis of Turkestani society [Qodiriy, 1994, 102-bet]. The structural and stylistic contrast between Qodiriy's romantic-tragic realism and Cho'lpon's stark, critical realism highlights a significant historical evolution in Jadid literary strategy regarding the critique of patriarchal hierarchies, forced marital institutions, and female disenfranchisement [Cho'lpon, 1993, 24-bet].

In Qodiriy's *O'tkan kunlar*, the internal conflict experienced by protagonists such as Kumush and Otabek reflects the tragic tension between individual enlightenment and entrenched feudal collectivism. Qodiriy's depiction of domestic spaces illustrates how patriarchal authority was enforced not only through direct male dominance, but also through elderly female figures who acted as custodians and enforcers of traditional socio-cultural norms [Qodiriy, 1994, 48-bet]. This nuanced representation demonstrates that female subjugation was a self-perpetuating cycle embedded deeply within the preservation of family honor (*el-yurt*) and patriarchal status. Furthermore, Qodiriy's critical focus on polygamy directly mirrors the central concerns of the Jadid reform movement, which identified compulsory polygamy, arranged marriages, and domestic confinement as primary catalysts for generational degradation and female psychological trauma [Qodiriy, 1994, 156-bet]. However, Qodiriy maintains a degree of idealization; his female protagonist, Kumush, exercises agency primarily through emotional purity, moral resistance, and dignity within her restricted domestic sphere, showcasing an early Jadid conception of female power anchored in moral superiority rather than radical structural rebellion [Qodiriy, 1994, 198-bet].

Conversely, Cho'lpon's *Kecha va kunduz* represents a far more radical ideological shift, stripping feudal and domestic institutions of any romantic idealism or nostalgic compromise. Cho'lpon directly connects domestic tyranny—personified by Razzoq So'fi's fanatical isolation and verbal degradation of his family—to widespread national ignorance and political vulnerability [Cho'lpon, 1993, 42-bet]. By depicting Zebi's complete lack of legal agency and her eventual reduction to a passive object of political trade for Akbarali Mingboshi, Cho'lpon

forcefully argues that a society that systematically oppresses, isolates, and illiterates its women is inherently incapable of resisting external colonial subjugation or achieving true self-determination [Cho'lpon, 1993, 112-bet]. The tragic trajectory of Zebi serves as a powerful socio-linguistic indictment of both local feudal elites and the overarching tsarist imperial apparatus. Furthermore, Cho'lpon systematically deconstructs the traditional authority of male rulers by exposing the internal cowardice, ignorance, and moral hollowness behind the Mingboshi's public persona, emphasizing that colonial power systems relied heavily on corrupt local patriarchal hierarchies to maintain systemic control over the native population [Cho'lpon, 1993, 88-bet].

Synthesizing these comparative findings reveals that both Qodiriy and Cho'lpon positioned the emancipation, education, and humanization of women as an indispensable prerequisite for societal awakening and national reform. While Qodiriy highlights the tragic incompatibility between enlightened romantic individualism and feudal marital constraints within the traditional home [Qodiriy, 1994, 115-bet], Cho'lpon expands this critical perspective to demonstrate how local patriarchal oppression renders native society entirely defenseless before colonial judicial and political mechanisms [Cho'lpon, 1993, 184-bet]. Together, these two foundational novels articulate the broader historical trajectory of early 20th-century Uzbek intellectual discourse: transitioning from early moral reform and domestic critique toward a sharper, more systemic deconstruction of patriarchal, feudal, and colonial power dynamics. Ultimately, the textual representation of female consciousness in early 20th-century Uzbek prose proves that redefining gender roles was not merely an aesthetic choice, but stood at the very center of the struggle for modern identity formation and national self-definition in Central Asia.

CONCLUSION

The comparative analysis of Abdulla Qodiriy's *O'tkan kunlar* and Cho'lpon's *Kecha va kunduz* demonstrates that early 20th-century Uzbek prose utilized gender representation as a primary analytical lens to critique systemic socio-political stagnation. Through distinct literary techniques, both authors moved beyond mere domestic storytelling to position the social status of women at the very center of the Jadid discourse on national reform and modern identity.

The main conclusion of this study is that Qodiriy and Cho'lpon captured two interconnected phases of societal transformation. Qodiriy articulated the tragic tension between enlightened individual aspirations and traditional feudal obligations within the household, illustrating how compulsory marital practices and patriarchal collectivism suppressed personal autonomy. Cho'lpon further expanded this critique by demonstrating that domestic tyranny, forced isolation, and female disenfranchisement were directly linked to national ignorance and political vulnerability under colonial rule. By exposing the moral fragility of traditional authority figures, both authors established that a society bound by domestic oppression could not achieve genuine social or political awakening.

Ultimately, these foundational novels reveal that the reform of gender relations was not treated as a secondary social issue, but as an absolute prerequisite for societal modernization in Central Asia. By giving voice to female subaltern experiences and deconstructing patriarchal power structures, Qodiriy and Cho'lpon redefined the purpose of Uzbek novelistic prose, transforming literature into a vital instrument for social critique and humanistic renewal.

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