



Article

Metaphorical and Imaginative-Paradoxical Expression in Nazar Eshankul's Novel "Gorugli or The Water of Life"

Yakubov Islamjon*¹

1. Professor, Tashkent State University of Uzbek Language and Literature named after Alisher Navoi, Doctor of Philology

* Correspondence: islamxoja_yakubov@mail.ru

Abstract: This article aims to explore metaphorical and imaginative-paradoxical expressions in contemporary Uzbek literature through Nazar Eshonkul's novel, "Gorugli or the Water of Life," emphasizing the representation of an antihero within modern literary frameworks. Employing a comparative and contextual methodology, the study utilizes sociological, historical-cultural, and psychological analyses to deeply interpret the novel's underlying themes and artistic innovations. The findings reveal Eshonkul's critical portrayal of social alienation and personal degradation, metaphorically illustrated through the protagonist's descent into animalistic despair, reflecting broader societal issues of injustice and moral decay. The novel's depiction of the protagonist's tragic demise underscores the alienation inherent in modern existence, aligning closely with existential and Kafkaesque literary traditions. The implications of this research highlight how modern Uzbek fiction, through sophisticated literary devices, engages profoundly with philosophical discourses on human dignity and societal dysfunction, offering nuanced insights into the cultural and psychological landscapes of post-independence Uzbekistan.

Keywords: Genre, Plot, Composition, National Character, Poetic Skill, Literary Tradition, Originality, Literary Influence, Adequate Translation

Citation: Islamjon, Y. Metaphorical and Imaginative-Paradoxical Expression in Nazar Eshankul's Novel "Gorugli or The Water of Life". Central Asian Journal of Literature, Philosophy, and Culture 2025, 6(2), 120-125.

Received: 17th Mar 2025

Revised: 21st Mar 2025

Accepted: 24th Mar 2025

Published: 30th Mar 2025



Copyright: © 2025 by the authors. Submitted for open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)

1. Introduction

The novel "Gorugli or the Water of Life" by the famous Uzbek writer N. Eshonkul is notable as a mature example of Uzbek novels of the independence era. Before the plot events of the work begin, the epigraph: "...Gilgamesh went in search of the water of life" is given. If the novel is called "Gorugli" and the search for the "water of life" is based on another epic poem, what aesthetic purpose is there in referring to it? - a legitimate question arises. In our opinion, the content of the above wise line reflects the ideological and emotional attitude of the writer. The impossibility of being involved in eternity in the epic space, where human values are violated and belief in deception and lies has become a habit, is emphasized. Therefore, the chosen epigraph, in its artistic and aesthetic function, serves as an opening to the novel. Because it provides specific information about the author's purpose, expresses the ideas and views that motivated the writing of the work, and concisely expresses N. Eshonkul's feelings and experiences during his creative moments, it evokes an initial impression of the reality of the novel.

The writer, striving to understand man and society, denies the social environment in which man is not honored, his dignity is not noticed. The adventures of N., who wandered

in search of truth and justice, and the suffering he endured in an attempt to overcome life's trials, mockingly laugh at the laws of society, in which the principle of inheritance has been forgotten and which is alien to improvement. It shows the essence of the development of nature, society and human thought. Artistic reality performs a poetic function no less than real events.

2. Materials and Methods

In this novel, the writer, striving to understand man and society, sharply denies the social environment in which man is not honored, his dignity is not noticed. In order to understand and express this, the article used a number of scientific analysis methods [1].

In covering the topic of the article, sociological, historical-cultural, historical-comparative, comparative-typological approaches of complex analysis, contextual analysis, as well as comparative, biographical and psychological methods were used [2].

3. Results

Nazar Eshonkul's novel "Gorugli or the Water of Life" is unique in terms of its national foundations, hidden in the literary text, and the expression of the state of mind. By the chapter of the novel called "Gorkov", the main character N. begins to have an extremely despondent attitude towards the human world that burys him alive and mocks him. This is reflected in the fact that in the summer and autumn seasons of the year he does not go out, becoming disillusioned with everything, like a person who has abandoned the world. N., who lives his life without anyone knowing about his wealth or lack thereof, has become a chaotic and desolate place due to his despondency. This situation is described in the novel as follows:

"...he could not do anything, he would leave any container or object he put there, he would not return it and clean it up, the rooms were as messy and messy as a house the owner had moved out of in a hurry. N. only shaved his beard twice that summer, and then, when his face was no longer visible and it was still preventing him from breathing, he desperately trimmed it with scissors. His dirty clothes and headgear were faded, and the room was filled with the smell and residue of tobacco" [3].

The heavy air suffocates the breath. Things are scattered, clothes are colorless and faded. This scene in the room is a parallel image, and as a kind of illustration proving the situation being expressed, it represents N.'s sleepy heart. Because N. Eshonkul chose an example to confirm the idea, similar to the hero's lifestyle, which was shrouded in darkness at that time, and the sleepy mood. Such a way of expression is not entirely new for our national novel. For example, the one-room "stinking hut" of one of the characters in U. Hamdam's novel "Balance" Ergash, with its "molded, wrinkled" seats and "ruined" condition, also symbolized the bitter fate of this hero. The writer likens the house and its furnishings to the fate of a poor person whose spiritual "lamp" illuminating his soul has gone out and whose life's difficulties have completely destroyed him. U. Hamdam writes: "Yusuf sat on the old sofa, not even taking off his street clothes, looking at Ergash, who was snoring, and thought painfully about his future". The fact that such painful thoughts prompted Yusuf to change his fate drastically, in order not to be destroyed by Ergash, is described in detail in some of our articles [4].

Since N. does not want to open the window of his room wide and freshen the air in the house, it means that his inner mental state is experiencing a hesitation and inability to adapt to the injustices of the material world. The writer does not immediately reveal this transformation to the reader. On the contrary, the miserable life of a humiliated person deepens the figurative expression. In particular, the process of N. facing his inner "I" is described in the figurative way of "listening to the sad cries of dogs". At first, the hero hears this sadness as if from outside - from the outside:

"When the dogs barked, N. felt something inside him howling. Now he longed for the dogs to bark, he felt a certain bond between himself and the dogs. This bond gave such charm to his miserable life that now he lived waiting for the dogs to bark, not for the just resolution of his fate, as he had done before" [5].

It seems that as soon as the wild melody becomes so close to the heart, a breath of fresh air enters the room (heart). In other words, as the heart's gaze is directed inward, a special meaning and charm appears in N.'s life. Of course, N. cannot immediately understand what this feeling that awakens inside him and takes over his entire body is. However, when this situation becomes his way of life, the situation in the depths of winter changes radically: "...when the dogs barked, his body would heat up, his body would become a fire, a wild passion would awaken in his heart, a desire to tear everything to pieces, to get drunk on the stench, some nights he would become helpless in the face of this desire and bite his own body, seeing the blood flowing from his shoulders, he would become even more furious and a wild howl like humiliation would burst from his throat. N. joined the dogs and gradually learned to howl" [6].

As the external and internal sounds merge, the reader finds it difficult to understand the lightness, happiness, and savage cruelty that appear in the character's body. Because tragic feelings are expressed in animal language. A person's howling like a dog or a wolf is actually a prolonged cry from the depths of his longing, his anger, his pain, and his humiliation. If we pay attention to the fact that the harmony of the relationship between a dog and a person arises on the basis of deep sympathy, it becomes clear that the external (the ownerless dog) and the internal (the trampled heart) are united by a feeling of alienation from social relations [7].

So, the misfortunes of N., which society has abandoned, did not subside, but rather became more and more severe. In fact, the Dog is a metaphorical image of social humiliation, which means that there is no chance left for him to live as a human being, and since society despises him like a dog, N. has no choice but to take on this image. At the same time, the above image involuntarily reminds us of the fate of the insect-man Grigor Samsa in F. Kafka's story "Metamorphosis". So, when N. Eshonkul draws a fictional picture of social exclusion, there is no need for the image of a dog outside:

Unaware of some of the "subtle" aspects of social order, in particular, the various tricks that exist in the judicial and executive systems, N. is deeply mistaken, believing that there may be an "exceptional circumstance" in the verdict. Due to a "misunderstanding", he agrees to "remove" the corpse buried in grave number 3-29. The unexpected news that justice will be done after examining the corpse naturally awakens a glimmer of hope in a person who has not been able to withstand the trials of life and is in a very depressed mood. N. wants to throw off the ominous stamp that he has attached to his fate [8].

Unfortunately, his biggest mistake was not in not using his full potential, not in trusting others too much, but in trying to prove his existence. Being deceived by cunning rulers and flattering executors, and having his last hopes dashed, was an incredibly difficult tragedy for N. "Yesterday morning, a body was found under a train at the 8th station of the Southern Railway. It was impossible to identify the person by looking at the body. Only a document found in the deceased's pocket identified him. This person turned out to be N., a senior employee of the S. organization." This poignant conclusion, drawn after the development of artistic reality, which began with a newspaper article that at first glance seemed like a mere newspaper article, expresses the habitual way of life of the recent past. It was impossible to find a remedy for injustice in a society where a condemned man was forced to dig his own grave and bury not only his body but also all his hopes and dreams in that coffin, where deception, lies, and silence had become the usual way of life [9].

That is why at the end of the novel, the writer depicts N., who has insulted himself and realized that nothing in this world has happened and will not happen by his own will,

among the passengers, leaning on a broken lamppost, looking very tired, helpless and helpless. No matter how much N. realizes that he has wasted his strength, that all his energy has been sucked out, he has become exhausted from fighting and has become useless. Having wasted all his strength, emotions, physical and spiritual strength, hopes and dreams in order to express his existence, he has become a weak, lifeless corpse like a withered tree, his enthusiasm has faded. He was not only unable to live and work, but also unable to dream. He only wanted to sleep, sleep for a long time: "I'm done for," he thought, "I can't even walk to that station now" [10].

Indeed, crawling towards the station in the dark of night, he weeps from incomparable fatigue, looking up from his legs. Since he can look at himself with bitter irony, scorn and mockery, N., having shaken off all the noise of the world, full of joy and anxiety, and the aimless aspirations of the crowd, decides to establish a coherent order among all the events that have begun, to put everything in a certain direction and to put an end to this miserable fate. He carries out the sentence written for him [11].

Indeed, N. throws himself under the train and disappears into the black void. He confirms the judgment of a disgusting and abject environment that does not recognize his existence as a person. In this way, the writer remains true to his theoretical concept: "The spiritual decline that we have experienced in the recent past, the incompatibility of beliefs, the differentiation - all this is the result of impersonality".

N.'s search for all the blame in himself can be viewed as an honest person cursing a society that humiliates a person. An interesting aspect of the problem is that by the end of the novel, N. Eshonkul's intention to increase aesthetic impact by exposing the vices of society makes the reader spiritually exhausted. This is not accidental, but is a consequence of following F. Kafka's poetic style of expressing the tragic helplessness of man in the face of an unfaithful world. For example, in F. Kafka's novel "America", Karl Rossman, a person with pure human feelings, is crushed by the social environment. Because there was a deep sense of alienation between the two. "It was impossible for him (i.e. K. Rossman, - I. Ya.) to survive in this cruel environment built on deception, violence, and evil", - writes literary critic Q.Yuldoshev. K. in the novel "Kurgan" cannot achieve his goal of entering and living in the fortress, interpreted as a symbol of society. When he achieved such a right after futile attempts, he was lying on his deathbed, exhausted.

According to F. Kafka, an individual cannot understand society, comprehend its rules and live in harmony with all the conditions of the environment. F. Kafka does not see any signs of goodness in social life. He does not believe that a person who is always a victim of society and circumstances has a definite meaning in his life.

In the novel "The Process", the writer takes Josef K. through the strange and incomprehensible trials of the social environment. He shows the horrors of social cruelty on the example of the fate of a hero who is subjected to unprecedented suffering by the law that should protect him, who cannot distinguish between prison and freedom.

It seems that for F. Kafka, it is not a consistent logical expression of events, but a feeling of the spiritual suffering of a person who finds himself in an extreme situation, showing those complex and complex feelings that he has experienced, not a coherent logical expression of events. Therefore, in the writer's novels, reality moves into the hero's soul, and the person becomes the center of the image. F. Kafka turns the suffering and experiences of the heroes, who are afraid and anxious in the face of the existing reality and the alienated environment that seeks to subjugate a person spiritually, into a means of artistic depiction.

Indeed, those scenes and metaphors embody wisdom that encourages us to awaken human perception, to look at ourselves, society and existence with a critical eye. At the heart of N.'s emotional rebellion in the novel "Gorugli" is also the desire to see a person free. To understand this more deeply, it is necessary to enter the artistic castle that the writer built from a symbolic construction, that is, to read the novel carefully [12].

The novel "Gorugli" actively uses images of a mixture of dream and reality, fantasy and life, which are observed in modern Uzbek novels. However, the ending of the work does not sit well with the Eastern reader. Because N. laments that his life is over and he no longer has the strength to fight against the environment. That is, he knows that he lives in suffering and puts an end to his life.

The fate of N. in the novel is reminiscent of Meursault in A. Camus's story "The Stranger" in certain aspects. After all, Meursault, who was sentenced to death, completely refuses to repent at the end of the story. Meursault, a prisoner behind prison walls, every stone of which is imprinted with suffering, is alien to hope for the Creator's mercy and a sense of trust in Him. For Meursault, a man of the real world, blind to his inner gaze and who considers divine life to be a vain fantasy, Marie's face is more precious than the beauty of God. That is why he says about the man of faith: "...his self-confidence is not worth a single hair of a woman's hair" [13].

Having risen above social and moral values and achieved peace of mind, Meursault does not consider himself a lost servant. Because in his heart there is not love for values, but resentment and turbulent anger. In this respect, Camus's views are extremely close to Nietzsche's. That is why Meursault does not see the meaning in living a life where all people are condemned to death. It is precisely this meaninglessness that becomes his life principle.

It seems that Camus was able to skillfully show the tragedy of Western society, when the rise of interpersonal affection alienates them from each other, and each person becomes isolated. In F. Kafka's novel "The Process", the image of a priest, the fulcrum of the spiritual world of humanity, pours water into the mill of the pillars of society in the pursuit of murder, trying to convince K. that he is mistaken. True, there are no prison incidents in "Gorugli". However, the fact that even a gorkov is not someone capable of giving strength and soul to a person, but is an agent of the devil, makes N. deprived of receiving a soul from anyone, hopeless and defenseless in saving his life. A more characteristic solution to such an extreme situation was found in T. Murad's novel "You Can't Die in This World." Knowing that he cannot die, both with his lifelong faith and according to the laws of Sharia, Batyr Firqa, a stubborn and helpless person, remains frozen between the "city of the dead" and the "city of the living," weeping silently. He never falls into despair. He quickly changes his mind about killing himself. Because he is guided by hope for the mercy of his Creator and feelings of seeking forgiveness in the pursuit of atonement [14].

4. Discussion

Many problems, such as the emergence, formation and improvement of the national novel, the leading features inherent in its development, and poetic skill, have been studied by a number of literary scholars. The leading features and principles of development of the Uzbek novel of the independence period in connection with the literary process have been studied in detail in the dissertation studies of Z. Pardaeva, Sh. Doniyorova, I. Yakubov, M. Pirnazarova. Although the literary scholar I. Yakubov put forward certain ideas about N. Eshonkul's novelist skills in his studies, the novel was not specifically studied.

In writing this article, the studies carried out in Uzbek literary studies served as a theoretical basis. The ideas put forward in them were developed and generalized to a certain extent [15].

5. Conclusion

Based on the above considerations, it can be concluded that the novel "Gorugli" bears the characteristics of the writer's creative mood and aesthetic views of the 90s of the 20th century. Consequently, the novel reflects not holistic aesthetic principles, but a

specific stage of the period of searches when the writer sought expression and opportunities for his social pain.

It seems that the tragic events of the 20th century are mostly accurately reflected in the novel "Gorugli". The author, through the fate of the hero of the novel, N., painfully sought ways out of the tragedy caused by the environment.

However, the writer did not find the final fulcrum at the end of the novel. The writer did not manage to show God's great love for man through the spiritual power in man. This is explained by the fact that the creator followed Western philosophy, not the ancient teachings of the East.

REFERENCES

- [1] A. Camus, *The Stranger*, Tashkent: Writer, 1995.
- [2] S. Doniyorova, "The problem of the national spirit and hero in Uzbek novels of the independence era," Doctoral Dissertation, Philology, Tashkent, 2012.
- [3] N. Eshonqul, *From "me" to "me"*, Tashkent: Akademnashr, 2006.
- [4] N. Eshonqul, *Goroglu or the water of life*, Tashkent: Gafur Gulam National Institute of Literature, 2018.
- [5] U. Hamdam, *Balance. Novel*, Tashkent: Sharq NMAK, 2007.
- [6] T. Matyokubova, "The poetic charm of Gafur Gulam's poetry (on the example of an analysis of the poet's poems 'Observation' and 'Health')," *Uzb. Lang. Cult.*, no. 2, pp. 88–98, 2024.
- [7] T. Matyokubova and I. Yakubov, "Laboratory works of Gafur Gulam: poetic image and imagery," *J. Crit. Rev.*, no. 7, pp. 28–37, 2020.
- [8] Z. Pardaeva, "Principles of development of current Uzbek novels," Ph.D. Dissertation, Philology, Tashkent, 2003.
- [9] M. Pirnazarova, "Methodological research in current Uzbek novels (on the example of O. Mukhtor, H. Dostmuhammad, U. Hamdam, T. Rustam's novels)," Ph.D. Dissertation, Philology, Tashkent, 2006.
- [10] I. Yakubov, "The need for balance and suffering," in *Balance. Novel*, Tashkent: Ulugbek Hamdam, 2007, pp. 261–271.
- [11] I. Yakubov, "The image of the transformations in the character's soul in Erkin A'zam's film 'Zabarjad'," *Uzb. Yazyk Kult.*, no. 2, pp. 66–77, 2024.
- [12] I. Yakubov, "Transformation of aesthetic views and modern Uzbek novel," *Theor. Appl. Sci.*, no. 12, pp. 120–125, 2017.
- [13] S. I. Yakubova, "The image of poetic images related to landscape in modern poetry," *Uzb. Lang. Cult.*, no. 3, pp. 42–54, 2022.
- [14] S. I. Yakubova, "Symbols in Jadid poetry: semiotic and hermeneutic interpretation," *Uzb. Lang. Cult.*, no. 3, pp. 79–90, 2023.
- [15] Q. Yuldoshev, *Burning word*, Tashkent: New generation, 2006.