

“LONGING” AS A MAIN THEME IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK BILDUNGSROMANS

Safarova Zilola Tolibovna*

*Senior Teacher,
PhD,
Department of English Literature Studies,
Bukhara State University,
Bukhara, UZBEKISTAN
Email id: safarovaenglishteacher@gmail.com
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ABSTRACT

English and Uzbek Bildungsromans are characterized with their realistic-artistic depiction of the life of orphan children and their education. Therefore, in most of the Bildungsromans which are the part of the children's literature, the similar motives are visible in the depiction of the image of orphan heroes. For instance, in almost all Bildungsromans of the world literature, the writer tries to show how the orphan hero suffered from hunger, loneliness and longing for their family. Especially, the works of English writers Charles Dickens and Charlotte Bronte, Uzbek writers Khudoyberdi Tukhtaboyev and Erkin Malik provide the realistic depiction of orphan's life using the above mentioned motives. It is enough to remember the life of Oliver in "Oliver Twist", Florence "Domby and Son", Jeyn in "Jeyn Eyre", Rahmonberdi in "Jannati odamlar" ("The paradise people"), Orifjon and his brothers in "Besh bolali yigitcha" ("A boy with five children"), the boy in the "Bolalik va o'smirlik ko'chalari" – all of them were orphan heroes, who experienced those sufferings.

In English and Uzbek literature, the image of an orphan, a realistic expression of the way of life used by writers is clearly manifested through the motif of longing for their family, in particular for their parents. As mentioned above, these kind of novels are distinguished by the rich depiction of orphans' real experiences and sincere feelings. With the help of these descriptions, the authors achieved to show the real appearance of the society and conditions of their time that make the reader clearly imagine and feel the hardships of abandoned and lonely children.

KEYWORDS: *Uzbek Literature, English Literature, Bildungsroman, Motif, Novel, Orphan Hero.*

INTRODUCTION

The motives of loneliness and longing are very convenient for illuminating the inner experiences of the characters of Bildungsromans. Because the heroes of such novels are orphans separated from their loved ones and families, and the life full of sufferings that is depicted through above-mentioned motives are common for all of them no matter what nationality they are. This article

analyses the similar features in the depiction of orphans' life in some of the English and Uzbek Bildungsromans.

For example, many literary critics admit that Oliver, the hero of Dickens, is an ideal image reflecting the life and mentality of homeless, neglected orphan of the time when the writer lived. In particular, Lydia Murdoch expresses the followings: “... *the depiction of Oliver became the standard image of a child which lasted for the entire century, and thus to a great extent influenced society's perception of orphans*”.¹

In fact, as L. Murdoch noted, the prototype of Oliver depicted not only the life, difficulties, and sufferings of one hero, but also the experience of thousands of helpless children, it has been illustrated as a life tragedy. In the process of highlighting injustice in society, the author expresses the attitude of cruel people to the weak and helpless through the following sentences addressed to Oliver:

“*Mind what I told you, you young rascal!*”² or:

“... *idle young dog and didn't deserve anything* ... ”

Similar humiliating insults and provocations are frequent throughout the work: “... *dreadful creatures that are born to be murderers and robbers from their very cradle*”³

Dickens carefully instills in the reader the fact that the cold treatment caused a deep wound in the hero's heart and had a negative impact in orphan's physical condition. This impact is clearly shown in the following description of the author:

“...*one kind word or look had never lighted the gloom of his infant years*” Or:

“... *sense of his loneliness in the great wide world sank into the child's heart* ... ”.⁴

These offensive words serve to highlight how much the child suffers from loneliness and grows up being depressed.

MAIN PART

These kind of illustrations can be seen on other works written by Ch. Dickens like, “Great expectations”, “Nickolas Nickle by”, “Dombey and Son” and etc. Florence, the heroine of “Dombey and Son” written by Ch. Dickens is also a character condemned to absolute loneliness. After her mother Mrs. Dombey dies while giving birth to the long-awaited child, the baby boy is taken care of by nannies, and Florence spends her days in solitude, she has been forbidden even to visit her brother. If the servants had told Mr. Dombey that Florence was too lonely, and would enjoy playing with her brother, Mr. Dombey would not have agreed at all. Therefore, a wise and kind nanny finds a way to persuade him using a trick. Only when Mr. Dombey is told that it would be beneficial for his son to play with other children, he allows Florence to spend time with her brother. Only this nanny felt the girl's sufferings and tried to be kind to her. However, she was powerless to cure the pain in the heart of a girl who grew up expecting love and care from her father.

Ch. Bronte also reflects the image of lonely heroine in her novel “Jane Eyre” When Jane lost her parents and became an orphan, her uncle was the only relative she could spend time with, but after his death, her uncle's unkind, cruel wife, Mrs. Reed, always humiliated her and isolated her

from other members of the family. It can be seen in the following description: *“I was a discord in Gateshead Hall: I was like nobody there; I had nothing in harmony with Mrs. Reed or her children, or her chosen vassalage. If they did not love me, in fact, as little did I love them. They were not bound to regard with affection a thing that could not sympathise with one amongst them; ...”*⁵ From these sentences, it becomes clear how lonely Jane is, that no one cares about her. In particular, Mrs. Reed’s son, John, had made a habit of teasing Jane and playing with her feelings. Jane’s words about John Reed can justify our opinion: *“He bullied and punished me, not once or twice a day, but continually. Every nerve in my body feared him, and the flesh on my bones shrank when he came near. There were times when my terror of him became too much for me, but I could go to no one for help”*.⁶

The experiences of the girl, who was heartbroken by John’s constant torments and humiliation, were skillfully revealed by the author. It can be seen that Jane’s childhood was spent in suffering both physically and emotionally from the cruel treatment of her relatives. Having no parents and no protector, Jane could find her place in society only by her strength and intelligence. Mrs. Reed directly confronts Jane with the fact that her daughters are superior to Jane in terms of both external beauty and physical state. Jane is called *“nasty Jane Eyre”*. She even tells her children: *“Don’t talk to me about her, John: I told you not to go near her; she is not worthy of notice; I do not choose that either you or your sisters should associate with her”*.⁷

In this passage, Mrs. Reed points out to her son that Jane does not even deserve attention, that she does not want her children to communicate with her, and that they should not talk about her at all. The writer expresses young Jane’s inability to tolerate such unfair treatment and humiliation, through the anger that rises in her heart bursts out through her firm thoughts: *“...I cried out suddenly, and without at all deliberating on my words— They are not fit to associate with me”*.

After the unpleasant incident with John Reed, Jane was sent to the Lowood boarding school, where she was humiliated and punished no less than she was at Gateshead Hall. Jane expresses her first days at school with these words: *“As yet I had spoken to no one, nor did anybody seem to take notice of me; I stood lonely enough: but to that feeling of isolation I was accustomed”*.⁸ As it can be seen, although Jane had been living in the school for several days, no one spoke to her or even noticed her. Jane remembers this situation as a loneliness that was not alien to her. Here, too, it is hinted that the hero always felt alone. Thus, Jane resides in Lowood for eight years. During this period, no one remembers her and does not come to see her.

The motif of longing has been skillfully used by Uzbek writer Erkin Malik in his novel *“Years of Childhood and Adolescence”* (*“Bolalik va o’smirlik ko’chalari”*). The hero loses his mother in the beginning of the novel and till the end suffers missing her. In the image of Sister Mujgan, the child seems to find his lost mother. Because he did not see love at home, when sister Mujgan kissed him on the face and eyes and patted on his shoulder, he impulsively hugged her by the neck and did not want to release. The inner feelings of the excited boy, comes out to the surface from this unexpected care. The smell of Sister Mujgan also reminds the child of his mother, at such times he cries and asks his father to find his mother.

In the work *“A boy with five children”*, Khudoyberdi Tokhtaboyev vividly showed the sufferings of children who are forced to miss their loved ones due to war. Although one hundred and seven

children living in the orphanage have different characters, they are united by one dream, one wish and one pain. This pain is “longing” for parents. In the part entitled “The night lament of the orphans” (“Yetimlarning tungi nolishi”⁹) the writer clearly depicts this. At night all the children came to the hole that was on the ceiling and adjured to the God telling the name of their parents or other family members. They believed that their lamentations would reach God and their loved ones who had gone to war would return.

With such descriptions, the author reveals how pure the hearts of children are, and how their unfortunate fate forced them to become bullies. This situation in the orphanage is depicted so skillfully that the children’s cry reaches the depths of any heart. “... Yotoqxonamizdagi ellik uch bolaning hammasi cho’kka tushib olib, qiblaga qarab qo’llarini yozgancha nolish qilyapti.... Mehribon kishisining bir og’iz shirin so’zi, suyub erkalatishi, bag’riga bosishi xumor qilgandilarni. Mehrga, muhabbatga tashna qalblar faryod chekardi hozir”.¹⁰ (“... All the fifty-three children in our dormitory are kneeling down, pointing their hands towards the QIBLA, and are moaning... All they wanted was to have one sweet word of a kind man, a kind patting on their head, a loving embrace. Hearts thirsty for love and affection were crying now.”) Children imagined themselves sitting on their father’s and mother’s lap. Unfortunately, it was only in the imagination. In fact, someone’s mother, someone’s father was already dead and would never come back. Admitting this is very difficult for these young hearts.

In “Paradise People”, the writer skillfully highlights the sufferings of a young hero who was separated from his mother. The reader feels this for the first time when Rahmonberdi expresses his feelings of longing to his grandmother (he called his mother as grandmother) who came to see him: “Menam sog’indim, mana shu ko’zlarim bilan sog’indim. Kechasiyam sog’inaman, o’ynayotganimdayam sog’inaman, har kuni ko’rgim keladi. Keyin enamga bildirmay yig’lab yig’lab olaman. Endi ketmaysizmi?”¹¹ (“I miss you, I miss you with these eyes. I miss you at night, I miss it when I’m playing, I want to see you every day. Then I cry without showing my grandma. You won’t leave again, will you?”) These three lines illustrate that a young hero spent his days missing his mother. The reader can vividly imagine and feel the pain that was hidden under his capricious actions and words.

The inner feeling of the hero has also been shown by the depiction of his happiness when his mother came to see him and he slept with her under the same blanket. The dreams of this innocent child, who was deprived of his mother’s love, show how great is the pain that is gnawing at his heart: “Ko’rpaga kirishim bilan buvimni mahkam achomlab oldim. Oh, qanday yaxshi-ya, qanday mazza-ya, qani endi, ming yil shunday qilib yotsam, hech ham tong otmasa, bomdod namozigayam turmasak, keyin ikkovimiz qo’shilib bitta bo’lib qolsak, hech kim ajratmasa.....”¹² (“As soon as I got into the bed, I hugged my grandmother tightly. Oh, how good it is, how fun it is, I wish I could sleep like this for a thousand years, may it never dawn, may we don’t even get up for the morning prayer, and then we both become one, and no one separates us...”)

CONCLUSION

Throughout their historical development in all periods the works created in English and Uzbek literature showed common features in the selection of genres, themes and motives. The analyses of Bildungsromans also show that “longing” is one of the common motives that is used to show

the inner feelings and real sufferings of young heroes. By these descriptions, the writers try to awaken a sense of affection in the hearts of people. They want the readers to understand that orphans need more care and love, and it's the duty of grown-ups to think about the fate of those children.

It should be admitted that the feelings, dreams and pains of orphan children are depicted in the same way in both English and Uzbek literature.

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