



Article

Depiction of Nature in the Works of Tog'ay Murod

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Abstract: This article analyzes the role and artistic-aesthetic significance of nature imagery in the works of Tog'ay Murod, a major representative of modern Uzbek prose. Using the examples of his novellas and the novel "Otamdan qolgan dalalar," the article demonstrates the inseparable connection between natural landscapes and the characters' psychological states, as well as the ideological content of the works.

Keywords: Tog'ay Murod, nature imagery, landscape, national color, psychological parallelism, folklore style

1. Introduction

The issue of the depiction of nature has consistently remained a significant subject in contemporary Uzbek literary studies because natural landscapes in literary works serve not merely as a background but as an essential artistic device that reveals the psychological state of characters, conveys the ideological and philosophical content of a work, and reflects the national worldview [1]. As a writer who established a distinctive narrative style closely associated with Uzbek folklore, Tog'ay Murod provides particularly valuable material for investigating this issue [2].

Tog'ay Murod entered the literary scene in the 1970s and gained widespread recognition with his novella *The Stars Shine Forever* (Yulduzlar mangu yonadi), published in the journal *Sharq Yulduzi* in 1976. This success was followed by the publication of the novellas *The Evening When the Horse Neighed*, *People Walking in the Moonlight* [3], and *Mother Earth's Song* (Momo yer qo'shig'i). Between 1986 and 1991, he completed the novel *Fields Inherited from My Father* (Otamdan qolgan dalalar), for which he received the Abdulla Qodiriy State Prize in 1994 [4]. The purpose of this article is to analyze the artistic and aesthetic functions of nature imagery in Tog'ay Murod's works and to examine its relationship with the psychological world of the characters and the national-ideological content of his writings, drawing upon the scholarly views of leading Uzbek literary critics and researchers [5].

Researchers of Tog'ay Murod's literary heritage consistently emphasize the distinctive characteristics of nature imagery in his artistic style. One contemporary study explicitly states [6]:

"The novel portrays the picturesque hills and foothills of the Surkhandarya oasis, the lives of its generous and hardworking people, and the unique beauty of its mountains and landscapes. Depicting natural scenery in close connection with the characters'

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personalities, emotional states, and inner experiences is the defining feature of the writer's works [7]."

This scholarly observation clearly confirms the central function of nature in Tog'ay Murod's prose: nature is not employed merely as decorative scenery but functions as a psychological parallel that reveals the inner world of the characters.

A practical example of this principle of psychological parallelism can be found in *Fields Inherited from My Father* [8]:

"The fox celebrated its daughter's wedding. The sun poured its light as it slowly descended. It spread golden-yellow rays. One could hardly look at its face. One could hardly gaze into its light [9]."

In this passage, the repeated description of the sun scattering "golden-yellow" light and its dazzling brilliance symbolically conveys the heightened emotional atmosphere and optimistic mood of the characters [10].

2. Materials and Methods

Another stylistic feature characteristic of Tog'ay Murod is the use of lexical and syllabic repetition (reduplication) to express continuity and increasing intensity in the depiction of natural phenomena. This technique is particularly evident in the novella *People Walking in the Moonlight*:

"The horizon grew darker and darker; pitch-black clouds swelled and swelled; the clouds spread farther and farther across the sky."

As one researcher observes, although this passage initially appears to be a simple description of nature, it actually possesses profound symbolic and emotional significance, foreshadowing the dramatic intensification of subsequent events.

The broader philosophical dimension of the relationship between nature and humanity is eloquently articulated by the distinguished literary scholar Ibrohim Haqqul, who states:

"The relationship between nature and humanity is both ancient and eternal. From the moment a person enters the world, they live within nature. The farther a person distances themselves from nature, the poorer their spiritual life becomes, and the more vulnerable they are to evil and moral corruption. Nature embraces both humans and animals alike. Above all, nature is the celebration of life itself."

3. Results and Discussion

This philosophical perspective has considerable methodological importance for interpreting Tog'ay Murod's works. His protagonists—such as Dehqonqul and Qoplon—live in close harmony with nature and never become alienated from it; consequently, they are portrayed as morally pure, honest, and spiritually resilient individuals [11].

Another important aspect of Tog'ay Murod's artistic vision is the close relationship between national identity and the natural environment of the Surkhandarya region. Scholars emphasize that the writer spent his childhood in Surkhandarya, and accordingly, the landscapes and authentic people of this region occupy a central place in his literary works. This geographical and biographical connection lends exceptional authenticity and concreteness to his depictions of nature. Rather than presenting generalized or abstract landscapes, he vividly portrays the distinctive environment of the region with which he was intimately familiar from childhood [12].

In his work *Horizons of Literary Criticism*, the literary scholar A. Rasulov highly appreciates the ability of gifted writers to create original artistic forms in Uzbek prose. This methodological position is equally applicable to evaluating Tog'ay Murod's portrayal of

nature. According to Rasulov, only those artistic forms that embody profound ideological meaning and reveal a new aesthetic beauty deserve a lasting place in literature. This principle fully explains the originality and artistic innovation of Tog‘ay Murod’s nature imagery [13].

The affinity between Tog‘ay Murod’s style and Uzbek folklore also deserves special attention. Researchers note that although his works exhibit stylistic features closely associated with folklore, their artistic value remains exceptionally high precisely because they are deeply rooted in the living language of the people. This folkloric quality is particularly evident in his frequent use of reduplication—such as “darker and darker” and “swelled and swelled”—which recalls traditional poetic devices found in Uzbek oral epics and folk narratives [14].

From the perspective of Viktor Shklovsky’s theory of *ostranenie* (defamiliarization), Tog‘ay Murod’s repetitive stylistic constructions are especially noteworthy. According to Shklovsky, the function of art is not simply to enable recognition but to make perception vivid and renewed. Expressions such as “the sun poured golden-yellow light” or “the clouds spread farther and farther” transform ordinary natural phenomena into rhythmically intensified and emotionally charged images, encouraging readers to perceive familiar scenes in an unfamiliar and aesthetically enriched manner [15].

The novella *The Evening When the Horse Neighed* also demonstrates the inseparable relationship between nature and national identity. Scholars observe that the beautiful hills of the Surkhandarya oasis are portrayed in close correspondence with the emotional states of the characters, while changes in nature mirror fluctuations in their inner experiences. Furthermore, the depiction of the traditional kupkari horse game situates natural landscapes within a broader collective and cultural context, illustrating that nature functions not only as an individual psychological symbol but also as an integral component of national customs and communal life.

The prominent Uzbek writer Odil Yoqubov offered a memorable evaluation of *People Walking in the Moonlight*, describing it as “a melody of love—or rather, a song about two pure hearts whose love enabled them to overcome every storm of life.” This metaphorical characterization (“melody” and “song”) indirectly confirms the lyrical and musical quality of Tog‘ay Murod’s prose, which closely resembles the expressive traditions of Uzbek folk songs. Even the metaphor of the “storm” reflects the long-established literary practice of expressing human struggles through images drawn from nature.

Finally, *Fields Inherited from My Father* is a social novel that vividly portrays the oppressive policies of the Soviet regime, the arduous labor of Uzbek farmers, and the hardships of rural life with remarkable realism. Within this work, the images of the field and the earth occupy a central symbolic position. The title itself foregrounds the concept of inherited land. Here, the field is not merely a geographical setting but a profound symbol of the peasant’s life, labor, suffering, and historical memory, embodying the artistic expression of the concept of Mother Earth. This broader philosophical symbolism can also be interpreted through the theory of typological correspondence developed by Dionýz Ďurišin. The archetype of Mother Earth represents a universal literary symbol found across world literature, including Russian literature, where it occupies a prominent place in numerous works depicting the intimate relationship between humanity and the land.

Researchers who have analyzed the interpretation of the aesthetic ideal in Tog‘ay Murod’s novellas particularly emphasize the concept of revealing the aesthetic ideal through the portrayal of the protagonist’s character. This aesthetic ideal is, in many instances, embodied in characters who live in harmony with nature and remain inseparable from it. Such an approach fully corresponds to the philosophical proposition advanced by Ibrohim Haqqul: a person who remains close to nature preserves spiritual

purity, whereas one who becomes alienated from it gradually loses moral and spiritual integrity.

From the perspective of Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of the chronotope, the natural environment of the Surkhandarya oasis in Tog'ay Murod's works may be interpreted as a distinctive national chronotope—a unique unity of time and space. Within this chronotope, natural time (the changing seasons and the alternation of day and night) is inseparably intertwined with historical and social time (the era of the Soviet authoritarian regime), forming a unified artistic and philosophical whole.

The depiction of nature in Tog'ay Murod's works can also be examined from a generic perspective. In his novellas—*The Stars Shine Forever* (*Yulduzlar mangu yonadi*), *The Evening When the Horse Neighed* (*Ot kishnagan oqshom*), *People Walking in the Moonlight* (*Oydinda yurgan odamlar*), and *Mother Earth's Song* (*Momo yer qo'shig'i*)—nature primarily functions as a lyrical and emotional background. In contrast, in his novel *Fields Inherited from My Father* (*Otamdan qolgan dalalar*), nature assumes a broader social and historical function, reflecting the wider realities of society. This distinction demonstrates the author's ability to adapt his artistic techniques according to the specific requirements of different literary genres.

The title *Mother Earth's Song* itself deserves particular attention. The combination of the word mother (or grandmother, symbolizing ancestry) with earth conveys the sacred status of the land as an ancient inheritance passed down through generations. Through this title, Tog'ay Murod presents nature—especially the earth—not as an inanimate object but as a living, respected, and metaphorically “singing” entity. Such anthropomorphism reflects an ancient artistic tradition rooted in Uzbek folklore, particularly in its animistic and mythological worldview.

Likewise, the title of *The Stars Shine Forever* expresses philosophical and existential meanings through the cosmic image of the star. The metaphor of “eternal shining” symbolizes humanity's aspiration toward enduring values such as love, loyalty, honor, and dignity through the image of the eternally radiant star. Employing cosmic and natural imagery to convey philosophical and ethical ideas has long been a characteristic feature of classical Uzbek poetry and oral literature, and Tog'ay Murod successfully adapts this tradition to prose.

The character of Dehqonqul, featured in *The Evening When the Horse Neighed*, is equally noteworthy for both his language and personality. Scholars observe that Tog'ay Murod carefully selected expressions that correspond to Dehqonqul's simple, sincere, and straightforward character. His harmonious relationship with nature once again reflects Ibrohim Haqqul's philosophical concept: an individual who remains close to nature preserves moral purity and authenticity. Even the protagonist's name—Dehqonqul (“farmer” combined with “servant” or “devotee”)—symbolically expresses his inseparable connection with the land and agricultural labor.

Another distinctive feature of Tog'ay Murod's style is the use of dialectal vocabulary in describing nature. Researchers note that dialectisms are employed skillfully throughout all of his works. The inclusion of lexical items characteristic of the Surkhandarya dialect enhances the authenticity, local color, and ethnographic vividness of natural descriptions, distinguishing his prose from standard literary language and contributing to its unique stylistic identity.

From the perspective of Dionýz Ďurišin's concept of national specificity, this dialectal enrichment possesses particular significance. Although Tog'ay Murod addresses the universal literary theme of the relationship between humanity and nature, he enriches it with linguistic and stylistic features specific to the Surkhandarya region, thereby creating an original artistic form deeply rooted in national culture. This represents a classic example of how national literature contributes its unique voice to world literary development.

The emotional impact of Togʻay Murod's prose is likewise inseparable from his depiction of nature. As one researcher notes, all four of his novellas profoundly move and emotionally engage readers because of their remarkable expressive power. This emotional intensity is achieved largely through the rhythmic and musical qualities of his descriptions of nature, particularly through lexical repetition and reduplication. Such repetitive structures create an emotional resonance within the reader, fostering a deeper sense of empathy toward the events and characters.

Viewed through the lens of Roman Jakobson's theory of the poetic function, Togʻay Murod's poetic treatment of nature deserves special consideration. Although he writes in prose, his language frequently follows the poetic principle of equivalence by employing recurring sound patterns and rhythmic repetitions. Consequently, his prose exemplifies what literary scholars describe as poetic prose or rhythmic prose, a stylistic phenomenon also found in the works of internationally recognized authors such as Mykhailo Kotsiubynsky and Mikhail Prishvin.

4. Conclusion

The analysis presented above leads to several important conclusions. First, the depiction of nature in Togʻay Murod's works is not merely a decorative element but a central psychological device that reveals the emotional and spiritual states of his characters. This conclusion is directly supported by independent scholarly research. Second, the writer's technique of lexical and syllabic repetition (reduplication) in depicting nature originates from the traditions of Uzbek oral literature and simultaneously produces the effect of defamiliarization (*ostranenie*), renewing the reader's perception of familiar natural phenomena. Third, the relationship between humanity and nature acquires profound philosophical and ethical significance in Togʻay Murod's prose. Characters who remain closely connected with nature are consistently portrayed as symbols of spiritual purity, honesty, and moral integrity. Fourth, in *Fields Inherited from My Father*, the images of the field and the earth transcend their literal meanings to become universal symbols of national suffering, endurance, and historical memory. Future research may further deepen our understanding of nature imagery in Togʻay Murod's literary heritage by conducting comprehensive quantitative and textual analyses of all his works and by comparing his artistic methods with those of other prominent Uzbek writers, such as Abdulla Qahhor and Said Ahmad, as well as with representative works of world literature. The present article should therefore be regarded as an initial and guiding stage of this broader field of scholarly inquiry.

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