

The Role of Women in Society in 18th-20th Century English and Uzbek Literature

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Abstract: This article explores the portrayal of women in English literature spanning the 18th to the 20th centuries, shedding light on evolving societal attitudes towards gender roles. It delves into the struggles, triumphs, and changing roles of women across different historical periods. By analysing various literary works, the research reveals shifting social norms and expectations regarding women. The paper emphasises the diversity of perspectives on women's place and role in society within the selected literary pieces. From the 20th century onwards, particularly during and after the First World War, women began to challenge traditional gender stereotypes and assert their identities. This shift is reflected in English literature, with many feminist writers emerging to depict more nuanced relationships between men and women. The emergence of feminism as a concept is evident during this period, highlighting women's oppression in a male-dominated world. Additionally, the article considers the contemporary situation of Uzbek women, addressing issues such as ego conflicts and misunderstandings, and their desire to be heard and respected in society, despite enduring generational struggles.

1 INTRODUCTION

This study explores the portrayal of female characters in English literature across different periods, including Romanticism, Enlightenment, Victorian, and modernist literature, aiming to understand how these portrayals reflect and challenge women's roles in society. By examining the works of both male and female authors, the study seeks to uncover the intricate relationship between literature and the evolving sociocultural environment, particularly as gender dynamics change over time. In the early 20th century, women's literature began to gain prominence, marking a departure from traditional male-dominated narratives. Authors such as James Joyce, Dorothy Richardson, Virginia Woolf, and D. H. Lawrence experimented with gender roles, highlighting the differences in perspective and experiences between men and women. Notable writers like Jane Austen provided insightful commentary on women's societal expectations in the 18th century, depicting female characters who challenged conventional norms. As society progressed, literature began to reflect changing attitudes towards women's rights and opportunities,

with works like Charlotte Bronte's "Jane Eyre" exploring the struggles of women in Victorian society. The emergence of feminist criticism in the latter part of the 20th century further underscored the importance of literature as a reflection of societal values and beliefs, particularly regarding gender equality and women's rights.

2 ANALYSIS

Feminist literary analysis emerged formally in the 1960s, yet its roots extend deep into history, marked by centuries of discourse on women's rights and societal roles. Across different epochs and cultures, women have faced systemic oppression, beginning with their birth, where they were immediately subjected to paternal authority, labour, and often early marriage, with scant regard for their own desires. In ancient India and Greece, women were relegated to domestic roles, devoid of autonomy, and considered the property of men, while in Victorian literature, the "angel in the house" ideal coexisted with burgeoning feminist movements challenging traditional norms.

Writers like Jane Austen and George Eliot depicted female characters striving for independence, reflecting the shifting societal attitudes towards women's roles.

Antiphon and Pythagoras, among others, advocated for gender equality, countering the prevailing subjugation of women in ancient China and the Arabian Peninsula. In Uzbek literature, women's roles echoed those in English works, portraying their resilience within traditional norms while also advocating for autonomy and challenging societal conventions.

Contemporary literature continues this exploration, with Khaled Hosseini's "A Thousand Suns" providing a poignant depiction of Afghan women's struggles and resilience across generations. Through characters like Maryam, Aziza, and Laila, the novel sheds light on the oppressive environment faced by Afghan women while expressing optimism for a brighter future. It urges universal respect and dignity towards women, lamenting their mistreatment and advocating for their empowerment.

By examining these narratives spanning different periods and cultures, we gain profound insights into the evolving roles and representations of women in literature. These portrayals unveil the intricate interplay between literature and societal norms, illustrating how literature serves as both a reflection of and a catalyst for change in societal perceptions of gender.

The emergence of feminist literary criticism in the 1960s marked a pivotal moment in literary analysis, shining a spotlight on the representation of women in literature and the broader societal implications of these portrayals. While the roots of feminist discourse extend far into history, the formalisation of feminist literary criticism provided a framework for scholars to critically examine the depiction of women in literature and its impact on shaping societal attitudes towards gender roles.

Through close analysis of literary works from various periods, feminist critics have explored how female characters are portrayed, how these portrayals evolve over time, and how they challenge or reinforce societal norms regarding gender. By examining the ways in which female and male authors construct gender in their works, feminist critics have uncovered the complex relationship between literature and the sociocultural environment, revealing how shifts in the status and roles of women are reflected in literary representations.

3 RESULT

"I am Malala" by Malala Yousafzai vividly exposes the brutal realities endured by Pakistani women under Taliban rule. Yousafzai's narrative vividly depicts the harrowing ordeals faced by women and girls, including raids on Afghan homes by Taliban forces resulting in rape and murder. In such dire circumstances, individuals often resort to desperate measures, such as illegal border crossings, to protect their loved ones from harm. Unfortunately, even refugee camps offer little sanctuary, as the Taliban frequently infiltrate them to perpetrate further atrocities.

Yousafzai underscores the dire consequences of innocent lives lost in ongoing conflicts perpetuated by vested interests. She argues that the root cause of such tragedies lies in the neglect of education. Yousafzai advocates for a renewed focus on education as a means to combat violence and promote progress. She contends that prioritizing education and moral development in future generations is essential for effecting positive societal change.

In today's global context, there is a concerted effort to advance women's rights, improve their legal and socioeconomic status, and promote girls' education. However, remnants of discriminatory laws and oppressive practices persist in some societies, underscoring the ongoing struggle for gender equality. Women equipped with critical thinking skills can provide effective guidance to their children, highlighting the pivotal role of education in fostering societal change.

In Uzbek literature, the portrayal of women's rights has been a recurring theme. Writers like Zulfiya Kuroloy, Risolat Haydarova, and Jamila Ergasheva have depicted women's experiences in their novels, leaving a lasting impact on readers. These writers explore themes of female empowerment, resilience, and strength, challenging established norms and advocating for gender equality.

Female characters in modernist literature often grapple with changing social dynamics, questioning traditional gender roles and seeking autonomy. Female authors during this period have played a significant role in shaping the representation of women in literature, offering diverse perspectives and challenging societal norms. Works in both English and Uzbek literature reflect on women's lives, family dynamics, societal roles, and relationships, addressing persistent issues that resonate with contemporary audiences.

Zulfiya Kuroloy's novels delve into the complexities of women's lives, exploring themes of determination, family, and love. Risolat Haydarova's works offer unique insights into the female psyche,

while Jamila Ergasheva's stories captivate readers with their emotional depth and sharp plots. These writers skillfully navigate the intricacies of women's experiences, shedding light on their aspirations, struggles, and joys in society.

The narratives in these works offer poignant reflections of the realities faced by women, urging readers to engage critically with issues of gender equality and women's empowerment. By studying and discussing these narratives, readers gain deeper insights into the evolving roles and representations of women in literature, fostering a greater understanding of their place and significance within society.

4 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the examination of women's roles in English literature spanning the 18th to the 20th centuries reveals a nuanced understanding of gender dynamics. Authors have depicted female characters navigating societal expectations within patriarchal frameworks, shedding light on both the obstacles and aspirations of women. These works contribute to ongoing discussions on gender equality and personal agency, remaining relevant in the broader context of world literature. They offer valuable perspectives on historical and cultural interpretations of women's roles, enriching our understanding of societal norms and the evolving status of women.

Thank you for sharing this insightful article, which explores the portrayal of women in English and Uzbek literature. By comparing cultural and historical contexts, it provides essential insights into the diverse representations of women across different literary traditions. This comparative approach underscores the importance of acknowledging and appreciating the complexities in depicting women's experiences, ultimately enhancing our understanding of gender dynamics in literature and society

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