



Criminal Motifs And Symbols In World And Uzbek Literary Prose

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Abstract: This article explores issues related to criminal motifs and symbolism. A typological study of world literary works based on freedom and objectivity allows for a deeper understanding of their specific features, expands the creative possibilities, and provides a foundation for inspiring research.

Using examples from both world and Uzbek prose, the article reveals that works with criminal plots are characterized by universal themes, engaging and multi-layered narratives, philosophical depth, dramatic and tragic details, high artistic quality, and rich psychological content.

Keywords: Criminal motif, criminal image, symbol, plot, writer's psychology, philosophical concept, problem, social environment.

Introduction: In world literature, as can be seen from experience, within works in the detective-criminal mode a variety of themes appear, yet in the system of philosophical-social ideas the interpretation of issues connected with the motif of crime and punishment takes the lead. Logically, the most important ideological aim in works related to the detective-criminal subject is also to interpret criminal acts, the activity of criminals, and the inevitability of punishment for these crimes.

While the criminal nature operates directly and fully in some works (as in A. Christie's novel "Ten Little Negro Boys"), in many works it appears in an indirect form. For example, this feature predominates in Theodore Dreiser's *An American Tragedy*, Jack London's *Hearts of Three* and certain short stories, Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Leo Tolstoy's *Resurrection*, Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, Mikhail Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*, Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*.

In fact, within world literature, works of a psychological,

social, philosophical, or domestic (everyday) cast that employ features of detective-ism and criminal-ism are valued as substantial creations with powerful ideological-artistic effect. The reason is that the use of criminal realities within works of a socio-psychological and social-domestic spirit ensures the vitality and naturalness of these works.

The lifelikeness and truthfulness in artistic works; the bold raising of the era's acute social, moral, and psychological issues; the disclosure of the human being and the hidden aims and ideas beneath consciousness; sharp dramatic tension and profound humanism are today finding expression in the interactive process of enriching young people's spirituality, helping them to understand themselves, and enter into relations with society.

What is distinctive about works that reflect the criminal motif is that the traits characteristic of a hero's character are clarified through artistic detail. Portraiture is also among the elements of artistic detail. As the literary scholar D. Quronov notes, artistic detail is "a piece of description in a work that expresses a specific content and bears an ideological-artistic load. ... Behind the detail there exists a certain reality: details of everyday life or place, portrait features, etc." Regarding the significant aspect of details in literary studies, there are scholarly observations in Russian literary scholarship by E. Dobin and B. Nabokov, and in Uzbek literary studies by scholars such as B. Sarimsoqov, T. Boboyev, and U. Nosirov.

In adventure-detective and criminal works, the relatively broad and complete realization of the dramatic or tragic image is manifested in examples of prose or dramatic works. The criminal motif is also counted among the leading features of the oeuvre of one of world literature's great representatives, Edgar Allan Poe. In this respect, his story "The Red Death" attracts attention. The Red Death is, figuratively, a symbol of evil, an entity in the rank of a colossal criminal.

"The unexpected guest was tall, broad-shouldered, wrapped from head to toe in fabric. The mask covering his face resembled that of a corpse. This unknown 'jester' wanted them to feel that he was precisely the Red Death. Bloodstains were clearly visible on his white garments, and a dark red blotch of blood was reflected on his face."

The masked unknown in the guise of the Red Death is a symbol of a ruinous policy, an oppressive land. With the insight of a thinker, E. Poe sought in an allegorical-poetic form to suggest that a state order showing no sign of goodness or justice would not cease corroding society and committing tyranny and violence against

the people. The bloodstains on the white robe are the image of a despotic and evil policy.

In world literature—and notably in Uzbek literature as well—there exist such forms as the criminal image-symbol and the criminal motif-symbol, which manifest themselves in various great and small forms of crime. In particular, the symbol of usury is among the criminal aspects of crime and has prompted the creation of many works of fiction. In his poem *The Divine Comedy*, Dante Alighieri, with artistic profundity, depicts the fate of hardened usurers—who amassed great wealth by oppressing the poor—suffering grievous torment in the ever-burning realms of hell.

In Russian literature, Dostoevsky in the novel *Crime and Punishment* illuminates the pitiable fate of the "sharti ketib – parti qolgan" tenant old woman, Alyona Ivanovna, a typical symbol of usurers, as a personification of society's vice.

The usurer old woman Alyona Ivanovna appears only in the first one or two chapters of the novel. For the most part—about ninety percent—the interpretation of the work concerns the process of identifying the culprit of this murder, and, on that pretext, depictions of Russian life in that turbulent time, intertwined with the fate of poor souls like Rodion. The author does not blame Raskolnikov for the murder. In fact, the "sharti ketib – parti qolgan" usurer old woman might simply have died of her own death sooner or later. The episode of the old woman killed by Raskolnikov's hand is, first of all, a confirmation that the usurer's fate in any case leads to death and, in the hereafter, to hell; moreover, in bourgeois Russia it constitutes a social reality whereby the pitiable fate of Raskolnikovs could lead them to commit any crime.

In our view, exposing the vice of usury—condemned in religion and in the holy scriptures—was one of the important aims of Dostoevsky's ideological career. True, the old landlady does not draw attention as an overt usurer like Gobseck (Balzac), Plyushkin (Gogol), or Qori Ishkamba (S. Ayni). Yet essentially she is no less of a profiteer than the great usurers: a hypocritical old woman who pays no heed to a person's condition, poverty, or deprivation, thinking day and night only of her base greed—an interpretation the writer renders to artistic perfection.

Depicting the pawnbroker old woman's household and how immaculately she keeps her rooms through Rodion's gaze, the author seeks to suggest how much wickedness and self-interest lie behind this "spotless order."

There are works in Uzbek prose, too, that create the image of the usurer, and Sadriddin Ayni's novella *The Usurer's Death* attracts attention for its satirical-tragic

quality. From the very title—where the usurer's fate is declared to be death—the ideological and philosophical pathos of the novella is evident.

It is known that, however noteworthy the tradition of satire or the school of the novella genre in Uzbek literature may be, Sadriddin Ayni created *The Usurer's Death* with a distinctive poetic innovativeness; as a result, this novella emerged as a very new and unique specimen of this tendency in Uzbek and Tajik literatures. S. Ayni became recognized as a capable writer in Central Asian literature who was able to create some of the first major examples of prose akin to world literature. The figure of the usurer named Qori Ishkamba—an embodiment of usury, profiteering, and squalor in the novella—along with the ideological scope of the reality portrayed, can also be found in examples of Eastern literature. Ayni's novella is written in the manner of such works in world prose.

At the center of the novella stands a figure who, brought forth by the socio-political life of colonial Turkestan at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, is in his entire being a model of squalor. Among the people, Qori Ishkamba is a contemptible symbol of usury, a man who, for money and worldly goods, is ready to throw himself from a roof; who neither eats, nor drinks, nor clothes himself, having become a slave to money; who ties the meaning of his whole life to coins amassed penny by penny; who even in his dreams sees money and gold; whose dealings with relatives are governed by thoughts of self-interest. The type of Qori Ishkamba is characteristic of the Muslim world of Central Asia and of the social epoch of Bukhara.

The events of the work are narrated by the author—Sadriddin, a madrasa student.

"There is a man called Qori 'Ishkamba.' He owns several cells. If you ask him, he'll lend you one of his cells to stay in for a while," he said.

My friend's advice drew my attention less to whether that man would give me a cell or not than to his name: Qori Ishkamba?" The friend's suggestion—the strangeness and appeal of the name "Qori Ishkamba" to a student who had come from the distant village of Soktare in the G'ijduvon district to study—sets the knot and the allure of the plot system in the work.

Indeed, the stomach of animals is called "ishkamba." How such a name came to be given to a person heightens one's curiosity about the fate of this usurer, and then he shares this astonishment with his friend and asks for an explanation. According to his friend, the man's name is Qori Ismat. But some say "Qori Ismat Ishkam," some "Qori Ismati Ishkamba," and some

shorten it to "Qori-Ishkamba." In this way the writer substantiates the fate of Qori Ismat through an interesting angle. All the lifelike episodes and every detail in the work are directed toward showing how two traits—selfishness and bondage to money—are so fully embodied in a single figure, and the writer consistently keeps this in view. Characteristic of Qori Ishkamba's nature is that, after renting out a cell, he can saddle the tenant with the obligation of treating him to a good meal at least every other day; if he happens to drop by an acquaintance's shop, he has the shopkeeper buy something, eats and drinks it himself, and does not hesitate to make the shopkeeper pay; passing by a poor person selling sweets on the street, he may freely slip some things into his own little bag and walk off; leaning on the money he has in the bank, he makes a habit of drinking tea every day in a glass filled with sugar in the presence of the bank clerks; he even has no qualms about asking for a loan from someone to whom he himself has lent money at interest, on the pretext that he has no cash...—and such depictions could be continued.

As Matyoqub Qo'shjonov observes, "From S. Ayni's biography it is known that he personally saw and observed the lives of any number of Ishkambas, and that in real life he repeatedly collided with this kind of type. Perhaps for that reason, all the deeds of the miser, the beggar-for-money Qori Ishkamba are so natural and cling so closely to him that his antics and machinations leave the reader with not the slightest doubt."

The conclusion of the work—its ideological peak—is tied to the moment when, at prayer time, he hears from someone nearby that the bank has passed in its entirety into the hands of the new Soviet authority. Realizing that all his wealth is gone, Qori Ishkamba does not rise back from his current state of prostration, for his "heart burst, and he breathed his last upon the prayer rug." By this the writer wishes to say: such is the usurer's hereafter.

In the figure of Qori Ishkamba, elements of tragedy and comedy merge. Even his speech is brimming with high-flown, rhetorical sentences, and his facial expressions and gestures are depicted in keeping with such grandiloquence.

Crime and punishment phenomena are, first of all, a distinctive component of life itself—one of the painful facets of human fate—and, at the same time, among the subjects of fiction that possess philosophical-social, legal-ethical, or religio-historical substance. Generally speaking, by the nature of detective-criminal works, plot engrossment—and even a compatibility with the architectonics of magical realism—is regarded as a characteristic feature of such works.

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