

# Expression Of Gender Roles And The Concepts Of Loyalty And Betrayal In Literary Images

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**Abstract:** This article analyzes the artistic interpretation of gender roles and the motifs of loyalty and betrayal in literary images. It examines the emergence of the gender approach as a methodological criterion in 20th–21st century literature, the representation of male and female characters within socio-cultural contexts, and the linguistic, psychological, and aesthetic dimensions in which the concepts of loyalty and betrayal are interpreted. Using examples from Uzbek and world literature, the article demonstrates how loyalty is associated with devotion, duty, and spirituality, while betrayal is connected with freedom, personal interest, or inner crisis. It is emphasized that contemporary literature revisits gender stereotypes and, through literary images, reflects society's changing values from a new aesthetic perspective.

**Keywords:** Gender roles, literary image, loyalty, betrayal, aesthetic interpretation, female image, male image, linguoculture, gender stereotypes, modern literature.

**Introduction:** Literature is a reflection of human thought and spirituality, through which the moral, social, and cultural values of society are depicted and analyzed. In particular, gender roles expressed through literary images, as well as universal concepts such as loyalty and betrayal, are shaped in close connection with the creator's aesthetic worldview, the ideology of the period, and the cultural environment. These ideas, serving as artistic means that reveal the deeper layers of human psychology, not only determine the character of literary images but also define the ideological and aesthetic weight of the work as a whole.

In the literature of the 20th–21st centuries, the gender approach has become an important methodological criterion in the analysis of literary images. The ways in which male and female characters are created, as well as their attitudes toward loyalty or betrayal, intersect with the ideals of societies shaped by patriarchal norms or striving for gender equality. The gender theories of contemporary Western scholars such as Judith Butler and Simone de Beauvoir provide a foundation for a deeper exploration of these issues. For example, Butler emphasizes that "gender is a social process constituted through repeated performances" (Butler, 1990).

Based on literary criticism, psychoanalysis, and

linguocultural research, it becomes evident that loyalty for men is more often associated with devotion to the homeland, a friend, or an ideal, while for women it is linked with love, family values, and fidelity to a husband. Betrayal, on the other hand, is interpreted in women as a pursuit of personal freedom, and in men as a manifestation of ambition or self-interest. Such contrasting approaches appear with varying degrees of emphasis in the analysis of literary images.

In Uzbek and world literature—particularly in the works of writers such as A.S. Pushkin, Alisher Navoi, Said Ahmad, O'tkir Hoshimov, Erkin A'zam, and Tohir Malik—the motifs of loyalty and betrayal are employed as profound aesthetic tools within a gender context. This article analyzes how these motifs are expressed through literary images and how they reflect gender stereotypes or represent new approaches through their artistic interpretation.

The relevance of this research lies in the fact that in contemporary linguocultural thinking, gender issues are increasingly moving to the center of literary and cultural discourse. This, in turn, necessitates the study of literary texts not only from artistic and aesthetic perspectives, but also through socio-gender lenses.

**Gender Roles and Literary Images.** In literature, gender

roles represent the artistic expression of the social and spiritual positions of men and women, their place in society, their level of agency in decision-making, their emotional state, and their social functions. The gender approach emerged as a distinct method in literary criticism in the second half of the 20th century. Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949), in which she asserts that "woman is the 'other' created by man," laid the foundation for analyzing gender constructs in modern literary studies (Beauvoir, 1949).

The literary formation of male and female images is closely connected with the author's worldview, the system of societal values, and the ideological climate of the period. In Uzbek literature, this phenomenon is particularly evident in the works of writers such as Said Ahmad, Erkin A'zam, Shukur Xolmirzayev, Zulfiya, and Oydin Hojiyeva. For example, in Said Ahmad's *Kelinlar qo'zg'oloni* ("Revolt of the Brides"), the traditional female image (Domla aya) is contrasted with a new, active, self-determining woman (Bahriniso). Through this contrast, the author artistically depicts the evolution of gender roles—from the "devoted mother" to the "independent woman."

Male characters are often enriched with qualities that represent social masculinity, such as strength, willpower, courage, intellect, and loyalty to duty. For example, Asqarjon in O'tkir Hoshimov's novel *Ikki eshik orasi* ("Between Two Doors") is portrayed as a conciliatory, patient, yet principled man who remains faithful to his values. Through this character, the author demonstrates that masculinity is not merely about physical strength, but is linked to moral elevation and a sense of responsibility.

In contemporary literature, however, the reinterpretation of gender roles is accompanied by the emergence of women as subjects with autonomous agency. In Erkin A'zam's story *Hijron kunlari* ("Days of Separation"), the female protagonist consciously makes her own choice. Although this choice may be perceived as betrayal by society, from psychological and individualistic perspectives it represents an act of freedom and self-realization (Khudoyberdiyeva M. (2018). "The Female Image and the Gender Approach in Modern Uzbek Short Stories." *Uzbek Language and Literature*, No. 5, pp. 40–45).

Also, in the novel *"The Last Bullet"* by Tahir Malik, the images of men are considered within the framework of such values as loyalty, patriotism, friendship, but in some cases they are depicted as contradictory, that is, as a subject making a choice between loyalty and interest. This reveals both the dynamic and contradictory nature of gender roles.

In world literature, especially in feminist literary

analysis, gender roles are considered as a product of social priorities and normative forces. Judith Butler writes about this: "Gender is not an existing reality, but a continuously performed scenario" (Butler, 1990). Through literary images, these scripts are disrupted or reinforced.

In conclusion, it can be said that gender roles serve as the main socio-cognitive factor in the formation of literary images. Through the images of men and women, such concepts as loyalty, betrayal, courage, selflessness, and freedom become an artistic reflection of gender relations in society. Modern literature shows a tendency to renew these roles, give alternative interpretations, and break stereotypes.

Gender-based interpretation of loyalty and betrayal: Loyalty and betrayal are universal moral concepts that form the basis of human relationships, and their interpretation through literary images has significant differences based on gender. According to socio-gender stereotypes, women are associated with more emotional loyalty, while men are associated with ideological or patriotic loyalty. At the same time, this difference is also noticeable in the approach to infidelity: a woman's infidelity is more morally punishable, while a man's infidelity can be justified through social or political conflict.

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In male characters, loyalty is more associated with principles, ideas, friendship, or duty to the homeland. In O'tkir Hoshimov's novel *"Between Two Doors,"* Asqarjon's loyalty is depicted as devotion to his father, village values, and beliefs. Such images of loyalty elevate a man to a level of spiritual elevation. Also, in Tahir Malik's novel *"The Last Bullet,"* loyalty is closely connected with friendship and honesty. The hero risks his life to save his friend from betrayal. Through this, a man's loyalty is reflected more as strength, courage, and self-sacrifice.

The gender-based interpretation of betrayal is clearly manifested in social sanctions and ethical evaluation criteria. In literature, a woman's infidelity is often interpreted as a moral crisis, which makes the image of

a woman worthy of social punishment. In Erkin A'zam's story "Days of Separation," the female protagonist chooses her freedom by renouncing family values. Although this choice is considered a betrayal in society, the author interprets it as a striving for inner freedom (Khudoyberdiyeva, 2018). This situation shows that in the gender approach, feminine loyalty is opposed to personal choice.

In the image of a man, betrayal is sometimes explained by political necessity or the desire for power. In A.S. Pushkin's tragedy "Boris Godunov," Boris Godunov is forced to kill an innocent prince to preserve his power. Although this betrayal is a moral criminal act, it is attempted to be justified by political necessity (Likhachev, 1982). Here, male infidelity is the power hierarchy in society, the ruler

The difference based on gender is that in literature, women's devotion is emotional, while men's devotion is ideological or spiritual. A woman's betrayal is a betrayal of love and trust, while a man's betrayal is often interpreted as a decision based on a principle, idea, or political interest. This shows how gender roles are reinforced or revised through literary images.

Feminist literary analyses view these situations as a product of the patriarchal system. Judith Butler says: "A woman's loyalty is often the repetition of social roles in accordance with the scenario created by men" (Butler, 1990). This creates grounds for interpreting a woman's infidelity not only as an act against moral, but also against social pressure.

Loyalty and betrayal in female characters: The motifs of loyalty and betrayal in female characters are interpreted in close connection with historical and cultural traditions, socio-gender stereotypes, and artistic and aesthetic views. In patriarchal societies, a woman's loyalty was equated with obedience, devotion, and devotion to a man, family, and society. Literature not only reinforced this stereotype, but in some cases also served as a meticulous critique of it. A woman's infidelity is usually interpreted as moral decline or personal reform. The literary interpretation of these motifs is variable and contradictory, reworked by each period and author with a new approach.

Loyalty - as a value and social duty, in traditional literature, the loyalty of the image of a woman is expressed more through spiritual purity, family stability, and devotion to a man. This situation is clearly visible in the character of Shamsiyakhon in Said Ahmad's novel "Silence": she remains faithful not only to her husband, but also to traditions and national values. He sacrifices his feelings, even his happiness, to preserve the integrity of his family and the future of his children. This loyalty leads her into an inner tragedy,

but her social status as a woman increases (Kuronov M. (2005). Literature is the mirror of the soul. Tashkent: Akademnashr, p. 81-82).

In Alisher Navoi's poem "Layli and Majnun," Layli's devotion is interpreted both spiritually and divinely. Despite all worldly temptations, Layli continues to love Majnun, through which she becomes faithful not only to love, but also to spiritual perfection (Rashidov I. The spiritual and aesthetic essence of figurative means in the works of Alisher Navoi. - Тошкент, 2016. - 124 p.).

Is treason punishable or an act of liberation? In modernist and contemporary literature, the question of betrayal in female characters requires an approach as a complex psychological and social process. In this case, a woman's "betrayal" is often reflected in the form of personal freedom, self-awareness, and withdrawal from a social role.

Also, in Oydin Hajiyeva's modern stories, through the images of women, betrayal is expressed not only by abandoning a man, but also by prioritizing one's own needs. This approach transforms the image of a woman into a subject, a person who makes decisions and possesses their needs.

Cultural-contextual views The attitude of female characters in Uzbek literature towards betrayal depends on the moral and religious norms of society. A woman's devotion is also presented as a religious duty. In these cases, a woman's "betrayal" is interpreted not only as a personal act, but also as an act of opposition to society and God.

In conclusion, the motifs of loyalty and betrayal in the images of women play an important role in the social, cultural, and aesthetic formation of literary thought. While loyalty is associated with purity, selflessness, and obedience in traditional works, in modern literature this concept is replaced by a complex internal struggle and conscious choice. And betrayal is now reinterpreted not only as a moral crisis, but also as an actor of abandoning a social role, striving for freedom, and personal self-awareness. This expands the function of female images in society and the range of literary possibilities.

Loyalty and betrayal in the images of men: The expression of the ideas of loyalty and betrayal through the images of men is formed in literature on the basis of a unique poetic system and socio-cultural thinking. In male characters, loyalty is often manifested through devotion to the homeland, idea, friend, or family, willpower, and principles. Betrayal in such images is expressed in the form of going against duty to society, homeland, faith or family, striving for power and authority, preferring interests. These two opposing concepts serve as the main spiritual and educational

axis of the male character in literature.

Social and moral foundations of male devotion in literature The devotion of male characters is often closely connected with the social roles of the head of the family, the defender, the decisive force.

For example, through the character of Asqarjon in Utkir Hoshimov's novel "Between Two Doors," the author combines a man's loyalty with social responsibility, patience, and moral perfection. Even when faced with life's trials, Askar remains true to his beliefs and moral position. He says: "Wherever a person is, he must not forget himself. Because if a person loses their identity, they lose everything" (Hoshimov O. Between Two Doors. Tashkent: Sharq, 2001. 127). This quote reveals the image's life philosophy based on loyalty. Also, in Tahir Malik's novel "The Last Bullet," a man's loyalty is combined with the motifs of friendship, honesty, and patriotism. The hero of the work risks his life in the hope of not revealing the secret of his friend. Through this dedication, loyalty is shown as a symbol of masculinity.

Adabiyotshunos A.A.Saidov writes in his monograph: "In our national literature, the loyalty of the image of a man is manifested more in decisiveness in decision-making, loyalty to personal principles, and in the struggle for one's convictions" (Saidov, A.A. (2017). Personality and Society in Literature: Issues of the Moral Ideal. Tashkent: Science and Technology. p.85). This situation is observed in many classical and modern works.

The image of Pyotr Grinyov in A.S. Pushkin's "The Captain's Daughter" is a young, honest, and romantic interpretation of loyalty. He understands loyalty within the framework of his love, officer duty, and responsibility to his conscience. Pushkin expresses the inner anguish of the character as follows: "I am an officer, don't think to hide me among women. Loyalty is an act measured by honor and pride" (Pushkin A.S. Captain's Daughter. - Тошкент, 2020. - 192 p.).

In male characters, loyalty is also manifested through emotional anguish and tragic choices. In Erkin A'zam's story "I'm Wandering," the main character is depicted as a man who lived a life of loyalty to his family, but lived an unhappy life due to strong inner resistance. He was unable to take advantage of the life opportunity given to him, but thanks to his loyalty, he preserved his human qualities.

Male infidelity: the struggle for power and self-interest In literary images, male infidelity is considered more in an ideological or political context. In this case, the image's betrayal is not personal, but social in nature. In A.S. Pushkin's tragedy "Boris Godunov," the betrayal of power in the image of Boris is connected with justifying

emotional anguish and a tragic ending. Boris's inner anguish is expressed as follows: "I wanted the throne, but not with a clear conscience... The bloody crown weighed heavily on my neck" (Pushkin A.S. Boris Godunov. - Тошкент, 2020. - 160 p.).

In modern Uzbek literature, especially in the works of Tahir Malik and Muhammad Ali, male infidelity is expressed through the struggle for personal gain, power, and independence. In some cases, this betrayal is interpreted not as a conscious act, but as a result of social pressure, the demand of the situation.

For example, when Muhammad Ali creates the image of a man who betrayed his wife in the story "Mirror" as a psychological portrait, he shows that a man's betrayal is not only a moral weakness, but also an internal dramatic struggle through the hero's attempt to justify himself, his state of regret and suffering.

Assessment of male loyalty and infidelity in the gender approach Feminist and gender approaches assess male infidelity as a phenomenon that is often tolerated or justified by society. As Judith Butler said, "A man's infidelity is seen for the sake of power and superiority, while a woman's infidelity is seen as moral corruption. This difference testifies to the strength of patriarchal norms" (Butler, 1990). Therefore, in literary images, a man's infidelity often finds a rational explanation in a philosophical and social context.

This difference is also evident in the works of Said Ahmad, Tohir Malik, Pushkin, and Hoshimov. Men often deviate from loyalty in pursuit of "great goals," but this behavior is justified by their inner drama. Nevertheless, these stereotypes are increasingly criticized in modern literature.

In the images of men, the motifs of loyalty and betrayal are formed in literature as an important idea associated with humanity, morality, and personal principles. While loyalty is reflected in the ideal of masculinity as responsibility, dedication, loyalty to the idea, betrayal is often the result of force, power, personal interest, or forced choice. Through these motifs, writers illuminate the complex spiritual world of the male image, the pressures in social roles, and moral contradictions. Especially through the gender-based interpretation of loyalty and betrayal, men are always on the threshold of moral trials. Modern literature attempts to analyze these motifs not only with traditional symbols, but also in a psychological and social context.

The ideas of loyalty and betrayal in the linguocultural context are a form of thinking that is formed on the basis of the interdependence of language and culture. In this context, moral concepts of loyalty and betrayal are considered as semantic structures that arose as a result of the historical, cultural, religious, and social



experience of the people. Every nation interprets loyalty and betrayal in its language not only at the lexical level, but also through cultural experience, values, and moral norms. Therefore, in literature, these concepts are reflected on the basis of linguocultural peculiarities.

Linguocultural semantics of the concepts of loyalty and betrayal In the Uzbek language, the root of the word "sadoqat" goes back to such concepts as "sodiq," "sodiqlik." This term has a positive semantic field and is associated with such concepts as love, fidelity, trust, dedication, faith, and patience. On the contrary, "treachery" belongs to the negative semantic zone and evokes meanings such as "mistake," "misconduct," "absence of thought," "dehumanization."

Linguist Z. Kadyrova writes in her research: "Loyalty is an ancient moral and cultural code of the Uzbek people. This concept is considered as an unchanging moral criterion within the framework of family, homeland, love, and faith" (Kadyrova, 2019, p. 34). In Uzbek poetry, "loyalty" is often expressed in the context of femininity, love, and patience, for example: "If you have no loyalty, love will go astray" (Kadyrova Z. Expression of values and linguocultural content in the Uzbek language. - Тошкент, 2020. - 128 p.).

The Russian words "верность" (loyalty) and "измена" (treachery) also have their own linguocultural weight. In the works of A.S. Pushkin "Eugene Onegin" or "Boris Godunov," these concepts are always combined with moral and political tension. In Russian culture, "измена Родине" (treason) is considered one of the most serious moral crimes. This interpretation is reflected in the images of Grinyov and Boris Godunov.

The manifestation of linguocultural thinking in literary images is highly valued in Uzbek literature as a semantic unit expressing not only moral ideals, but also the national spirit through images of loyalty. For example, in the works of Said Ahmad, loyalty is often depicted in the images of mother, homeland, and family. Through the image of Shamsiyakhan, loyalty is interpreted as incomparable devotion to the motherland, family, and national values.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the gender roles in literary images, as well as the motifs of loyalty and betrayal, are important aesthetic means of reflecting the historical, cultural, and moral thinking of society in an artistic form. These concepts, expressed through the images of men and women, can reinforce traditional gender concepts or, conversely, reinterpret them and pave the way for modern gender approaches. While loyalty is more associated with purity, dedication, duty, and moral responsibility, betrayal is interpreted as personal

freedom, interest, power, and spiritual crisis. Modern literature approaches these two concepts not one-sidedly, but in a complex psychological, social, and linguocultural context, more deeply illuminating the dynamic nature of gender roles, conflicts in the human psyche, and the changing value system in society.

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