
CONFERENCE ARTICLE**A Comparative-Typological Interpretation Of The Light And Darkness Motif In The Short Stories Of James Joyce And Nazar Eshonqul****Komila Samatovna Umarova**Uzbekistan State World Languages University, PhD Researcher in Philology, Uzbekistan

Abstract: This article presents a comparative-typological analysis of the artistic and philosophical interpretation of the light and darkness motif in James Joyce's short-story collection "Dubliners" and Uzbek writer Nazar Eshonqul's collection "The Wind Cannot Be Caught". The study aims to identify the semantic and poetic functions of this universal motif in the works of the two writers and to reveal its national and aesthetic peculiarities. "The Sisters" – "The Unopened Door", "A Little Cloud" – "The Scent of Mint", "Araby" – "Art", "Eveline" – "Momoqo'shiq", and "The Dead" – "The Dead Season" are examined comparatively. Particular attention is paid to the relationship between light and darkness and such categories as space, memory, psychological state and epiphanic realization. Comparative-typological, hermeneutic and poetic methods of analysis are applied. The study demonstrates that in Joyce's prose darkness is predominantly associated with spiritual paralysis, alienation and delayed realization, whereas in Eshonqul's prose the motif is closely connected with memory, historical consciousness, existential inquiry and the search for meaning.

Keywords: Motif, light, darkness, comparative-typological analysis, epiphany, modernism, James Joyce, Nazar Eshonqul, psychological state, symbol, stream of consciousness.

Introduction

The opposition of light and darkness is one of the oldest and most universal poetic models of humanity's artistic thought in world literature. These two concepts encompass a broad semantic field ranging from religious-mythological conceptions to philosophical, aesthetic and psychological perspectives. Light is conventionally associated with life, understanding, hope, enlightenment, spiritual awakening and truth, while darkness may express ignorance, fear, loneliness, spiritual decline, death and the unknown. In contemporary literature, however, this opposition is not always applied unambiguously. On the contrary, in modernist and postmodernist poetics, light itself may become an emblem of false hope, illusion or ideological pressure, while darkness may become an inner space leading to the realization of truth.

In this respect, a comparative study of the works of James Joyce and Nazar Eshonqul is of particular scholarly significance. As one of the major representatives of twentieth-century world modernism, James Joyce depicted the complex processes of human consciousness, the conflict between the individual and society, and states of spiritual paralysis and alienation through distinctive poetic devices. In his collection *Dubliners*, the geographical space of the city is inseparably bound up with the characters' inner psychological state: the streets, rooms, windows, dark corners, nocturnal scenes and depictions of natural light of the city serve to reveal the characters' spiritual world. In Nazar Eshonqul's prose, too, the opposition of light and darkness performs an important poetic function. The writer tends to focus not so much on external reality as on the human inner world, layers of memory and consciousness, and the complex relationship between society and the individual. For this reason, in his works light and darkness acquire meanings that extend beyond a merely physical phenomenon, taking on psychological, moral, social and philosophical dimensions.

The principal aim of this study is to identify the typological commonalities and national-artistic distinctions in the light and

darkness motif in the short stories of James Joyce and Nazar Eshonqul. To this end, a number of works by the two writers in which the motif plays an active role are compared.

The Poetic Nature of the Light and Darkness Motif. Within a literary text, a motif is never confined merely to an isolated image or detail. It manifests as a poetic unit that binds together the various layers of a work and shapes a particular semantic direction. The distinctive feature of the light and darkness motif is that it simultaneously engages with space, time, the protagonist's psychology and the author's philosophical outlook.

In Joyce's work, light and darkness frequently appear as a device that determines the character's process of realization. As the protagonist observes the external world, a corresponding change also occurs within their inner world; yet this change does not always lead to a positive outcome. On the contrary, the process of realization often reveals the protagonist's own weakness, the spiritual crisis of society, or the collapse of personal aspirations.

In Eshonqul's prose, by contrast, light and darkness are frequently bound up with historical memory, the search for selfhood, spiritual trauma and the social environment. The writer tends to interpret light not as a ready-made truth but as a process of attaining it. For this reason, the search for light within darkness becomes one of the key principles governing the inner movement of Eshonqul's characters.

Darkness in "The Sisters" and "The Unopened Door". In James Joyce's story *The Sisters*, darkness is first and foremost bound up with the environment in which the priest Flynn lives and with his spiritual-moral condition. Details connected with a dark room, an enclosed space, illness and death shape the story's atmosphere. Here darkness is not merely physical obscurity but a symbolic expression of the spiritual stagnation within society.

The closed and dark space of the story also restricts the boy's capacity for understanding. Although the figure of the priest initially appears mysterious and sacred to the boy, this perception gradually changes as the events unfold. Thus,

darkness migrates from the external environment into the protagonist's consciousness, casting doubt on his previously held conceptions.

In Nazar Eshonqul's story *The Unopened Door*, the detail of the door assumes a central symbolic burden. A door is conventionally regarded as a boundary between two spaces, a symbol of possibility and of passage. Its remaining unopened expresses the limitation of possibility, inner isolation, and the obstacles on the path to self-understanding. The typological affinity between the two stories lies in the fact that darkness and enclosed space indicate the limitation of the protagonist's inner freedom. Their artistic function, however, is not identical: in Joyce, the enclosed space is bound up with spiritual paralysis and the religious-social environment, whereas in Eshonqul it becomes a symbolic space that reveals the inner processes of the human psyche.

"A Little Cloud" and "The Scent of Mint": Memory and Spiritual Awakening. In Joyce's story *A Little Cloud*, the light and darkness motif is bound up with the protagonist's unrealized aspirations. Little Chandler compares his own life with Gallaher's outward success. For Gallaher, the great city, career advancement and the opportunity to see the world seemingly signify a bright future. Yet in the course of the story, the inner substance of this "light" is called into question. The narrowness of Little Chandler's home, the monotony of daily life and the unrealized nature of his creative aspirations intensify his spiritual darkness. Here darkness is not confined to the image of a dark room; it manifests in the discrepancy between the protagonist's inner capacities and his actual life.

In Nazar Eshonqul's story *The Scent of Mint*, the image of scent serves as a poetic signal that sets the protagonist's memory in motion. The scent of mint is bound up with naturalness, childhood and a lost spiritual harmony. This detail therefore appears not as a direct manifestation of light but as an inner impulse leading toward it. What unites these two works is the conflict between external life and inner necessity. The difference lies in the resolution of this conflict: Joyce's protagonist moves closer to a state of recognizing his own weakness, whereas in Eshonqul's protagonist the possibility of inner renewal emerges through memory.

"Araby" and "Art": The Problem of False Light. In the story *Araby*, light is bound up with romantic longing and aspiration toward an ideal. For the boy, the Araby bazaar is imagined as a mysterious and beautiful world, onto which he projects a certain romantic meaning. On arriving at the bazaar, however, he perceives the discrepancy between the imagined scene and actual reality. The fading of the light becomes a symbolic expression of the collapse of the protagonist's romantic illusion. In Nazar Eshonqul's story *Art*, too, the discrepancy between outward beauty and true content occupies an important place. The work of art expressing "tranquility," though outwardly signifying light and order, is shown to conceal beneath it a mechanism aimed at controlling human consciousness and concealing the truth.

Thus, in both works two distinct forms of light are distinguished: true light and its outward appearance. The most essential process for the protagonist is precisely the recognition of this difference a process that brings to the surface the modernist conflict between appearance and essence.

"Eveline" and "Momoqo'shiq": Freedom and Fear. In the story *Eveline*, the darkness in the protagonist's life stems from her domestic and social environment. For Eveline, the possibility of departing for another life, moving to a new place and attaining freedom appears as a bright future. Yet at the moment of decision, fear and inner hesitation intensify, and as a result the protagonist proves unable to leave her existing environment. In Nazar Eshonqul's work *Momoqo'shiq*, too, the conflict between the individual and the surrounding social environment is of central importance. The systemic injustice depicted in the work, and the determination of human fate by external forces,

demonstrate the limitation of individual freedom.

The typological commonality of these two works is defined by the human aspiration toward freedom and its restriction by the external environment. Yet whereas in Joyce's protagonist fear manifests with particular intensity as an individual psychological state, in Eshonqul's work the protagonist's tragedy is bound up with a broader social-moral environment.

"The Dead" and "The Dead Season": Life, Death and Spiritual Darkness. Joyce's story *The Dead* offers one of the most complex interpretations of the light and darkness motif. Snow covers the entire city, symbolically uniting the living and the dead within a single space. In this way, a natural phenomenon becomes connected to philosophical reflections on the transience of human existence, memory and death.

By the story's end, the protagonist's inner process of realization deepens. The external natural scene becomes a broad metaphorical space expressing the protagonist's inner state. Here darkness is not merely tragedy; it is a philosophical space that prompts an understanding of the essence of human existence.

In Nazar Eshonqul's story *The Dead Season*, the notion of "deadness" acquires a meaning broader than biological death. The loss of a person's capacity to think, to question and to seek truth is interpreted as a form of spiritual death. A phenomenon that outwardly appears magnificent and luminous may conceal darkness within its inner essence. In this respect, both works demonstrate that light is not always truth, nor is darkness always falsehood. On the contrary, a person's genuine process of realization begins precisely with perceiving the discrepancy between external light and inner darkness.

Typological Commonality and National Distinctiveness. The typological affinity of the light-darkness motif in the works of Joyce and Eshonqul manifests in several respects. First, in both writers this motif serves as a means of expressing the individual's inner state. Second, light is frequently interpreted not as a ready-made truth but as a process leading toward realization. Third, external space is inseparably bound up with the protagonist's inner world. Yet national-artistic distinctions also exist. In Joyce's artistic world, the city of Dublin, the Catholic religious environment, national consciousness under conditions of colonialism, and domestic and social constraints constitute an important context. In Eshonqul's prose, by contrast, historical memory, the spiritual problems of society, the relationship between the individual and the system, national thought, and the individual's existential quest occupy an important place.

Thus, a shared motif acquires different semantic content within different cultural environments. This is one of the important methodological conclusions of comparative-typological research: typological similarity does not necessarily indicate direct influence, but rather demonstrates that similar artistic problems may arise independently within different literary traditions.

Conclusion. The comparative-typological study of the works in James Joyce's collection "*Dubliners*" and Nazar Eshonqul's collection "*The Wind Cannot Be Caught*" demonstrates that the light and darkness motif possesses a complex, multilayered function within the poetics of both writers. In Joyce, darkness is predominantly bound up with spiritual paralysis, alienation, fear and delayed realization, while light frequently appears in the form of a brief epiphanic recognition. In Eshonqul's prose, light and darkness are connected with the individual's historical memory, inner self, spiritual renewal and the search for the essence of existence.

Moreover, in both writers light and darkness do not constitute a rigid opposition but appear as a mutually complementary semantic system: at times darkness lies behind light, and at times the possibility of understanding lies within darkness itself. In this respect, the motif serves as a universal poetic mechanism

expressing the protagonist's inner evolution, the conflict between aspiration and reality, and the process of human self-understanding. Consequently, the comparative analysis of the light and darkness motif in the works of James Joyce and Nazar Eshonqul reveals not only shared human concerns across two distinct national literary traditions but also the national-philosophical distinctiveness of their artistic thought. The study of this typological affinity and its differences serves as an important theoretical foundation for further research into the poetic connections between contemporary Uzbek prose and world modernist literature.

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