

# “Gender-Based Comparative Analysis of the Mother–Child Image in Contemporary Uzbek Short Stories: Salomat Vafo and Xoliyor Safarov”

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## Annotation.

Ushbu maqolada zamonaviy o‘zbek adabiyotida faol ijod qilayotgan ikki yozuvchi — Salomat Vafo va Xoliyor Safarovning hikoyalari qiyosiy jihatdan o‘rganiladi. Salomat Vafoning “Muqaddas manzil” va Xoliyor Safarovning “Qo‘g‘irchoq” hikoyalari ona-bola obrazini turlicha uslubda yoritadi. Ular genderga oid qiyosiy tahlil mezonlari asosida — psixologik chuqurlik, hissiy ta’sirdorlik, dialog tuzilishi, obrazlilik va ramziy ifoda, fokalizatsiya hamda ijtimoiy kontekst nuqtayi nazaridan ko‘rib chiqiladi.

**Kalit so‘zlar:** Psixologik chuqurlik, hissiy ta’sirdorlik, dialog tuzilishi, obrazlilik, ramziy ifoda, fokalizatsiya, ijtimoiy kontekst.

## Abstract

This article provides a comparative study of the short stories of two contemporary Uzbek writers, Salomat Vafo and Xoliyor Safarov. Salomat Vafo’s “Muqaddas manzil” and Xoliyor Safarov’s “Qo‘g‘irchoq” depict the mother–child image in different styles. They are analyzed on the basis of comparative gender-related criteria — psychological depth, emotional impact, dialogue structure, imagery and symbolic expression, focalization, and social context.

**Keywords:** Psychological depth, emotional impact, dialogue structure, imagery, symbolic expression, focalization, social context.

## Introduction.

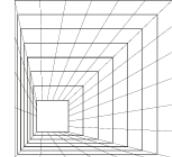
In literary studies, the analysis of short stories is usually carried out through the examination of key elements that serve to reveal their artistic structure and the uniqueness of the author’s style. Research commonly focuses on the compositional structure of the plot, methods of character creation, the main theme of the story, the influence of space and time, the use of imagery and symbols, the peculiarities of language and style, as well as the central ideas conveyed in the text (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002). All these elements shape the aesthetic and ideological weight of the text and determine its overall artistic value.

However, when comparing the styles of male and female writers, it is essential to refine this broad approach and pay particular attention to aspects that reflect diverse life experiences related to gender. The gender approach in literary criticism serves to explore not only the author’s biological sex but also how their worldview, social position, and aesthetic vision are embedded in the literary text

## Theoretical Foundations

1. Psychological depth. According to literary scholar A. Palmer (2004), revealing the consciousness and inner experiences of a character in a work of art is connected with the theory of “fictional minds,” which reflects the writer’s psychological approach. Female writers usually tend to depict emotional and psychological processes with delicacy, while male writers are more inclined to emphasize external reality and social responsibilities.

2. Emotional impact. Emotional tension in literature is one of the key factors that engages the reader with the text. As Hogan (2011) notes, the degree of emotional expression reveals the author’s aesthetic orientation.



3. Dialogue structure. Dialogue reveals the inner world of the characters and their mutual relationships. As Tannen (1990) demonstrates, male and female authors structure dialogues differently: female authors more often show emotional openness and empathy, whereas male authors prioritize functional and external communication.

4. Imagery and symbolic expression. Gilbert and Gubar (1979) argue that symbols in literary texts are directly linked to gender. Female authors tend to employ symbols related to the body, the home, and care, while male authors often use symbols of power, heritage, and social duty.

5. Focalization. Within feminist narratology, Lanser (1986) highlights the significance of events presented through a female perspective, considering “focalization” a central concept for gender theory.

6. Social context. A literary text is closely connected with the socio-cultural environment in which the author lives and writes. According to Moi (1985), gender-based analysis must take into account the social conditions surrounding the text’s creation.

## Main Part

### **Salomat Vafo — Analysis of the short story “Muqaddas manzil”**

In “Muqaddas manzil” the life and suffering of a woman named Tufa are depicted. In the context of poverty, social indifference, and loneliness, motherhood is not portrayed as love and devotion but as a heavy trial leading to tragedy. The child becomes a symbol of suffering, and the story ends with the mother’s tragic act at the dramatic climax.

Psychological depth: The mother’s inner turmoil and monologues are revealed in detail. The clash between maternal instinct and despair draws the reader into the dramatic process.

Emotional intensity: Emotions are sharp and explosive. The mother’s curses, tears, and desperate actions create a strong dramatic effect.

Dialogue structure: Dialogues mainly reflect relations with the external world, though the story’s main weight lies in inner monologues.

Imagery: Symbols such as boiling water, a window, and a flowerpot express the mother’s spiritual torment.

Focalization: The story is told through the mother’s perspective.

Social context: Poverty, the status of women in society, and the lack of social support form the background of the story.

### **Xoliyor Safarov — Analysis of the short story “Qo‘g‘irchoq”**

The short story “Qo‘g‘irchoq” tells of the happy dreams of an ordinary family and their tragic end. The parents lose their child, and the mother is forced to embrace a doll in its place.

Psychological depth: Inner feelings are expressed through external signs—silence, quiet weeping, simple actions.

Emotional intensity: Emotions are restrained, and the tragedy is conveyed in a calm tone.

Dialogue structure: The story contains simple, functional dialogues that reflect the family’s everyday communication.

Imagery: The doll, cradle, and lullaby are the main symbols, representing the loss of the child.

Focalization: Based on third-person observation, allowing the reader to witness events from a distance.

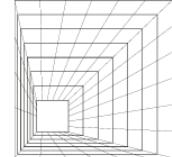
Social context: The story unfolds in a rural setting, where personal tragedy is depicted against the broader background of social life.

## Comparative Analysis

Psychological depth: Vafo employs inner monologues and emotional outbursts; Safarov relies on external signs.

Emotional intensity: In Vafo’s story it is dramatic and sharp, while in Safarov’s it is restrained and calm.

Dialogue: Almost absent in Vafo’s work (with inner monologues dominant), but present as functional exchanges in Safarov’s.



**Imagery:** Vafo uses metaphorical and dramatic symbols, while Safarov employs realistic and everyday ones.

**Focalization:** Vafo's story is told through the mother's eyes; Safarov's through third-person observation.

**Social context:** Vafo emphasizes personal drama, whereas Safarov highlights the social background.

#### **Comparative Analysis Table of Salomat Vafo and Xoliyor Safarov's Short Stories Table 1.**

Criteria	Salomat Vafo ('Sacred Destination')	Xoliyor Safarov ('The Doll')
<b>Psychological depth</b>	The mother's inner monologues, thoughts, and self-reflections are deeply revealed; the conflict between maternal instinct and suffering engages the reader in a dramatic process.	The mother's psychological state is expressed through external signs (silent crying, quiet gestures, ordinary actions), highlighting restrained emotions.
<b>Emotional intensity</b>	Emotions are conveyed with sharp outbursts (curses, screams, crying, despair), creating a highly dramatic effect.	Emotions are restrained, the tragedy is presented in a calm and quiet tone.
<b>Dialogue structure</b>	The story relies heavily on inner monologues; direct dialogues are rare, mostly focused on inner conflicts.	Simple, functional dialogues reflect everyday family communication; dialogue carries a significant role in narrative.
<b>Imagery and symbols</b>	Metaphors and symbols (boiling water, window, flowerpot) vividly represent the mother's psychological turmoil.	Symbols such as the doll, cradle, and lullaby serve as the main representations of the child's loss.
<b>Focalization</b>	The story is narrated through the mother's perspective, immersing the reader in her emotional world.	Events are presented from a third-person observer's perspective, keeping some distance from the characters.
<b>Social context</b>	The story highlights poverty, the marginal status of women, and the lack of social support; the tragedy is rooted in personal suffering within a harsh environment.	The story unfolds in a rural setting, where personal tragedy is shown against the backdrop of broader social life.

#### **Conclusion**

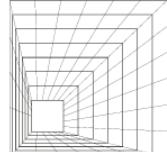
The stories of Salomat Vafo and Xoliyor Safarov depict the mother-child image in different styles. As a female writer, Vafo presents motherhood through inner experiences, emotional outbursts, and metaphorical symbols. This highlights the central role of the female gaze within the gender approach. As a male writer, Safarov conveys tragedy through external events, symbolic images, and restrained emotions.

The comparative analysis shows that gender positions strongly influence the aesthetic and ideological construction of a literary text. While the female writer portrays motherhood as a complex, multifaceted phenomenon full of inner drama, the male writer presents it through a social background and symbolic layers.

Thus, literary analysis based on gender not only reveals differences in authorial style but also provides deeper insights into the artistic representation of gender stereotypes and experiences in society.

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