



The Concept Of Historical Memory And National Thought In 21st-Century Uzbek Novels

Shomurodov Sanat

Assistant Lecturer at Zarmed University, Uzbekistan

ABSTRACT

This article examines the artistic and aesthetic interpretation of the concept of historical memory and national thought in twenty-first-century Uzbek novel writing. It analyses the renewal of the principles of addressing historical themes in Uzbek novel writing after the independence period and the reinterpretation of historical reality and the image of the historical personality on the basis of modern artistic thought. Historical memory is considered an important artistic and aesthetic category for understanding national identity, reinterpreting spiritual heritage, ensuring continuity between generations, and shaping historical responsibility. National thought is interpreted on the basis of the interaction between historical experience, national values, spiritual and intellectual heritage, and modern social consciousness. Using Luqmon Burikhon's Imam Maturidi and Isajon Sultan's Navoi and Abu Rayhan Beruni as examples, the study analyses the artistic function of the image of the historical personality, the relationship between the historical environment and the individual, the spiritual connection between the past and the present, and the artistic interpretation of historical fact. As a result, it is substantiated that in twenty-first-century novel writing, the approach to history has developed from depicting the past toward understanding its meaning, while historical memory has evolved from retrospective memory into an active artistic and aesthetic category.

KEYWORDS: Twenty-first-century Uzbek novel writing, historical memory, national thought, historical novel, national identity, historical personality, spiritual heritage, historical consciousness, historical responsibility, artistic interpretation, national value, historical continuity.

INTRODUCTION

Significant changes can be observed in the content and principles of addressing historical themes in twenty-first-century Uzbek novel writing. This change is primarily associated with the renewal of attitudes toward understanding national history. The new historical thinking formed during the independence period made it possible to reassess historical events, personalities, and periods in literature and to reveal their essence from the perspective of national development and spiritual identity. From this point of view, with regard to twenty-first-century Uzbek novel writing, it can be stated that "the principles that emerged in the past and were refined over centuries were aesthetically perceived from the perspective of the mature needs of the socio-historical conditions of the new era... The principles of realistic depiction of life were developed. The criteria of artistic truth were renewed. Writers who took into account the needs of readers with developed artistic taste aspired to complexity,

philosophical depth, and symbolism in the poetic mode of expression of the national novel." Thus, while historical reality in twentieth-century novel writing was often interpreted from the standpoint of a particular socio-political ideology, in twenty-first-century novel writing the attitude toward history became relatively freer and became closely connected with issues of national memory, individual freedom, spiritual choice, national identity, and historical justice. As a result, the function of the historical novel also expanded: it ceased to be merely a means of artistically reconstructing past events and began to serve as a means of understanding the contemporary individual and society through the past and expressing an attitude toward their spiritual and moral problems.

In this process, the attitude toward the image of the historical personality also acquired a new character. The historical personality is now interpreted not only as a great statesman or an active participant in the historical process, but also as a human being with inner contradictions and facing moral choices. In this respect, the relationship between the historical personality and the historical environment also becomes more complex in twenty-first-century novel writing: the individual's fate is revealed in connection with the political and social conditions of the era, relations of power, national interests, and spiritual values. At this point, it is first necessary to determine the essence and content of the concepts of historical memory and national thought. This is because these categories appear as important conceptual foundations for the artistic perception of historical reality in twenty-first-century historical novels.

Literature Analysis And Methods

Historical memory is a concept that expresses the reappearance, remembrance, and appreciation in people's consciousness and everyday practical activity of the material and spiritual wealth created by ancestors. One of the important functions of historical memory is to form a sense of self-awareness in people and, through this, to develop feelings of national pride and dignity. Its main characteristics can be summarized as follows:

1. Self-awareness – helps a person understand their nation, history, and spiritual roots.
2. Spiritual foundation – serves as a basis for understanding the value of today's peaceful and free life and comparing its essence with historical experience.
3. Ancestral heritage – performs the function of transmitting the heroism, resilience, spiritual experience, and cultural achievements of the past to future generations.

Thus, historical memory is the process by which the past is preserved and reinterpreted in individual and social consciousness, embodying the thoughts, ideas, beliefs, and aspirations of ancestors as a certain spiritual experience. In this sense, historical memory is an important spiritual factor enabling every nation to understand its historical value, preserve its national identity, and confidently build its future.

National thought, in turn, is a mode of perception and thinking formed in the course of the historical development of a particular people or nation and based on its language, culture, customs, values, and worldview. In other words, national thought appears as a system of understanding, thinking about, and evaluating the world on the basis of the history, language, culture, customs, and values of a particular people. Its main characteristics can be defined as follows:

1. Historical roots – it is based on the spiritual heritage, traditions, and values inherited from ancestors.

2. National identity – it creates a foundation for a person to understand their belonging to their people and to respect their language and culture.

3. Development – it is continuously enriched and improved under the influence of modern science, new ideas, and global changes.

Thus, national thought appears as the process of understanding historical memory from the perspective of national identity, values, and contemporary life. In the context of the historical novel, the artistic function of historical memory is manifested in such functions as driving the plot, revealing the psychology of the character, and ensuring a spiritual connection between the past and the present. The interrelationship between historical memory and national identity makes it possible to connect the personal fate of the character with the history of the nation and to unite the concepts of national values, language, customs, the Motherland, and historical heritage within a single conceptual system. From this point of view, the expression of national thought in the novel genre cannot be limited solely to national images or ethnographic details. It is appropriate to analyse it according to such criteria as the perception of history, attitudes toward the fate of the individual and the nation, spiritual choice, national responsibility, the fate of the Motherland, and attitudes toward historical heritage.

Results and discussion

In twenty-first-century novels, when a historical personality or historical reality is interpreted through human destiny, it is important that the historical personality is created not as a “ready-made image,” but in connection with a particular period, social environment, historical conflicts, and spiritual choices. In this regard, the relationship between historical memory and contemporary reality acquires particular importance, while the role of the past in understanding the present is manifested in reflections on modern society, spiritual crisis, national values, and human responsibility through an appeal to history. Thus, in the novel writing of the new century, historical memory has begun to emerge as a distinct artistic-aesthetic category. The writer depicts history not as a ready and unchanging truth, but as a process of memory, interpretation, and reinterpretation. Therefore, the dialogue between the past and the present intensifies in literary works. In this process, several artistic-conceptual functions of historical memory become apparent: understanding national identity, restoring historical justice, ensuring continuity between generations, reinterpreting national values, and evaluating contemporary spiritual problems on the basis of historical experience. From this perspective, history in twenty-first-century novel writing functions as an artistic-semantic foundation that ensures the relationship past → present → future.

In twenty-first-century Uzbek novel writing, the concept of historical memory and national thought is manifested in various artistic forms and dimensions in works such as Pirimqul Qodirov's *Ona Lochin Vidosi*, Muhammad Ali's *Ulug Saltanat*, Nurali Qobul's *Temuriylar Epopeyasi*, Luqmon Burikhon's *Imam Maturidi*, and Isajon Sultan's *Alisher Navoi* and *Abu Rayhan Beruni*. In these works, the artistic interpretation of historical reality, the creation of the image of a historical personality, the restoration of national memory, and the connection of historical experience with contemporary human thought are expressed through different poetic methods.

In Luqmon Burikhon's novel *Imam Maturidi*, historical memory is manifested through the artistic reconstruction of the social and spiritual environment of Transoxiana in the ninth–tenth



centuries, the personality of Abu Mansur Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Maturidi, and his scholarly and educational activities. However, the artistic value of the novel is not limited to the chronological narration of historical events. The reality of the past is reinterpreted from the perspective of contemporary individuals' understanding of national identity, their attitude toward spiritual values, and their historical responsibility. In this respect, historical memory in the novel appears not merely as a means of preserving and reconstructing the past, but as an artistic mechanism connecting historical experience with contemporary national thought.

One of the important functions of historical memory in the novel is to connect national identity with historical roots. Through the personality of Maturidi, the traditions of scholarly, religious-educational, and ethical thought formed in the land of Transoxiana are artistically represented. The scholar's life and scholarly activity are interpreted not only within the events characteristic of a particular historical period, but also as a process in the formation of national spiritual experience. In this sense, the image of the historical personality becomes a means of reviving national memory and connecting it with contemporary human thought.

In this process, the personal destiny of the historical personality is harmonized with the spiritual destiny of the nation. Maturidi's pursuit of knowledge, aspiration to comprehend truth, and views on the relationship between human reason and faith go beyond the framework of an individual life path and are interpreted as a process connected with the educational and spiritual development of the nation. In this sense, national identity in the novel is formed on the basis of the unity historical memory + spiritual heritage + national value + historical responsibility.

In Imam Maturidi, it is insufficient to seek national thought only through national customs, ethnographic details, or national images. Its deeper layer is manifested in the questions of how history is understood and how human responsibility for the fate of the nation is defined. The conceptual significance of the image of Maturidi lies in the fact that he embodies a model of thought that does not separate knowledge, reason, faith, and spiritual responsibility from one another. Thus, the novel presents national thought in harmony with enlightenment and spiritual responsibility. This process can conventionally be expressed through the chain understanding history → understanding spiritual heritage → understanding national identity → feeling national responsibility. Within this chain, historical memory acquires a broader meaning than merely remembering the past and determines the individual's attitude toward their own history and the fate of the nation.

In the novel, Maturidi is not portrayed merely as a "great scholar" already known from historical sources. His image as a human being is also revealed through his personal life, attitude toward knowledge, conflicts with the environment of his time, and spiritual choices. In this respect, an important feature of the novel is the understanding of history through personal destiny. Historical processes are connected with the character's inner world, intellectual searches, and spiritual choices. As a result, the historical personality and the historical environment become two complementary poetic components. This relationship can be expressed through the following formula: historical environment → formation of the personality → spiritual choice → the place of the historical personality in the fate of the nation. Within this system, the historical environment serves as an objective basis for the formation of the character, while spiritual choice determines his personal identity. The place of the historical personality in the fate of the nation takes his activity beyond the limits of individual biography



and connects it with the national-spiritual process. It should be noted that the appeal to Maturidi's heritage serves not only to recall the history of the ninth–tenth centuries, but also to reconsider issues of knowledge, reason, faith, enlightenment, and spiritual responsibility that remain significant for the contemporary individual. In this sense, historical memory performs the function of an artistic mechanism that satisfies contemporary spiritual needs. Personalities and ideas from the past are reread from the perspective of the present and acquire new meaning. This condition can be expressed through the principle “The past is a means of understanding the present.”

An important aspect of the novel's historical conception is that, rather than seeking direct historical parallels between Maturidi's era and the modern period, continuity of spiritual values comes to the forefront. In other words, priority is given not to mechanically transferring a historical period into contemporary reality, but to revealing the significance of spiritual experience formed in the past for the thinking of the contemporary individual. In this respect, another important function of historical memory in Imam Maturidi is ensuring spiritual continuity. Maturidi's scholarly and educational heritage is interpreted not as a phenomenon confined to a particular historical period, but as a source of spiritual experience and thought for subsequent generations. As a result, the heritage of the historical personality moves beyond the boundaries of individual biography and becomes an element of national memory that ensures spiritual connection between generations.

In Luqmon Burikhon's novel *Imam Maturidi*, historical memory is transformed from a means of reconstructing historical reality into an artistic mechanism for understanding national identity and national thought. Maturidi's personal destiny, scholarly and educational pursuits, and spiritual choices are depicted in connection with a particular period in the history of Transoxiana, revealing the relationship between the historical personality and the fate of the nation. At the same time, the scholar's heritage is reinterpreted from the perspective of contemporary reality, revealing the function of historical memory in ensuring spiritual continuity between generations. Thus, in the poetics of the novel, history appears not as information about the past, but as an active aesthetic category that shapes the contemporary individual's national identity, spiritual responsibility, and historical thought. In the novel, the movement of historical memory proceeds as historical personality → spiritual heritage → contemporary perception → national identity → historical responsibility.

It is well known that the attitude toward historical fact is also changing in contemporary historical novel writing. The writer does not accept a historical source as an absolute and unchanging truth; rather, it is assimilated as material that provides a basis for artistic interpretation. From this perspective, in Luqmon Burikhon's work, a historical event can be reshaped according to the chain fact → artistic imagination → psychological interpretation → generalization about the human being.

This approach separates the historical personality from a collection of information recorded in documents and elevates it to the level of an artistic character. Historical fact is transferred through artistic imagination into the inner world of the individual, acquires an individual character through psychological interpretation, and ultimately becomes a generalization about a particular period and human nature. Therefore, in *Imam Maturidi*, the artistic value of the historical personality is manifested not in repeating the activities recorded in historical sources, but in illuminating through this historical personality the universal issues of the human being,



enlightenment, faith, and spiritual responsibility. Thus, in the novel Imam Maturidi, the conceptual function of historical memory is manifested according to the principle artistic perception of historical fact → psychological individualization of the historical personality → reinterpretation of spiritual heritage → formation of national identity → awakening of contemporary historical responsibility. This aspect makes it possible to regard Luqmon Burikhon's novel as an important work expressing a distinctive artistic interpretation of the relationship between historical memory and national thought in twenty-first-century Uzbek novel writing.

In Isajon Sultan's novels *Navoi* and *Abu Rayhan Beruni*, historical memory acquires a broader meaning than merely serving as a means of reconstructing the lives of historical personalities. By depicting the personalities of *Navoi* and *Abu Rayhan Beruni* in connection with the socio-political, scientific, and cultural environment of the periods in which they lived, the writer elevates historical memory to the level of an important artistic mechanism for understanding national identity. In this respect, these novels represent a new stage in the creation of the image of the historical personality in Uzbek novel writing. It should be noted that novels portraying the images of *Navoi* and *Abu Rayhan Beruni* occupy a significant place in Uzbek novel writing. In particular, novels depicting the image of *Abu Rayhan Beruni* include O. Yoqubov's *Kohna Dunyo*, M. Qoriyev's *Ibn Sino* and *Ghaznaviylar*, as well as Qurbon Muhammadrizo's trilogy consisting of the novels *Omonat Tuhfa*, *Sinov Sahnasi*, and *Bir Siqim Tuproq*. "The authors vividly depicted *Beruni*'s passion for knowledge, perseverance, adolescence and youth, as well as his middle and old age spent in exile and wandering."

Using this tradition, Isajon Sultan interprets the historical personality not merely as a participant in historical events, but as an individual representing a particular spiritual and intellectual environment. Therefore, at the centre of both novels lies not simply the narration of a "great ancestor," but the question of what meaning his spiritual and intellectual heritage has for the present generation. In the novel *Navoi*, national identity is manifested primarily in connection with the native language, literary heritage, and national spirituality. *Navoi*'s personal destiny, state activity, creative pursuits, and views on the interests of the people are interpreted not separately, but in harmony with the spiritual development of the nation. In particular, the aspiration to demonstrate the literary and aesthetic possibilities of the Turkic language determines the role of *Navoi*'s personality in understanding national identity. Thus, in the novel, the image of *Navoi* makes it possible to understand the national language and literature as one of the principal forms of national memory.

In the novel *Abu Rayhan Beruni*, another important aspect of national identity—scientific and educational heritage—comes to the forefront. At this point, it is appropriate to cite the recognition of the *Beruni* scholar P. G. Bulgakov: "Abu Rayhan *Beruni* wrote a total of 10,000 manuscript sheets. If all of them were published in print, a 40-volume 'Collection of *Beruni*'s Works,' each volume consisting of 35 printed sheets, would be produced." Naturally, this provides a basis for attracting the writer's attention. *Beruni*'s formation in the scientific environment of *Khorezm*, his study of the history and culture of different peoples, and his scientific views on the world and the human being demonstrate the open and civilizational character of national thought. Thus, the two novels can be comparatively expressed as follows: *Navoi*—the artistic expression of national identity through language, literature, and spiritual heritage; *Abu Rayhan Beruni*—the artistic expression of national identity through science,

enlightenment, and civilizational heritage. When these two directions are combined, an integral concept of national identity emerges.

A common feature of the two novels is that national thought appears not as a collection of national images, customs, or ethnographic details, but as a process of understanding history and comprehending the spiritual and intellectual foundations of national development. In this respect, in Isajon Sultan's historical novel writing, nationality is manifested not through external signs, but as a mode of thinking and a spiritual position.

While the concepts of language, literature, enlightenment, justice, and the interests of the people stand at the centre of national thought in Navoi, in Abu Rayhan Beruni priority is given to science, reason, the search for truth, the aspiration for knowledge, and openness to different cultures. In particular, Beruni emphasizes in his works the need to honour and respect science and its representatives, stating: "The sciences are many. They increase when their time is favourable and different thoughts and memories are added to them. People's interest in the sciences and their respect for the sciences and the people of knowledge are signs of such prosperity." These views are clearly embodied in the work. In this respect, both novels interpret national thought at the level of an intellectual and spiritual category. Their common conceptual model can be expressed as follows: historical memory → understanding national heritage → spiritual-intellectual responsibility → national thought → understanding contemporary identity.

An important artistic feature of Isajon Sultan's historical novels is the attempt to portray the historical personality not merely as a "great personality," but as a human being who lived in a particular historical environment and faced spiritual choices. Navoi's personal destiny is inseparable from the destiny of his state, people, language, and literature. His position as a creative figure is connected with responsibility for elevating national spirituality. In Beruni's destiny, devotion to science, the aspiration to understand truth, and the preservation of scientific thought amid political and historical changes acquire particular significance. Thus, the personal lives of the two protagonists become an artistic means of embodying the historical and spiritual experience of the nation.

Another feature uniting the two novels is the spiritual significance of the past for the present. By appealing to the images of Navoi and Beruni, the author also raises questions relevant to the contemporary individual: What is the role of science and enlightenment in human life? What attitude should be adopted toward national heritage? What does the individual's responsibility for national development consist of? What harmony exists between the national and the universal? Therefore, historical memory in the novels acquires not a retrospective but a functional character: the past serves to understand the present.

In Isajon Sultan's novels Navoi and Abu Rayhan Beruni, historical memory emerges as an important artistic and aesthetic mechanism for understanding national identity. The writer closely connects the personal destinies of historical personalities with the spiritual and intellectual history of the nation. In Navoi, national identity is conceptualized through the notions of language, literature, enlightenment, the people, and the Motherland, while in Abu Rayhan Beruni it is conceptualized through science, reason, truth, historical and cultural heritage, and civilizational thought. Thus, complementing one another, the two novels demonstrate two important models of national thought—the literary-spiritual and the scientific-intellectual. The images of historical personalities, in turn, are transformed from a



means of recalling the past into a factor in understanding the national identity and spiritual responsibility of the present generation.

In Isajon Sultan's work, the treatment of historical material acquires an even more distinctive character. The writer often connects historical reality with such universal categories as the human being, time, memory, destiny, and spirituality. Therefore, it is insufficient to assess his interpretation of the historical personality merely as historical-biographical reconstruction. In his works, the historical personality, while representing a particular period, is elevated to the level of a philosophical image expressing human responsibility before history and the individual's relationship with time.

For Isajon Sultan, the significance of a historical event is often not limited to the question "What happened?" In his artistic thinking, such questions as "Why did it happen this way?", "What trace did this event leave in the human psyche?", and "How does history live in human memory?" acquire particular importance. Therefore, at the contemporary stage, the historical personality becomes not only a subject who drives history, but also a means of understanding the meaning of history.

One of the important features uniting the works of Luqmon Burikhon and Isajon Sultan is the strengthening of the category of historical memory. While at earlier stages the historical novel was mainly constructed within the system historical event → historical personality → period, in contemporary interpretation the relationship historical event → personal memory → collective memory → contemporary understanding becomes stronger. This directly connects the image of the historical personality with the contemporary reader. Although the protagonist lived in the past, his destiny influences the present-day individual's perceptions of history, memory, and spiritual values. Thus, in the works of Luqmon Burikhon and Isajon Sultan, the image of the historical personality appears not as a simple continuation of traditions formed in Uzbek novel writing, but as their reinterpretation on the basis of contemporary artistic thought. At this stage, the centre of the depiction of the historical personality shifts from external historical events to the inner human world, from historical fact to artistic interpretation, and from historical memory to philosophical understanding.

This gradual process shows that the artistic function of historical memory in Uzbek novel writing has progressively expanded. Initially, the appeal to history was associated with the need to recall national history and understand national identity and the fate of the nation; at later stages, it entered into increasingly complex relationships with such concepts as the historical personality, historical environment, statehood, spiritual heritage, continuity between generations, and human historical responsibility. In twenty-first-century novel writing, historical memory has begun to perform, in addition to reconstructing historical reality, the function of reinterpreting the experience of the past in the consciousness of the contemporary individual and connecting it with present-day spiritual needs.

At the same time, the artistic expression of national thought has also deepened beyond the depiction of external national features, customs, and ethnographic details and has come to be based on such criteria as the perception of history, attitudes toward national heritage, the fate of the individual and the nation, spiritual choice, science and enlightenment, and historical responsibility. As a result, the artistic function of the image of the historical personality has also changed: it is no longer merely a participant in historical events or an object for remembering the past, but has become a means of understanding the fate of the era and the nation,

reinterpreting spiritual heritage, and revealing human responsibility before history. In this sense, the general development of the concept of historical memory and national thought in Uzbek novel writing can be expressed as follows: remembering national history → reinterpreting the historical personality and the period → comprehending statehood and spiritual responsibility → understanding continuity between generations → reassessing spiritual and intellectual heritage → philosophical perception of history.

Conclusion

Thus, in twenty-first-century Uzbek novel writing, the appeal to history has developed from depicting the past toward understanding its meaning, while historical memory has evolved from retrospective memory into an active artistic and aesthetic category. It ensures a spiritual connection between the past, present, and future and serves to understand national identity, reassess historical experience, ensure continuity between generations, and shape the historical and spiritual responsibility of the contemporary individual. National thought, in turn, manifests itself in the process of reinterpreting this historical memory through contemporary perception. On this basis, an important feature of the interpretation of the historical personality in twenty-first-century Uzbek novel writing can be defined as a shift from biographical reconstruction to artistic interpretation, from the depiction of external historical reality to understanding the inner spiritual world of the individual, and from historical fact to philosophical and aesthetic generalization. This process expands the functional possibilities of the image of the historical personality in contemporary novel poetics and elevates it to the level of an important conceptual image that unites national memory, spiritual heritage, and contemporary thought.

References

1. Абу Райхон Беруний. Танланган асарлар, II –жилд. – Тошкент.: “Фан, 1965.
2. Allambergenov A. O'zbek adabiyotida Abu Rayhon Beruniy obrazi talqinlarining qiyosiy tahlili: filol.fan.b cha.falsafa d-ri. diss.avtoref. – Toshkent, 2022.
3. Давронова Ш. Истиқлол даври ўзбек романларида шарқ ва ғарб анъаналарининг бадий синтези: филол.фан.д-ри.дисс.автореф. – Самарқанд, 2019.
4. Исажон Султон. Алишер Навоий – Тошкент.: Инновацион ривожланиш нашриёт матбаа уйи, 2022.
5. Исажон Султон. Абу Райхон Беруний. – Тошкент.: Инновацион ривожланиш нашриёт матбаа уйи, 2023.
6. <https://oyina.uz/kiril/teahause/2342>
7. <https://www.google.com/>