



THE IMAGE OF THE IDEAL PERSON IN THE NOVEL

Ataqllova Shaxlo Shamidullayevna

English language teacher at the academic lyceum of Samarkand State University named after Sharof Rashidov, Uzbekistan

ABSTRACT

The concept of the ideal person has served as a pivotal motif in world literature, especially within the genre of the novel. This article examines how the image of the ideal person is constructed, transformed, and problematized in the novelistic tradition from the early modern period to the present. Drawing upon key examples from English, Russian, and Uzbek literature, the article analyzes the philosophical, social, and psychological dimensions that shape the portrayal of the ideal protagonist. The investigation is anchored in literary theory and cultural studies, highlighting the interplay between societal ideals and the individual. The study concludes that the image of the ideal person in the novel is not static, but rather reflects evolving cultural values, ethical dilemmas, and the complexities of the human condition.

KEYWORDS: Ideal person, novel, literary character, hero, morality, cultural values, narrative, literary theory.

INTRODUCTION

The quest for an ideal person—a being embodying virtue, wisdom, and moral clarity—has been central to the development of human thought and culture. Literature, as a mirror and molder of social consciousness, provides a unique lens for examining the transformations of this ideal across epochs. Nowhere is this exploration more vivid than in the novel, a form that emerged as a dominant narrative vehicle in modernity. The novel's flexibility and its emphasis on psychological depth enable writers to probe, critique, and sometimes subvert prevailing notions of ideality.

The image of the ideal person in novels transcends a simple catalog of virtues; it functions as a cultural and ideological construct that mediates between the aspirations of society and the realities of individual experience. This article traces the evolution of the ideal person in the novel, considering canonical works from various literary traditions and theoretical approaches that illuminate the dynamic relationship between character and context. The central question guiding this study is: how do novels conceptualize and problematize the ideal person, and what does this reveal about shifting cultural values and notions of human possibility?

The analysis draws upon a comparative literary methodology, combining close textual analysis with insights from literary theory, cultural studies, and the philosophy of literature. Primary sources include key novels from English, Russian, and Uzbek literature, chosen for their influential depictions of idealized characters and their engagement with broader questions of ethics and identity. These texts are contextualized within their historical and social milieus, with secondary sources providing critical frameworks.

The theoretical underpinnings are grounded in the works of Mikhail Bakhtin on dialogism and the novel, Northrop Frye's archetypal criticism, and contemporary scholarship on narrative

ethics. The study employs hermeneutic and structuralist approaches to character analysis, exploring not only explicit descriptions of the ideal but also implicit tensions and contradictions. By situating literary examples within their broader philosophical and sociocultural context, the article aims to provide a nuanced account of the mutable image of the ideal person in the novel.

The notion of the ideal person in literature is deeply rooted in classical traditions, where the epic hero often embodies the virtues most valued by society—courage, honor, wisdom, and piety. However, with the rise of the novel, the image of the ideal person becomes increasingly complex. Unlike the static figures of myth and epic, the novelistic hero is shaped by internal conflict, social context, and the challenges of self-realization. The ideal is no longer absolute; it is interrogated, contested, and sometimes deconstructed.

In Uzbek literature, the image of the ideal person is shaped by national identity, ethical codes, and the synthesis of Eastern and Western influences. The works of Abdulla Qodiriy, particularly "O'tkan kunlar," present protagonists whose struggle for integrity and justice reflects both personal and collective ideals. Qodiriy's novel is notable for its depiction of characters who must reconcile individual desires with the demands of tradition and community, thus embodying a uniquely Uzbek vision of the ideal person.

The image of the ideal person in the novel is never merely a private affair; it is inextricably linked to the values, crises, and aspirations of the society in which the novel is produced. Novels become sites of negotiation, where cultural ideals are tested against the realities of historical change and social upheaval. In this sense, the ideal person is not a fixed type but a dynamic site of contestation and meaning-making.

Throughout the history of the novel, we observe a movement from external ideals—those dictated by tradition, religion, or state—to internalized ideals, rooted in personal conscience, authenticity, and self-actualization. This shift is evident in the transition from the didacticism of early novels to the introspection of modernist and postmodernist fiction. The Bildungsroman, or novel of formation, exemplifies this trend, focusing on the protagonist's moral and psychological development.

Uzbek novels of the twentieth century, especially those produced during the Soviet era, also grappled with the tension between personal and collective ideals. The portrayal of the "ideal person" became intertwined with the demands of socialist construction and the reimagining of national identity. Contemporary Uzbek novels, however, increasingly return to themes of moral ambiguity, cultural hybridity, and the search for authenticity.

While the image of the ideal person serves as a beacon of aspiration, the novelistic tradition is marked by skepticism regarding the attainability and desirability of perfection. Novels often expose the contradictions inherent in the pursuit of the ideal, revealing the ways in which such ideals can become instruments of repression, self-deception, or social exclusion. The anti-hero, the flawed protagonist, and the unreliable narrator emerge as important counterpoints to the figure of the ideal person.

Modernist and postmodernist novels, in particular, challenge the very notion of the ideal by emphasizing fragmentation, irony, and the multiplicity of perspectives. In James Joyce's "Ulysses," the protagonist Leopold Bloom is an ordinary man whose virtues and limitations are presented in all their ambiguity. Joyce's refusal to offer a coherent ideal reflects a broader distrust of grand narratives and absolute values in the modern age.

Similarly, in the novels of Virginia Woolf, the ideal person is not a fixed entity but a process of becoming, shaped by memory, desire, and the passage of time. Woolf's characters strive for moments of connection and insight rather than static perfection. The image of the ideal becomes, in her work, an elusive horizon rather than a settled destination.

The postcolonial novel complicates the image of the ideal person further by situating it within contexts of cultural hybridity, displacement, and resistance. Writers such as Chinua Achebe and Salman Rushdie depict protagonists whose struggles for ideality are inseparable from the legacies of colonialism and the complexities of modern identity. In such works, the image of the ideal person is deconstructed and reconstructed in relation to questions of power, belonging, and justice.

Despite the skepticism and irony of much modern fiction, the image of the ideal person remains a powerful ethical and imaginative resource. Novels continue to provide models of courage, empathy, and resilience, even as they acknowledge the limitations of such ideals. The enduring appeal of figures such as Atticus Finch in Harper Lee's "To Kill a Mockingbird" or Aslan in C.S. Lewis's "The Chronicles of Narnia" testifies to the human need for moral exemplars.

Yet the most compelling portraits of the ideal person in the novel are those that recognize imperfection, vulnerability, and the capacity for growth. The ideal, in this sense, is not a destination but a journey—a process of striving toward greater understanding, compassion, and self-awareness. The novel, with its capacity for nuance and complexity, is uniquely suited to exploring this ongoing negotiation between aspiration and reality.

The novel's engagement with the ideal person also raises important questions about the relationship between literature and life. Do novels simply reflect the ideals of their time, or do they help to shape them? Can fictional models of ideality inspire real-world action, or do they risk reinforcing unattainable standards? These questions remain open, inviting further reflection and debate.

The image of the ideal person in the novel is a richly layered and evolving phenomenon. Far from being a fixed template, the ideal person is constructed through an ongoing dialogue between individual psychology, social values, and historical circumstances. The novel, as a form, is uniquely equipped to interrogate, reimagine, and problematize this ideal, offering readers a space in which to explore the possibilities and limits of human aspiration.

Through close analysis of novels from different literary traditions, this article has shown that the image of the ideal person is shaped by a complex interplay of ethical, psychological, and cultural factors. Whether portrayed as a heroic figure, a spiritual seeker, or a flawed but striving individual, the ideal person in the novel remains a central site for negotiating the meaning of virtue, authenticity, and the good life. In a world marked by uncertainty and change, the novel's ongoing exploration of the ideal person continues to provide valuable insights into the human condition.

REFERENCES

1. Бахтин М.М. Эпос и роман: К методологии исследования романа // Вопросы литературы. – 1970. – №1. – С. 67–102.
2. Frye N. Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays. – Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957. – 383 p.
3. Qodiriy A. O'tkan kunlar. – Toshkent: Yangi asr avlodi, 2006. – 416 b.

4. Richardson S. Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded. – London: Penguin, 1980. – 528 p.
5. Dickens C. Great Expectations. – London: Penguin, 2002. – 505 p.
6. Achebe C. Things Fall Apart. – London: Heinemann, 1994. – 209 p.
7. Lee H. To Kill a Mockingbird. – New York: HarperCollins, 2006. – 336 p.
8. Rushdie S. Midnight's Children. – London: Vintage, 2008. – 672 p.

