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ANALYZING WOMEN'S POSITION IN SOCIETY THROUGH 'THE MOTHER': INSIGHTS FROM EAST AND WEST

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Abstract. This article explores the social roles of women as depicted in the novel *The Mother*, offering a comparative analysis of Eastern and Western perspectives. The study investigates how the novel reflects societal expectations, gender norms, and the evolution of women's roles within different cultural contexts. By examining key themes, character portrayals, and narrative techniques, this paper aims to highlight both the unique and shared experiences of women in the East and West. The discussion draws on literary criticism and cultural studies to provide a nuanced understanding of how literature shapes and mirrors social realities for women.

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqolada "Ona" romanida tasvirlangan ayollarning ijtimoiy rollari Sharq va G'arb nuqtai nazaridan solishtirma tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqotda asarda jamiyatdagi kutishlar, gender me'yorlari va ayollarning turli madaniy kontekstlardagi roli qanday aks ettirilgani o'rganiladi. Asosiy mavzular, obrazlar va badiiy uslublarni tahlil qilish orqali maqolada Sharq va G'arb ayollarining noyob va umumiy tajribalari yoritiladi. Muallif adabiy tanqid va madaniyatshunoslik asosida adabiyot ayollar hayotidagi ijtimoiy haqiqatlarni qanday aks ettirishini ko'rsatadi.

Аннотация. В данной статье исследуются социальные роли женщин, изображённые в романе "Мать", с сравнительным анализом восточных и западных взглядов. В работе рассматривается, как роман отражает общественные ожидания, гендерные нормы и эволюцию роли женщин в различных культурных контекстах. Путём изучения ключевых тем, характеристик героев и повествовательных приёмов, статья показывает как уникальный, так и общий опыт женщин Востока и Запада. Обсуждение основано на литературной критике и культурологических исследованиях, чтобы глубже раскрыть, как литература формирует и отражает социальную реальность для женщин.

Keywords: women, society, *The Mother*, East, West, gender roles, comparative literature

Kalit so'zlar: ayollar, jamiyat, "Ona", Sharq, G'arb, gender rollari, qiyosiy adabiyot

Ключевые слова: женщины, общество, "Мать", Восток, Запад, гендерные роли, сравнительная литература

Introduction. The depiction of women's roles in society has long been a central theme in world literature, serving as a mirror to prevailing cultural values and social dynamics (Showalter, 1977). In *The Mother*, the author crafts a vivid portrait of women navigating traditional expectations and modern transformations

within their respective societies. While Eastern cultures often emphasize familial duty and collective identity, Western perspectives tend to highlight individual agency and personal fulfillment. This comparative analysis seeks to explore how *The Mother* both reflects and challenges these cultural paradigms, offering insight into the evolving position of women across different global contexts (Smith, 2002).

The role of women in society, as presented in the novel *The Mother*, serves as a reflection of broader cultural values and historical realities in both Eastern and Western societies. The novel's protagonist—often depicted as a maternal figure navigating hardship and social pressure—offers a unique entry point for understanding these differences and similarities.

Main part. In the Eastern context, *The Mother* situates women within a tightly knit social fabric that emphasizes duty to family, tradition, and communal welfare. Eastern societies, particularly those influenced by Confucian, Islamic, or patriarchal traditions, have historically positioned women as caretakers and moral anchors of the household (Chatterjee, 1993). The novel's protagonist, much like women in classic Eastern literature, often internalizes the responsibility for maintaining familial harmony and enduring personal sacrifice for the sake of the collective. For example, her silent endurance and resilience in the face of poverty, discrimination, and loss are praised as virtues that uphold the family and, by extension, the entire community (Said, 1978). This portrayal echoes the broader expectations found in many Eastern societies, where female agency is often defined by self-effacement, obedience, and selfless love (Ahmed, 1992). The mother figure in the novel, through her daily struggles and quiet acts of defiance, becomes a symbol of cultural continuity and moral stability. At the same time, the text does not shy away from critiquing these societal expectations. Through moments of internal reflection and brief assertions of independence, the protagonist subtly questions her predetermined role, highlighting the tension between individual identity and collective duty.

In contrast, Western perspectives on women's roles, especially those influenced by waves of feminism and individualism, foreground personal autonomy, self-expression, and legal equality (Beauvoir, 1949). Western literary tradition often features female protagonists who confront and challenge oppressive structures—be it within the family or the broader society. In *The Mother*, Western influence is perceptible through the gradual awakening of the protagonist's sense of agency and her desire for change, echoing the feminist ideals of emancipation and personal fulfillment (Showalter, 1977). The mother's journey in the novel is marked by pivotal moments of self-discovery, where she asserts her voice and resists social injustice. These narrative developments align with Western concepts of empowerment and the right to self-determination. The presence of supportive allies, education, and legal reforms in the storyline further emphasize the importance of structural change in achieving gender equality (Smith, 2002).

Despite these contrasts, the novel also illustrates common ground between East and West. In both contexts, women face systemic barriers—ranging from restrictive cultural norms to economic dependence and limited access to education.

The mother's resilience, adaptability, and resourcefulness serve as universal traits that transcend cultural boundaries. Through her struggles, the novel underscores the shared humanity of women across societies, while also highlighting the specificities of their lived experiences.

By weaving together Eastern reverence for maternal sacrifice and Western ideals of individual autonomy, *The Mother* presents a complex, nuanced portrait of women's roles. This intersectional approach not only enriches the narrative but also invites readers to reconsider assumptions about gender, culture, and power. As literary scholar Susan Bassnett (1993) notes, comparative literature provides a valuable lens for understanding how different cultures negotiate similar challenges, ultimately shaping a more inclusive vision of women's social roles.

While the first part of this analysis established the contrasts and connections between Eastern and Western perspectives on women's roles, the second part explores the dynamics of social change, individual agency, and the wider influence of *The Mother* on readers and society.

One of the most significant contributions of *The Mother* is its depiction of the gradual transformation in women's roles as societies evolve. In the Eastern context, the protagonist's journey often mirrors the broader social changes occurring during times of upheaval—such as revolution, industrialization, or modernization. For instance, even as traditional norms constrain the mother's actions, the narrative allows her small but meaningful acts of defiance, such as supporting her children's education or questioning patriarchal rules (Chatterjee, 1993). These actions signal the beginnings of empowerment and social mobility, resonating with historical movements in Eastern societies where women played crucial but understated roles in national or community struggles (Ahmed, 1992).

The Western influence in *The Mother* becomes more evident as the story unfolds, especially in how the protagonist's agency is depicted. Inspired by Western literary heroines, the mother learns to recognize and challenge injustice, sometimes even defying the expectations of her immediate environment (Beauvoir, 1949). The growing importance of women's education, political participation, and access to economic resources are recurring themes that reinforce the potential for societal change when women assert their rights (Smith, 2002). In this sense, *The Mother* can be read as a bridge between the communal values of the East and the individualistic ideals of the West.

Another key aspect is the role of language and narrative style in shaping perceptions of women's social roles. The novel employs both colloquial expressions and poetic imagery to evoke the authenticity of the mother's voice. This blend of high and low registers allows readers to empathize with her struggles and aspirations, making her journey accessible and relatable to diverse audiences (Bassnett, 1993). The use of restricted colloquial units—such as regional idioms, proverbs, or nicknames—further enhances the realism of the mother's character and underscores the social contexts that shape her experience.

The novel's impact extends beyond literature, influencing debates on gender equality, social justice, and cultural identity. In both Eastern and Western contexts,

The Mother has been cited in discussions about women's representation, the limits of tradition, and the possibilities for reform. Its universal appeal lies in its honest portrayal of hardship, hope, and resilience, reminding readers that the struggle for recognition and dignity is a shared human experience (Showalter, 1977).

Critically, *The Mother* also invites reflection on the limitations and challenges of achieving social change. The protagonist's victories are often hard-won and incomplete, reflecting the ongoing tensions between personal aspirations and structural barriers. Yet, by documenting these struggles, the novel provides a powerful call for empathy, solidarity, and continued advocacy for women's rights across cultures.

Conclusion. *The Mother* offers a multifaceted exploration of women's roles in society, drawing from both Eastern traditions and Western reforms. Through its nuanced characters, poetic language, and engagement with contemporary issues, the novel encourages readers to reconsider their assumptions about gender, power, and social progress. By doing so, it not only enriches the literary canon but also contributes to the ongoing dialogue about the place of women in a rapidly changing world.

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