

## Assosiative – Semantik Features of the Father’s Image in the Work of the Uzbekistan Writer Isadjon Sulton

NIYAZOVA ZILOLA ESHTEMIROVNA  
*Shahrisabz State Pedagogical Institute, Uzbekistan*

### ABSTRACT

*This article examines the associative and semantic characteristics of the father figure in the short stories of Isadjon Sulton. It highlights how, in the writer’s works, the image of the father is portrayed not merely as a central character within family relationships, but also as an artistic and philosophical symbol embodying concepts such as memory, destiny, longing, self-sacrifice, spiritual inheritance, and moral responsibility. Drawing on the stories ‘Og‘riqtog‘I’ (Mountain of Pain), ‘Uzuk’ (The Ring), ‘Otamanimadirbo‘ldi...’ (Something Happened to My Father...), ‘Sog‘inch’ (Longing), ‘Ozor’ (Affliction), ‘Turmush’ (Life), ‘Todd’, ‘Qismat’ (Destiny), and ‘Yog‘ochkavush’ (Wooden Clogs), the study analyzes associative chains, symbolic details, and semantic layers connected with the father figure. The article demonstrates that in Isadjon Sulton’s short fiction, the father transcends the boundaries of an individual character and emerges as a multifaceted poetic center representing the national mentality, intergenerational continuity, and universal human values.*

**Keywords:** Father figure, associative thinking, associative-semantic analysis, literary image, symbol, memory, longing, destiny, self-sacrifice, poetics.

### INTRODUCTION

The process of creating literary characters is manifested as a product of the author's thinking, worldview, and aesthetic ideals.

The father figure, in particular, has long occupied a significant place in both world and Uzbek literature, where it is traditionally interpreted as a representation of family, lineage, spiritual inheritance, life experience, and moral values. In contemporary Uzbek prose, however, this image has expanded beyond its conventional interpretation and has come to embody complex semantic layers associated with human psychology, memory, destiny, and spiritual inquiry. In the works of Isajon Sul-ton, one of the distinguished representatives of modern Uzbek literature known for his distinctive artistic style and intellectual depth, the father figure acquires a special aesthetic significance. In his short stories, the father is presented not merely as a protagonist at the center of events, but also as an associative symbol linked to memory, conscience, destiny, ancestral heritage, and moral responsibility that continue to exist within the consciousness of other characters. Therefore, examining the father figure in Isajon Sul-ton's fiction not only from the perspective of characterization but also through an analysis of its associative and semantic dimensions is of considerable scholarly importance.

Associative thinking in literary texts is characterized by the ability of a particular image or character to connect with multiple layers of meaning, thereby generating additional associations and interpretations in the reader's mind. In Isajon Sul-ton's short stories, the father figure likewise creates a multidimensional semantic field, being closely associated with concepts such as affection and longing, guilt and repentance, destiny and justice, memory and spiritual inheritance. As a result, the father transcends the boundaries of an individual character and becomes an important poetic device through which the author expresses his artistic and philosophical vision. The purpose of this article is to analyze the associative and semantic features of the father figure in Isajon Sul-ton's short stories, to reveal its artistic and philosophical essence, and to identify the spiritual and aesthetic ideas conveyed through this image. On this basis, the study also highlights the distinctive aspects of the writer's individual style and artistic thinking as reflected in his portrayal of the father figure.

## RESEARCH METHODS

In this study, a range of scholarly methods was employed in order to identify the associative-semantic features of the father figure in Isajon Sulton's stories and to reveal the mechanisms of its artistic interpretation. First, the structural-semantic analysis method was used to examine the system of artistic units, symbols, and images connected with the father figure in the narratives. Through this approach, the semantic load and artistic function of such images as "mountain," "ring," "wolf," "pigeon," "handprint," "wind," "standard," "cliff," and "Qoravoy," which form around the father figure, were analyzed. In addition, the associative analysis method was applied as a leading approach in the study. This method made it possible to identify associative chains emerging in the text (father → mountain → pain; father → ring → labor; father → pigeon → longing; father → wolf → freedom, etc.), and to clarify their role in revealing both the characters' psychological states and the overall idea of the works. As a result, it was substantiated that the father figure functions not merely as a participant in the plot, but as a broad associative center with multiple layers of meaning.

The psychological analysis method was also employed in the research process. Through this approach, the inner experiences of the father figure, the poetics of silence, as well as states such as longing, remorse, responsibility, self-sacrifice, and emotional suffering were examined. In particular, the psychological expressive devices in the stories 'Og'riqtog'i,' 'Sog'inch,' 'Otamanimadirbo'ldi...', 'Bo'ri,' and 'Qismat' were analyzed.

On the basis of the comparative-typological method, the father figures in Isajon Sulton's stories were compared with father images in world and Uzbek literature. The hermeneutic (interpretative) method also played an important role in the study. Through this method, symbolic details, mythopoetic elements, natural imagery, and memory-related artistic layers in the stories were interpreted, and their connection with the father figure was elucidated.

As a result, the combination of these methods made it possible to comprehensively reveal the associative-semantic

nature of the father figure in Isajon Sulton's stories, its artistic-philosophical content, and its unique poetic function in modern Uzbek prose.

#### DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

Association, as one of the fundamental mechanisms of artistic thinking, enables reality to be perceived not directly, but through the mediation of memory, imagination, emotional experience, and cultural knowledge. As scholars have noted, it is "based on identifying the connections between emotional images that arise in the process of reflecting reality and the ideas preserved in memory or embedded within the cultural and historical experience of humankind." In this sense, a literary image is not merely a representation but an associative-aesthetic construct that integrates multiple layers of meaning. The father figure in Isajon Sulton's short stories emerges precisely as a product of such associative-aesthetic thinking. Literary scholar Dilmurod Kuronov links the essential characteristics of artistic thought and figurative expression to associativity, arguing that association is an inherent feature of human cognition whereby any element of the external world evokes related concepts in the mind. Indeed, Isajon Sulton does not limit his portrayal of the father to the conventional role often found in Uzbek prose – that of the family provider or educator. Instead, he places the father at the center of a network of symbolic details and reveals the spiritual essence of the character through a system of associative connections.

The father figure is regarded not only in Uzbek literature but also in world literature as one of humanity's most significant spiritual and archetypal symbols. In the poem 'Sog'inish' (Longing) by Gafur Gulam, the father is portrayed both as a loving man suffering for the fate of his child and as a collective embodiment of the people's grief during the years of the Second World War. Likewise, father figures in renowned works of world literature reveal diverse dimensions of the phenomenon of fatherhood. For instance, *The Brothers Karamazov* by Fyodor Dostoevsky presents the character of Fyodor Pavlovich Karamazov, who is considered one of the most complex and

morally flawed fathers in world literature. He is depicted as irresponsible, self-indulgent, and indifferent to the fate of his children. Through this character, the author demonstrates how a father's moral degradation can profoundly affect the psychological development of his offspring. In *King Lear*, William Shakespeare portrays King Lear as a ruler who initially equates authority with fatherhood. As the events unfold, however, he gradually comes to understand the true meaning of love, forgiveness, and humanity. In *Death of a Salesman*, Arthur Miller portrays Willy Loman as a father who lives with dreams of success for his children. However, his misguided perceptions of life ultimately lead his family toward tragedy. Through this character, the author demonstrates that even the noblest parental intentions do not always produce positive outcomes. In *The Road*, the father lives in a devastated, post-apocalyptic world and dedicates himself entirely to protecting his son. Every action he takes is directed toward ensuring the child's survival. Similarly, in *Fathers and Sons*, the conflict between the worldviews of fathers and children occupies a central place. The older generation represents tradition, while the younger generation embodies new ideas and perspectives. In The "White Ship" by Chingiz Aitmatov, the father figure does not participate directly in the events of the narrative. Nevertheless, he exists in the child's imagination as an idealized image that shapes notions of hope, affection, and justice. Such a portrayal corresponds to the concept of the aesthetic ideal, which may be understood as the artistic expression of the most perfect and beautiful image formed within human consciousness. In this regard, the aesthetic ideal can be viewed as a refined artistic representation of what is desired and worthy of depiction. Therefore, associative thinking plays a decisive role in the formation of the aesthetic ideal. Human beings do not perceive reality merely through observation; rather, they comprehend it through connections with memory, experience, emotions, symbols, and spiritual values.

From the perspective of associative poetics, the Uzbek writer Isajon Sulton frequently employs indirect modes of representation in portraying the father figure. In the story "Og'riqtog'I" (Mountain of Pain), for example, the father is

interpreted through the metaphor of a mountain. Rather than being depicted as an ordinary human being, he emerges as a spiritual figure who has carried the entire burden of life upon his shoulders. In the story, natural elements such as the mountain, cliff, wind, stream, oleaster tree, and palm print function not merely as components of the landscape but as symbolic devices that reveal the deeper layers of human consciousness. While describing nature, the author is, in fact, reading the human soul. The father appears as a being embodied in the image of the mountain. In the protagonist's childhood memory, he is immense, powerful, dependable, and awe-inspiring. The child moves constantly around his father's feet and feels the strength emanating from his powerful hands. Consequently, the association of the father as "the mountain on which one leans for support" arises naturally within the narrative. Yet through associative thinking, Isajon Sulton gradually reveals that hidden pain lies beneath this apparent strength. As the protagonist observes the cracked cliffs of the mountain, these images become linked in his consciousness with the inner world of his father. The fissures in the rocks are not merely natural formations; they become symbols of accumulated regrets, losses, and sufferings that have been transformed into silence over the course of a lifetime. Just as a mountain appears firm and majestic from the outside, the father is portrayed as a person who seems strong and resilient, yet whose inner life has been shaped by countless trials. One of the most powerful manifestations of associative thinking in the story is connected with the image of the palm print. Upon seeing the imprint of a hand on a stone, the protagonist is suddenly reminded of his father's handprints on the walls of their childhood home. A simple physical detail instantly awakens a profound emotional memory. The palm print on the stone symbolizes permanence and continuity, while the father's hand signifies affection, protection, and care. In this way, the author constructs the associative chain "father → mountain → stone → imprint → memory." Here, the father is interpreted not merely as a biological parent but as a spiritual support whose presence remains within the human heart throughout life. Just as the palm print endures, the father's place in the child's emotional world

does not fade with the passage of time. The writer further reveals the father's inner world through its parallel relationship with nature. The winds of the Mountain of Pain, the eroding cliffs, and the crumbling rocks correspond to the father's gradually aging spiritual and emotional condition. Through these interconnected images, the natural landscape becomes a reflection of the father's inner experience, transforming the external world into a symbolic expression of human destiny and memory. This associative framework becomes even more profound in the episode concerning the aunt's death. The phrase, "My father, who had always seemed mountain-like, now appeared bent and diminished," creates a striking contrast between outward strength and inner collapse. Until that moment, the father had existed in the child's perception as an invincible mountain; however, the death of his sister reveals that he, too, is being worn down from within. Through this image, the author suggests that the deepest human tragedy lies not in external hardship but in internal fracture. The father neither speaks openly nor reveals his grief, yet his silence becomes one of the most powerful expressions of suffering in the story. It is through this poetics of silence that Isajon Sulton uncovers the deeper dimensions of the father's inner world. In the song quoted in the narrative "On the Mountain of Pain, they struck me..." the word "struck" does not refer to physical violence. Rather, it symbolizes the blows inflicted by life itself: the burden of time, the weight of separation, and the wounds left by loss. In essence, the father is also a man who has been repeatedly "struck" by life. He belongs to a generation that concealed its affection, endured its pain in silence, and carried its suffering inward rather than expressing it openly. Consequently, all the meanings associated with the mountain image ultimately converge in the figure of the father. The image of the oleaster tree (*jiyda*) likewise serves as a vivid example of associative thinking linked to this paternal dimension. As the aunt is compared to the oleaster tree, the image revives one of the most cherished figures preserved in the father's memory. The tree's ability to grow in dry, rocky soil and its capacity to spread a pleasant fragrance despite its thorns become symbolic of the aunt's life – one marked by hardship and

endurance, yet filled with warmth, kindness, and affection. This memory once again reveals the father's inner world. As the protagonist wanders through the mountain landscape, he gradually begins to sense the people who lived in his father's heart, as well as the longings and losses that shaped his life. By the end of the story, the Mountain of Pain ceases to be merely a geographical location and becomes a metaphor for the father's entire existence. The mountain's gradual erosion symbolizes old age; the wind represents the passage of time; the fractured cliffs signify wounds carried within the soul; and the summit comes to embody aspirations that remain forever beyond human reach. The protagonist ultimately realizes that, in the eyes of his own children, he too has become a "mountain-like father." Yet, like his father before him, he carries countless unseen fractures within himself. In this way, the story brings the theme of generational continuity to the forefront: a child cannot fully understand his father, but with maturity he eventually discovers that he himself has become another "Mountain of Pain." The concluding statement, "It was just an ordinary mountain, my son...", serves as the philosophical core of the entire narrative. Beneath these simple words lies a lifetime of accumulated suffering, loss, affection, and hard-won understanding. The father has come to comprehend these truths, yet he does not attempt to explain them. Some truths can only be understood through lived experience. Thus, Mountain of Pain transcends a mere depiction of nature and evolves into a profound philosophical narrative about the inner geology of the human soul, the gradual erosion wrought by time, and the enduring necessity of preserving love and compassion despite life's hardships.

In 'Uzuk' (The Ring), Isajon Sulton portrays the father not as a man of lofty speeches or grand declarations. Instead, he expresses his love by lighting the stove and warming bread in the early morning, working in icy water, laboring tirelessly to provide for his children, and undertaking a long and difficult journey to a distant city in order to buy a ring. One of the most significant aspects of the story is that the father's love is not openly proclaimed; rather, it is conveyed through quiet devotion and self-sacrifice. He never says, "I love you," yet he spends his

entire life proving it through his actions. Whenever the narrator recalls the ring, memories of the father's labor, rural life, cold fields, and familial affection are evoked. Gradually, the seemingly ordinary ring becomes a symbol of paternal toil, selflessness, generational continuity, and unspoken love. Perhaps, the most moving aspect of the father's character is his willingness to sacrifice his own comfort and happiness to shield his children from hardship. In the statement, "We never used it even in our hardest days; we raised you through our own labor," the ring appears as the embodiment of a lifetime of parental effort and dedication. At the same time, the father is portrayed not merely as the hereditary owner of the ring but as a bridge that ensures its spiritual continuity across generations. The inclusion of the legend of Solomon's ring is likewise deliberate and meaningful. In the legend, the ring possesses extraordinary powers, enabling its owner to command the winds, birds, and hidden treasures. Yet in the story, the father's simple ring acquires an even greater significance. Its true power lies not in supernatural authority but in self-sacrifice, honest labor, familial devotion, and enduring hope for future generations.

The central idea of Isajon Sulton's story 'Otamganimadirbo'ldi...' (Something Happened to My Father...) is that the father is not merely the material provider of the family but also its moral pillar, source of blessing, and spiritual center. The story possesses profound psychological and symbolic dimensions. Here, the father is not portrayed simply as someone who earns money and ensures material well-being. With his absence, the house grows cold, the trees wither, the crops lose their abundance, tears fill the mother's eyes, and the children become emotionally orphaned. Although some of these perceptions arise from the imagination of the child narrator, the author conveys a deeper truth: where a father is present, there are order, security, protection, and blessing. The father works far from home in order to support his family. Exposed to harsh conditions, he falls ill from the cold. In this respect, he is depicted as a self-sacrificing parent. At the same time, however, the writer introduces a subtle and significant idea: in striving to provide for his family, the father has unintentionally deprived

them of what they need most – his presence and affection. This is why the father's moment of inner realization at the end of the story is so important: "It turns out that they needed me more than all the things I dreamed of giving them." This insight constitutes the philosophical climax of the narrative. Another important aspect of the story is its narrative perspective. Because the events are presented through the eyes of a child, the father appears even more noble and almost sacred. Through this perspective, the author movingly illustrates how deeply the image and value of a father are preserved within the hearts of children.

In 'Sog'inch' (Longing), Isajon Sulton chooses not to portray the father as a conventional heroic figure; instead, he reveals the character through the experience of longing itself. This constitutes the story's most distinctive artistic feature. The father's inner world is disclosed through a series of subtle details. The cold field, the desolate hut, the fledgling doves, the silent television, the frost, the old tree stump, and the father's recollections of his children all function as symbols reflecting his emotional and psychological state. The fledgling doves occupy a particularly central role in the story's artistic structure. As the father cares for them, he is in fact reminded of his own children. He begins to see himself as a parent bird living far from its young, and through this association his feelings of affection and longing gradually come to the surface. For this reason, the author develops the father's character not through external action but through inner monologue, memory, descriptions of nature, and a network of parallel symbolic images. The story presents the father not as a stern or authoritarian man but as a person of great emotional sensitivity. His compassion for the fledglings, his efforts to protect them from a cat, his tears as he thinks of his children, and his profound sense of responsibility toward them all reveal the depth of his tenderness and humanity. Through these details, the father emerges as a figure whose strength lies not in outward authority but in the quiet intensity of his love and devotion. Thus, the father figure in the story emerges as a symbol of a hardworking, self-sacrificing, and affectionate parent whose life is shaped by longing and a deep sense of responsibility. The central message of the work is that even when a father lives far

from his family, his entire emotional world remains bound to his children. The story emphasizes that a person's greatest wealth lies not in material possessions but in family and loved ones. A meaningful parallel can be observed between Isajon Sulton's 'Otamganimadirbo'ldi...' (Something Happened to My Father...) and 'Sog'inch' (Longing), both of which are built around the theme of separation and yearning between parent and child. In the former, the events are presented through the perspective of a child, whereas in the latter they are viewed through the eyes of the father. These stories may therefore be regarded as two artistic interpretations of the same emotional experience from opposing perspectives. They can also be seen as connected on a psychological and philosophical level, though not in terms of plot. A clear continuity exists in their emotional and thematic structure. In 'Something Happened to My Father...', the child longs for the father's return; in 'Longing,' the father himself strives to return home. One may be viewed as a call, while the other appears almost as a response to that call. In the first story, the father is the object of longing; in the second, he becomes the one who longs. For this reason, the two works complement each other not compositionally but through their shared spiritual and psychological exploration of familial bonds, absence, and love.

In Isajon Sulton's story 'Ozor' (Pain), the father figure does not appear as an active character on the narrative stage. Instead, he is reconstructed through the traces he leaves behind after his death, through the memories of people, and most importantly, through the perspective of his loyal dog, Qoravoy. In this respect, the father figure in the story is created through an unusual and relatively rare artistic approach in Uzbek prose. The writer does not directly depict the father's inner world; rather, he reveals his lifelong suffering and self-sacrifice through the attitudes and memories of those around him. The father is presented as a person who carried responsibility for the fate of nine children. The detail in which he refers to his wheat fields as "my children's livelihood" is not accidental. It reflects his understanding of life as continuous care, provision, and sacrifice for the well-being of his family. This expression encapsulates the father's entire life and worldview. He plows the land, brings

water, sows, crops, and weeps when the harvest is destroyed by wind and drought, yet he does all of this not for himself, but for his children. Thus, the meaning of the father's life is not personal benefit but the future of his family. His sense of responsibility is so profound that he constantly postpones his own needs. He does not buy new clothes, does not seek medical treatment, and does not think about rest or leisure, because in his understanding, the needs of his children always come first. The woman's remark in the story "First I would clothe the children, then I would think about myself" confirms this truth. The father lives entirely for his family, gradually forgetting himself in the process. As a result, he slowly deteriorates both physically and emotionally. The father's inner experiences in the story are conveyed through the memories of his dog, Qoravoy. Through these recollections, the animal recalls how much suffering its owner endured throughout his life. The father is not appreciated by those around him; his labor is taken for granted as something ordinary. His friend exploits his goodwill, his wife does not fully recognize his self-sacrifice in time, and others interpret his modesty as weakness. Yet the father never reveals his pain to anyone. He lives by swallowing his inner suffering. His words – "I have many thoughts inside me, but what is the use of telling them to you?" – clearly reflect his psychological state. This character embodies the patience, resilience, and philosophy of silence characteristic of many Uzbek fathers. One of the most emotionally powerful aspects of the story is that the father's true value is only fully recognized after his death. His friend, his wife, and even his son gradually come to understand what kind of person he truly was. In particular, through the son's inner monologue, the father's true image is revealed. The son begins to comprehend his father's innocence, honesty, and the lifelong sacrifices he made for his children. This reveals one of the key ideas of the story: a person's greatness is often only recognized after their death. The image of the dog Qoravoy functions as a measure of the father's moral worth. It is precisely the dog that preserves the loyalty that people forget. It protects its owner, guards his grave, and recognizes those who once caused him suffering. As a result, the writer creates a paradoxical situation: the being that most deeply

understands human virtues is not another human, but a loyal dog. Through this device, the nobility of the father figure is further intensified. Qoravoy in IsajonSulton's story, through associative connection, evokes the image of Qorako'z, a symbol of loyalty created by Said Ahmad in Uzbek prose. However, Qoravoy is not merely a faithful animal. He is elevated to the level of a symbolic figure who understands the father's suffering and protects his moral dignity.

In Isajon Sulton's story 'Turmush' (Life), the father figure is neither portrayed as an idealized, loving parent nor as a tyrannical authority figure. Instead, he is presented as an ordinary man worn down by the burdens of everyday life. At first glance, he appears somewhat rough, demanding, and constantly frowning. Upon returning home, he expresses dissatisfaction that the yard has not been dug and reprimands his son. However, when we turn to his inner world, it becomes clear that he is, in fact, a person deeply longing for love, attention, and familial warmth. He works tirelessly to provide for his family, yet what he truly desires in return is gratitude and a sincere welcome. In this sense, the writer reveals a hidden psychological need within the father's character – the need for affection. One of the most important artistic devices in the story is the use of dream sequences. In the father's dream, he perceives the true essence of his wife – her devotion and obedience. In turn, the mother sees her husband as a huge cracked rock. Through this associative image, the story expresses the idea of a man who spends his entire life sacrificing himself to protect his family from storms and hardships. Although he appears strong and unbreakable from the outside, he is gradually worn down from within. Thus, in the story, the father is depicted as the pillar of the family, its protector and provider of livelihood, while the mother is portrayed as its spiritual foundation, a source of love and patience. The author shows that beneath the everyday conflicts between husband and wife lies a deeper reality: mutual dependence and an unacknowledged form of love. The central idea of the story is that marriage is not merely a set of obligations, but a process of mutual understanding and appreciation. People often come to realize this truth too late.

In the story 'Todd,' the father figure is one of the most emotionally powerful and philosophically rich images in Isajon Sul-ton's oeuvre. At first, Mamasiddik Pishik is perceived by villagers as a stingy man, someone endlessly absorbed in work and even driven by the desire to accumulate wealth. However, as the narrative unfolds, his true nature is revealed, and he emerges as a self-sacrificing father who has devoted his entire life to his family and children. What makes this father unique is that he expresses his love not through words but through labor. Having endured war, captivity, humiliation, and the harsh trials of life, his entire existence becomes defined by "running." The forced running imposed by the German officer Todd in the concentration camp gradually transforms into a metaphor for life itself. The burdens of daily survival, concern for his children's future, and the very passage of time all become forms of pursuit and exhaustion. The figure of Mamasiddik gradually transcends individuality and becomes a universal representation of fatherhood. In the end, the author imagines him still working tirelessly in the fields, as if his labor continues beyond time itself. This final image symbolizes the eternity of a father's effort and selfless devotion.

In Isajon Sul-ton's story 'Bo'ri' (The Wolf), the father figure stands out from other paternal images in the writer's works due to its symbolic-philosophical depth and psychological complexity. The central artistic feature of the story is the associative parallelism between the father and the wolf. As the protagonist grows older and becomes the head of his own family, he begins to compare himself to a wolf. Just as a wolf protects its pack and territory, the father struggles to provide for his family, earn a livelihood, and safeguard his children. In this way, the image of the wolf becomes a symbolic means of revealing the father's inner world. Through this story, the author highlights the existence of two opposing forces within human nature: on one side, a wild spirit longing for freedom and boundless horizons, and on the other, the responsibility toward family, children, and society. The protagonist's desire to howl at the moon and his confession that "a wolf lives inside him" are direct expressions of this inner conflict. He longs for freedom, yet his paternal duty

forces him to remain within his “territory.” Thus, the father emerges as a philosophical character who is constantly trying to understand his own nature, life responsibilities, and the deeper meaning of existence.

In the story ‘Qismat’ (Destiny), the father figure differs sharply from many other paternal images in IsajonSulton’s works, as he is portrayed not as an idealized character but as a complex, contradictory figure. He is not the traditional kind, wise, and affectionate father. Instead, he is a man who has committed wrongdoing, caused pain to his family, and yet is transformed into a fish-like being, enduring the torment of remorse and destiny. For this reason, this character stands out within IsajonSulton’s oeuvre due to its tragic tone, symbolic depth, and psychological complexity.

In the story ‘Yog’ochkavush’ (The Wooden Clogs), the father figure is also presented in a more complicated artistic interpretation than the conventional image of a loving and self-sacrificing parent. Xuan-Shi deeply loves his daughter, but his understanding of her happiness is shaped by poverty and social inequality, leading him to make a misguided decision. He does not wish for his daughter to live a life of hardship and labor like his own, and therefore believes that marrying her into a wealthy family is the only path to a better future. With this aim, he makes wooden clogs in an attempt to alter the shape of her feet. As a result, paternal love and paternal error converge at a single point. The writer depicts the father as a tragic figure – one who is deeply concerned for his child’s future, yet becomes lost under the influence of his time and environment.

#### CONCLUSION

The results of the study show that Isajon Sulton artistically interprets the father figure as a complex associative center that embodies human life, fate, memory, spiritual heritage, and inner psychological experience. Therefore, in the writer’s works, the image of the father goes beyond the level of an individual character and acquires a universal and philosophical meaning. The analysis also demonstrates that Isajon Sulton often

constructs the father figure through indirect modes of representation. The image of the father is closely connected with symbolic details such as “mountain,” “ring,” “pigeon,” “cliff,” “handprint,” “wind,” “Qoravoy,” and “wooden clogs,” forming a broad associative-semantic field. As a result, these elements cease to function as simple artistic details and instead become poetic devices expressing the father’s inner world, spiritual identity, and life philosophy. In particular, in the story ‘Og‘riqtog‘i,’ the interweaving of the father and mountain images, in ‘Ring’ the associations of labor and devotion, in ‘Longing’ feelings of affection and separation, and in ‘Pain’ loyalty and belatedly realized values reveal the originality of the writer’s artistic thinking. The stories analyzed in the article reflect different manifestations of the father figure. In one group of narratives, the father is portrayed as a kind, self-sacrificing person devoted entirely to his family, while in others he appears as a complex individual struggling with the blows of fate, life’s mistakes, and inner turmoil. However, what unites all these representations is the interpretation of the father as a symbol of moral responsibility and selflessness. Rather than idealizing the father figure, the writer seeks to reveal his human weaknesses, emotional pain, and inner experiences. The father is not only responsible for the destiny of his children, but is also interpreted as a carrier of inherited spiritual values and a transmitter of them to future generations. Overall, the father image in Isajon Sulton’s stories is considered one of the significant poetic phenomena of modern Uzbek prose. Through associative thinking, symbolic imagery, and psychological depiction, the writer succeeds in creating a new artistic interpretation of the father figure. As a result, in the writer’s creative work the father figure rises beyond a character representing family relationships and becomes a multilayered artistic-philosophical concept reflecting human spiritual development, destiny, memory, self-sacrifice, and universal human values. This, in turn, appears as one of the key poetic features defining the ideological and artistic value of Isajon Sulton’s stories.

## REFERENCES

- Aitmatov, C. 2018. *The White Ship*. Tashkent: Yoshlar Nashriyot Uyi.
- Dostoevsky, F. 2024. *The Brothers Karamazov*. Tashkent: Yangi Asr Avlodi.
- Ghulam, G. 1984. *Complete Works Collection*. Vol. 2. Poems. Tashkent: Fan.
- Ivanovsky, V. N. 1909. *Psychological and Epistemological Associationism*. Kazan.
- McCarthy, C. 2014. *The Road*. Trans. Yu. Stepanenko. Saint Petersburg: Azbuka.
- Miller, A. 1960. *All My Sons. Death of a Salesman. The Crucible. A View from the Bridge: Plays*. Moscow: Iskusstvo.
- Qurbonov, D. 2004. *Introduction to Literary Studies*. Tashkent.
- Sulton, I. 2017. *Works. Stories. Vol. 1*. Tashkent: Gafur Ghulam Publishing House.
- Timofeyev, L. I. & Turaev, V. 1974. *Dictionary of Literary Terms*. Moscow: Prosveshcheniye.
- Turgenev, I. S. 2010. *Fathers and Sons*. Moscow: Direct-Media.
- William Shakespeare. 1981. *King Lear. Selected Works*. 5 vols. Vol. 2. Tashkent: Literature and Art Publishing House named after Gafur Ghulam.

**NIYAZOVA ZILOLA ESHEMIROVNA**  
BASIC DOCTORAL STUDENT,  
SHAHRISABZ STATE PEDAGOGICAL INSTITUTE,  
UZBEKISTAN.  
E-MAIL: <ZILOLANIYAZOVA83@GMAIL.COM>