HSR London International Conference on Multidisciplinary Academic Research
(HSR-ICMAR) 2026
https://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/conference

ECOLOGICAL THINKING AND THE ARTISTIC INTERPRETATION OF NATURE IN MENGZIYO SAFAROV'S NOVELLA AYRISHOX

Feruza Hafizova
PhD student, Termez State University
https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21779981

Abstract: This article examines the ideological and artistic features of Mengziyo Safarov's novella Ayrishox. It analyzes the harmony between humans and nature, the natural patterns of deer life, and the ideas of freedom, compassion, and devotion to nature embodied in the image of Ayrishox. The study also explores the author's artistic mastery in depicting natural landscapes, his techniques for conveying the emotional world of wildlife, and the literary devices employed to promote ecological thinking. The findings demonstrate the novella's significant place in Uzbek nature-oriented prose, highlighting its artistic value and its contribution to the expression of ecological and aesthetic concepts.

Keywords: Mengziyo Safarov, Ayrishox, novella, depiction of nature, human–nature relationship, deer image, ecological thinking, artistic mastery, system of characters, Uzbek prose.

Mengziyo Safarov's novella Ayrishox (1989) is regarded as one of the finest examples of Uzbek nature-oriented prose. The work vividly depicts the life of deer in their natural habitat and artistically portrays the harmonious relationship between humans and nature. Particular attention is given to the character of Ayrishox as the leader of the herd, his adaptation to the laws of nature, and the natural processes that shape the life of deer.

Ayrishox is initially raised by kind-hearted and compassionate people. When he reaches the age of three, the question of returning him to his own herd becomes a matter of priority. The head of the nature reserve, Rahmat Ahadov, and the research officer, Suyar Suyun, discuss this issue in detail. At first, Suyar asks whether Ayrishox will be transferred to a zoo, but Ahadov rejects this possibility. Instead, a plan has been developed to return him to his natural environment and reintegrate him into the deer herd. This decision prompts Suyar to reflect deeply on whether Ayrishox, having grown up among humans, will be able to adapt successfully to life in the wild.

After joining the herd, Ayrishox initially returns frequently to the nature reserve where he was raised. Over time, however, he gradually becomes fully integrated into his own herd. This development symbolizes that Ayrishox has begun to experience a genuine sense of freedom, belonging, and fulfillment within his natural environment. Before releasing Ayrishox into the wild, the head of the reserve, Rahmat Ahadov, asks Suyar Suyun to carefully explain the decision to Suluv, who helped care for him, and to Oynovot, the schoolgirl who raised the young deer by feeding him milk.

Ayrishox experiences two distinct ways of life. On the one hand, he grows up surrounded by human compassion, care, and affection; on the other hand, he eventually returns to his natural habitat and continues his life among the deer. Through this journey, he comes to experience the fundamental values of nature—freedom, dignity, and nobility. By portraying this transformation, the author offers a philosophical interpretation of the relationship between humans and nature, while also exploring the opposing forces of kindness and cruelty, goodness and evil. In essence, Ayrishox becomes a symbolic figure who encounters the two contrasting aspects of human nature: selfless compassion and destructive malice[1].

The introductory chapters of the novella depict the severe winter of 1969. The continuous snowfall throughout January and February, the powerful winds, the freezing of the Amu Darya River,

[1] Сафаров Менгзиё. Айришох: (Қиссалар, ҳикоялар, эссе) – Тошкент: “O‘qituvchi” HUNY, 2008. -288 б. Қаранг: (-б.4)

and the cracking of the ice are described with remarkable vividness. Through these natural phenomena, the author realistically portrays the struggle of wild animals to survive under harsh winter conditions.

The novella also emphasizes the growing population of Bukhara deer (xongul) while illustrating the severe hardships they endure during the bitter winter. In particular, the difficult journey of the herd led by Ayrishox through snowstorms and freezing weather demonstrates the author's exceptional artistic skill in depicting wildlife. Whenever the herd senses danger, Ayrishox instinctively leads them toward a safer area. After hearing the distant howl of an unknown predator, the herd moves rapidly and, after a long and exhausting journey, reaches the White Cliffs Valley (Oq Qoyalar), where they find temporary refuge. Despite the freezing temperatures and strong winds, they continue their relentless struggle for survival.

The second chapter introduces the reserve staff, particularly Rahmat Ahadov and Suyar Suyun. They are portrayed not only as specialists dedicated to wildlife conservation but also as individuals with profound love and respect for nature. Suyar Suyun's personal and professional background is especially noteworthy. He initially worked as a schoolteacher, later as a newspaper journalist, and subsequently in the railway sector. Eventually, at Rahmat Ahadov's invitation, he joined the nature reserve, where he devoted the rest of his life to the protection and preservation of wildlife and the natural environment.

The third chapter of the novella narrates the events surrounding Ayrishox's arrival at the nature reserve. A young deer discovered in a rice field is initially presented as a gift to the director of a local enterprise. The director's daughter, Oynovot, lovingly cares for the fawn and raises it by feeding it milk. However, when the decision is made to transfer the young deer to the nature reserve, the family experiences profound emotional distress. In particular, Oynovot's separation from the fawn is depicted with great emotional intensity. Unable to cope with the loss, the young girl refuses to eat for an extended period and suffers deeply, constantly worrying about the deer's fate. "…It is no secret that the population of the Bukhara deer (xongul), one of the most remarkable species of wildlife found in Mother Nature, has been increasing"[2],

Later, Oynovot's father takes her to the nature reserve. As soon as she sees Ayrishox, she throws her arms around his neck, bursts into tears, and loses consciousness. This scene serves as a powerful artistic expression of the sincere bond of affection between a human and an animal. From that moment on, Oynovot becomes a frequent visitor to the reserve, where she continues to care not only for Ayrishox but also for Suluv with great love and devotion. Her aspiration to become a veterinarian and work in the nature reserve in the future further reflects her deep love for nature and her strong commitment to the protection of wildlife.

Another significant feature of the novella is its masterful artistic depiction of natural landscapes: "The wind does not lose its force until it strikes the foothills of Bobotog' with tremendous intensity. Within a short time, it buries vast expanses beneath drifting sand, while hills and shallow ravines along its path disappear into dense clouds of dust. When the wind finally subsides, only the harder objects that have withstood its force remain visible, protruding from the ground and creating a desolate landscape resembling an abandoned cemetery"[3]. The shimmering reflection of the sun's rays on the surface of the Amu Darya River, the winds blowing from the mountains and foothills, and the powerful wind locally known as **"To'yinning chappasi"** are portrayed with remarkable vividness. These natural phenomena are closely intertwined with the lives of the deer, emphasizing the inseparable relationship between wildlife and its environment. Strong winds and snowstorms make it increasingly difficult for the deer to find food, placing their survival under constant threat.

Through the symbolic interactions between Ayrishox and the mother deer, the author artistically conveys the animals' instincts, vigilance, and innate drive for survival. Although animals

[2] Сафаров Менгзиё. Айришох.- В.14,
[3] Ўша асар.-Б-29.

cannot communicate through human language, Safarov successfully reveals their inner world and emotional experiences by means of literary interpretation. As a result, readers gain a deeper understanding of the laws of nature and the distinctive characteristics of wildlife.

Overall, Mengziyo Safarov's novella Ayrishox is a remarkable literary work that artistically explores the harmony between humans and nature, the complex life of wildlife, and the universal values of compassion, freedom, and dignity. The novella promotes a profound respect for nature, emphasizes the importance of environmental conservation, and affirms the right of every living creature to exist and thrive within its natural habitat.

References:

1. Maqsadqulov Xurram. Tog‘dek baland, cho‘lday keng so‘z boshi//Safarov Mengziyo. Ayrishox. (Qissalar, hikoyalar, esse)- Toshkent: “O‘qituvchi” HMNY, 2008 -288 б. (qarang:–B.6-7).
2. Murtazoyev Bobonazar,Nazarova M. Olam va odam (“Payg‘ambar oroli” yessesi haqida)//O‘zbekistonda ijtimoiy-iqtisodiy va etnomadaniy hayot: tarix va tahlil, Respublika ilmiy anjumani maqolalar to‘plami. Termiz DU.-Termiz, 2015, -800 b. (Qarang -B. 252-255).
3. Murtazoyev Bobonazar, Inson, tabiat va suv (Mengziyo Safarovning “Sarbasta Surxon” essesiga chizgilar) // “Davr, Zamon, Shaxs”, “Surxondaryo viloyati tarixi va ekoturizim salohiyati” mavzusidagi Respulika ilmiy maqolalari to‘plami. Professor-o‘qituvchilar minbari. – Toshkent: “YA NCI U ASHR”, 2019 -546 b. (Qarang: – B. 151-156).
4. Safarov Mengziyo. Daryo-hayot, mangulik//Sharq yulduzi.–1991 –№: 9 – B. 6-16.
5. Safarov Mengziyo. Ayrishox(Qissalar, hikoyalar, esse), – Toshkent: “O‘qituvchi” HMNY, 2008 - 288 в.
6. Xolmirzayev Shukur. Sening qadring o‘tdi // O‘zbekiston adabiyoti va san’ati. – 1995, - 6 yanvar.