



THE AESTHETICS AND REVIVAL OF MODERN UZBEK FICTIONAL NARRATIVES

Nilufar Yuldasheva Odilovna

email: yuldashevanilufar458@gmail.com

In world literary studies, since the mid-20th century, the novella (short novel) genre, which followed the novel in prominence, has increasingly focused on the in-depth analysis of reality and the human psyche, as well as on conveying the essence of life. The structure, characters, conflicts, psychological depth, artistic and figurative devices, and the wide thematic scope of works created in this genre define the principles of its renewal. Naturally, understanding the current literary process, adopting an appropriate approach to artistic works, and comprehending the poetics of the novella genre in prose have created the need for distinctive theoretical knowledge and analytical skills in literary scholarship.

In contemporary Uzbek literary studies, during the current era of globalization, the renewal principles of the novella genre like those of other genres along with issues of artistic language and stylistic poetics, as well as the study of writers' stylistic individuality, have gained particular importance as a direct reflection of the transformations in social thought.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the novella genre developed rapidly. Alongside renowned writers such as N. Aminov, S. Siyoyev, Sh. Kholmiraev, and O. Hoshimov, authors like E. A'zamov, M. M. Do'st, T. Murod, Kh. Do'stmuhammad, Kh. Sultanov, G'. Khotamov, A. Saidov, B. Murod Ali, and Sh. Bo'tayev also secured a worthy place in literature. Through their creative works, they introduced distinctive themes, characters, interpretations, and concepts to modern Uzbek novella writing.

Uzbek novella writing has undergone several stages of development. For instance, the novellas written in the 1960s differ significantly from those of the 1970s and 1980s in terms of the themes and issues they address. In the 1960s novellas (for example, P. Qodirov's *Freedom, My Dignity, Heritage*), the focus was primarily on inner emotions and family relationships, whereas in the 1970s, writers began to depict artistic characters with diverse personalities, behaviors, psychologies, and worldviews. The object of depiction in novellas shifted, giving rise to a new creative



direction. The image of the storyteller (novelist) began to occupy a central position in representing events and experiences within the narrative.

In contemporary Uzbek literature, the spatial and temporal settings chosen by authors, along with the themes, characters, and narrative styles used to portray them, provide opportunities to compare and define the renewal principles of the novella genre in modern Uzbek prose.

The socio-political changes that occurred at the end of the 20th century had a direct impact on the worldview of writers. This influence was also reflected in the Uzbek novella genre. In particular, the 1980s and 1990s marked a period of renewal in the history of Uzbek novella writing. Such transformations and experiences in the process of development led to the emergence of distinctive styles, the elevation of the novella to a new stage of progress, and a reimagined artistic perception and representation of the world—all of which define the principles of renewal in the modern Uzbek novella genre.

In our study of modern Uzbek literature, we have identified the principles of renewal in the novella genre through the works of two writers as follows:

Reflecting human character realistically:

(Erkin A'zam's *The Year My Father Was Born*; Xurshid Do'stmuhammad's *My Separation Is a Thousandfold, I Without You, You Without Me*);

Exploring the complexities of the human psyche:

(Erkin A'zam's *Days Other Than the Holiday*; Xurshid Do'stmuhammad's *The Gaze, Refuge, Chayongul, or a Village-Like Murder*).

Today, talented writers such as Murod Muhammad Do'st, Tog'ay Murod, Erkin A'zamov, Xurshid Do'stmuhammad, Nazar Eshonqul, and Shoyim Bo'tayev are productively contributing to the development of the novella genre. Their works enrich Uzbek prose both in quality and quantity. In their novellas, these authors address the pressing issues of their time. Each writer, distinguished by their unique stylistic direction and artistic vision, demonstrates the social and aesthetic vitality as well as the individuality of the novella genre in the contemporary period.

In contemporary Uzbek novella writing, the creative and unconventional techniques of world literature are being skillfully utilized. Under this influence, modern Uzbek novellas have developed diverse forms in terms of genre and artistic style. From a



stylistic perspective, both traditional realistic novellas and nontraditional modernist novellas have emerged. As a result, a genre syncretism has occurred within the nature of the novella. For instance, hybrid forms such as the cinematic novella, story-novella, novella-essay, letter-novella, sketch-novella, and essay-novella have appeared. There have also been tendencies of one genre merging into another for example, the emergence of novelistic elements within novellas or novella features within novels.

Considering the quantity, quality, and significance of novellas in Uzbek literature, one can observe the genre's growing importance: in 2010 alone, nearly twenty novellas were published in the journals *Sharq Yulduzi* ("Star of the East") and *Yoshlik* ("Youth"). This demonstrates the special attention devoted to the genre. Such a developmental process also necessitates substantial scholarly research into the changes and renewal occurring within the field.

Every literary genre, including the novella, evolves under the influence of time and place. Likewise, every artist is a child of their era, environment, and historical circumstances. The traits defining an author's individuality and creative character arise from these very factors. Indeed, the true value of an artist's work lies not merely in the depiction of their personal experiences, but in their ability to transform the socially significant events of their time into elements of their own life narrative.

The novella genre in Uzbek literature has a long history. Written sources such as the medieval "folk books" (*xalq kitoblari*) served as a foundation and a school of experience for the modern novella form. The renewal of the modern Uzbek novella, its broad thematic scope, and its rich diversity in form and content have elevated it to a higher stage of artistic and aesthetic development.

Today, the Uzbek novella has further advanced in terms of artistry, meaning, and style. While the novellas created before the early 20th century primarily depicted prophets, saintly heroes, kings, and the lives of historical figures, later works began to focus on real-life events, ordinary people, and hopes for the future—contrasting with the dark days of the past. Regardless of the period, type, or genre, the influence of the prevailing socio-political context can always be observed.



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