



THE ISSUE OF THE HERO IN POETIC STORIES

Diyorov Eldorjon Kupaysin og'li

Gulistan State University,
Master's degree student,
Department of Uzbek Literature
Diyoroveldorjon@mail.ru

Abstract: *This article analyzes poetic stories, their common and specific features with traditional stories. It also discusses the Hero, the main feature of the poetic story, his role in the poetic story and his participation in determining the genre.*

Key words: Poetic story, genre, specification, hero, character, means of artistic depiction, portrait, detail, etc.

It is known that the early 20th century was significant for Turkestan and, in general, the Central Asian region due to political and economic changes and the literary revolution that emerged under their influence.

From the mid-20th century onwards, several innovations became traditions. Among these innovations, inter-genre integrations started to appear as formal novelties (poetic novel, poetic drama, lyrical story, dramatic poem). One of these is the lyrical story, which combines elements of prose and poetry, and holds a special place among such genres.

Looking at the history of the poetic story, we can find the initial elements of this genre in the works of Mirtemir. Later, poets such as Omon Matjon, To'lan Nizom, and Asqar Mahkam also produced works in this genre. Although the poetics and specifications of this genre have not been thoroughly studied by scholars, there are differing opinions regarding Mirtemir's work "The Portrait". While the author himself defines the work as a "lyrical story," literary scholar Dilmurod Quronov, in his book "Fundamentals of Literary Theory," states the following when discussing the genre of doston (epic poem):

"For example, while many of the folk oral epic poems are classified as epic dastans, Mirtemir's 'The Portrait' (even though the author calls it a 'lyrical story') and S. Zunnunova's 'Dialogue with the Soul' are lyrical... dastans" [1. 265].

From this, we can conclude that although both the lyrical story and lyrical doston are based on the narration of events in poetic rhythm, their genre potentials differ. One of the main distinguishing features is the relationship between the narrative and the protagonist. In a lyrical doston, the main focus is on the events



from which the reader draws conclusions, while in a poetic story, the protagonist at the center of the events holds the primary importance.

This indicates that the poetic story modifies the main specific characteristics of the “story” genre, which belongs to the category of middle-epic genres.

In his book “Fundamentals of Literary Studies,” literary scholar To‘xta Boboyev provides the following definition of the story (as mentioned above, the words story and povest are considered synonymous):

A povest (from the Russian 'povestvovat' – to narrate a story) is a medium-length literary work based on narrative, typically revolving around a single event and focused on the protagonist’s inner experiences [3. 139].

In the Dictionary of Literary Studies published by “Akademnashr” in 2013, the term qissa is defined in two ways:

1. A narrative work rooted in oral folk tradition, characterized by event-driven storytelling that recounts the life and adventures of a central hero;
2. One of the three principal genres of epic literature, alongside the short story and the novel—i.e., a povest. A qissa typically portrays a specific period or episode in the life of the protagonist.

Whereas the short story tends to focus on a single event, and the novel reflects the broader socio-cultural context through the lens of the protagonist, the qissa places the hero at the center of the narrative. In this genre, the protagonist is not a mere narrative tool, but the primary objective. Consequently, all events are structured around the protagonist, and the plot does not branch out as extensively as it does in the novel [3.387–388]. This observation highlights that the issue of the protagonist constitutes a fundamental component in defining the qissa, a feature that retains its relevance in the genre of poetic qissa as well. While literary genres are subject to continuous development and transformation, the essential attribute that defines a genre remains stable over time [1.267]. In poetic qissas, as in traditional ones, the narrative revolves around the protagonist; other characters and episodes are organized in relation to the central figure. Though the structural composition remains largely similar, the mode of expression diverges. As noted by the esteemed literary scholar Izzat Sulton, “In the qissa, lyricism tends to be more pronounced than in the short story or the novel” [2.170]. Indeed, poetic rhythm allows for a more nuanced and emotionally charged portrayal of the protagonist's dramatic experiences.



If we consider the protagonist to be the primary distinguishing feature of the poetic qissa, it becomes necessary to clarify how this figure differs conceptually from related literary constructs such as the character, type, episode, and figure. An episode refers to a minor character who fulfills a specific function within the plot and exits the narrative once that role is completed. A character is defined as a figure distinguished by individual traits and playing an integral role in the progression of events. A type represents a generalized image embodying the characteristics of a specific group or social class. A figure, meanwhile, refers to any participant in the narrative and tends to carry a neutral function within the system of characters.

According to the Dictionary of Literary Studies compiled by D. Quronov et al., the protagonist is defined as “a figure occupying a leading position among the system of characters and playing a crucial role in shaping the ideological and artistic concept of the work.” This interpretation implies a hierarchical structure among characters in epic and dramatic literature: the narrative is constructed around the protagonist, and other characters are introduced in relation to their connection with this central figure. These secondary characters function in an integrative and subordinate capacity, supporting the protagonist’s narrative arc [4.385].

In conclusion, although a literary work—especially a poetic qissa—may contain multiple episodic, character-based, or typified figures, there exists only one true protagonist. All other images, regardless of their classification, serve to illuminate the protagonist’s destiny, both in its spiritual and worldly dimensions. The protagonist, in turn, may simultaneously exhibit features of a character or a type, reflecting the complexity of literary representation.

In identifying the protagonist in poetic stories, it is important to first determine the writer’s artistic and ideological intention. For example, in Omon Matjon’s lyrical story “Times That Speak”, the entire narrative is told from the perspective of a narrator-character. Therefore, he is an integral and realistic participant in the plot. At times, we also observe that particular attention is given to his emotions and destiny.

However, we cannot state that the narrator is the complete and sole protagonist of the work. There are two main reasons for this:

First, although the narrator appears to maintain the plot’s dynamics, his fate is not fully developed. Instead, the focus often shifts to another character, Anvar, and parts of the narrative relate either directly or indirectly to his destiny.



Second, when we consider the author's purpose—which is to show that no idea, system, or regime is flawless—we can understand the broader context. As the author himself writes in the preface:

“Elevated human beliefs and moral values have only gained social significance in our time, rising to the level of ideologies among many nations. This work discusses the beliefs and ideologies of different eras, and how war, violence, and oppression have affected the human spirit.”

Therefore, we can conclude that in poetic stories, the protagonist is not shaped based on a rigid plot structure as in traditional narratives. Instead, the author's artistic and ideological message, the lyrical nature of the plot, and the depth of emotional experiences play a decisive role in identifying the protagonist. In “Times That Speak”, the function of the protagonist is not limited to a single character—both the narrator and Anvar, and even the author's reflective voice, contribute to shaping the work's central message.

As another example, we can cite To‘lan Nizom's lyrical stories “White Flower” and “The Weeping Willow.” Although these two works are narrated by the author, he also becomes involved in the events and rises to the level of a character. In “The Weeping Willow,” the epic scope is somewhat narrow, with greater emphasis placed on inner emotions and various poetic-compositional elements. This, in turn, greatly enhances the importance of the author's personality. However, he cannot be considered the protagonist, because—though the epic scale may be limited—the core theme and the author's intent are centered around the creative master Mirtemir and his fate.

In “White Flower” as well, the above-mentioned author-character structure is repeated. The fact that the characters in both stories exist in real life, and that both works are written in an elegiac spirit, brings the author's lyrical presence to the forefront. However, the epic scope in “White Flower” is significantly broader than in “The Weeping Willow,” and the driving characters are Saida Zunnunova and Said Ahmad. As we read the story, a second plotline appears—concerning Said Ahmad's repression and imprisonment. This raises some questions regarding the central character. However, if we move beyond the structure and approach the content using a biographical method, we can see that the image of the genius Uzbek woman cannot be imagined without these events. Their inclusion is not an exaggeration of the content, but rather a poetic necessity. Considering the principle of realism mentioned earlier, the lives of these two individuals cannot be seen separately. Therefore, we can say that in the lyrical story, the character of Said Ahmad functions as a “means,” not the “goal.” The symbolic title chosen for the story also proves this idea.



Thus, when determining the artistic value of a lyrical story, several factors are important: how fully the protagonist's fate is reflected, whether they are elevated to the level of a true literary character, their unique traits, how they are typified within the time and space of the narrative, the extent of fictionalization, and—if the character is a real person—whether their depiction retains a distinctive and individualized form. Since the work is a lyrical story rather than a traditional prose story, the proper use of poetic elements in revealing the protagonist's spiritual essence, emotional dynamics, and inner experiences is also crucial in evaluating the work. Indeed, the difference between a poetic story and a prose one lies not only in the use of poetic language. In poetic stories, the lyrical nature of the characters—their inner emotions—runs parallel to the plot events.

In "White Flower," from the very title and opening lines, the personality of the central character—Saida Zunnunova—is symbolically suggested. The "flower" motif in the story's title is traditionally used in classical and modern literature as a metaphor for women. The author continues this tradition but in a unique way—by adding the adjective "white." In our culture, white symbolizes purity, goodness, and, when associated with a person, spiritual cleanliness. "White flower" becomes a beautiful metaphor-comparison.

Let us now look at the following lines from the exposition of the story:

There are many flowers in the world, all beautiful,

A red rose holds the warmth of the heart.

In the yellow one, a nameless acceptance,

In the black—tears like pearls.

Yet the pure white rose came to mind,

It reminded me of tales from my life.

I gazed and gazed until my eyes grew tired,

Then my late beloved appeared in my dream.

In these lines, the "White Flower" becomes somewhat intensified into a "White Rose." This rare type of rose, unlike others, withers earlier and has more delicate thorns to protect it. Still, its fragrance lingers until it dries completely. The poetess's fate is somewhat similar to this rose.



Both in her biography and in the plot of the story, she lives faithfully to her beliefs, without compromising her principles, cherishing sacred emotions throughout her life.

The choice of the “white flower” image in the story and its transformation into a poetic symbol allows for the deep revelation of Saida Zunnunova’s spiritual and moral essence. This elevates her beyond a mere historical figure to the level of a full-fledged literary character.

Another notable aspect of the work is that it relies more on lyricism and emotions than on plot-driven narrative. Although the author is the storyteller, he is not visibly present in the plot, yet his poetic voice resonates throughout.

In Omon Matjon’s poetic novella “Talkable Times,” the character Anvar is portrayed as a talented, sincere, and underappreciated individual in society during the Soviet era. The author emphasizes certain personal traits of Anvar, exaggerating them to show that his character is typical of the era. Another important point is that the creator’s description of Anvar’s external details (his clothing, portrait) is also crucial in how the character is portrayed. The alignment of his outer appearance with his inner world helps to clarify the literary character. His depiction as someone who cannot find his place in society yet has not lost his inner strength and aspirations offers the reader a deeper, more social and human perspective. Furthermore, by highlighting the connection between personality and generalization, the work allows for a more profound analysis of the relationship between individual and social factors in literature. Toxta Boboyev’s idea of image generalization is illustrated by the fact that the work attempts to reflect certain layers of society through each character. Anvar’s image not only reflects the inner world of one individual but also represents the general condition of many people in that era and society. In this way, the literary character conveys how individuals feel in different societies and social environments.

In creating a literary character, finding the balance between typification and individualization is one of the key goals of the author. At the same time, by highlighting the creator’s subjective opinions, the method of portrayal allows for a combination of the character’s inner state and the general mood of the environment. This interplay of colors and images not only carries aesthetic significance but also holds deeper ideological and social meanings.

1. Anvar – A General Symbol of the Youth of the Soviet Era

In the novella, Anvar is portrayed as an inventor, a creator, and a person striving to improve his life. His inability to enter the university and find his place in society is



not just a simple problem but a reflection of the Soviet regime's system that hinders talents like his, a system that is tailored to the cotton industry. This feature turns him into a typical character of his era.

2. Social Pressure and the "Son of a Traitor" Stigma

Due to his father being labeled a “traitor to the homeland,” Anvar faces constant suspicion from society throughout his life. This is not only his personal tragedy but also the collective fate of an entire generation that has fallen victim to the ideological system. Although Anvar suffers in this environment, he does not completely abandon his dreams. Over the course of the story, his father is exonerated, disappears, and then returns, but the negative attitude towards Anvar in his youth remains the starting point for his future emotional traumas. One of the pressures is shown in the following lines:

“Didn’t we pass Physics... I’m saying this for this reason...

Up until this moment, the chairman, who had been silent, suddenly,

I mean, Comrade Davlatboyev with his politics

sprang up, his hand reached for the whip handle

that was sticking out from his boot,

then his fist was in the air, and with a strike, he shook:

‘Hey... you boy... your physics... over there...

Whose child is this?’ ‘Sodiqov Anvar.’

‘Sodiqov? Ah, I see... Is he the one... hm... like him...

He’s the same kind of bastard offspring...’

‘You’re talking about my father... my father... He... He...’”

In any work written in poetic speech, one of the genre requirements is the conciseness of the sentence construction. As seen in the lines above, the author shortens the dialogues as much as possible in the poetic novella. The poet’s mastery is shown in how, even when dialogues are shortened, there is no loss of meaning, and in fact, it may even increase. First of all, the author leaves it to the reader to guess what is said after the ellipsis, which helps to intensify the emotionality.

3. Sincere and Devoted Hero



Anvar is a person who cares about his fellow villagers and tries to do good for them. As a person, he strives to improve the lives of his fellow villagers. However, his invention, aimed at purifying the polluted water flowing through the village with the help of electricity, is neglected by the “Davlatboyevs,” who are concerned with nothing other than “high-level” plans.

4. Theme of Love

Although Anvar is married to a girl named Ra’no, he later falls in love with another girl, Gulshan. This situation deepens the personal torments that already exist in his life. His dreams, love, and life choices remain unfulfilled due to societal pressure and ideological boundaries. This is a common emotional state for many youths of that time. In the poetic novella, such emotional experiences are revealed through inner monologues:

Anvar, suffering greatly,

First thought of it as a harsh push of fate.

Then he got used to it: “What right do I have to Gulshan,

Who am I to her?”

Yes, I broke my vow, Ra’no! I’m a vow-breaker...

I used to think my father would return.

Now I have completely lost hope, even more than that.

As seen, in lyrical novellas, details are not as emphasized; instead, emotions take precedence. Anvar is not just a single character, but rather a collective representation of many young people of that time—talented yet unable to fully achieve their dreams. He is portrayed as a creator, sincere, longing for love and recognition, but struggling to find his path due to social limitations. The characterization of Anvar is significant because he fights not just with personal hardships but with the social and ideological constraints of his era.

From the above, we can conclude that there are both similarities and differences between the protagonist of a traditional novella written in prose and the protagonist of a poetic novella. They are as follows:

Common Features:

Central Character: In both types of novellas, the protagonist is the central figure that defines the essence of the work.



Inner World and Experiences: In both types, the emotional and psychological states of the protagonist are depicted.

Character as the Driving Force of the Plot: The actions and decisions of the protagonist shape the plot.

Representation of the Protagonist as a Figure of Their Time and Environment: In both types of novellas, the protagonist is presented as a representative of their era and surroundings.

Internal and External Conflict: At a certain point in their lives, the protagonist experiences internal struggles, searches, or complex situations.

Foydalanilgan adabiyotlar:

1. D. Qur'anov, Z. Mamajonov, M. Sheraliyev. Fundamentals of Literary Theory. Tashkent: Akademnashr, 2013. – 387-388 p.
2. D. Qur'anov. Dictionary of Literary Studies. Tashkent: Publisher, 2019. – 265 p.
3. To'xta Boboyev. Theory of Literary Studies. Tashkent: Uzbekistan, - 139 p.
4. Izzat Sultan. Theory of Literature. Tashkent: O'qituvchi, 2005. – 170 p.
5. Kholbekovna, F. O. (2021). *THE ISSUE OF ARTISTIC IDEA IN POETRY. European Scholar Journal*, 2 (4), 233-236.
6. Fayzullayeva, O. X. (2020). Diversity in writing Uzbek sonnets. *Theoretical & Applied Science*, (4), 627-633.
7. Kholbekovna, F. O. (2022). The artistic-aesthetic nature of rauf parfi's poetry. *Asian Journal of Research in Social Sciences and Humanities*, 12(5), 332-340.
7. Kholbekovna, F. O. (2021). The issue of artistic idea in poetry. *European Scholar Journal*, 2(4), 233-236.