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Interpretation of Social Issues in Uzbek Short Stories of the Independence Era

Raimqulova Sohiba Bahromovna*¹

1. Independent Researcher at Termez State University, Deputy Director for Spiritual and Educational Affairs at Specialized Boarding School No.1 in Termez City

* Correspondence: raimqulova.s.b@gmail.com

Abstract: Independence period Uzbek prose is a rebirth period of artistic thinking, among genres short prose by its nature is a live, express and intensive genre to response to socio-moral, spiritual changes swiftly. In this vein, writers gradually turned their focus away from the external event, and onto psychological processes, moral choice and the relation of the individual to society, using symbolism, metaphor and philosophical reflection as the primary aesthetic tools. Although a large number of literary works were produced, social issues had not been systematized in that how it looks through an artistic glass and transformed into more aesthetic meanings in a short stories of the independence era. Highlighting the figure and theme of the symbolic apparently the actual cases of change of social consciousness It is the target of this study is genre potential, symbolic thinking, and the performance of the literature in reflecting of changes that have learnt of the social problems in the Uzbek short stories of the independence period. Independence-era short stories fulfil a social diagnostic and spiritual reflective function as condensed narratives and as metaphorical structures revealing crises that speak of value, moral responsibility, and existential choice. This study supports the idea that, in the form of no formal experiment other than one conducted within his aesthetic own decisions which compounds the philosophical content behind a social issue, symbolism and metaphor won out over a sociological framework. The results confirm the conceptual significance of the short story type in the processes of modern Uzbek literature and are theoretical materials for new researches on the processes of relation of social reality and artistic thought of national literature.

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1. Introduction

The Uzbek literature of the independence period holds particular significance as a stage of renewal in national thinking and artistic consciousness. During this period, the short story genre became active as an artistic form that provided the most rapid and impactful response to the social, spiritual, and moral changes occurring in society. The conciseness and semantic density of the story allowed for the generalization of social reality and the concentrated depiction of contradictions in individual psyche and societal consciousness. Consequently, during the years of independence, the short story genre became one of the leading genres with high ideological and emotional value [1].

In the stories of this period, issues such as the relationship between the individual and society, the crisis of values, social injustice, spiritual vacuum, and generational

differences came to the forefront of artistic perception. Writers focused on depicting not external events, but their imprints on human consciousness, psychological shifts, and processes of moral choice. As a result, symbolism, metaphorical expression, and philosophical reflection became the leading aesthetic principles in artistic thinking. In this regard, the scientific study of how social issues are interpreted in the short stories of the independence period is of great importance for understanding the internal laws of the literary process [2].

The revival of the short story genre in Uzbek prose during the years of independence is attributed to its ability to quickly and accurately reflect the spirit of the times. In the context of socio-spiritual renewal, the story served to express important ideological issues through a concise form, artistically illuminating the shifts in human psyche and thinking. Regarding the stories of the independence period, Professor B. Karimov states: "About stories. During the years of independence, the short story genre occupies a special place in Uzbek prose. Stories created by talented writers acquire ideological and emotional value due to their originality in form, content, and poetic structure. In fact, the poetic possibilities of this small genre are enormous. A story is a literary phenomenon with an incredibly beautiful and elegant formal structure that is instantly and forcefully imprinted on human thought" [3].

The stories of this period are distinguished by the unity of form and content, compositional precision, and poetic innovation. The genre's main aesthetic power is manifested in the high concentration of events and meanings, possessing the ability to deliver a brief yet impactful artistic "punch" to the reader's consciousness. Consequently, the short story is regarded as one of the leading genres with high ideological and emotional value in Uzbek literature of the independence period [4].

This reflects the generational shift and genre-aesthetic diversification that occurred in Uzbek prose during the second half and end of the 20th century. While Shukur Kholmirzayev, Utkir Hoshimov, and their contemporaries, who entered the literary scene in the 1960s, enhanced the portrayal of realism, psychological analysis, and social issues in prose, Tohir Malik and Khojakbar Shaykhov expanded the genre's scope through fantasy stories [5]. "In the 1960s, writers such as Shukur Kholmirzayev, Utkir Hoshimov, Ulmas Umarbekov, Uchqun Nazarov, Farhod Musajonov, and others emerged in the literary field. Tohir Malik and Khojakbar Shaykhov ventured into writing fantasy stories. In the last quarter of the 20th century, Uzbek prose was enriched by the works of writers including Murod Muhammad Dost, Erkin A'zam, Khayriddin Sulton, Olim Otakhonov, Khurshid Dostmuhammad, Nurulloh Muhammad Raufkhon, Normurod Norqobilov, Shoyim Botayev, Abduqayum Yoldosh, Nazar Eshonqul, and others." Writers who emerged in the last quarter of the 20th century significantly enriched the content and form of Uzbek prose by making philosophical contemplation, symbolism, and individual style the leading factors in artistic thinking [6].

The given observation emphasizes literature's function of social prediction and spiritual diagnosis. The idea that "literature is a prediction of tomorrow" suggests that artistic thinking is not merely an aesthetic phenomenon, but also has the ability to anticipate hidden social processes in society and express them in figurative form [7]. This thesis indicates that literature's predictive function is now being confirmed by empirical life experience, as expressed by the phrase "it is only now finding its confirmation."

The particular significance of Uzbek short stories from the independence period lies in their attempt to illuminate social issues in a multilayered and complex manner. In the stories of this era, problems such as the relationship between the individual and society, the crisis of values, social injustice, spiritual emptiness, and generational differences come to the forefront of artistic perception. The conciseness of the short story genre and its concentrated system of images allow these issues to be revealed in a sharp and impactful way [8]. It is no coincidence that Shukur Kholmirzayev's words, spoken almost thirty years

ago, are being recalled today. This fact demonstrates that the writer's artistic thinking was ahead of his time; he was able to anticipate and artistically express problems that were not yet fully formed in the public consciousness [9].

Thus, Sh. Kholmirzayev's perspective confirms that literature is a field of strategic and long-term thinking, unrestricted by time. It encourages us to interpret the literary process not only as a historical stage but also as a mechanism for the development of social consciousness. Uzbek short stories of the independence period show that this mechanism is actively working, and the views of writers like Shukur Kholmirzayev are being proven in today's literary and social reality: "In the future, genres such as short stories, novellas, and novels will take the form of legends and tales. Because all genres have lived out their lives, now tales will prevail over stories [10]. Yes, yes, humanity will return to its original state. Very soon". Some concise works appearing in today's literary process seem to confirm these thoughts. Professor A.Rasulov, who considered the product of artistic creation as art based on the writer's personality, emphasized that the term "biography" means "history of life," "fate in writing," and compared it with the combinations "hasbi hol," "holot adosi," "holot kayfiyati," "zavqi holot," which Alisher Navoi actively used in such works as "Holoti Sayyid Hasan Ardasher," "Holoti Pahlavon Muhammad," "Khamsat ul mutahayyirin".

2. Methodology

The study employs a comprehensive interpretative framework drawing upon textual, contextual, and comparative techniques to uncover how social concerns are artistically imagined by the genre of the short story. Thus, textual analysis, emphasizing narrative structure, imagery, symbol, metaphor, and character psychology, is first applied to selected texts, revealing dominant aesthetic principles and repeating social motifs. Secondly, the study contextualises these artistic traits within the socio-historical and spiritual conditions of the independence time-frame, enabling interpretation of literary phenomena concerning shifts in social consciousness, value systems and moral paradigms. Implicit comparative analysis highlights the relative importance of independence-period stories, as opposed to earlier phases of Uzbek prose, not only to trace the transformation of the genre and expansion of themes, but also to show the growing influence of philosophical reflection and metaphorical thinking. Further, some theoretical analysis of Uzbek, and Russian literary criticism are incorporated to explicate the terms: artistic idea, creative intention, symbol, individual and society that prevents from adopting inappropriate binding schemes. From literature, attention is also given to preference for not representing social problems as straightforward journalistic statements, but rather aesthetic constructs, as revealed in ongoing inner conflict, moral choice, and symbolic narrative forms. This methodological device allows to analyse the short story as a socio-diagnostic and artistic forecast tool, and to produce congruence between theoretical assumptions and textual interpretation.

3. Results and Discussion

Indeed, the root of this word, which has received increased attention in modern literary studies, goes back to our classical literature. However, it was formed as a method in the West and became much more active in our modern literary studies". Different interpretations of these ideas are a natural manifestation of literary thought, which means that a single issue is interpreted through different theoretical and aesthetic approaches. In fact, at the center of the discussion is not the "right" or "wrong" interpretation, but the question of creative individuality. Every writer creates a work of art at the level of their talent, worldview, and aesthetic experience; therefore, the artistic result does not fit into a single mold.

Unfortunately, the diversity of interpretations is an internal law of the literary process, which is directly determined by the personality of the creator and the power of

talent. "Just as a person lost in darkness ultimately has strong and firm hope and faith in light, the reality, wrapped in deep reflections, metaphors, metaphors, and irony, clashes with reality in the reader's heart. Through these metaphors, the reader cultivates their emotional feelings. He seeks a confidant in his pain, a companion in his sorrow. This testifies to the connection of literature with life and its existence in the warm embrace of the society living on this land". This idea highlights the aesthetic and philosophical function of artistic images and metaphors. The opposition of darkness and light symbolizes the categories of hope and faith in the human mind; the presentation of reality through metaphors, metaphors, and irony allows one to perceive it more deeply than a simple image. As a result, the student enters into emotional and spiritual communication with the literary text, cultivates their inner experiences, and compares their personal pain with general human experience. This confirms that literature is based on vital roots and is inextricably linked with the spiritual needs of society [11].

This reveals the problem of methodologically correct classification of Khurshid Dostmuhammad's story "Breeze." The parallel application of reality and fantasy in the work, as well as the elements of mystery, are reminiscent of the syncretism of genre and style characteristic of postmodernism. However, these signs alone are not enough to assess the work as postmodern.

After all, the principle of play, which is an important criterion of postmodern poetics, that is, the self-negation of the text, irony and intertextual games do not play a leading role in the structure of the story. Thus, despite some external similarities, the strict classification of "Breeze" as a postmodernist work is not scientifically justified; this situation requires the accuracy of criteria in the labeling of literary phenomena. "It is known that in the process of creative imagination, the aesthetic ideal, worldview, cultural and educational level, life experience, skills, talent and potential of each writer acquire special value. A writer cannot carry out the creative work that needs to be done, the clarity of the intended goal, the world of images, the social period and real conditions without sufficiently imagining, without accumulating the necessary experience and skills. The artists' creative intention, artistic idea, way of selecting life material, and features of aesthetic interpretation before starting to write a particular work are manifested in an interconnected way. The writer's creative laboratory begins with the study of aspects related to the transformation of the creative intention into an artistic idea and its artistic and aesthetic interpretation. At this point, it is appropriate to raise the question: when does a writer's creative intention turn into an artistic idea? Only when a creative intention arises in the creator's heart as a result of a strong feeling towards a life event, reality, does the need to write arise. That need leads to the birth of an artistic idea". These considerations illuminate the internal mechanism of the creative process. In the writer's work, the harmony of aesthetic ideal, worldview, life experience, and skill is of decisive importance; if they are not sufficiently formed, the artistic intention will not become a perfect work. The creative laboratory begins precisely with the awareness of the process of intention transforming into an artistic idea. This process is activated by the creator's strong emotional attitude towards a certain life event: the need born in the soul forms artistic thought and raises it to the level of aesthetic interpretation. Therefore, creative intention and artistic idea are inextricably linked and determine the substantive and spiritual basis of creativity. He conceptually analyzes the socio-cultural conditioning of postmodernism and its acceptance in the national literary environment. It recognizes that the global changes at the end of the 20th century - the ideological vacuum, the expansion of mass culture and the strengthening of the flow of digital information - created an objective basis for postmodernism. However, the author explains that, despite the existence of these conditions, postmodernism did not take deep root in the local literary process due to the mentality and the system of values based on Eastern philosophy.

It is also emphasized that postmodernism as a historical and cultural phenomenon is a transitional stage, and modern theoretical views that "postpostmodernism" is taking

its place are referred to. This idea corresponds to the law of continuous exchange of literary development: each new era, while denying the previous one, is formed through certain intermediate, synthetic currents. At the end of the text, the author draws attention to the danger of justifying products without aesthetic criteria and taste under the name of postmodernism and puts forward the culture of artistic expression and aesthetic responsibility as the main criterion of art. Thus, the text evaluates postmodernism not as an absolute value, but as a certain stage of the historical-aesthetic process. "Mirkarim Osim appears in his works as a virtuous and knowledgeable creator with a high language culture in his historical imagination. He is skilled at enriching historical details with imaginary but simultaneously realistic scenes. His artistic fabrications, embedded in a historical event, are not aimed at making it beautiful, artificially making it impressive, decorating it, "wearing earrings," but at enriching this event, making it more exemplary, more attractive". This consideration theoretically substantiates the aesthetic essence of literature and the relationship between artistic form and content. Since literature is, first of all, an art of expression, the presence of elements of play in it is a natural phenomenon. However, this game should not be an independent goal, but a means of conveying the content - that is, the "piano," the artistic core more deeply and effectively. In this sense, formal searches acquire aesthetic value only when they arise from internal necessity, human and spiritual problems [12].

As the author puts it, if the creative goal is to turn the reader not into an indifferent spectator, but into a sympathetic subject, to lead him towards humanity, then the expansion of artistic experience and symbolic expression does not contradict the laws of art. Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's "The Little Prince" is a vivid example of this: although the work is built on a system of symbols and signs, they serve not for play, but to express deep philosophical and moral content in a universal form. As a result, the writer not only offers a new artistic form, but also enriches world literature with profound generalizations about man and being. Thus, the true criterion of formal novelty in art is determined by its substantive necessity and aesthetic impact.

Among the representatives of the generation that entered literature in the last quarter of the 20th century, the work of Ahmad A'zam occupies a special place. Initially, he sought to understand literature without ideological and aesthetic obligations, but later, through his work, he formed a concept aimed at awakening the social thinking of his time. This generalized socio-aesthetic attitude is clearly expressed in the writer's novellas "My Unwritten Poem About the Homeland," "With Myself," "Triple View of the Human Being," the stories "Nonisof Musa," "Small Researcher Hamdamov," and the novellas "Continuation of This Day," "In the Sides of the Asqar Mountain." In these works, a relatively new type of hero is formed in Uzbek prose, the image of the "I," who is in the process of realizing his place in society, facing an inner awakening. In this image, positive and negative, judging and condemned contradictions are embodied within a single person. Thus, through this hero, Ahmad A'zam achieves an artistic generalization of the socio-philosophical concept of his generation. Nazar Eshankul reflects on this in his work "From Me to Me": "Who is the person who speaks to himself, the person who reflects himself in the mirror? Perhaps literature is a person talking to itself? In any case, when reading the poems, stories, and novellas of poets and writers who entered literature in the 70s, one gets the impression that literature is talking to itself. It is clear to everyone today that literature is not a "reflection of real reality". Human thought essentially proceeds in the form of internal dialogue. That is, the process of thinking requires a person to communicate with themselves. This internal dialogue is directly related to the process of awakening of human consciousness, and thinking itself can be interpreted as the beginning of spiritual awakening, even its main form. From the moment a person begins to analyze themselves, they search for answers to fundamental ontological questions such as "who was I?" and "who will I become?" This process also has important conceptual significance in artistic thinking [13].

The forced search for social meaning in works of art creates the danger of simplifying the aesthetic nature of literature. However, even imagining art completely devoid of social content reduces it to the level of mere external decoration, a meaningless form. Therefore, the social meaning in art should manifest itself in direct connection with the inner sound of the soul of a living, suffering person. If a work of art is not nourished by this spiritual pain and inner experiences, its aesthetic power cannot be fully manifested.

The relationship between the era and the creator is extremely delicate and complex. If the era strives to subordinate the creator to its social direction, the creator also tries to reform the era within the framework of artistic perception. Only when both sides are unable to fully subdue each other does this relationship manifest itself in an impartial, artistic, and artistic form. It is this equilibrium point that creates the basis for the emergence of true art.

Nazar Eshankul continued his thought: We see this striving for harmony in the image of people who talk to themselves. People who spoke to themselves renewed artistic taste, level, traditions: by speaking to themselves, they brought prose closer to some people, to the inner world of a person." A person's pain and suffering can be evaluated not simply from the point of view of temporary events and phenomena, problems, but from the point of view of the human psyche and thoughts, which are an eternal mystery, an eternal place for literature [14].

Elder Nazar in the story "Oh, Life!" by Zulfiya Kurolboy qizi, one of the women storytellers in Uzbek literature, is also an old man who has seen much. Father to children and daughters-in-law, grandfather to countless grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He too is a lover of life, unwilling to let death come near, unable to let go of life, of living. Having reached this age, the old man "could not convince himself of the existence of the other world... For him, everything about the afterlife is a lie, "what's the use of living as a soul!" His main goal is "as long as he doesn't leave this bright world." Nothing else is needed. "just live, live, live! If only he could live forever!.. " Look at the mercy of the Creator, He gave this misguided servant a long life according to his intention.

Literary critic U. Normatov relates to this story as follows: "But he is still not satisfied with what he gives; his children, spouse, daughters-in-law, grandchildren, great-grandchildren pass away one after another, and the descendants become estranged; he is deprived of the pleasure of seeing, hearing, walking, eating and drinking, he cannot walk, he cannot control himself; despite all the humiliations, he does not fall into despair, he continues to live with the comfort of being alive...". In the artistic context, the old man's infinite desire to live is separated from its ontological content and turns into a meaningless absurd state, an ineffective and fruitless inner struggle. Old man Nazar accepts life as an absolute value, but this acceptance is determined not by understanding and philosophical reflection, but by instinctive attachment. Therefore, his love of life leads not to human perfection, but to a tragic crisis. The tragedy of old Nazar lies in the fact that he is deprived of the ability to understand this simple but fundamental truth, that is, the possibility of human repentance and spiritual awakening. Therefore, his striving for life does not give an enlightening conclusion, but remains in a state of mental stupor.

The aesthetic impact of the work lies in the fact that the reader begins to perceive life and death not as opposing concepts, but as complementary ontological phenomena. From this point of view, death is interpreted not as a punishing force, but as the final and sacred salvation, a gift of fate, which, when it arrives, frees a person from the sufferings of this mortal world [15].

The image of Hilola in another story by Zulfiya Kurolboy qizi also continues this philosophical trend. Despite her congenital illness and doctors' strict prohibitions, she prioritizes maiden honor and passion over biological existence. Hilal's willingness to face death, knowing that she would perish, is not accidental, but a conscious moral choice. His

fulfilled dream - the joy of the wedding and the moments of union "equal to a butterfly's life" - tragically turns into mourning.

Thus, the main criterion in the work is not the duration of life, but its content, a person's moral choice and spiritual position. Through the images of old Nazar and Hilola, the author interprets the question of life and death not as a biological, but as a philosophical and moral category, and at the artistic and theoretical level substantiates that the true value of human life lies in its meaning.

The writer's story "Death in the Image of a Woman" manifests itself as a unique poetic experience in the artistic perception of the hidden layers of the human soul, the problems of life and destiny. As Khurshid Dustmukhammad noted, the story of this work is an extraordinary artistic discovery that calls the reader to deep reflection on the relationship between life and death, will and submission, consciousness and imagination. In the writer's previously analyzed stories "Oh, Life!" and "Hilola," the relationship with death is expressed in various forms, while in "Death in the Image of a Woman," this relationship occurs unknowingly, imperceptibly, in the embrace of love and pleasure. In "Oh, Life!" the character consciously avoids death, while in "Hilola," he meets it knowingly; in this story, Mulla Ashur is led to death involuntarily, through imagination and fantasy.

The work brings to the artistic center the dual nature of human existence - real and imaginary. A person lives not only in external reality, but also in the realm of dreams, imagination, and inner experiences; there they love, suffer, are defeated or victorious, and sometimes face destruction. In the story, Mulla Ashur's mental state between these two worlds and the drama of his heart are vividly and impressively depicted through the method of expression "magical (magical) realism." As a result, the boundaries between real life and imagination blur, and a multi-layered structure of artistic reality emerges.

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Unlike the story of Sheikh Sanan, the love experiences of the mullah take place not in the social arena, but in the inner world - in the realm of imagination and fantasy. His sense of shame, inner dignity, and responsibility prevents the love affair from becoming public. Thus, the writer does not condemn the character, but strives to understand him. A touch of sympathy, a touch of gentle smiles, and a subtle sense of propriety are noticeable

in the movement of the pen; this allows one to express the wild melodies of the human soul, not subject to will, in aesthetic balance.

The story "Death in the Image of a Woman" illuminates the relationship between love, fantasy, and death in a philosophical and psychological layer, revealing a complex dialectic between inner freedom and human weakness. The work reveals not the contradiction of life and death, but their unexpected and delicate points of connection within the framework of artistic thinking. "However, when the character describes in his dream that he walks hand in hand with that beauty in a deserted place, he cannot stop himself and exclaims: 'May my heart die!' After all, as the folk saying goes, such romantic pranks suit youth! Continuing the description of that vision, the narrator writes with tenderness and modesty: "A woman, stroking her face with gentle hands, laid her head on the chest of the melting mullah... The mullah is ashamed to even remember the rest..." Look, even in these delicate intimate moments, the character's feelings of modesty and shyness don't leave his heart. The second time such a meeting turns into a life-or-death for the mullah, and this time he dies in the hands of a magical beloved...". At the center of this artistic excerpt is the image of a mysterious beauty who captivates a pious, prayerful person and ultimately takes him from life. This puzzle inevitably leaves the reader in the face of philosophical and contemplative questions: is this image a symbol of devilish temptation, an embodied manifestation of human desires, or a symbolic image of the angel of death? The literary text increases the power of artistic influence through this ambiguity and encourages the perception of the phenomenon of death within the framework of a multilayered meaning, excluding it from a one-sided interpretation.

In Nurullah Muhammad Raufkhon's story "The Hut at the Foot," statements, descriptions, and explanations are given directly from the author's perspective, and the story differs from others in the depth of its imagery.

Symbols are important from the point of view of expressiveness in a literary text. There are different types of symbols - symbol-image, symbol-detail, symbol-plot (in theoretical books). The story begins with the word "silent." And precisely this "silence" was broken by the Madman with his "strange," "suspicious," and "frightening" exclamation: "Who has burned their house?.. Who has burned their livestock?.. Who has a burning heart?.. The plot of the story "The Cabin at the Foot" draws attention because it is based on symbols. This story, whose hidden secrets are difficult to discern and understand in one reading, invites the reader to deep reflection: "The village became alert, became suspicious. He did not rejoice at this word, which could have brought a little freshness to his dull and colorless life, but, on the contrary, he was somewhat frightened, and this sudden thunderous sound, of course, seemed frightening and suspicious to them. "Dead," "silent," and "restless" Devona's voice roamed the village, and into the ears, numb by the noise of the silence, his voice entered as some kind of pleasant breeze, even sounding sweet". At this point in the story, you begin to grasp the author's thoughts. The wonder of first love, the inevitable heartache that follows, self-discovery, the passion for creation... One starts to sift through the flowing thoughts to find the most accurate one, precisely the riddle the author intends. The village is a symbolic place that shivers from the bitter cold in winter, burns from the heat in summer, takes a breath in spring, and exhales in autumn, living a boring life with indifference. Devona is a strange, eccentric character. In the story, this character is described as follows: "Who is this man? He doesn't look like a craftsman, though he wants to repair burned houses. He doesn't resemble a rich man, yet he supports those whose wealth has been burned. He's not like a healer, but he applies medicine to burned hearts. Who is he, after all?.. A complete madman! An eccentric whose words don't match his demeanor, whose demeanor doesn't align with his words!". In world literature, such exposing "wandering characters" as a clown, a madman, a fool have existed since ancient times, and they serve as an effective means of revealing social reality in artistic thinking. These images allow us to expose deep contradictions, spiritual crises, and social injustices in society, behind the back of an outwardly comical or unnatural appearance.

Therefore, these typological images are distinguished by their tendency to illuminate reality in a symbolic and metaphorical way rather than directly depicting it.

Statistical and artistic facts confirm the strengthening of this trend in modern Uzbek short story writing. In particular, the publication of more than fifty short stories in prestigious literary publications such as "Tafakkur," "Jahon adabiyoti," "Guliston," "Yoshlik," "Sharq yulduzi," "O'zbekiston adabiyoti va san'ati" demonstrates the activity of the literary process. The collection of more than sixty stories in the collections of such writers as Lukman Burikhon, Isajon Sultan, Masuma Akhmedova, published this year, testifies to the fact that the genre of short stories has reached a mature stage both in terms of scale and content. If you include materials from central and regional press and private publications, it becomes clear that at least two hundred fifty-three hundred stories were published during the year.

These stories differ significantly from the narratives of the previous fifty years in terms of thematic scope, universal coverage, artistic structure, and style. In them, the experience of folk storytelling, the traditions of classical literature, and the synthesis of poetic elements of world prose are observed. Importantly, in modern stories, the desire to express these rich experience factors in harmony with the perception of life's reality as an art of the Creator has increased. This situation shows that the process of metaphorical depiction of reality, which began several years ago, has entered a certain mature stage.

The fact that a significant part of modern stories is built on metaphor, that is, metaphorical thinking, fully confirms this idea. Two main forms of metaphorism are distinguished here. The first form is an example of a small epic genre entirely based on metaphor, that is, stories-metaphors. In such works, the chosen theme and event become a holistic metaphorical system, and the plot and images acquire a typological, generalizing character. The language of the story is built on a series of symbols, prioritizing spiritual and philosophical content over concrete reality.

In this type of story, the traditional compositional elements are replaced by the metaphor. As a result, the boundaries of space and time expand, and the semantic scope of the work rises to the level of universality. The story goes beyond the depiction of an individual event and becomes a means of artistic perception of such general issues as man and society, life and destiny, good and evil. Thus, modern Uzbek short story writing, based on metaphorical thinking, has risen to a new aesthetic level and is entering the path of development in conjunction with world literary processes.

Isajon Sultan's story "Ayvon" can be evaluated in the combination of formal experience and content responsibility. Artistic exploration in the work cannot be limited only to external form. Because formal solutions ultimately raise a strong moral and philosophical question. In particular, the image of the golden fish symbolizes the relationship between father and son, the continuity of inherited moral guilt and violence between generations. And the question at the end of the story turns the reader not into a passive recipient, but into a subject who assumes moral responsibility.

Thus, the formal innovations in the work are not an end in themselves, but serve to reveal the painful problems of society and the human psyche. The story "Ayvon" shows that art acquires aesthetic value in close connection with content, confirming the organic unity of form and idea in the work of Isajon Sultan. "In the writer's creative laboratory, the initial plan can change to varying degrees depending on the writer's desire and the requirements of artistic interpretation. Because he must be able to find an individual characteristic that corresponds to the image he creates. The first plan born in the creator's heart matures further during its execution. Although the essence changes, the first artistic idea serves as its basis. It should be considered not as a writer's shortcoming, but as a stage in the formation of the creative process, that a work that is first ripened in imagination can change in its own way during writing". In this case, the dynamic and open nature of the creative process is scientifically substantiated. The variability of the initial plan in the

writer's creative laboratory is a natural law of artistic thinking, which arises from the process of the creator searching for individual solutions corresponding to the image and idea. The first intention matures and becomes richer during execution. Content and compositional changes manifest not as a denial of the artistic idea, but as its deepening. Therefore, it is advisable to evaluate the transformations that occur in the process of writing a work not as a weakness of the creator, but as an important indicator of the maturity of creative thinking and the stages of artistic formation.

This text establishes a significant conceptual link between an ethical-philosophical issue and the practice of literary criticism. The concept of "qaytar dunyo" (boomerang effect) expresses the principle of cause and effect inherent in Eastern thought. It brings to the forefront the universal question of how responding to evil with evil leads to a crisis of humanity. The author does not provide a ready-made conclusion here. Rather, they pose a problematic question necessary for artistic and philosophical reflection, which demonstrates the reflective, not didactic, nature of art.

At the same time, the text raises a methodological problem in national literary criticism. When criticism falls into the pattern of merely praising and listing shortcomings, the critic becomes an evaluating subject. This hinders the revelation of the work's inner artistic and essential layers. The author advocates for the necessity of interpreting criticism not as passing judgment, but as a process of uncovering the questions posed through the artistic text and analyzing their aesthetic and moral foundations. In this sense, the text substantiates the idea of a functional reconsideration of criticism and its transformation into a field of intellectual discourse.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, Uzbek short stories of the independence period represent a new aesthetic stage in the artistic perception of social issues. In the stories of this period, complex social and spiritual problems in the life of society are not limited to the depiction of external events, but are deeply artistically generalized through mental processes, inner experiences, and moral choices occurring in the consciousness of the individual. As a result, the social problem manifests itself in the form of individual tragedy, leading the reader directly to aesthetic observation and moral conclusion. In the course of the research, it was revealed that in the short story of the independence period, the writer's artistic thinking increasingly relies on symbolic and metaphorical expression. These artistic methods allow us to interpret social problems in a deep aesthetic and philosophical layer rather than an open journalistic exposition. The relationship between man and society, the crisis of values, the spiritual void, and the issues of moral responsibility become the central themes of the poetics of the story. Also, the research results show that Uzbek short stories of the independence period actively performed the task of social prediction and spiritual diagnostics of literature and were able to artistically express the spiritual needs of society. Through the genre of short stories, the inner essence of social processes, contradictions in the consciousness of society, and spiritual shifts are artistically generalized. Thus, Uzbek short stories of the independence period are evaluated as a leading and conceptually important phenomenon of the literary process and create a solid theoretical and methodological basis for future literary research.

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