



PLOT AND COMPOSITION IN THE INTERPRETATION OF REALITY AND LIFE: A POETIC ANALYSIS OF OMON MUXTOR'S SHORT STORIES

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Abstract

This article provides a scholarly analysis of the plot and compositional structure in the short stories “Adabiyot muallimi” (The Literature Teacher), “Mezon” (The Criterion), and “Qorboboning qaytishi” (The Return of Father Frost) by the Uzbek writer Omon Muxtor. The plot is explored not merely as a sequence of simple events, but as an artistic system shaped by the author’s aesthetic purpose. Composition, in turn, is considered as the internal and external structure that elevates this system into an integral artistic whole. The research focuses on the personal destiny, spiritual quest, and social role of the protagonists, revealing the harmony between symbolic layers and real-life events. In “Adabiyot muallimi”, the parallel construction of symbolic narration and contemporary reality is highlighted; in “Mezon”, the fusion of philosophical monologue and retrospective composition is analyzed; and in “Qorboboning qaytishi”, the transformation of a seemingly simple storyline into a profound philosophical reflection is elucidated. In conclusion, these stories are evaluated as vivid examples of the unity of plot and composition in Uzbek short fiction.

Keywords: Plot, composition, Uzbek prose, short story genre, symbol and reality, philosophical reflection, artistic integrity, retrospective composition, character psychology.

Introduction

In the study of a literary text, one of the primary aspects to which attention is directed is the issue of plot and composition. As B. Tomashevsky noted: “the plot



is not a mere sequence of events, but an artistic system selected and arranged by the author on the basis of a certain idea and aesthetic purpose” (Poetics, 1925). Composition, in turn, is the internal and external structure that shapes this system and elevates the plot to the level of artistic integrity. From this perspective, many short stories created within Uzbek prose represent not only a reflection of events, but also complex artistic constructions that convey human destiny, inner psychology, and social position.

The short stories selected for analysis in this article—“Adabiyot muallimi” (The Literature Teacher), “Mezon” (The Criterion), and “Qorboboning qaytishi” (The Return of Father Frost)—though seemingly built upon different plots, share a common thematic and semantic interconnectedness. In all of them, the central focus lies on personal fate, life choices, and spiritual quest. Each story possesses its own distinctive plot resolution, revealed through a compositional structure that reflects the author’s philosophical worldview.

Literature Review

The issues of plot and composition have long been central subjects of scholarly discussion in literary studies. Russian formalists, including V. Shklovsky and B. Tomashevsky, defined plot as “not the simple sequence of events, but their re-selection and arrangement by the author directed toward a specific artistic aim.” According to Tomashevsky, composition is “the art of organizing plot elements for a given aesthetic function” (Poetics, 1925). These theoretical foundations remain relevant in the analysis of the short story genre within Uzbek prose.

In Uzbek literary scholarship, the study of plot and composition began to receive wide scholarly attention from the second half of the twentieth century. For instance, O. Sharafiddinov, in discussing the development of the short story and novella, emphasized that “the artistic power of a work lies not in the multiplicity of events, but in their inner logical and psychological consistency.” Similarly, Q. Yo‘ldoshev, in his Fundamentals of Literary Theory, stated that “the aesthetic value of the plot resides not in the event itself, but in the human essence revealed through that reality.”

N. Karimov, in his articles, explored the unique features of the short story genre, stressing the ability of the form to convey profound philosophical ideas within a



concise framework, and highlighting the compact yet layered richness of composition. These aspects are especially significant in the artistic analysis of “Adabiyot muallimi”, “Mezon”, and “Qorboboning qaytishi.”

M. Qo‘shjonov also argued that “the short story is not about the event itself, but serves as a means to reveal the inner world of the character; thus, the compositional structure is closely connected with the character’s mood and reflections.” Such perspectives provide a methodological foundation for examining both the shared and distinctive features of these three stories.

In foreign literary studies, valuable insights into short story analysis can also be found. For example, E. M. Forster, in *Aspects of the Novel* (1927), described plot as “the logical and emotional linkage of events,” emphasizing its role in revealing character. M. Bakhtin, through his concept of the chronotope, demonstrated how plot and composition are embodied within the unity of time and space.

Thus, existing theoretical approaches indicate that in the short story genre, the dramatic development of the plot and the internal harmony of the compositional structure determine the ideological and aesthetic value of the work. From this point of view, “Adabiyot muallimi”, “Mezon”, and “Qorboboning qaytishi” hold particular scholarly significance as vivid examples of the unity of plot and composition in Uzbek prose.

Analysis and Results

The short story “Adabiyot muallimi” (The Literature Teacher) is structured around two main plotlines:

First part — the legend of two imams who lived in Bukhara.

In this section, the ignorance of Mulla Badriddin is contrasted with the wisdom of Mulla Sadriddin. Although Badriddin is imprisoned for his deeds, it is Sadriddin who saves him — not to protect the guilty man, but to protect the honor of the title of imam from disgrace. This episode constitutes the symbolic-philosophical layer of the story.

Second part — the contemporary event.

In the gathering of classmates, Kalon insults the poet by calling him “hangi,” provoking a heated confrontation with the literature teacher, Shavkat. Shavkat’s



reaction — angrily throwing a cup and leaving the gathering — symbolizes the defense of the poet's honor and forms the dramatic climax of the plot.

These two parts complement each other: the symbolic layer is transferred into the realm of real life. Thus, the plot of the story is constructed on the basis of parallelism.

The story employs a two-ring composition:

- **First ring — the legend,**
- **Second ring — the contemporary event.**

Both parts embody the stages of classical dramatic composition:

Exposition: depiction of the imams and the classmates' gathering.

Complication: Badriddin's imprisonment and Kalon's insult ("hangi").

Climax: Sadriddin's act of saving and Shavkat's fierce reaction.

Resolution: the idea of "protecting the sacred name from disgrace."

This ring composition ensures the internal balance of the story. The first part serves as a symbolic foundation, while the second is read as its continuation in contemporary life.

The harmony of plot and composition in the story is evident on three levels:

1. **Unity of symbol and reality:** the legend and the contemporary event merge into artistic wholeness.
2. **Character parallelism:** Mulla Sadriddin and Shavkat as wise, protective figures; Mulla Badriddin and Kalon as ignorant and contemptuous figures.
3. **Shared ideological integrity:** in both parts, the main aim is to protect a sacred name (imamship, poetry, literature) from disgrace.

Omon Muxtor's story "Mezon" (The Criterion) draws attention in contemporary Uzbek short fiction as a work enriched with techniques of inner monologue, retrospection, and philosophical generalization. Its plot begins with an ordinary human fate, gradually expands into the author's philosophical reflections, and ultimately affirms life.

According to classical theory, the plot consists of five stages: exposition, complication, development, climax, and resolution (see: Qur'onov D., Dictionary of Literary Studies, 2010). In "Mezon", these stages unfold as follows:



Exposition — the narrator (Sharof domla) is introduced in a state of illness, struggling with a serious disease, while also being known among people as someone who provides solutions to their troubles.

Complication — parents from a village approach him, seeking help for their daughter Bayramjon, who suffers from inner torment. At this moment, the author's own inner contradictions also emerge.

Development — reflections on the girl's fate intertwine with the author's philosophical anguish over whether he has the power to change it.

Climax — the narrator's hospitalization, followed by years of apparent forgetfulness, yet his inability to free himself from inner torment. Here the psychological intensity of the story reaches its peak.

Resolution — the unexpected ending: Bayramjon is not lost to life but instead appears as the principal of her school, full of vitality. This is an optimistic conclusion affirming life.

The composition of the story is built on two layers:

1. **The layer of reality:** the narrator's illness, the parents' concern, the girl's fate, and the eventual unexpected reunion.
2. **The philosophical layer:** the narrator's self-addressed questions such as "Who am I?" and "What is the measure of a human being?" expressed through inner monologues.

These two layers develop in parallel and converge in the concept of "criterion (mezon)." The central idea of the story is that the true measure of a human being lies in the trace one leaves behind and the humanity one embodies.

"Mezon" belongs to the genre of psychological short fiction, where "the inner world of the protagonist takes precedence over external events" (see: Bakhtin M., *Aesthetics of the Novel*, 1975). Sharof domla's suffering, his oscillation between self-justification and self-reproach, and his philosophical reflections on life and death constitute the psychological layer of the work.

The story is also structured through **retrospective composition**: it begins in the present (the narrator's illness and the reunion), moves backward to the conversation with Bayramjon's parents, then further back into personal memories, and finally ends in the future (Bayramjon as a school principal). This



method intensifies the inseparability of real events and philosophical reflection in the reader's perception.

The short story "Qorboboning qaytishi" (The Return of Father Frost) stands out as a work that harmonizes eventfulness with philosophical depth.

Exposition — the Artist is revealed to be excluded from the stage, unable to find new roles, and in financial difficulty, establishing his social and psychological background.

Complication — a proposal from his businessman friend: to participate in holiday events dressed as Father Frost. This determines the main trajectory of the plot.

Development — the Artist successfully performs at three households. In the fourth, however, a fateful turning point occurs: he comes face to face with his first love, Nargiza.

Climax — the internal drama of "recognition and non-recognition" with Nargiza. At this point, the plot is governed less by external events than by the protagonist's inner world and emotions. This recalls Bakhtin's notion of "psychological dramatism" (Aesthetics of the Novel, 1975).

Resolution — Nargiza's symbolic words, "Both matter!" This represents not only the resolution of a long-unfinished dispute from the past, but also a philosophical generalization about life. The Artist attains inner relief and perceives life as a "gift."

Thus, the plot expands from a simple narrative line toward philosophical reflection and concludes with an "unexpected affirmation of the truth of life."

The composition of the story manifests itself on two principal levels:

On the level of external reality — the Artist's visits to households in the guise of Father Frost, the festive family gatherings, and outward actions.

On the inner level — memories of past love, youthful disputes, and present emotional experiences. On this plane, the composition acquires a retrospective character, as past events are reconstructed through the protagonist's memory.

A distinctive feature of the composition is that profound philosophical dramatism emerges within an apparently ordinary festive situation. The Artist's external activity (entertaining children, distributing gifts) is set in contrast to his inner experiences (fear of recognition, recollections of the past, the resolution of a



lifelong dispute). In this way, the composition is constructed on the basis of parallel layering.

The central symbol of the story is the figure of Father Frost. On one hand, he represents the Artist's "second role" in social life; on the other, he symbolizes life itself. Although forgotten on the stage, the Artist is once again assigned a role on the stage of life. Thus, the Father Frost costume becomes not merely a temporary disguise, but a symbol of "destiny's second chance."

Furthermore, the phrase "Both matter!" emerges as the key that resolves the story's philosophical knot. This statement not only concludes the long-standing dispute between the protagonists, but also reflects the balance between material and spiritual values in human life.

Conclusion

Omon Muxtor's short stories "Adabiyot muallimi" (The Literature Teacher), "Mezon" (The Criterion), and "Qorboboning qaytishi" (The Return of Father Frost) each embody a distinctive artistic wholeness in terms of both content and form. The internal logic of plot dynamics and the harmony of compositional layers demonstrate the writer's mastery in aesthetically comprehending issues of human psychology and social life. In these stories, the development of events depends less on external reality and more on the protagonists' inner experiences, spiritual struggles, and the clash of values.

In "Adabiyot muallimi," the plot is formed around the conflict between scholarly-literary values and personal aspirations, while the composition reveals the theme of moral responsibility through the image of the teacher. In "Mezon," the central tension lies between justice and injustice, with the composition gradually intensifying the dramatic oppositions. In "Qorboboning qaytishi," the plot centers on human emotions, memories of the past, and the tests of time, while the composition leads to an ultimate artistic conclusion through the dramatism of fate and coincidence.

Thus, a comparative analysis of the plot and compositional features of these three stories highlights both the consistency of the writer's artistic thought and his overarching creative concept. Through his protagonists, Omon Muxtor interprets the "human-life-spirituality" triad in different ways, with each story arriving at



its own unique artistic solution. These works therefore demonstrate that plot and composition function not merely as devices for conveying events, but as aesthetic categories that embody profound philosophical and spiritual meaning.

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