

Interpretation Of Social Issues In Contemporary Uzbek Short Stories

Raimqulova Sohiba Bahromovna

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

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Abstract: This article examines the problems of artistic interpretation of social issues in contemporary Uzbek short stories. It explores the aesthetic potential of the short story genre in representing social contradictions, moral crises, and the inner conflicts of individuals. Through the analysis of Abduqayum Yuldashev's "Poincaré" and Isajon Sulton's "The Eight-Year-Old Child of the Twenty-First Century," the paper highlights themes such as the tragedy of talent, the conflict between science and everyday survival, social pressure of traditions, consumerist mentality, and the instrumentalization of childhood. Social issues are conveyed through symbolism, metaphor, and psychological imagery rather than direct journalistic critique.

Keywords: Short story genre, social issues, tragedy of talent, individual and society, tradition and ritual, information pressure, consumer mentality, child image, artistic thinking, contemporary Uzbek literature.

Introduction: In modern Uzbek literature, the short story genre stands out as an artistic form that most swiftly and profoundly reflects the social, economic, and spiritual processes occurring in society. The conciseness and content density of the story allow for illuminating complex social issues through personal destinies, inner experiences, and symbolic images. For this reason, the short story genre is becoming the leading aesthetic medium expressing the spiritual state of society in today's literary process.

In post-independence period stories, social issues are expressed not through overt statements and slogans, but through internal conflicts, choices, and psychological breakdowns occurring in the individual's consciousness. In the stories of Abduqayum Yuldash and Isajon Sulton, the themes of knowledge, labor, wealth, traditions, information, and childhood are artistically generalized in close connection with human destiny. In this regard, analyzing the interpretation of social issues in modern Uzbek short stories plays a crucial role in understanding the aesthetic and moral directions of literary thought.

Regarding the principles of artistic interpretation of historical truth specific to prose works, Academician M. Qo'shjonov's views are as follows: "It is demonstrated that a work of art is never an exact reflection of history, but rather a unique artistic world created by the writer. The creator first observes life, and then realizes their artistic intention through events that express these observations. Artistic fiction becomes a true generalization - an artistic image - only when it is combined and harmonized with real-life facts."

Regarding the principles of artistic interpretation of historical truth specific to prose works, Academician M. Kushjanov's views are as follows: "It is shown that a work of art is never the exact opposite of history, but a unique artistic world created by the writer. The artist first observes life, and then realizes his artistic intention through the events that express them. Artistic fiction becomes a true generalization - an artistic image only when it is combined and harmonized with a life fact." . This idea clarifies the ontological essence of a work of art. A literary text is not a direct copy of historical reality. Rather, it is an independent artistic world recreated in the writer's aesthetic consciousness. The

creator begins by observing real life. However, they do not directly copy it. The writer realizes their artistic intention through the selection, rearrangement, and generalization of life events. In this process, the harmony between artistic fiction and life facts is of decisive importance. It is through this synthesis that an individual phenomenon rises to the level of aesthetic generalization, and an artistic image is formed. Thus, the authenticity of the work is manifested not in historical accuracy, but in aesthetic credibility and the power to express universal content.

The literary process clearly defines the essence of literary criticism and its contemporary tasks. The critic's activity is not limited to simple assessment or judgment of a work, but requires analyzing existing problems in the literary process, identifying promising directions, and providing scientifically based recommendations. In this sense, the concept of "criticism" should be interpreted not as denial or accusation, but as an analytical and guiding activity that develops literary thinking.

In today's literary environment, there are many styles and trends that have not yet undergone conceptual analysis, and works that have not been sufficiently evaluated from an aesthetic point of view. Indeed, one of the urgent tasks facing criticism is the lack of objective and systematic assessment of the work of young creators entering the field of literature. Unfortunately, in current conditions, literary criticism should function not only as a retrospective evaluator but also as an important scientific and intellectual institution that understands the process and determines future directions. "Therefore, only if the writer overcomes the challenge of choosing a character suitable for the spirit of the work and artistically embodying them, will the outer and inner aspects of the characters be portrayed vividly, realistically, and convincingly. In the study, issues such as the creator's choice of their hero in accordance with their artistic idea, their artistic interpretation in line with their aesthetic ideal, and simultaneously not infringing on the logic of the characters, were examined through the aesthetic factors that ensured the history of creation, lifestyle, and readability of specific works." . It systematically reveals the methodological problems of literary criticism. In it, the late recognition of young writers in the literary process is explained by the

passive position of criticism. It is emphasized that criticism is largely limited to noting already recognized achievements and does not adequately fulfill the task of actively guiding the literary process. This situation indicates a weakening of the normative-aesthetic function of criticism.

According to experts, literary criticism is responsible for the "purity" of literature and is obliged to shape the reader's taste, strictly differentiate between mass "commercial" literature and artistic-aesthetic explorations, and express a clear and well-founded position in this regard. Otherwise, criticism becomes a secondary phenomenon that cannot exert real influence on the literary process. The insufficient analysis in the press of works mentioned in the annual reports of the Writers' Union indicates a gap between criticism and actual literary practice.

Additionally, the issue of tradition and continuity is illuminated at the level of philosophical generalization. Through the metaphor of "genetic heritage," the inevitable participation of historical experience and values in national literary thought is emphasized. No work of art is born from absolute emptiness. Rather, it is formed on the basis of aesthetic and moral codes created by generations. From this perspective, the spiritual and moral world of the artistic image cannot exist separately from the writer's aesthetic worldview. Thus, the task of criticism is not only to evaluate new works but also to actively contribute to the development of literature by deeply analyzing their relationship with tradition, aesthetic ideals, and modernity.

As literary scholar Sh. Hasanov noted: "The influence of social and psychological processes that shaped the creator leaves its mark on the objective and subjective interpretation of the world. Objectivity is a good quality for a creator. Despite all objectivity, historical reality still passes through the "filter" of the creator's character, thinking, and heart, taking the form of a specific work. The character, thinking, and heart of the creator "breathe the air" of the environment and conditions that surround them. The writer receives the impressions necessary for the creative process, first and foremost, from the surrounding environment. Then he expresses them in harmony with his personality. That is why, in a sense, the writer "lives" in

the nature of the images he created, and the words his characters want to say emerge in harmony with the creative intent." . The above idea scientifically expresses the dialectical and evolutionary nature of literary development. As the literary process continuously evolves, works that have withstood the test of time and are aesthetically and semantically "substantial" are preserved. Random and hollow elements naturally fall away during the historical process. In this sense, innovation is not a product of absolute negation, but a qualitative change arising from stable traditions and proven aesthetic principles.

In this context, the relationship between the old and the new is interpreted not as opposition, but as a symbolic "struggle." This struggle in the literary process occurs through a mechanism of natural selection, comparable to biological evolution: whichever form and idea meets the spiritual needs of society and individuals remains viable. Therefore, the author assesses young creators' aspiration for new expressions and forms as a socio-aesthetic necessity. Thus, this confirms the organic continuity of the literary process, demonstrating that tradition and innovation are not opposing, but complementary factors. "The selected life truth in a work of art is united on a single foundation around the artistic idea. Not only the sequence of events but also the portrayal of people with diverse personalities are analyzed in the writer's mind. The writer creatively approaches the reality of the social period and, on this basis, reveals the essence of the characters." . It is natural and necessary for the literature of each historical period to be distinguished by its form, style, and aesthetic principles. As times change, literary thinking also evolves; therefore, works created in a certain period should qualitatively differ from those of the previous stage. The main law of development is that subsequent generations, having assimilated the artistic and aesthetic discoveries of their ancestors, do not limit themselves to mere reproduction, but to a certain extent enrich them and advance them to a new level.

Every word that flows from a creator's pen, no matter how simple its theme, once published, transcends individual expression and becomes the property of national consciousness and culture. In this sense, a literary text is not merely a space where the author's personal experiences are concentrated, but also a

social phenomenon that reflects the spiritual state, values, and problems of society. A writer or poet cannot exist in isolation from society, either as an individual or as a creator. Their aesthetic worldview is shaped by specific historical and cultural conditions.

Rauf Parfi's lines "I too gaze at the stars, / Stars are a celestial dream. / I am more suited to the earth, / I need the life on earth" also express the creator's understanding of himself in connection with the earth, real life, and human issues. This stance reveals the artist's social responsibility and inner connection with the times. Thus, regardless of the era in which a creator lives - be it a period of historical upheavals or conditions of stability - they are an important social subject who feels the spiritual and moral weight of the time, perceives this burden through artistic words, and conveys it to the consciousness of society.

In modern Uzbek storytelling, there are works that significantly revise traditional plot-compositional and genre norms, and Abduqayum Yuldosh's story "Poincaré" is a vivid example of such artistic experiments. This work emerges as a complex artistic structure built around philosophical and psychological reflection, departing from the principles of realism, conciseness, and definitive resolution established in storytelling theory. The writer generalizes the contradictions between science and livelihood, dreams and obligations, talent and social indifference through the example of an individual's fate, elevating them to a socio-philosophical level.

In the story, the problem of time, as the most invaluable asset of human life, is brought to the forefront. Unwavering aspirations on the path of science, the choices made at life's crossroads, and the irreversible consequences of these choices determine the main ideological direction of the work. Abduqayum Yuldosh unveils the tragedy hidden beneath ordinary everyday life and creates an artistic portrayal of the fate of a person who sacrificed themselves for science but remained unrecognized by society.

The main character of the work is a mathematician who came very close to solving Poincaré's conjecture but could not achieve his goal due to social and everyday circumstances. Through this character, the author epitomizes the fate of many talented individuals in society: talent exists, but there is no environment to

nurture it. The main conflict in the story stems from the irreconcilable contradiction between the hardships of scientific research and the demands of daily life. In his youth, the protagonist lives with dreams of great discoveries, and the Poincaré problem becomes a symbol of his life's purpose. However, the economic difficulties of the period of social reforms, family responsibilities, and domestic needs increasingly distance him from scientific research.

Through this, the author puts forward an important social conclusion: if science is not materially and spiritually supported by society, even the highest talent is doomed to perish. Although the protagonist consciously chose the path of science and derived spiritual satisfaction from scientific work, the necessities of life gradually force him to abandon his ideal. As a result, while remaining physically present, he decays spiritually. Dedicating his days to family needs, engaging in science only at night, and his inability to manage time effectively become his greatest loss.

The culmination of the work, the news that Grigory Perelman solved the Poincaré conjecture, elevates the protagonist's psychological tragedy to its peak. He realizes that he was very close to the solution and acknowledges that he has missed the greatest opportunity of his life. This moment in the work alludes not only to individual tragedy but also to intellectual opportunities lost as a result of social indifference.

The character of the apprentice in the story is interpreted as a symbol of last hope. The main character sees in him his childhood dreams and unrealized opportunities. However, the apprentice's abandonment of the scientific path due to life's worries demonstrates the continuity of the tragedy, showing that the problem is not specific to an individual, but inherent to the entire social system. Through this, the author emphasizes that the path of science requires dedication, but as long as society does not create the necessary conditions, dedication alone will not suffice.

In subsequent episodes, the protagonist's admission to a psychiatric hospital indicates that he is broken not only psychologically but also spiritually. The final symbolic point of the work - the abandonment of the master's manuscripts by the apprentice and their consignment to waste paper - represents the devaluation of scientific heritage in society. Science

turns into mere paper, but remains ignored in terms of content and social significance.

In this sense, in the story "Poincaré," Poincaré's hypothesis becomes a symbol of understanding the simple yet vital truth hidden behind complexity. The work deserves to be evaluated as an important artistic achievement in modern Uzbek storytelling, which illuminates the problems of science, time, and human destiny with philosophical and psychological depth, expanding the possibilities of the genre.

A. Yuldosh's story "Poincaré" is a philosophical-psychological work that centers on the conflict between science and livelihood, dreams and obligations. Through the character of a mathematician, the author portrays the tragedy of talent unable to realize its potential due to social circumstances. The main conflict in the work is presented as an irreconcilable contradiction between devotion to science and the demands of everyday life.

The protagonist's spiritual deterioration is closely linked to the factor of time, which in this context rises to the level of a philosophical category that destroys human dreams. The solution of Poincaré's problem by another scientist brings the hero's tragedy to its climax and emphasizes the irretrievability of lost opportunities. The character of the student symbolically represents the problem of discontinuity in scientific progress and the lack of support for talent in society.

Literary critic D. Turayev comments on the story as follows: "Abdukayum Yuldoshev's work 'Poincaré' (published in 'World Literature' journal, September 2012 issue) is one of the artistic discoveries of our modern prose that stands alongside examples of world literature. The renowned literary critic Umarali Normatov, who was the first to analyze the work in our literary criticism, acknowledges that if he were to place the writer's previous works on one side of a scale and 'Poincaré' on the other, the latter would rightfully tip the balance. Indeed, the problem artistically interpreted in the work transcends the boundaries of the national context and rises to the level of a universal social issue."

The social core of the story is the extinguishing of scientific talent due to lack of societal support. The protagonist approaches Poincaré's hypothesis, but

socio-economic circumstances (wedding, housing, debt, additional work) disconnect him from scientific pursuits. Here, the author presents science not as a "personal interest," but as a social institution: if institutions (material support, scientific defense mechanisms, incentives) fail to function, even individual genius is powerless. The protagonist cannot choose "science" - survival chooses for him. The story attributes the tragedy of talent not to individual "weakness," but to structural factors (resource scarcity, social pressure), thus creating a model of social determination (circumstances, choices, fate). Literary critic D. Turaev, elaborating on this idea, states: "The author reveals the origins of tragedies by depicting the contradictions arising from the protagonist's intellectual wealth and his wife's backwardness. The story's hero, through his engagement with cutting-edge science - the current mathematical foundations of theoretical mathematics and geometry - has somewhat transcended national limitations, becoming semi-European. This is why he jokes with his mother-in-law the very day after the wedding. On the other hand, he remains far from the uninhibited behavior of Europeans. He is still constrained by national limitations and cultural boundaries."

In the work, weddings, chilla, gifts, and relatives' demands function not as spiritual values, but as social mechanisms that have become economic coercion. For the hero, "falling behind the fashion" is a disgrace, "falling behind the fashion" is equal to social punishment: rumors, shame, pressure. As a result, family life in the artistic image is subordinated to the credit-debt, ritual, and security regime rather than "love." The author interprets rituals as a means of social control: tradition is a mechanism that narrows individual choice, directing resources from science (future) to ritual (present).

Family and gender factors in the story: the issue of "supplier man" and "woman demanding stability" is significant.

The demands of the wife and mother-in-law, such as "you need a homeland," "don't embarrass me," "make more money," are not personal evil, but the language of the social role: the woman defends "housing," "reputation," "organizational stability"; the man is forced to bear "provision." This distribution of roles leads the hero to a state of "imprisonment" in constant

labor: scientific research seems "excessive luxury."

The protagonist of the story portrays the family not as a romantic space, but as an institution of social obligations; this institution consumes the time of talented individuals and accelerates psychological deterioration.

The transitional period and the "predatory market" experience in the story, along with the episode of the onion business, are ideologically well-developed.

The cooperatives, the promise of "big money," and the episode of "warming up" onions in Mirzachul for export to Russia are socially significant. The risky, unprotected economic landscape that emerged during this transition period is also noteworthy. The protagonist temporarily halts his studies in pursuit of "quick money," resulting in the loss of both money and knowledge. The rotting of onions symbolizes economic danger, while the loss of "capital" signifies the disruption of a scientific future.

The author exposes the illusion of market romance: "business" here is not progress, but a factor that further oppresses the individual against the backdrop of social instability.

The ethics of the scientific field and social injustice: The contrast between Munisa and Ayupov is ideologically well-developed.

Munisa's later achievement of becoming a doctor of science and Ayupov's rapid rise further accentuate the protagonist's "lost time." Through this contrast, the author illustrates that in science, success is determined not only by "talent," but also by opportunity, conditions, and a stable work routine. The protagonist, however, is deprived of this stability.

The story demonstrates the selectivity of the "social elevator": some have resources, time, and environment, leading to results. Others lack these, and even talent can't pass through the system.

Society's attitude towards intellect: attitudes such as discrimination and indifference draw attention.

The briefcase incident (people don't help when papers scatter), the "professor legends," the doctor's interpretation of Perelman as "schizophrenic" - all these indicate that society often fails to understand or value intellectual work. The scientific manuscript turning into "waste paper" at the end symbolizes the

pinnacle of social indifference.

Such thoughts emerge from the protagonist's consciousness. "I went to work. I was on borrowed time at the university. I'm nearly sixty years old. I'll retire soon. I don't have an academic title. So, first they'll reduce me to part-time, then gently suggest I resign 'of my own accord.' If I agree, they might award me an honorary certificate 'for many years of fruitful work' and even drape me in a golden robe... I also found additional work. I'd return home at midnight, no matter how exhausted, trying to find strength to work on my hypothesis for at least an hour or two. But it wasn't easy. Alas, I was no longer young, and time was taking its toll. Often, I'd fall asleep with my head on my manuscripts, only to wake up startled by my life partner's desperate, sickly, frightened wail: '...what will I do?...how will I live?'". The author portrays an environment where the social value of scientific work has diminished. In the story, knowledge is viewed not as "sacred capital," but as mere "paper." The work links the protagonist's tragic decline not only to personal character, but also to a time-consuming social system: customs, rituals, housing pressures, debt, and the inefficiency of supplementary work institutions. This system transforms the individual from a scientific subject into an object of subsistence.

The critic offers the following conclusion about the story: "No, in fact, this is not greed, malice, or envy, but rather anguish over others snatching away the fruits of a lifetime of talented scientific work. The reader sympathizes with the protagonist's distress, empathizes with him, and simultaneously experiences spiritual purification. In short, an Uzbek scientist could have uncovered the secrets of the 'formula of the universe' in this era. However, in reality, even a person possessing the finest qualities, if not valued, distances themselves from discovery. Above all, a person must discover themselves. This is how I understood the writer's idea in this work."

The story "Poincare" concentrates social issues at the center of the tragedy of talent. If society does not create stable conditions for science, the personal courage of talent will not be enough. In the work, such factors as customs and economic pressure, transitional risks, indifference to science are interconnected, revealing the conflict of "dream-obligation" as a social problem. "A contented woman who understands and

supports science is worthy of people on the path of science, such as our hero. For his wife, perhaps he would have lived contentedly if he had found a businessman, a resourceful life partner. But that didn't happen. They lived in the same family, as if at two poles. That is why the writer strongly condemns the concept of connecting life with the intervention of others, not knowing each other through the story." In the work, "The thick door at the end of the long corridor slammed open, and the patient was taken inside. The teacher's anguished cry kept moving further and further from the deserted meeting room:

"God, send me back thirty years... God, send me back..." In general, the story reveals the spiritual and psychological tragedy that arises as a result of ignoring science by society, raising the issues of choice, time, and responsibility in human life to the level of a central idea.

Another talented prose writer Isajon Sultan's story "Eight-Year-Old Child of the Twenty-First Century" shows the everyday life of a child in the era of globalization. In this story, one of the most painful social problems of modern society - the issue of consumer thinking, the visibility of wealth and success - is revealed with special artistic emphasis. In particular, the TV-casino episode manifests itself as a symbolic scene that exposes how economic success in society has deviated from moral norms and turned into an entertainment spectacle. "The next program is a TV gambling house. Hundreds of people gathered in a magnificent and noisy palace, shouting and yelling, betting money, their eyes flashing with excitement. A large sum of money was invested in the prize, and it was promised that the person who won it would be buried in comfort for the rest of his life." Through this image, the author criticizes the social environment that promotes wealth not as a product of labor and responsibility, but as a result of random luck. The promise of "comfort until the end of life" shows that the value of honest work has been pushed to the background in society, and instead, quick and easy success has become an ideal. This situation indicates the erosion of the ethics of moral labor in public consciousness. The exacerbation of the social problem is conveyed through the image of the boy, the "youngest millionaire": "To prove the fairness and authenticity of the game, the boy who won yesterday's

game was also invited to the studio. The world's youngest millionaire was now being shown very close up." . In this episode, the child appears not as a subject of personal development, but as a means of advertising and legitimization. Society brings the child onto the stage not as a being that needs protection, but as a symbol of spectacular success. This reveals the problem of childhood instrumentalization put forward in the story. The boy's inner state is sharply contrasted with external joy: "And the youngest millionaire, smiling but with anxious eyes, waved to the audience." .

This sentence is one of the central points of social criticism. Through the contrast between artificial smiles and "blinking eyes," the author shows that the success model imposed by society is completely contrary to the child's mental needs. Wealth and fame became not joy for the child, but a source of pressure and fatigue. The state of the parents further exacerbates the social problem: "And the parents beside him, their eyes sparkling with happiness, hurriedly said something." . Through this image, the author shows that material success has become an absolute value even in the minds of adults. Parents perceive their child's financial success as the main achievement, rather than their inner state, psychological needs, and natural childhood development. As a result, the child becomes a means of realizing society's economic aspirations.

Researcher Shakhnoza Yuldosheva writes about the story in her article "Artistic expression of the concept of childhood and nature in the stories 'One Day of Summer' and 'An 8-Year-Old Child of the 21st Century'": "In Isajon Sultan's story 'An 8-Year-Old Child of the 21st Century,' a boy is depicted sitting in front of a television at dusk, weighing various programs and the news and topics presented in them in his mind, trying to understand the complex relationship between nature and humans. The story highlights the influence of nature on the protagonist's maturity, self-perception, and connection with the surrounding world. The story begins with a nature channel program dedicated to the death of a famous octopus predictor and describes how crowds mourn its death, showing images of a Colombian boy during floods, a starving child in Africa suffering from drought, and depictions of dolphins that have died by beaching themselves on American shores. At one end of the story's plot is the portrayal of events in the media, and on the other side

is the reaction of the public and the boy to these events, which served to make the development of events more vivid and authentic." . In this regard, the TV gambling episode stands alongside other social tragedies in the story such as famine, war, violence, and technological mutations, representing an economic manifestation of spiritual decline. While physical destruction is depicted in other scenes, here mental and moral decay takes center stage. It can be said that the story sharply criticizes social issues like the absolutization of wealth and success in modern society, the exploitation of childhood, and the erosion of moral norms. Through artistic reflection, the author unveils the human tragedy concealed behind economic spectacle, prompting readers to reconsider what constitutes true values in society.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, social issues in modern Uzbek short stories emerge as a complex and multi-layered aesthetic phenomenon. In these works, societal problems are artistically generalized not at the level of external reality, but through psychological shifts, inner turmoil, and moral choices occurring within the individual's consciousness. Social problems are interpreted as internal mechanisms directly shaping human life, revealing factors that influence personal freedom and spiritual stability. In Abduqayum Yuldash's story "Poincare," the extinguishing of talent under the influence of social conditions and domestic obligations, the devaluation of science, and the transformation of time into a force that erodes human dreams are artistically generalized. In Isajon Sultan's story "Eight-Year-Old Child of the Twenty-First Century," consumerist thinking, the spectacle of wealth and success, and the exploitation of childhood are revealed through sharp aesthetic imagery. Both writers illuminate social problems not through overt criticism, but through symbols, metaphors, and psychological portrayals at a profound philosophical level.

In Abduqayum Yuldash's story "Poincare," the extinguishing of talent under the influence of social conditions and domestic obligations, the devaluation of science, and the transformation of time into a force that destroys human dreams are artistically generalized. In Isajon Sultan's story "Eight-Year-Old Child of the Twenty-First Century," consumer thinking, the spectacle of wealth and success, and the

exploitation of childhood are revealed through a sharp aesthetic image. Both writers illuminate social problems not through open criticism, but through symbols, metaphors, and psychological imagery at a deep philosophical level.

In general, modern Uzbek storytelling, showing social issues in close connection with the inner world of the individual, calls for a deep aesthetic perception of the spiritual state of society. In this process, the short story genre manifests itself as a leading artistic tool that raises issues of critical understanding of public consciousness, human responsibility, and moral choice.

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