
CONFERENCE ARTICLE**Mythopoetic Thinking and Symbolic Representation In Contemporary uzbek short fiction: a study of shodiqul hamro's "the woman in the photograph"****Sarvinoz Narzulloyevna Oripova**

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Abstract: This article examines mythopoetic thinking and symbolic representation in contemporary Uzbek short fiction through the analysis of Shodiqul Hamro's short story "The Woman in the Photograph". The study focuses on the author's narrative strategies, psychological portrayal, and the symbolic functions of artistic details. The photograph in the story is interpreted not merely as an object but as a symbolic space connecting memory, human destiny, loneliness, and existential experience. The research explores how Shodiqul Hamro incorporates elements of modernist aesthetics into Uzbek prose while preserving national literary traditions. Particular attention is paid to the representation of loneliness, the interaction between reality and the imaginary world, and the transformation of everyday events into philosophical reflections. The article also discusses parallels between the author's artistic approach and certain features of Western modernist literature, particularly existential themes associated with human isolation and the search for meaning. The findings demonstrate that Shodiqul Hamro's fiction contributes to the development of contemporary Uzbek storytelling by introducing innovative narrative forms and symbolic structures. Through mythopoetic images and psychological depth, the writer reveals the complexity of human existence and the hidden dimensions of individual consciousness.

Keywords: Mythopoetics, symbolism, contemporary Uzbek prose, short story, modernism, psychological narration, loneliness, existentialism.

Introduction

Contemporary literature is characterized by the expansion of artistic methods and the search for new ways of representing human consciousness. The short story genre, despite its limited volume, has become one of the most effective literary forms for expressing complex psychological and philosophical problems. Modern short fiction often moves beyond the description of external events and focuses on inner conflicts, memory, spiritual experience, and the hidden dimensions of human existence. Uzbek prose has undergone significant transformations, especially after the period of independence. Writers gained broader opportunities to explore individual destiny, personal identity, and psychological experiences without ideological restrictions. As a result, new artistic approaches emerged, including symbolic narration, mythopoetic interpretation, and modernist techniques.

Shodiqul Hamro occupies a distinctive position in contemporary Uzbek literature due to his unique narrative style and philosophical approach. His works demonstrate an interest in the inner world of individuals, their emotional struggles, and their relationship with reality. Instead of presenting direct social descriptions, the writer often creates symbolic situations that encourage readers to search for deeper meanings.

"The Woman in the Photograph" represents one of the remarkable examples of this artistic approach. The story combines realistic details with mysterious and symbolic elements, creating a narrative space where memory, death, loneliness, and human identity intersect. The photograph becomes the central artistic symbol through which the author explores the complexity of human existence.

Research Methodology

This study applies literary analysis, comparative analysis, and mythopoetic interpretation methods. The research examines symbolic images, narrative structure, psychological representation, and philosophical dimensions of Shodiqul Hamro's short story.

The theoretical framework of the research is based on modern literary studies concerning symbolism, mythopoetics, and existential themes in fiction. The analysis also considers the relationship between contemporary Uzbek prose and global literary tendencies, particularly modernist approaches to portraying human consciousness.

Results and Discussion

One of the most significant features of Shodiqul Hamro's short fiction is the author's ability to transform ordinary life situations into philosophical and symbolic narratives. In "The Woman in the Photograph", the writer does not limit himself to depicting the fate of an individual woman; instead, he creates a broader artistic representation of human loneliness, memory, and the mysterious relationship between the past and the present.

The central symbol of the story is the photograph. In traditional understanding, a photograph preserves a moment from the past; however, in Shodiqul Hamro's artistic interpretation, it becomes a symbolic space where human emotions, forgotten memories, and

unresolved destinies exist. The photograph functions as a bridge between two dimensions: the visible world and the invisible world of memories and spiritual experiences. Through this symbolic object, the author explores the psychological condition of a person who remains isolated from society. The woman in the photograph represents not only an individual character but also a universal image of human solitude. Her life story reflects the tragedy of a person whose inner world remains unknown to others during her lifetime. Only after her death does the hidden dimension of her existence become gradually revealed.

This artistic approach demonstrates the influence of modernist narrative principles, where external events are often replaced by psychological depth and symbolic meaning. The writer focuses on the internal experiences of characters rather than presenting a traditional chronological storyline. As a result, the reader becomes involved in interpreting the hidden meanings behind images and events. The theme of loneliness occupies a central position in the story. However, loneliness in Shodiqul Hamro's work is not simply a social condition; it is an existential state connected with human consciousness and the search for meaning. The woman's isolation reflects the broader spiritual crisis of modern individuals who experience separation from others despite living within society. The connection between reality and imagination is another important aspect of the story. The appearance of the woman from the photograph creates an atmosphere where realistic and supernatural elements coexist. This technique can be understood within the framework of myth

Contemporary Uzbek short fiction demonstrates a significant movement from traditional narrative forms toward deeper psychological and philosophical interpretation. In this process, Shodiqul Hamro's works represent an important stage in the development of modern literary thinking. His stories are characterized by the combination of realistic details, symbolic structures, and psychological analysis of human consciousness.

"The Woman in the Photograph" can be considered a representative example of mythopoetic narration in contemporary Uzbek prose. The author creates a special artistic world where ordinary reality gradually transforms into a symbolic and mysterious space. The story does not simply describe the life and death of an old woman; rather, it investigates the spiritual traces left by a human being and the connection between memory and existence.

One of the central concepts of the story is loneliness. The woman in the photograph represents a person who has experienced emotional isolation throughout her life. However, her loneliness is not presented only as a personal tragedy. It becomes a universal human condition reflecting the difficulties of communication, understanding, and emotional connection between individuals. The writer uses the image of the photograph as a symbolic bridge between the past and the present. In traditional understanding, a photograph preserves a moment from the past. In Hamro's artistic interpretation, however, the photograph becomes a living space where forgotten emotions, memories, and hidden experiences continue to exist. Through this symbol, the author challenges the boundaries between life and death, reality and imagination. The mythopoetic dimension of the story becomes visible through the transformation of ordinary objects into carriers of deeper meanings. The photograph, the night, the mysterious appearance of the woman, and the dream-like experiences of the narrator create a symbolic system. These elements are not accidental; they form a complex artistic structure through which the writer explores human destiny.

The image of the night plays an important role in the narrative organization of the story. In world literature, night often symbolizes uncertainty, hidden truth, and the subconscious world. Shodiqul Hamro uses this traditional symbolic meaning to reveal the psychological transformation of the protagonist. The night becomes a space where the border between rational perception and imagination becomes uncertain. The narrator's experience reflects the psychological techniques frequently used in modernist literature. Instead of focusing only on external events, the author emphasizes the internal reactions, fears, doubts, and emotional changes of the character. The reader follows not only what happens but also how the human mind perceives and interprets these events.

This artistic method demonstrates certain similarities with existential literature. Writers such as Franz Kafka and Albert Camus often portrayed individuals facing incomprehensible situations and searching for meaning in an uncertain world. Shodiqul Hamro also explores similar philosophical questions; however, he transforms them according to Uzbek cultural and spiritual traditions.

Unlike some Western modernist works where alienation often leads to complete hopelessness, Hamro's narrative preserves a connection with moral responsibility and human compassion. The narrator's inability to destroy the photograph is not simply a sign of fear; it represents respect for human memory and the value of individual existence. The psychological depth of the story is also achieved through the interaction between the visible and invisible worlds. The woman's appearance from the photograph can be interpreted not only as a supernatural event but also as a metaphorical representation of suppressed memories and unresolved emotional experiences. The mysterious elements function as artistic devices that reveal the hidden layers of human consciousness.

Another important feature of the story is the author's approach to time. The narrative does not follow a purely chronological structure. Instead, the past and present interact through memory and imagination. This technique creates a multidimensional perception of time, which is characteristic of modern narrative forms. The photograph as the main symbolic object also determines the compositional structure of the story. All significant events are connected with this object. It becomes the center of interpretation, allowing the reader to understand the woman's fate indirectly. The writer avoids direct explanations and prefers symbolic communication with the reader. From the perspective of mythopoetics, the woman's transformation into a mysterious figure after death recalls ancient beliefs about the continuing existence of the soul. The story contains elements that remind readers of universal mythological ideas about life, death, memory, and spiritual continuation. However, these elements are transformed into a modern literary context.

Shodiqul Hamro's artistic innovation lies in his ability to combine national literary traditions with universal philosophical themes. His work demonstrates that contemporary Uzbek prose can engage with global literary ideas while maintaining its own cultural identity.

Therefore, "The Woman in the Photograph" should be understood not only as a story about an unusual event but as a philosophical reflection on human loneliness, memory, and the search for meaning. Through symbolic images and psychological narration, Shodiqul Hamro creates a complex artistic representation of modern human consciousness.

Conclusion

Shodiqul Hamro's "The Woman in the Photograph" reflects the new tendencies of contemporary Uzbek short fiction through its symbolic structure, mythopoetic thinking, and psychological depth. The story demonstrates how a simple object can acquire a

complex philosophical meaning and become a medium for exploring human existence.

The analysis shows that the photograph functions as the central symbolic element connecting memory, identity, and destiny. Through this image, the writer reveals the hidden emotional experiences of individuals and presents loneliness as a universal human phenomenon. The combination of realistic details and symbolic imagination allows Shodiqul Hamro to create a unique narrative style. His work reflects the influence of modern literary aesthetics while preserving the cultural and spiritual characteristics of Uzbek prose.

The story's mythopoetic elements, psychological narration, and existential themes confirm the author's significant contribution to the development of contemporary Uzbek literature. By focusing on the inner world of individuals, Shodiqul Hamro expands the artistic possibilities of the short story genre and introduces new approaches to representing human consciousness.

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