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THE GENRE OF THE SHORT STORY IN RUSSIAN AND UZBEK LITERATURES

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Abstract: The short story occupies a significant position in both Russian and Uzbek literary traditions, reflecting universal patterns of world literature alongside distinct national and cultural characteristics. This article examines the genre of the short story through a comparative analysis of Russian and Uzbek prose, focusing on its historical development, thematic orientation, narrative structure, and stylistic features. Special attention is paid to the evolution of the genre from oral and folkloric narrative forms to psychologically complex realist prose. The study highlights the role of the short story as a medium for representing the everyday life of the “little man,” moral dilemmas, and the interaction between the individual and society. The research identifies two dominant narrative models: the introspective, psychologically oriented Russian short story and the extroverted, ethically and collectively focused Uzbek short story, shaped by Eastern storytelling traditions. The article also explores contemporary transformations of the genre in the post-Soviet period, emphasizing processes of globalization, genre experimentation, and intercultural dialogue. The findings contribute to comparative literary studies by revealing both typological similarities and culturally specific features in the development of the short story as a literary genre.

Keywords: short story genre; Russian literature; Uzbek literature; comparative literature; narrative models; national identity; literary tradition; cultural context.

The short story as a literary genre in Russian and Uzbek literatures demonstrates both shared features, rooted in the general laws of world literary development, and distinctive national characteristics shaped by specific cultural and historical contexts. In Uzbek literature, the short story develops alongside traditional genres under the influence of Eastern narrative traditions, which is reflected in its stylistic and thematic features. In contrast, the Russian short story primarily reflects the social realities and moral problems of Russian society.

The genre of the short story occupies an important place in both Russian and Uzbek literary traditions, revealing common traits determined by universal literary patterns as well as specific features defined by national and cultural contexts. Owing to its conciseness, semantic density, and formal flexibility, the short story has become an expressive means of artistic interpretation of reality, capable of capturing sociocultural realities and moral values of different peoples.

Literary technique in the short story refers to the system of methods and devices employed by an author to construct the narrative structure and atmosphere of a work. Depending on artistic aims and stylistic preferences, writers use various techniques to enhance narrative engagement or deepen psychological and philosophical meaning. As a form of artistic expression, the short story holds a significant position in both Russian and Uzbek literary traditions, reflecting not only national cultural specificity but also broader aesthetic tendencies formed within the evolution of world literature.

The short story represents one of the most flexible, compact, and expressive literary forms. Due to its brevity, semantic concentration, and accessibility, it has gained wide popularity in many literary systems worldwide. In Russian and Uzbek literatures, the short story occupies a stable and meaningful position, embodying both universal literary principles and unique national features rooted in the historical and cultural experiences of each people. The historical development of the short story in both traditions followed global literary trends: the transition from oral to written narration, from folklore and epic structures to realist prose, and from

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externally event-driven narratives to psychologically enriched storytelling. Despite differences in linguistic and cultural contexts, these processes developed synchronously.

In both Russian and Uzbek literatures, the short story became a form of artistic reflection on the everyday life of the “little man,” focusing on issues of moral choice, social justice, inner struggle, and the individual’s interaction with society. This is explained not only by shared genre patterns but also by the humanistic traditions deeply rooted in the literary consciousness of both cultures.

Despite parallels in genre evolution, significant differences exist between Russian and Uzbek models of the short story, arising from national and cultural specificity. Russian literature shaped the short story largely under the influence of Western European novella traditions, absorbing elements of realism, psychological depth, and existential drama. In the works of A. S. Pushkin, N. V. Gogol, and I. S. Turgenev, and later in the prose of A. P. Chekhov, the short story evolved into a medium of profound philosophical and ethical analysis rather than merely a narrative unit.

The Russian short story emphasizes the inner world of the individual—doubts, suffering, and spiritual dissonance. Characters are often placed in situations demanding moral choice, self-analysis, and existential reflection. The narrative frequently relies on subtext, psychological detail, and open endings that invite the reader’s interpretation. This type of short story functions as a form of artistic philosophizing and introspective reflection.

In contrast, the Uzbek literary tradition, enriched by a strong epic heritage, preserves a close connection between the short story and oral narrative culture. The protagonist of the Uzbek short story is typically a representative of the people: a peasant, craftsman, elder, or a young person standing at the crossroads of tradition and modernity. Central themes include honor, dignity, justice, respect for elders, and generational continuity. While the Russian short story immerses the reader in individual consciousness, the Uzbek short story often expresses collective morality and traditional values, shaping its structure, style, and thematic orientation.

The language of the Uzbek short story is marked by vivid imagery, folk speech, proverbs, sayings, and dialogic forms. The style is generally straightforward, the narrative linear, and the ending clearly moralized and complete. These features do not indicate archaicism but rather demonstrate a strong connection between Uzbek prose and the living oral traditions of Eastern culture, where storytelling serves as a means of transmitting collective experience.

In contemporary Russian and Uzbek literatures, the short story has undergone significant transformations. The post-Soviet period—characterized by ideological shifts, globalization, and intensified intercultural interaction—has led to a rethinking of both form and content. In both traditions, documentary elements, psychological depth, philosophical reflection, and genre experimentation have become more prominent.

Russian writers increasingly address issues of identity, spiritual disorientation, and loneliness within urbanized, post-industrial society. Uzbek authors, in turn, explore generational ruptures, conflicts between traditional culture and new social realities, and the preservation of national identity under global change. A gradual convergence of genre models can be observed: the short story becomes a space of cultural dialogue, where national identity is not erased but reinterpreted through new expressive forms.

Comparative analysis of these two traditions reveals both typological similarities and deep structural differences in the formation and development of the short story as a genre. The Russian short story began to take shape in the early nineteenth century under the influence of Western European literature—particularly French and German novellas—as well as indigenous folklore and hagiographic traditions. Early literary short stories appeared in the works of Pushkin, Gogol, and Turgenev, while Chekhov played a decisive role in shaping the genre as a concise, psychologically saturated form in which the inner world of the character is revealed through detail, intonation, and subtext [1].

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Thus, the short story in Russian and Uzbek literary traditions developed as an independent and highly artistic phenomenon. Its formation was influenced by both internal factors (mental, cultural, linguistic) and external factors (historical, political, aesthetic). Comparative analysis of these traditions broadens the scope of comparative literary studies and enriches the understanding of universal and unique features of national literary processes.

Continuing the analysis of genre specificity, it should be emphasized that the choice of protagonist and type of conflict reflects not only artistic techniques but also the worldview of a given culture. In Russian prose from the nineteenth century onward, a central figure is the solitary, reflective individual, often in conflict with society or with oneself. This is the figure of the “little man” in the prose of Gogol, Chekhov, and Dostoevsky—externally inconspicuous yet bearing profound moral and philosophical significance. The conflict in such stories is predominantly introspective, involving inner doubts, moral dilemmas, and existential anxiety.

In contrast, the Uzbek short story frequently focuses on external conflict rooted in everyday life and tradition. The protagonist is usually a member of the community, and the narrative foregrounds collective values such as honor, respect, spiritual resilience, and generational continuity [2]. While the Russian short story often takes the form of an inner monologue of an intellectual seeking meaning, the Uzbek short story functions as a dialogue between generations, grounded in the moral experience of the people.

The formation of the short story as an independent genre in both literatures occurred through interaction with folklore traditions and realist aesthetics. Both cultures demonstrate an aspiration to depict everyday life, moral choice, and the inner conflict of the individual—features rooted in the humanistic orientation of nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature toward truthful and psychologically profound representations of reality [3].

In Uzbek prose, especially from the twentieth century onward, the protagonist often appears as a bearer of collective memory, tradition, and cultural continuity. Conflicts are typically external, shaped by historical change, the transition from patriarchal structures to modernity, urbanization, and shifting social values. Nevertheless, these conflicts are permeated with ethical concerns—dignity, responsibility, and fidelity to cultural heritage.

Thus, two narrative models can be distinguished: the introverted model (Russian) and the extroverted model (Uzbek), each developing its own system of artistic coordinates. Together, they form a polycultural picture of the short story genre, enriching the global literary process.

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