

The Historical Trajectory Of The Novella Genre In Russian And Uzbek Literature

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ABSTRACT

The novella is a prose genre situated between the short story and the novel, characterized by a limited plot but broad spiritual and moral content. It expresses reality through human psyche, emotions, and internal conflicts. This study examines the formation and development of the novella in Russian and Uzbek literature, highlighting its stylistic and poetic features, as well as its evolution within realist and psychological frameworks. Using the works of L. N. Tolstoy, F. M. Dostoevsky, Shukur Xolmirzaev, and Khurshid Do‘stmuhammad as case studies, the paper demonstrates the genre’s significance in representing human consciousness, moral dilemmas, and social relations. Comparative analysis reveals shared features and national specificities, emphasizing the cultural, philosophical, and aesthetic roles of the novella.

Keywords: Novella, Russian literature, Uzbek literature, realism, psychological analysis, national identity, literary evolution, stylistics.

INTRODUCTION

The novella occupies a unique position in prose literature, bridging the narrative conciseness of the short story and the expansive scope of the novel. Its limited plot scope does not restrict its capacity for profound exploration of human consciousness, morality, and societal relationships. Both Russian and Uzbek literary traditions have employed the novella as a vehicle for reflecting on individual and social experience, offering philosophical, moral, and psychological insight.

In Russian literature, the genre flourished in the 19th century, coinciding with the rise of realism. Writers such as L. N. Tolstoy and F. M. Dostoevsky explored ethical dilemmas, human psychology, and social critique. Uzbek literature developed the novella more intensively during the mid-20th century, under the influence of national revival and humanistic ideals. Despite differences in historical context, both traditions share aesthetic principles emphasizing psychological depth, moral reflection, and realism.

The purpose of this study is to examine the historical development, stylistic characteristics, and cultural significance of the novella in Russian and Uzbek literature, highlighting points of convergence and divergence.

This research uses a comparative-historical and stylistic approach, combining literary analysis, historical contextualization, and comparative methodology. The following methods were employed:

1. Textual Analysis: Examination of canonical Russian and Uzbek novellas, including L. N. Tolstoy (*The Prisoner of the Caucasus*, *The Kreutzer Sonata*), F. M. Dostoevsky (*The Gambler*, *The Adolescent*, *The Double*), Shukur Xolmirzaev (*Village Horses*, *Autumn Leaves*, *Stone and Paranya*), and Khurshid Do‘stmuhammad (*Man and the Swan*, *Days in the Village*).

2. Historical Contextualization: Analysis of social, cultural, and philosophical influences shaping the novella in each tradition.

3. Comparative Literary Analysis: Identification of shared characteristics, stylistic divergences, thematic foci, and narrative techniques between Russian and Uzbek novellas.

4. Psychological and Philosophical Analysis:

Exploration of narrative strategies for portraying consciousness, moral dilemmas, and social interactions, with emphasis on internal monologues, symbolic imagery, and stylistic devices.

Data were synthesized into comparative tables and thematic discussions to highlight similarities, differences, and the evolution of the genre over time.

Historical Development of the Russian Novella

The Russian novella emerged in the late 18th century during the sentimental period. N. M. Karamzin's Poor Liza (1792) exemplifies the focus on human emotion, internal conflict, and moral consciousness, laying the groundwork for realism.

A. S. Pushkin's The Belkin Tales (1830) introduced narrative brevity, compositional models, and psychologically complex characters. Pushkin's concise storytelling conveyed moral and social critique, influencing subsequent writers.

In the second half of the 19th century, L. N. Tolstoy and F. M. Dostoevsky elevated the genre. Tolstoy's The Prisoner of the Caucasus (1872) and The Kreutzer Sonata (1889) explore ethical dilemmas, moral conscience, and spiritual struggles. Dostoevsky's The Gambler (1866), The Adolescent, and The Double employ internal monologues and psychological conflict, emphasizing human consciousness fragmentation and existential questions.

Stylistic Features of Russian Novellas:

- Predominance of internal monologue and psychological analysis
- Integration of moral and philosophical reflections

with narrative

- Realist depiction of social environments and human interactions

These features established the Russian novella as a universal instrument for exploring human consciousness and moral dilemmas, while also serving as a reflection of societal norms.

Historical Development of the Uzbek Novella

The Uzbek novella has roots in oral traditions such as epics, legends, and folk tales, combined with early 20th-century prose by writers like Abdulla Qodiriy, Abdurauf Fitrat, and Cho'lpion. Early works exhibit narrative conciseness and psychological expressiveness, often addressing moral and social issues.

The genre flourished in the 1960s–1980s with writers such as Shukur Xolmirzaev, Odil Yoqubov, Pirimqul Qodirov, and Khurshid Do'stmuhammad. Xolmirzaev's Village Horses, Autumn Leaves, and Stone and Paranya integrate folk language, natural imagery, and interpersonal relationships. Do'stmuhammad's Man and the Swan and Days in the Village explore philosophical-symbolic and lyrical-psychological dimensions, depicting human-epoch interactions.

Distinctive Features of Uzbek Novellas:

- Influence of folk language and national traditions
- Combination of psychological depth with philosophical generalization
- Expression of spiritual and moral ideas through nature, human interactions, and symbolic imagery
- Harmonization of contemporary thought with national and cultural values

Comparative Analysis

Feature	Russian Novella	Uzbek Novella
Primary focus	Social-philosophical drama	Moral-spiritual values, national identity

Psychological technique	Internal monologue, polyphony	Lyrical narration, symbolic imagery
Philosophical orientation	Universal questions	National and contemporary issues
Language influence	Standard literary language	Folk language and national idioms
Role of nature	Background for realism	Symbolic and moral dimension

Both traditions share an emphasis on realism and psychological depth, portraying human consciousness, moral dilemmas, and social relations. Differences reflect the socio-cultural and historical contexts in which the genre developed.

The formation and development of the novella in Russian and Uzbek literature is a long historical and cultural process. In Russian literature, the 19th-century novella reached maturity with Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Turgenev, Leskov, and Chekhov, revealing deep psychological and moral insights. In Uzbek literature, the novella developed actively from the mid-20th century, combining folk elements, national consciousness, and humanistic ideals to create a distinct national style.

Russian and Uzbek novellas illustrate two different but spiritually aligned developmental trajectories, expressing universal human values in culturally specific forms. They remain essential tools for examining human consciousness, morality, social interactions, and the reflection of contemporary life. Comparative study highlights the shared and unique contributions of each literary tradition, underlining the novella's role as a medium of cultural, moral, and psychological exploration.

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