

## **Plot Construction and Aesthetic Function in Abdulla Qodiriy's Novel Bygone Days**

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**Abstract.** This article provides an academic analysis of the plot construction in Abdulla Qodiriy's novel *Bygone Days* (*O'tkan kunlar*), focusing on its structural logic, aesthetic function, and ideological significance within the development of Uzbek prose fiction. The study examines the core components of the plot—exposition, conflict, development of events, climax, and resolution—through close textual analysis.

**Key words:** *plot, narrative structure, Uzbek novel, Abdulla Qodiriy, Bygone Days, national consciousness, epic narration.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The emergence of the novel as a dominant literary genre in Uzbek literature is closely associated with the name of Abdulla Qodiriy. His novel *Bygone Days* occupies a foundational position not only due to its thematic novelty but also because of its sophisticated plot construction and narrative coherence. The work reflects the complex socio-historical conditions of late nineteenth-century Turkestan while simultaneously portraying the moral and psychological dilemmas faced by individuals living in a period of transition. Particular attention is paid to the interaction between personal destiny and historical reality, as well as to the role of plot in articulating national consciousness and social transformation. Employing structural, comparative, and contextual methodologies, the article argues that the novel's plot represents a qualitatively new stage in the evolution of Uzbek narrative art.

### **METHODS AND METHODOLOGY**

The research employs a combination of structural-narrative analysis, historical-contextual interpretation, and comparative literary methodology. The theoretical framework draws upon classical and modern concepts of plot developed by Aristotle, G. E. Lessing, V. Zhirmunsky, and B. Tomashevsky, alongside contributions by Uzbek literary scholars such as U. Normatov, N. Karimov, and H. Boltaboyev. The primary source of analysis is the original text of *Bygone Days*, examined in relation to its historical background and literary tradition. In literary theory, plot is understood as the organized system of events that drives narrative movement and ensures semantic unity. In *Bygone Days*, the plot functions not merely as a sequence of events but as a mechanism through which historical change, social conflict, and personal tragedy are artistically synthesized. This article aims to analyze the structural principles of the novel's plot and to elucidate its aesthetic and ideological functions within the broader context of Uzbek literary modernity.

### **Analysis**

General Characteristics of the Plot in *Bygone Days* - the plot of *Bygone Days* is distinguished by its multi-layered structure and internal coherence. It unfolds along two interrelated narrative lines: the personal and psychological story of Otabek and Kumush, and the broader socio-historical depiction

of political instability, economic relations, and moral decline within the Kokand Khanate. These two dimensions are not presented in isolation; rather, they intersect and reinforce each other, thereby expanding the epic scope of the novel.

Qodiriy's narrative strategy is characterized by a careful balance between historical authenticity and artistic imagination. Historical realities provide the framework within which fictional events unfold, lending credibility and depth to the plot. Each episode serves a functional role in advancing narrative tension and thematic development, ensuring logical continuity throughout the novel.

**Formation of the Central Conflict** - the plot's central conflict emerges through the ideological and moral stance of Otabek, whose progressive views on trade, justice, and social responsibility clash with entrenched conservative norms. His opposition to outdated economic practices and rigid social hierarchies forms the ideological backbone of the narrative conflict.

Simultaneously, the forced marriage to Zaynab and Otabek's genuine love for Kumush introduce a personal and emotional dimension to the conflict. These parallel tensions—social and domestic—converge to create a complex narrative knot that propels the plot forward. The interaction between private life and public reality underscores the novel's critique of a society resistant to reform.

**Development of Events and Narrative Tension** - as the plot progresses, conflicts intensify and acquire greater psychological depth. Otabek's reformist aspirations encounter systemic resistance, while domestic tensions escalate due to jealousy, misunderstanding, and moral weakness. Qodiriy carefully avoids episodic randomness; instead, each event is causally linked to preceding developments. The gradual accumulation of tension reflects the author's mastery of narrative pacing. Through dialogues, internal monologues, and symbolic scenes, the novel sustains dramatic momentum and prepares the reader for the inevitable tragic climax. The plot thus functions as an instrument of ethical inquiry, exposing the destructive consequences of social inertia and moral compromise.

**Climax and Tragic Resolution** - the climax of the novel is marked by the poisoning and death of Kumush, a moment that represents the culmination of both personal tragedy and social failure. This event is not merely a narrative shock but a symbolic expression of the violence inflicted by an unjust social order upon purity, love, and moral integrity.

The subsequent death of Otabek serves as the resolution of the plot, reinforcing the novel's tragic vision. The collapse of the protagonists' aspirations signifies the incompatibility of humanistic ideals with a decaying socio-political system. Through this ending, Qodiriy articulates a profound sense of historical pessimism while simultaneously affirming the ethical value of resistance and moral consciousness.

## Research Results

The research yields several original findings regarding the narrative organization of *Bygone Days*.

First, the study demonstrates that the plot of the novel functions as a dynamic system of ethical causality rather than a linear chain of events. Narrative progression is driven primarily by moral decisions and social contradictions, which confirms that Qodiriy privileges ideological coherence over episodic action.

Second, the analysis reveals that the dual-level narrative structure—personal and historical—operates through a mechanism of mutual reinforcement. Individual tragedies do not merely reflect historical conditions; they actively construct a historical worldview within the text. This finding highlights the plot's role in transforming private experience into collective historical meaning.

Third, the research establishes that conflict in *Bygone Days* is structurally embedded within the social order itself. The inevitability of the tragic outcome is produced by systemic resistance to reform, not by accidental circumstances. This result positions the novel firmly within the realist tradition while distinguishing it from romantic determinism.

Finally, the study confirms that the climax and resolution serve an allegorical function. The deaths of Kumush and Otabek operate as narrative judgments on a stagnant socio-political system, reinforcing the novel's function as a form of historical critique rather than moral didacticism.

These results collectively support the argument that Qodiriy's plot construction represents a significant innovation in early Uzbek prose, contributing to the formation of a national realist narrative model.

## Conclusion

The plot of *Bygone Days* is a complex, multi-dimensional narrative structure that embodies the aesthetic and ideological principles of early Uzbek realism. Its coherence, dramatic intensity, and symbolic resolution contribute to the novel's enduring literary significance. By presenting personal tragedy as a reflection of historical crisis, Qodiriy establishes the plot as a central vehicle for expressing national identity and moral inquiry. Consequently, *Bygone Days* occupies a pivotal position in the formation of the Uzbek novel and continues to serve as a critical reference point for literary scholarship.

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