

The Poetics of Time and Memory in Shoyim Butayev's Novels “Qo‘rg‘onlangan Oy” and “Shox”

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Abstract. *This article analyzes the artistic interpretation of time and memory in Shoyim Butayev's novels “Qo‘rg‘onlangan oy” and “Shox.” The study aims to reveal the function of memory as the main mechanism organizing the plot, the fragmented structure of artistic time, and the relationship between individual and collective memory. As a result of the analysis, it is substantiated that time in these novels is represented not as a chronological sequence, but as a psychological and philosophical category.*

Key words: *artistic time, memory, poetics, narratology, fragmentation, modern Uzbek novel.*

In modern literary studies, the category of time is increasingly interpreted as a psychological and philosophical phenomenon. Since the second half of the twentieth century, the novel genre has moved away from the linear model of time, giving priority to the depiction of subjective time occurring within human consciousness. In this process, memory has become an important instrument of artistic thinking.

The novels of Shoyim Butayev, particularly “Qo‘rg‘onlangan oy” and “Shox,” are vivid examples of this tendency in Uzbek prose. In these novels, the plot is shaped not by the development of external events, but by the characters’ memories and inner experiences. Nevertheless, the relationship between time and memory in these works has not yet been sufficiently studied as a separate poetic system. The purpose of this article is to fill this gap.

As literary scholar A. Nasirov notes: “Any image functions within a certain artistic time and space. The issue of time and space has been studied in direct connection with art and literature in the works of B. S. Meylakh, G. E. Lessing, Yu. M. Lotman, A. A. Fridman, M. Bakhtin, M. S. Kagan, and V. V. Molchanov” [1].

Accordingly, although these scholars have studied the problem of the artistic chronotope in various forms, their works may serve as a key source for identifying qualitative changes taking place in modern Uzbek novel-writing.

When speaking of “time” in a literary work, first of all attention is paid to its function within the plot. It is acknowledged that time may accelerate or slow down the narrative flow, and in some cases directly influence the reader’s perception [2]. Indeed, the organization of a broad range of plots is formed on the basis of the chronotope. At the same time, it enables the synthesis of the past that has turned into history, the present, and the paths leading to the future destiny.

In the novel “Shox,” within the road chronotope, the tragic scenes resulting from the vile and deceitful plans of Hotam and Qulmahnud are clearly and advantageously understood by no one other than the devil-like characters Larisa Ziganshina and Mr. Himera. Therefore, the author considers it appropriate

to evaluate these characters from a mythopoetic perspective. At the same time, while the chronotope in the novel directs the travelers toward the realization of their aims and intentions, it also serves to make the plot events more engaging and dynamic.

The Plot-Forming Function of Memory

In the novels “*Qo’rg’onlangan oy*” and “*Shox*,” memory appears not as an external but as an internal driving force of the plot. The development of events is determined not by the characters’ present actions, but by their returns to the past and the process of recollection.

In “*Qo’rg’onlangan oy*,” the present-time plot is relatively calm and low in action, while the main dramatic tension is revealed through unresolved moral problems of the past. The protagonist’s memory creates a cause-and-effect relationship: decisions made in the past are interpreted as the source of the present psychological state.

In “*Shox*,” memory turns into a process of rethinking and reassessment. The events recalled by the protagonist are presented not as factual data, but through inner anguish and delayed understanding. This situation transforms memory into an active aesthetic mechanism rather than a passive one.

The Fragmented Model of Artistic Time

In both novels, time is not linear but has a fragmented character. Clear boundaries between the past and the present are broken, and they intermingle with each other. Such a fragmented model of time serves to express the instability of the protagonist’s psychological state.

In “*Qo’rg’onlangan oy*,” the present time is depicted briefly and concisely, while episodes from the past are presented extensively and with emotional depth. This proportion demonstrates the spiritual emptiness of the protagonist’s present life and the abundance of unresolved issues in the past.

In “*Shox*,” the fragmentation of time intensifies the tragic mood. The protagonist cannot break away from the past and therefore is unable to fully live in the present. As a result, time appears not as a continuous flow, but as an internally fragmented state.

The Harmony of Individual and Collective Memory

In Shoyim Butayev’s novels, memory does not remain solely an individual phenomenon, but is connected with collective and cultural memory. While recalling personal experiences, the protagonist simultaneously reveals the social environment and the spirit of a particular historical period.

In “*Qo’rg’onlangan oy*,” individual memory is linked with rural life, customs, and traditions, forming a layer of collective memory. The protagonist’s personal suffering becomes an expression of general moral changes within society.

In “*Shox*,” collective memory is conveyed through symbolic images. The protagonist’s loneliness and inner crisis reflect a general moral crisis occurring in society. Thus, individual tragedy rises to the level of a generalized moral problem.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the poetics of time and memory constitute a central aesthetic principle in the novels “*Qo’rg’onlangan oy*” and “*Shox*.” Memory functions as the main mechanism organizing the plot, and through the fragmented model of artistic time, the protagonist’s inner crisis and spiritual quest are revealed. The harmony of individual and collective memory deepens the philosophical and social content of the novels. These features make it possible to evaluate Shoyim Butayev’s prose as an important aesthetic phenomenon in modern Uzbek literature.

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