

# Reflections on The History of Studying the Poetics of Prose Works in Literary Studies

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**Abstract:** Poetics is one of the significant means of belles-lettres fiction. The concept of poetics is considered as widely encircled notion in literary criticism. The article studies theoretical investigations on poetics by the world, russian, uzbek scientists in literature and basically analyses the stories by Khurshid Dustmuhammad. Particularly, the article deals with high artistic value of images, their general and special peculiarities metaphoric features of prose in the stories.

**Keywords:** Theoretical poetics, scientific image, artistic image, figurativeness, figurative thoughts, artistic generalisation, individualism, traditional metaphors, individual metaphors, aesthetic ideal, the feelings of character, the concept of fiction.

**Introduction:** Throughout the development of world literary studies, the term poetics has been used in various meanings across different eras. In ancient literary studies, poetics was used to refer to the general science of literature. A prime example of this is Aristotle's work *Poetics*. This work is considered one of the earliest sources addressing theoretical issues concerning literary works and their language. It contains information about the early theory of realism in Greek literature. Our great compatriot Abu Nasr al-Farabi, influenced by this work, wrote his treatise *On the Laws of the Art of Poetry*. Later, issues such as the essence, purpose, and functions of art, and its relationship with reality, became the domain of philosophical aesthetics. During the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the era of Classicism, poetics focused on the study of poetic devices and techniques of artistic speech.

## METHODOLOGY

Today, poetics (from Greek *poietike* – the art of poetry) is understood as the science concerning the system of expressive means in literary works. In a broader sense, poetics corresponds to the concept of literary theory. As a branch of literary theory, poetics studies the characteristics of literary genres and types, literary movements and schools, styles and methods, and

investigates the internal connections and interrelations between various levels of artistic expression. Therefore, we can regard poetics, in a broader sense, as a field that studies the principles of literary science.

“Poetics (from the Greek: the art of creation) in a broad sense is literary theory; in a narrower, more commonly used sense today, it is a component of literary theory, a doctrine about the literary work.” If we consider poetics as a component of literary theory, it aligns with the perspective we intend to advance.

Poetics consists of three main parts: Theoretical (general) poetics; Descriptive (specific) poetics; Historical poetics. Theoretical poetics studies the artistic devices and construction principles of any literary work, including systems of imagery, plot, composition, motivation, structure of verse and stanzas, and the methods by which the author's intent is realized depending on genre and literary type. The term theoretical poetics was introduced into scholarship by A. A. Potebnya. His work *Theoretical Poetics* substantiates this idea.

Descriptive poetics identifies the specific features of works by individual authors or particular eras and literary movements. Historical poetics, on the other hand, investigates the development of artistic devices (figurative expressions, forms, rhyme) and categories

(artistic representations of time, space, rhythm). The emergence of historical poetics is closely tied to A. N. Veselovsky, whose views are reflected in his work *Historical Poetics*.

The science of poetics, an inseparable part of literature, has been significantly advanced by theorists such as Aristotle, F. Hegel, J. C. Scaliger, L. Castelvetro, T. Tasso, B. Johnson, J. Chaplain, V. Belinsky, P. Corneille, N. Boileau, A. N. Veselovsky, A. A. Potebnya, V. E. Kholishev, B. V. Tomashevsky, V. M. Zhirmunsky, M. Bakhtin, among others.

One of the philosophical scholars, Aristotle, authored *Poetics* (On the Art of Poetry) and *Rhetoric*, which are considered the earliest works of literary theory in the world. In this book, poetry is not understood merely as modern-day poetry, but as a concept encompassing universal aesthetic and artistic principles under the broader meaning of literature. Furthermore, Aristotle referred to all forms of art as poetry. He explained the types of poetry (literature) such as drama, epic, and lyric, distinguished it from science, and analyzed the genre of tragedy as well as elements like character and conflict. The philosopher Aristotle wrote:

"In response to the accusation that the poet (creator) does not depict life as it is, it can be said that the poet depicts life not just as it is, but as it ought to be. Sophocles, for example, depicts people as they ought to be; Euripides depicts them as they are.

## RESULTS

The views of German philosopher Friedrich Hegel on art and artistic creation hold a special place in the development of poetics. In his book *Aesthetics*, Hegel evaluates epic, lyric, and drama. According to him, the symbolic form belongs to Eastern imagery, while the classical form pertains to ancient literature, especially Greece. Hegel argued: "Any work of art belongs to its era, people, and environment, and is connected with specific historical and other conceptual goals and visions."

Since artistic literature concerns humans, it is studied in inseparable connection with the society, nature, and existence in which they live. The level of consciousness of a society is reflected in the literature of every era. Moreover, artistic literature, through the ideas it represents, has a powerful emotional impact on readers, inspiring new perspectives and ideas, enriching them spiritually, and contributing to the growth of their consciousness.

In this sense, writers such as Abdulla Qodiriy, Cho'lpon, Abdulla Qahhor, Oybek, G'afur G'ulom, Odil Yoqubov, and Khurshid Dustmuhammad are among those who, while preserving national traditions, also embraced

innovations from world literature and wrote about specific eras, creating contemporary characters.

The concept of image, which forms the basis of a literary work, has been a key element of poetics from ancient times to the present. Indeed, the artistic image is the means that defines the unique character of all works of art.

"Through the artistic image, the artist comprehends the world, expresses the essence they have understood, and conveys their emotional attitude towards what is perceived. In this sense, the image is the mode and method of thinking in literature and art." As Hegel stated, art and literature are forms of thinking through images. Discussing the uniqueness of art, especially the image, Hegel wrote:

"... First, it implies some content — for instance, a particular emotion, situation, event, action, or individual; second, it implies the method of depicting this content."

From this it follows that the uniqueness and individuality of an image are manifested both in the content it carries and in the methods used to represent it.

In the history of literary and theoretical views, Russian critics such as V. Belinsky, A.I. Herzen, N.G. Chernyshevsky, N.A. Dobrolyubov, and M.E. Saltykov-Shchedrin represented a distinct stage. They thoroughly analyzed such features of art as populism, national identity, originality, ideological and artistic integrity, and imagery. In the theoretical works of V.G. Belinsky, the artistic image is considered an important component of artistic aesthetics. Belinsky wrote the following about the artistic image:

"The highest subject of art is considered to be the human being; therefore, the term 'image' should be applied to the human being (i.e., the human represented in the artistic work). The image is a generalized and, at the same time, specific depiction of human life, created through artistic imagination and bearing aesthetic value."

In modern literary studies, however, the concept of an image refers not only to human beings but also to other living and non-living objects. As literary scholar Dilmurod Quronov states:

"The artistic image is the reflection of reality (its objects, events, etc.) in an artistic work."

Nevertheless, the scholar's views on universality and individuality in artistic images resonate with Belinsky's ideas:

"When discussing the characteristics of an artistic image, it is essential to emphasize first and foremost its manifestation as an individualized generalization. It is

known that every object or phenomenon in reality embodies both general characteristics inherent to its type and unique features specific only to it.”

An artistic image depicted in a literary work is not merely the result of generalization; it is also the product of concretization and individualization. “In this sense, concreteness is one of the specific characteristics of the artistic image.” This is because the writer concretizes the artistic image by portraying its individual traits, imparting to the image vitality, realism, and naturalness. This influences the reader’s emotions and fosters their belief.

Writer Khurshid Dustmuhammad also created a patriotic image by generalizing the portraits of the brave sons of the Uzbek people who endured suffering and hardship during the harsh times of the first half of the 20th century. Among them are Mirkomilboy in the story “The Missed Prayer”, Tokhtasinboy in “Tokhtasinboy’s Wealth”, Abdurauf Fitrat in “The Flower of Hope”, and Abdullah Qodiriy in the novella “The Lonely One”. These are progressive, intellectual individuals of their time. While their characters share some common features, each of them also possesses unique qualities, thoughts, aspirations, and dreams, which highlight the individuality of their images.

Belinsky emphasized that, in creating the image of a certain nation, the thought patterns, religion, language, and, importantly, customs of that people play a significant role:

“Customs are the face of a people; without them, a people is a faceless image, a vain and unrealized fantasy,” he wrote.

Among the images created by Khurshid Dustmuhammad, we also encounter characters who value customs and traditions. These include Qadriya’s mother in the story “The Cry of the Harmless Bird”, Mirsayid Toga in “The Breeze”, and Umid in the novella “The Jug”. These are people who live based on national and universal human values, considering humanity as the highest virtue.

Life exists within the artistic word. The word transforms from a mere tool of communication into an image, the image into a system of images, the system of images into artistic reality, and artistic reality into the creator’s concept. In transforming a word into an artistic image, the word bears a significant aesthetic load both in content and form.

“...It is necessary to distinguish an ordinary scientific image from an artistic image. If a scientific image first affects the mind and through the mind the feelings (and sometimes may not affect the feelings at all), an artistic image first influences the feelings and through the

feelings influences the mind. The purpose of emphasizing this obvious axiom is to remind us that literature also has a cognitive function of its own at its level.”

From an aesthetic point of view, the word “rest-chair” (“*oromkursi*”) in everyday life signifies an object, an item designed for sitting and resting. If we hear this word naturally and separately, it may seem to have almost no emotional impact on us. However, if this word is filled with emotions, pain, and suffering, and is placed within a life situation, it transforms into a full-fledged artistic image.

For example, in Khurshid Dustmuhammad’s story “The Main Street” and the novella “The Rest-Chair”, the word “*oromkursi*” appears as a companion-image that embodies human sorrows and contemplations. The writer expresses the importance of the rest-chair in the life of the story’s protagonist, S. Aliyevich:

“...the chair, as before, was not just a work chair, but had transformed its function into a rest-chair, a carriage-chair, becoming an even stronger support for its faithful owner. When S. Aliyevich, exhausted and trembling from anxiety, his vision dimming, and nearly fainting, leaned his head and shoulders onto the carriage-chair, he caught his breath and regained his composure.

Thus, the rest-chair became a support for the protagonist during his most painful and difficult moments.

“As every person is a treasure trove of countless secrets, so too is the chair they occupy filled with indescribable, marvelous adventures.”

It should be emphasized that the word “*oromkursi*” becomes an integrated image once it interacts with the character’s inner experiences. Because a simple word denoting a natural object, when infused with the creator’s imagination, pain, and emotions, transforms into a living image that touches the reader’s heart and feelings.

One of the important characteristics of the artistic image is its metaphoricity. Literary scholar Bahodir Sarimsoqov says the following about this:

“Among artistic tropes, metaphor occupies a very significant place... An artistic depiction and expression based on metaphorical transfer of meaning acquires an exceptionally extraordinary character. As a result, the created image becomes highly impactful.”

Another literary scholar, Dilmurod Quronov, defines it as follows:

“By ‘metaphoricity,’ we mean the artistic image’s aspiration to reveal the essence of one thing through another, reflecting the specific mode of thinking

inherent to art.”

The writer does not rely on the obvious external similarity of objects and phenomena in reality but rather on the hidden internal resemblance unseen by people. For example:

— Cholpon finds a connection between the image of beauty and the idea of human will and freedom;

— Abdulla Qahhor draws parallels between the deceptive figures of the amins and police officers and the thieves;

— Abdulla Oripov compares the golden fish with people who live enclosed within their own shells;

— Said Ahmad finds similarities between the unconscious predatory wolf and the image of Borivoy, a man who has become alienated from his homeland, people, and faith.

Similarly, Khurshid Dustmuhammad, in his story “Jajman”, discovers a resemblance between the strange four-legged creature devouring all the food at the market and the endless desires and greed of humans—this is a product of metaphorical thinking.

Thus, metaphorical depiction, i.e., portraying meaning through hidden bases, encourages the reader to activate their intellect in order to grasp the essence and content of the work and promotes logical thinking about the text.

Literary scholar Bahodir Sarimsoqov classifies metaphors into two types:

“1. Traditional metaphors.

2. Individual metaphors.

Traditional metaphors were created long ago and have become part of the linguistic heritage; writers frequently refer to them... Individual metaphors, however, are created for the first time by a particular author, and their figurative meaning is not widely known.”

Therefore, in individual metaphors, the author’s thinking, attitude toward reality, emotions, and aesthetic ideal are embodied. Furthermore, assessing the idea and content of a specific artistic work can be achieved precisely by correctly understanding these individual metaphorical images and the emotional energy embedded within them.

## CONCLUSION

We can also encounter individual metaphorical images in the stories of Khurshid Dustmuhammad. As proof of this idea, we may cite the images of “jajman” in the story “Jajman”, the eagle in “Above the Cliffs”, and the unopened door in “The Eleventh Door”. Therefore, in ensuring the artistic quality of a work, along with

ordinary language metaphors, individual metaphors also play an active role. Individual metaphors stand out due to their level of transfer, emotional depth, exceptional imagery, and uniqueness. This type of metaphor provides the creator with vast opportunities for drawing profound philosophical and aesthetic conclusions.

One of the main functions of literature is to assimilate reality aesthetically and to awaken aesthetic feelings in the reader. This is achieved through imagery and figurative thinking. Therefore, the artistic image is a theoretical concept that has been classified and interpreted in various ways from ancient times to the present. Through artistic images, each creator’s worldview, style, artistic idea, and purpose find their expression in their works.

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