

## Epic Imagery and Folk Spirit in Usmon Azim's Short Stories

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**Abstract:** This article analyzes the artistic expression of epic imagery and folk spirit in Usmon Azim's short stories. The study highlights the integration of oral folk traditions, colloquial language devices, and national color with epic descriptions in the writer's prose. The heroes of the stories, symbolizing bravery and generosity, are depicted on an epic scale. In particular, the story "Another's Life" is examined as an example of the author's skill in combining simple everyday events with folk spirit and epic imagery.

**Keywords:** Author, prose, epic imagery, folk spirit, oral folk tradition, colloquial language, national color, artistic language, figurativeness, wrestling arena, bravery, generosity, literary process.

**Introduction:** In the recent development of Uzbek literature, the creative work of Usmon Azim occupies a special place. Although he is recognized as a poet who found his own voice, he has also created a distinctive artistic style in the genre of short stories. His stories are aimed at deeply expressing the spiritual world of the Uzbek people, national values, contemporary life experiences, and human emotions.

In Usmon Azim's short stories, the naturalness of language, "folk expressions and lively dialogues play an important role" [1, p.2]. These features bring the reader closer to the events, allowing them to live alongside the characters and feel their experiences. The author's style manifests itself in the harmony of lyricism, symbolic imagery, and psychological depth. For example, in the story *Goose*, symbolic images serve as a means of expressing national spirit and historical memory, while in *Another's Life* the philosophical interpretation of human destiny is conveyed with psychological depth.

Moreover, Usmon Azim's poetic experience in poetry is also evident in his short stories. The richness of figurative devices, melodious sentences, and artistic thinking elevate the stories not only in terms of plot but also aesthetically. Therefore, the issue of language and style in his stories requires special attention from the

perspective of literary analysis. In general, the writer's language and style complement each other: language ensures the artistic charm of the work, while style reflects the author's worldview, aesthetic taste, and writing mastery. As a result of this harmony, the work serves not only as a source of artistic pleasure for the reader but also as a means of deep reflection on the meaning of life, humanity, and society.

Based on the above ideas, when analyzing Usmon Azim's story *Another's Life*, we see that it begins with the depiction of the character Panji Polvon. At the beginning of the story, the writer briefly describes the hero's native village – Chagana, its people, and their way of life. Through these descriptions, the environment and human nature are revealed, but the main focus is directed toward Panji Polvon's personal qualities.

### METHOD

In the story, Panji Polvon stands out with his unusual habits. During holidays he encourages people to be generous by distributing money from his own hand, defends honesty in the wrestling arena, and plants saplings on the hills in summer, taking care of them. These qualities show him as a patriotic, brave, and generous man. At the same time, he is portrayed as a

wrestler respected among ordinary people and famous throughout the region.

The subsequent events of the story deepen with Panji Polvon's youthful first love, the tragedy of separation, and his life choices. At the beginning, his village life, generous customs, and reputation among the people are described, while later parts reveal his personal life, regrets, and longing. Here the writer pays special attention to showing the hero's inner world and spiritual experiences.

Panji Polvon's youthful love for Dilorom, which ended in an unfulfilled fate, leaves a deep mark on his life. After this separation, he cannot live in the city and returns to the village. This event determines his entire life path: although he is known among the people as a brave, generous, and honest wrestler, inwardly he lives with regret and longing.

Later, the story takes a sharp turn when Panji Polvon travels to Tashkent after many years. His friend Chori Kassir brings him to the city, and various scenes of entertainment in a hotel are described. It is here that a dancer suddenly recognizes Panji Polvon as "Asad" and accepts him as another person. As a result, Panji Polvon involuntarily believes in this twist of fate. Through the figure of the dancer, he sees his first love Dilorom, feeling her presence within. This episode demonstrates the writer's stylistic mastery: real events and memory, present life and past love intertwine to express the hero's spiritual experiences.

In the following scenes, the dancer and Panji Polvon stroll through the streets of Tashkent. During this walk, Panji Polvon truly feels himself to be Asad, and in conversations with the girl he relives his past experiences with Dilorom. The story reaches its climax when they enter a bar. There Panji Polvon unexpectedly meets his beloved Dilorom, who is sitting among a group of young people. He instinctively joins them, but then one of the young men introduces himself as Asad, revealing the existence of the real Asad. This becomes a psychological shock for Panji Polvon: at the very moment he feels himself to be Asad, the presence of another man with that name completely confuses his sense of identity.

At this point, the reader reaches the climax of the story. The inner conflict of Panji Polvon—losing his identity, living another's life—creates tension and astonishment.

Panji Polvon instinctively withdraws, separating himself from this alien environment. The next day he returns to his village. This return reflects his life choice and spiritual state: Panji Polvon cannot find himself in the city; he can only live in the village, among the people, in the wrestling arena, planting saplings and spreading generosity.

The distinguished writer Sh. Kholmirezayev, who read several of Usmon Azim's stories, wrote:

"Now, if we look at these works from the perspective of artistic requirements—completeness, unity of spirit, and character (I rely on my own judgments here!)—we clearly see many imperfections, unnecessary descriptions, and lack of spiritual unity in each story. For example, what is the need for the final conclusion in *Goose*? The Bakhshi could not stop himself... Or in *Another's Life*, what does Panji Polvon's living in another's guise at the restaurant have to do with the lengthy biography above? It could have been greatly shortened, with more emphasis (five or ten lines) on the wrestler's simplicity and generosity. In the *Love* section: the poor orphan Abdurahmon's twenty years of living in the city naturally dulls his feelings. And when he returns to his village, he sees nature differently—with longing, with a unique simplicity, with wonder mixed with sorrow. In the story, Abdurahmon appears almost like this. But... often you think (I thought so!) 'No, this man is not coming from a workers' settlement. He is a poet...' Another serious conclusion of mine is this: in Usmon's early stories there are only Good people and Bad people. Yet this does not meet the requirement of 'creating character,' which is said to be the lifeblood of literature! But strangely, I did not feel this while reading the stories. Only now (while typing) I realized it! The conclusion is this: Usmon—the poet Usmon Azim in prose..." [2, p.3]

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

From the perspective of literary analysis, these episodes reflect the writer's philosophical views on humanity, identity, fate, and love. Panji Polvon's experiences in Tashkent reveal his spiritual struggles and the tragedy of losing his sense of self. Through the figure of the dancer, the memory of Dilorom is revived, while the appearance of a young man named Asad confuses Panji Polvon's identity. By this contrast, the author deeply contemplates human identity, the meaning of life, and

the games of fate. His journey to Tashkent, the situation of “living another’s life,” the encounter with Dilorom, and the loss of his own identity form the dramatic point of the story. Through these events, the writer philosophically reflects on human existence, destiny, and love. This is one of the works that demonstrates the author’s mastery of language and style. In the image of Panji Polvon, the story creates a symbol of folk bravery, honesty, generosity, and humanity. At the same time, it raises philosophical issues such as the loss of identity and being forced to live another’s life.

Furthermore, the author’s language is expressed in a folk-like and lively spirit, with many phrases taken from the oral speech of ordinary people. For example, Panji Polvon’s exclamations: “Five soms from Hasan the barber! Three soms from Umar the gas worker!”—these sentences recall real communication among the people. Metaphors are also widely used: “The voice shatters in the air” [3, p.15], or his address to the saplings, “This is who we are, comrade sun! Burn us!” – a vivid example of figurative language. Dialogues serve as the main driving force of the story, revealing the psychological state of the characters and enlivening the events. Local vocabulary—such as bakovul, qoramurutlik, uloq polvon [4, p.45]—strengthens the national color.

Stylistically, the story is diverse: at the beginning, the festive scene with Panji Polvon’s speeches is written in a satirical tone, through which the author criticizes stinginess and hypocrisy in society. The events in the wrestling arena are depicted with epic breadth, where the crowd’s cheering, blessings, and the wrestlers’ honesty convey an epic spirit. The episodes in Tashkent, however, are presented in a lyrical-philosophical tone, showing the tragedy of losing one’s identity through Panji Polvon’s situation of “living another’s life.” The use of contrast is also important: the honest and brave life in the village is set against the alien, pleasure-seeking life in Tashkent.

Moreover, Usmon Azim’s style is multilayered. He simultaneously combines satirical critique, epic description, and lyrical-philosophical reflection. In the image of Panji Polvon, the story creates a symbol of folk bravery, honesty, and generosity, while the Tashkent episodes portray, on a philosophical level, the loss of identity and the compulsion to live another’s life. This stylistic harmony elevates the story from a simple

depiction of events to a high artistic and philosophical level.

In the author’s stories, poetic sensibility and human suffering are directly woven into the narrative. The story *Another’s Life* creates the image of Panji Polvon in a national spirit yet at a universal level, with high artistry achieved through the harmony of language and style. The writer’s folk-like, lively, and figurative language, together with his satirical, epic, and lyrical-philosophical style, turns the story into not only a source of artistic pleasure for the reader but also a work that inspires deep reflection on the meaning of life.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, Usmon Azim’s mastery of short story writing finds its most vivid expression in *Another’s Life*. The author begins with simple everyday scenes and gradually leads the reader into the most delicate layers of human psychology. In the image of Panji Polvon, he creates a symbol of folk bravery, honesty, generosity, compassion, and humanity. At the same time, through the hero’s personal life, youthful love, the tragedy of separation, and the events in Tashkent, philosophical issues such as the loss of identity and the compulsion to live another’s life are artistically expressed.

Usmon Azim’s language is folk-like, lively, and figurative, drawing the reader into the events. Through satirical tones, he criticizes social flaws; through epic descriptions, he conveys the people’s passion for national wrestling and the spirit of bravery; and through lyrical-philosophical reflection, he reveals the inner world of the individual. In this way, the harmony of language and style elevates the story from a simple depiction of events to a high artistic and philosophical level.

The story *Another’s Life* is valued not only as a source of artistic pleasure for the reader but also as a work that inspires deep reflection on the meaning of life, humanity, love, and fate. Through Panji Polvon’s life, the writer expresses the national spirit while also portraying universal values with high artistry. Therefore, in Usmon Azim’s short stories, poetic sensibility, human suffering, and philosophical reflection are directly woven into the narrative, making the story occupy a special place in Uzbek literature.

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