



THE CONFLICT STRUCTURE OF THE EUROPEAN NOVELLA AND ITS STYLISTIC COMPARISON IN UZBEK LITERATURE

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Abstract

This article examines how conflict is architected in the European novella and compares its stylistic realization in Uzbek prose, especially within the qissa and hikoya traditions. Drawing on narratological concepts of chronotope, focalization, and teleological plotting, the study argues that the European novella organizes conflict as a single, high-intensity vector that converges on a decisive turning point, achieving symbolic density through spatial-temporal compression and rhetorical restraint. In Uzbek literature, analogous structural concentration is refracted through ethical didacticism, communal frameworks, and a parabolic tonality that privileges moral resolution over open endings. Through close reading of paradigmatic European models associated with Boccaccio, Kafka, Thomas Mann, and Hemingway, alongside representative Uzbek texts, the article shows that both systems rely on minimal settings, limited character constellations, and controlled narration to convert ordinary situations into sites of extraordinary ethical or psychological stress. The main difference lies less in plot mechanics than in tonal disposition: while the European novella tends toward ambiguity and aesthetic autonomy, Uzbek prose often reintegrates crisis into communal horizons and culturally specific codes of honor and reciprocity.

Keywords

Novella; conflict; chronotope; focalization; symbolism; Uzbek literature; qissa; hikoya; modernism; ethics.

Introduction

The European novella occupies a middle register between short story and novel, yet it develops a distinctive conflict grammar. Rather than dispersing tension across multiple subplots, it concentrates pressure on a single causal thread that advances with a sense of inevitability toward a recognition, reversal, or ethically charged decision. A restricted chronotope—the ship and sea, the apartment, the city quarter—magnifies each action by minimizing noise in the system. The consequence is a form whose brevity is not merely quantitative but structural: limited space and time force condensation of theme into image, motif, and carefully metered dialogue. This economy of means has made the novella a privileged site for exploring crisis states in European literature from Boccaccio's framed tales through Kafka's metamorphic domesticity to Mann's symbolist psychology and Hemingway's minimalist exemplum.

Uzbek prose encountered this grammar through translation, pedagogy, and long-standing local preferences for compact narrative. The qissa and hikoya, though heterogeneous historically, share with the novella a bias toward the exemplary episode and the charged scene. Yet the Uzbek adaptation is not a replication. It re-anchors conflict in communal and ethical matrices—mahalla obligations, kinship reputation, professional duty—and often completes the arc with a

moral clarification that is felt rather than preached. As a result, stylistic restraint serves not only modernist aesthetics but also culturally situated ethics.

The study aims to articulate the conflict structure typical of the European novella and to compare its stylistic instantiation in Uzbek literature, clarifying convergences in form and divergences in tone, value orientation, and narrative closure.

The materials include classical European novellas—representatively Boccaccio's *Decameron* tales, Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*, Mann's *Death in Venice*, and Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*—and a corpus of Uzbek *qissa/hikoya* that display comparable compression and heightened ethical stakes. Methodologically, the article applies comparative-typological and narratological analysis, using Bakhtin's chronotope to describe spatiotemporal limits, Genette's focalization to track interiority and point of view, and modernist stylistics to assess ellipsis, understatement, and symbolic load. The approach privileges close reading of conflict arcs, motif networks, and the relation between narrative speed and thematic weight.

In the European novella, conflict is typically launched at the threshold, often by an "unheard-of event" or its realistic analogue, and then driven through a narrow corridor toward a terminal insight. Boccaccio's plotting turns on clever contrivances or moral tests whose consequences are immediate and public, folding conflict into a brisk causal chain with a final turn that seals meaning without heavy exposition. Kafka intensifies the internalization of conflict, situating metaphysical anxiety inside a domestic frame where bureaucratic voices and family gestures carry allegorical voltage. The conflict's force arises from tonal sobriety tethered to impossible fact, and the apartment's tight spatial field converts each small act—a knock, a key, a meal—into an ethical hinge. Mann's novella designs conflict as a symbolic itinerary, compressing the protagonist's aesthetic will and self-conscious decline into a limited time in Venice; interior monologue, leitmotifs, and a ritualized setting orchestrate the crisis so that a private obsession acquires public mythic form. Hemingway recasts conflict as elemental contest, stripping away discursive commentary so that endurance and failure speak through motion, rhythm, and silence; the sea is both obstacle and mirror, and the climactic loss functions as paradoxical victory through dignity.

Uzbek prose often reproduces the same structural concentration while displacing the axis of evaluation. The decisive episode typically concerns not an isolated individual's aesthetic destiny but an individual's position within a social web. A courtyard, a field brigade, a school office, or a city ward provides a bounded chronotope analogous to the European chamber setting; within it, a delayed confession, a signed form, or a quiet refusal becomes the catalytic event. Focalization gravitates toward free indirect discourse or restrained first-person testimony, allowing interior tension to register without oratorical excess. Dialogue is economical, and descriptive details are charged metonymically: a teacup placed gently on a saucer, the dust on a threshold, the sounding of an evening *azan* across rooftops. Such details bind plot to cultural texture and enable the conflict to radiate ethical significance without explicit moralization.

Stylistically, both systems value omission, but they omit toward different ends. In European modernism, reticence often protects ambiguity and aesthetic autonomy, leaving conflict suspended within unresolved ironies. In Uzbek practice, understatement frequently protects dignity and social harmony, permitting readers to infer communal implications while preserving the characters' modesty. Endings in both traditions avoid didactic pronouncement,



yet the Uzbek closure more often steers toward reconciliation with a code—of duty, kinship, neighborliness—whereas the European close may settle into tragic clarity or open indeterminacy. Even so, the mechanics of conflict—the progressive narrowing of options, the visibility of a point of no return, the conversion of gesture into judgment—operate with remarkable similarity.

The comparison also illuminates how time-pressure functions. European novellas habitually compress action into hours or days, thereby intensifying causality and reducing explanatory padding. Uzbek qissa/hikoya do the same, but they also synchronize crisis with socially meaningful rhythms: the work shift, the market day, a festival, the afternoon lull. This synchrony grafts conflict onto collective time, sharpening its ethical legibility. Likewise, limited character constellations—often dyads or triads—strip social debate to essentials without caricature. Through these shared devices, both literatures demonstrate that conflict in the novella is not a subtraction from the novel's fullness but a recalibration of narrative to a higher specific gravity of meaning.

The European novella engineers conflict as a concentrated vector within a tight chronotope, relying on symbolic economy, calibrated focalization, and a decisive turn to transform small spaces into crucibles of value. Uzbek literature has adopted and localized this grammar, redirecting crisis toward communal ethics and a parabolic tonality that integrates individual choice with collective norms. The stylistic convergence in restraint and ellipsis is unmistakable; the divergence in evaluative horizon is equally clear. Together, they show how a portable form sustains its identity across cultures while absorbing local meanings, confirming the novella's versatility as a transnational instrument for staging high-stakes human decisions.

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