

APPROACHES TO THE LYRICAL HERO IN CONTEMPORARY NARRATIVE THEORY

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Annotation: This article discusses how contemporary narrative theory studies the lyrical hero, a figure traditionally associated with poetry but now actively analyzed in modern fiction, autofiction, and hybrid genres. The paper reviews several theoretical approaches, including structuralist, post-structuralist, narratological, and psychological interpretations. It also studies contributions from Uzbek literary scholars such as N. Karimov, A. Rasulov, and M. Qo'shjonov, who explore the transformation of the lyrical hero in Uzbek literature. The article argues that the lyrical hero today is not only an emotional center of a text but also a narrative device that expresses identity, memory, and cultural experience.

Key words: Lyrical hero, narrative, poetry, scholars, emotion, novels, fiction, Lord Byron, character, modern, textual function, psychological, romanticism.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada zamonaviy hikoya nazariyasi lirik qahramon obrazini qanday tadqiq qilishi yoritiladi. An'anaviy ravishda she'riyat bilan bog'langan ushbu tushuncha hozirgi adabiyotda – xususan, badiiy proza, autofiksiya va gibril janrlarda – faol tahlil qilinmoqda. Maqolada strukturaviy, post-strukturaviy, hikoyaviy va psixologik yondashuvlar ko'rib chiqiladi. Shuningdek, N. Karimov, A. Rasulov va M. Qo'shjonov kabi o'zbek adabiyotshunoslarining lirik qahramonning o'zbek adabiyotidagi o'zgarishi haqidagi ilmiy qarashlariga ham e'tibor qaratiladi. Maqolada zamonaviy lirik qahramon matnning faqat hissiy markazi emas, balki o'ziga xos shaxsiyat, xotira va madaniy tajribani ifodalovchi hikoya vositasi ekani ta'kidlanadi.

Аннотации: В данной статье рассматривается, как современная нарративная теория изучает образ лирического героя — фигуры, традиционно связанной с поэзией, но активно анализируемой в современной художественной прозе, аутофикшне и гибридных жанрах. Работа включает обзор нескольких теоретических подходов, включая структуралистский, постструктуралистский, нарратологический и психологический. Кроме того, изучены труды узбекских литературоведов, таких как Н. Каримов, А. Расулов и М. Кошжонов, посвященные трансформации лирического героя в узбекской литературе. В статье подчеркивается, что современный лирический герой является не только эмоциональным центром текста, но и нарративным инструментом, выражающим идентичность, память и культурный опыт.

Introduction: The concept of the lyrical hero has traditionally belonged to poetry studies, where it refers to a voice that expresses deep emotions, subjective experiences, and personal reflections. However, in recent decades, narrative theory has begun to explore this figure in prose and hybrid genres as well. Contemporary literature often blurs the boundaries between lyric and narrative, allowing the lyrical hero to appear in novels, short stories, autofiction, and even digital narratives. Because of this shift, literary scholars now seek new approaches to understand how lyrical subjectivity works within modern narrative structures.

This article examines several approaches to the lyrical hero in contemporary narrative theory. It also highlights the contributions of Uzbek scholars who have analyzed lyrical expression in national literature. By comparing global theories with local perspectives, the paper aims to give a balanced understanding of how the lyrical hero functions today.



1. The Lyrical Hero in Classical Literary Theory

In classical literary theory, the lyrical hero was mostly studied in poetry. Scholars such as Mikhail Bakhtin emphasized the uniqueness of the lyrical voice, describing it as a “single and unified consciousness” that shapes the entire emotional world of the text (Bakhtin, 1981). The lyrical hero was not simply the author but a constructed voice that communicates personal feelings in an artistic form.

In Western literary studies, the lyrical hero was also connected with Romanticism, where poets like William Wordsworth or Lord Byron created speakers who expressed their inner conflicts and philosophical insights. According to Jonathan Culler, lyric poetry builds a space where the speaker's emotions become universal (Culler, 2015).

In Uzbek literary scholarship, critics such as Naim Karimov and M. Qo‘shjonov analyzed the lyrical personality in classical poetry and modern Uzbek verse. Karimov (1996) wrote that the lyrical hero in Uzbek literature often stands between personal and social experience, reflecting moral and national identity.

These classical interpretations created a basis for modern narrative theory to expand the concept into prose genres.

2. The Lyrical Hero in Structuralist and Post-Structuralist Approaches

Structuralist theorists shifted the focus from the author to the text itself. Roland Barthes argued that the “author is dead,” meaning that meaning is created not by the author's personality but by the structure of language (Barthes, 1977). From this perspective, the lyrical hero becomes a textual function rather than an expression of the author's emotions.

Post-structuralists, however, emphasized instability and subjectivity. Jacques Derrida claimed that identity in literary texts is always fragmented and shifting. Therefore, the lyrical hero in modern narratives often appears as a broken, multi-layered figure.

These theories help us understand why contemporary novels may contain lyrical passages that reveal intimate thoughts, inner monologues, or fragmented memories. Here, the lyrical hero functions not as a stable identity but as a shifting narrative voice.

3. Narratological Approaches: The Lyrical Hero as a Narrative Voice

Modern narratology studies how stories are told - who speaks, from what perspective, and with what degree of reliability. Scholars such as Gérard Genette (1980) introduced terms like focalization, voice, and narrative mode, which are useful for analyzing the lyrical hero in prose.

In contemporary narrative theory, the lyrical hero is seen as a special type of narrator or focalizer. This figure expresses not only events but also deep emotional states, philosophical thoughts, or meditations about life. For example:

In autofiction, the “I” narrator becomes both a character and a lyrical thinker.

In modern novels, interior monologue can turn the narrator into a lyrical hero.

In short stories, lyrical passages often interrupt the plot to reveal psychological depth.

Uzbek scholar Abdug‘ani Rasulov (2005) writes that many modern Uzbek prose writers use lyrical digressions (lirik chekinishlar) to show the inner world of characters. These digressions create a lyrical hero even in narrative prose.

Thus, narratology helps explain how lyrical expression becomes part of story-telling.

4. Psychological and Identity-Based Approaches

Another important field is psychological literary theory. Today’s narratives often explore trauma, memory, identity crises, and emotional struggle. The lyrical hero becomes a tool for expressing these themes.

Psychological theorists like Carl Jung and Sigmund Freud showed how inner life shapes creative expression. In contemporary criticism, scholars examine how the lyrical hero represents: personal trauma, fragmented memory, cultural identity, gender identity, migration experience.



For example, in post-Soviet literature, many writers show characters who struggle with identity during social changes. The lyrical hero expresses their inner conflict through emotional reflections.

Uzbek scholars also study these aspects. N. Karimov (2001) notes that lyrical expression in Uzbek prose after independence often focuses on moral purification, national identity, and the search for meaning.

5. The Lyrical Hero in Hybrid and Experimental Genres

Contemporary literature includes many hybrid forms: prose poetry, autofiction, documentary fiction, and digital storytelling. In these genres, the lyrical hero becomes central.

- Autofiction

Writers like Karl Ove Knausgaard or Annie Ernaux use a narrator who is both the author and a lyrical subject. The lyrical hero expresses emotional truth rather than mere biography.

- Prose Poetry and Fragmented Novels

These texts mix poetic language with narrative structure. The lyrical hero appears through brief reflections, metaphors, and symbolic images.

- Digital Narratives

Online storytelling (blogs, social media narratives, hypertext fiction) often uses a personal voice that functions as a lyrical hero. It expresses emotions in real time, making the narrative more intimate.

This shows that the lyrical hero is no longer limited to poetry; it has become a universal literary device.

- The Lyrical Hero in Uzbek Contemporary Literature

In Uzbek literature, the lyrical hero remains a strong tradition. Modern poets and prose writers often use a personal voice to express national culture, memory, and ethical values.

Uzbek researchers such as A. Rasulov, N. Karimov, and O. Sharafiddinov emphasize that lyrical subjectivity in Uzbek literature has three features:

- Integration of moral and philosophical ideas

- Close connection with national spiritual heritage

- Blending of lyrical and narrative techniques

For example, the works of O'tkir Hoshimov, Tog'ay Murod, and Xurshid Davron show strong lyrical voices that represent both personal and collective experience.

Thus, Uzbek scholarship enriches global discussion by showing how the lyrical hero reflects cultural identity.

Conclusion: Contemporary narrative theory offers many approaches to understanding the lyrical hero. Structuralist and post-structuralist theories focus on textual subjectivity, narratology examines the lyrical voice as a storytelling device, and psychological criticism interprets the lyrical hero as a representation of inner experience. Modern hybrid genres show that lyrical expression is not limited to poetry but functions widely in today's narratives.

Uzbek literary scholars also contribute significantly to this discussion by highlighting how lyrical subjectivity in national literature reflects cultural values and moral thought. As literature continues to evolve, the lyrical hero remains a powerful tool for expressing identity, emotion, and human experience.

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