



POETIC FRAGMENTS AND THEIR ROLE IN THE
IDEOLOGICAL AND ARTISTIC STRUCTURE OF
THE NOVEL (BASED ON XAYRIDDIN SULTON'S
NOVEL "YALDO KECHASI")

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ABSTRACT

The article analyses the role of poetic fragments in forming the ideological and artistic structure of Xayriddin Sulton's novel "Yaldo kechasi", published in 2025. The study applies structural-semantic and intertextual analysis and hermeneutic interpretation, and explains the interplay of verse and prose on the basis of the views of Yuri Lotman, Mikhail Bakhtin, Gérard Genette, Julia Kristeva and Roman Jakobson. It is shown how the verses of Muhammad Sharif Gulxaniy cited as the epigraph of the work relate to the title of the novel, its symbolic layer and its depiction of the historical period. The study demonstrates that the poetic fragments in the novel are not merely ornamental but function as an ideological key, a paratextual boundary, a means of intertextual connection and an emotional accent.

INTRODUCTION

The combination of verse and prose within a single work is one of the ancient traditions of Eastern literature. The tales in Sa'diy's "Guliston" and the verses attached to them, and the quotation of verses by the author or by other poets in historical and memoir works, have enriched prose narration emotionally and philosophically.⁵ In contemporary Uzbek novel-writing this tradition continues in a new form: a poetic fragment is now used not only as a character's speech or as an ornament but as the ideological foundation of the work, its symbolic

⁵ Sa'diy Sheroziy. Guliston [Gulistan] (Uzbek editions) (in Uzbek).



centre and a means of dialogue with the reader. Xayriddin Sulton's novel "Yaldo kechasi" is noteworthy in this respect.⁶ The work was created on the basis of a hint given in the note "Yozg'uchidan" ("From the Writer") at the end of Abdulla Qodiriy's novel "O'tkan kunlar" (Bygone Days), and through the fates of three generations it artistically comprehends the period of Tsarist and Soviet colonial rule.⁷⁸ In scholarly and popular articles devoted to the work, the novel's aspects of historical memory, mystification, documentariness and language and style have been studied more extensively, while the structural function of the poetic fragments has not been sufficiently covered as a separate subject of research. The aim of this article is to determine, on a theoretical basis, the role of the poetic fragments in the novel in forming its ideological and artistic structure.

METHODS

The theoretical basis of the research consists of approaches that study the literary text as an integral system. Yuri Lotman stressed that in a literary text each element acquires its full meaning only when it enters into relations with other elements, and that the collision of different systems such as verse and prose generates additional meaning.⁹ Mikhail Bakhtin described the novel as a genre capable of absorbing other genres – poems, letters, maxims and the like; such "incorporated genres" bring a distinct word and point of view into the novel and strengthen the polyphony of the work.¹⁰ Roman Jakobson linked the poetic function with the orientation of the message towards its own form and showed that devices such as intonation, rhyme and repetition are means that accumulate meaning.¹¹ Julia Kristeva, regarding every text as a mosaic of quotations and as the absorption of another text, advanced the concept of intertextuality.¹² Gérard Genette, studying the epigraph as a type of paratext, noted that it serves to explain the title, to comment on the text and to link the work to a certain tradition through a voice chosen by the author.¹³ Methodologically, structural-semantic and intertextual analysis, as well as

⁶ Sulton X. Yaldo kechasi: tarixiy hujjatlar asosidagi badiiy to'qima [Yaldo kechasi: artistic fiction based on historical documents]. – Tashkent: Xaybar-25, 2025 (in Uzbek).

⁷ Qodiriy A. O'tkan kunlar [Bygone Days]. – Tashkent: G'afur G'ulom Publishing and Printing Creative House (various editions). The note "Yozg'uchidan" ("From the Writer") in the work (in Uzbek).

⁸ "Yaldo kechasi" – milliy tarixiy tafakkurni uyg'otgan badiiy hodisa ["Yaldo kechasi": an artistic phenomenon that awakened national historical thought] // Information service of Alisher Navoiy Tashkent State University of Uzbek Language and Literature. – 17 January 2026. – <https://tsuull.uz/uz/content/yaldo-kechasi-milliy-tarixiy-tafakkurni-uygotgan-badiiy-hodisa> (in Uzbek).

⁹ Lotman Yu. M. The Structure of the Artistic Text. – Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1977.

¹⁰ Bakhtin M. Discourse in the Novel // The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays. – Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981.

¹¹ Jakobson R. Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics // Style in Language. – Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1960. – P. 350–377.

¹² Kristeva J. Word, Dialogue and Novel // Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art. – New York: Columbia University Press, 1980. – P. 64–91.

¹³ Genette G. Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation. – Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.



hermeneutic interpretation, were used. The sources drawn upon were the epigraph of the novel, accounts of its presentation and scholarly articles devoted to the work.¹⁴

RESULTS

In the poetic layer of the novel, the epigraph attracts attention first. As recorded in the newspaper Ma'rifat, the lines of the peerless poet Muhammad Sharif Gulxaniy – “Bu nechuk tunkim, oni tongi yo‘q, / Yo muazzinlarining bongi yo‘q” (“What kind of night is this, that has no dawn, / Or one whose muezzins have no call?”) – were taken as the epigraph of the work.¹⁵ From Genette’s point of view this verse performs four functions. First, it explains the title: apart from the calendar meaning of the longest night, the expression “yaldo kechasi” becomes a symbol of a night “without dawn”, that is, of a period dominated by tyranny and ignorance. Second, it gives the reader a reading direction before the text: even before entering the book, the main conflict – the struggle between darkness and awakening – is revealed through a poetic image. Third, as a voice chosen by the author, the epigraph links the work to the tradition of classical Uzbek poetry and signals that the novel’s reflection on the history of the nation relies on the literary memory of the past. Fourth, together with the Qodiriy tradition mentioned above, this choice strengthens the literary continuum leading from “O‘tkan kunlar” to “Yaldo kechasi”.

The structure of the verse itself also carries ideological weight. In the lines, the words “tongi” (“its dawn”) and “bongi” (“its call”) form the rhyme, and the word “yo‘q” (“there is no”) forms a repeated refrain (radif); according to Jakobson’s definition, it is precisely this repetition that reinforces the harmonious negation and makes the message memorable through its own form.¹⁶ The night–dawn opposition in the verse is complemented by a spiritual meaning in the second line: the “call of the muezzins”, that is, the azan, is mentioned as the spiritual sign of the breaking of dawn, and its absence expresses not only an astronomical but also a spiritual and moral darkness. In this sense, the “night” in the epigraph appears not as a natural phenomenon but as a historical and social condition, and the “dawn” as a metaphor of freedom, enlightenment and spiritual awakening. The fact that Shuhrat Sirojiddinov described the novel as a work that narrates “lamenting and crying out over the endless tyranny of the Yaldo nights in which oppression and ignorance reign” also confirms this symbolic reading.¹⁷ The fact that the presentation of the novel was held on the night passing from 21 to 22 December, in a memorial

¹⁴ Karvonli E. “Yaldo kechasi” tarixiy romani kitobxonlar qo‘lida [The historical novel “Yaldo kechasi” in the hands of readers] // Ma'rifat. – 21 December 2025. – <https://marifat.uz/show-post/yaldo-kechasi-tarixiy-romani-kitobxonlar-qolida-1096> (in Uzbek).



complex dedicated to the memory of the victims of repression, also links the image of night in the epigraph with a real historical place and time.¹⁸

Beyond the epigraph, it has been noted in the scholarly literature that historical documents, letters and poetic texts are woven into the fabric of the novel, and that intertextuality is the leading means of turning historical truth into artistic reality.¹⁹ According to Bakhtin's theory, such incorporated texts express in the novel a separate point of view distinct from the author's voice. For this reason, poetic fragments do not repeat the authorial narration but complement it or take part as a voice opposed to it. Relying on a general theoretical classification, the following functions of poetic fragments in novels can be distinguished: ideological accent (summarising the essence of events in a compact image), psychological disclosure (expressing a character's experience more powerfully than prose), historical and cultural background (restoring the spirit of the era and the literary milieu) and a compositional function (marking the boundaries of sections and episodes, changing the rhythm).²⁰ [Here, a poetic fragment from a particular chapter of the novel, its author and its page are cited, and which of the above functions is realised is analysed.]

Lotman's approach shows the structural significance of poetic fragments in particular: when a rhythmic and rhymed text appears against the background of prose narration, the reader's attention shifts, the pace of reception slows down and the semantic density of the narration increases.²¹ In a wide-ranging historical work such as "Yaldo kechasi" this feature is important: while prose develops the chain of events, a poetic fragment interrupts this chain and creates a moment that generalises historical experience. Such a moment leads the reader from the question "what happened" to the question "what does this event mean". The novel's depiction of history through the fates of three generations, that is, its narrative that continues with the change of time and generations, can be rhythmically ordered through poetic fragments, because verse makes it possible to halt time and to generalise.

A poetic fragment is also important as a means of communicating with the reader. In prose narration the reader mainly follows the development of events, whereas a poetic line invites the reader to emotional participation and prompts the reader to connect the text with his or her own experience. In a work on a historical theme this feature is especially valuable: the events of the past are perceived not as a distant and cold fact but as a living part of personal and collective

¹⁹ Xojamurodova O. The novel "Yaldo kechasi" ("The Night of Yalda") as an example of intertext // International Journal of Literature and Language Studies. – 2026. – Vol. 5, No. 07. – P. 447–451. – <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21587038>

²⁰ Quronov D. Adabiyotshunoslik nazariyasi asoslari [Fundamentals of Literary Theory]. – Tashkent: Akademyashr, 2018 (in Uzbek).



memory. For this reason, poetic fragments also serve as a link that joins the scholarly and documentary layer of historical interpretation with its artistic and emotional layer.

From the standpoint of intertextual relations, a poetic fragment serves as a bridge between the “narrating” voice of the work and the cultural memory of the past. In Kristeva’s phrasing, every text absorbs and transforms other texts.²² The inclusion of Gulxaniy’s verse in the novel is also such an absorption: the night–dawn image of the poetry of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries resounds anew in a new historical context – against the background of the experience of colonial rule and repression. This process is also in harmony with the novel’s method of literary mystification: since the work is presented as a continuation of Qodiriy’s prose, a tone of text enriched with the poetry of a particular historical period suits it.²³

DISCUSSION

The night–dawn opposition in the epigraph has deep roots in the Uzbek literary tradition. It is known that in Persian-Tajik and Turkic poetry “yaldo”, the longest night of the year, has been used as an image of prolonged separation, hardship and calamity. In the Jadid literature of the early twentieth century, the images of night and dawn, of night and day, appear as widespread symbols expressing the idea of freedom, enlightenment and national awakening: even the titles of Cho‘lpon’s poetry collection “Uyg‘onish” (Awakening) and his novel “Kecha va kunduz” (Night and Day) attest to this thinking.²⁴ Thus, choosing Gulxaniy’s verse as the epigraph is not accidental: through classical poetry and Jadid enlightenment it organically links the symbol of Yaldo with the main idea of the novel – the nation’s striving from a long night towards dawn. This choice can also be interpreted as an attempt not to limit the depiction of the historical period to prose narration and documents alone, but to render it in the very language of the literary thought of that time.

To study the poetic fragments in the novel systematically, it is advisable to classify them according to several criteria. By source, they may be ready-made verses of classical or contemporary poets, examples of folk oral literature, or the poetic texts of a character or of the author. By position in the text, one distinguishes the epigraph, a fragment at the beginning of a chapter or part, a verse within a dialogue or letter, and a lyrical digression between passages of narration. By function, they are divided into types such as ideological accent, psychological disclosure, creation of historical background and compositional delimitation. This three-dimensional classification makes it possible to assess the place of a poetic fragment in the novel not merely at the level of “it is quoted” but at the level of its specific function within the structure. It should also be noted that the scholarly value of the classification depends on

²⁴ Cho‘lpon. Uyg‘onish (she‘rlar to‘plami) [Awakening (poetry collection)]. – Tashkent, 1922; Cho‘lpon. Kecha va kunduz (roman) [Night and Day (novel)]. – Tashkent, 1936 (in Uzbek).



comparing each fragment with its original source and determining whether the text is quoted correctly, altered or reworked through the authorial image; for quoting a text in altered form is one of the subtlest manifestations of intertextual relation.

The question of paratextuality also deserves attention. In a study that analysed the novel “Yaldo kechasi” on the basis of intertextuality theory, the work’s hypertextual and paratextual relations, allusions and reminiscences were considered as constituent parts of intertextual relation.²⁵ If we apply this approach to poetic fragments, the epigraph, the title and the notes inside the book together form a “threshold of reading”: before entering the main narrative, the reader becomes acquainted with the tone and theme of the work through images such as Yaldo, night, dawn and the call of the muezzin. The fact that the symbolic layer of the work, its artistic mastery in language and style, and its enlightenment idea were also singled out at the presentation event supports such a reading.²⁶

In conclusion, in the novel “Yaldo kechasi” poetic fragments, in particular the epigraph composed of Gulxaniy’s verses, participate in the ideological and artistic structure of the work at several levels. First, the epigraph explains the title and raises the symbol of the “night without dawn” to the level of the main ideological metaphor. Second, as a paratext it gives the reader a reading direction and links the novel to the tradition of classical Uzbek poetry. Third, the harmonious negation of rhyme and refrain (radif) reinforces the symbolic meaning through structure. Fourth, poetic texts introduce a voice and rhythm opposed to prose narration and thereby ensure the polyphony of the novel. In future research, it will be advisable to compile, on the basis of the full text of the novel, a list of all poetic fragments, to identify their authors and to compare their place in the chapter composition statistically and semantically.

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