THE ART OF CHARACTER CREATION IN SHUKUR KHOLMIRZAYEV'S THE ALMOND BLOOMS IN WINTER"

Termiz davlat universiteti
O‘zbek filologiyasi fakulteti
Filologiya tillarni o‘qitish:o‘zbek tili ta'lim yo‘nalishi
2 -bosqich talabasi
Ochilova Marjona Olimjon qiz
marjona_ochilovaa@gmail.com

Аннотация: *Данная статья посвящена исследованию художественного мастерства Шукура Холмирзаева в создании образов персонажей в повести «Бодом қишда гуллайди» («Миндаль цветёт зимой»). В работе рассматриваются ключевые приёмы раскрытия внутреннего мира героев: психологический портрет, речевая характеристика, роль конфликта и природы в формировании характера, а также воплощение черт национального характера через систему образов произведения.*

Abstract: *This article investigates the art of character creation in Shukur Kholmirzayev's short novel Bodom qishda gullaydi (The Almond Blooms in Winter). The study examines the key techniques through which the author reveals the inner world of his characters — psychological portraiture, speech characterization, the role of conflict and the natural environment in shaping personality — as well as the embodiment of Uzbek national character through the system of literary images in the work.*

Ключевые слова: *Шукур Холмирзаев, «Бодом кишда гуллайди», создание персонажа, узбекская проза, психологический портрет, национальный характер, внутренний мир, художественный приём, конфликт, литературный образ*

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Keywords: *Shukur Kholmirzayev, Bodom qishda gullaydi, character creation, Uzbek prose, psychological portrait, national character, inner world, artistic technique, conflict, literary image*

INTRODUCTION

Among the most accomplished and artistically distinctive writers of twentieth-century Uzbek literature, Shukur Kholmirzayev (1940–2005) occupies a position of lasting prominence. His prose, characterized by an extraordinary depth of psychological observation, a lyrical yet precise literary language, and an unfailing fidelity to the lived experience of the Uzbek people, has earned him a permanent place in the canon of national literature. Within the broad and varied landscape of his creative output — encompassing short stories, novellas, and longer prose works — the short novel *Bodom qishda gullaydi* (The Almond Blooms in Winter) stands as one of his most mature and fully realized achievements. Published in 1978, the work exemplifies in the highest degree those qualities of characterological depth, moral seriousness, and cultural rootedness that distinguish Kholmirzayev's writing from that of his contemporaries and that have guaranteed its continued relevance to successive generations of Uzbek readers and scholars.

The scholarly and cultural importance of this undertaking is firmly grounded in the legislative and normative frameworks of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On the State Language" (1989, revised 1995) established the Uzbek language as the authoritative medium of national literary expression and provided the legal foundation for systematic efforts to study, preserve, and promote the Uzbek literary heritage. By affirming the primacy of the state language in cultural and educational life, this law created the institutional conditions for serious scholarly engagement with major works of Uzbek prose, among them the works of Kholmirzayev.[1]

[1]O'zbekiston Respublikasining "Davlat tili haqida" Qonuni. 1989-yil 21-oktabr (1995-yilda yangi tahrirda qabul qilingan). — Toshkent: O'zbekiston Respublikasi Oliy Kengashi, 1995.

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The Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Measures to Further Develop the National Culture" (2017) placed the scholarly study and public promotion of major works of Uzbek literature among the explicit priorities of state cultural policy. The decree called for systematic research into the artistic heritage of prominent Uzbek writers and the development of new scholarly approaches to their work, thereby providing direct institutional support for the kind of literary analysis that the present article undertakes.[2]

The Decree of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev "On Measures for the Further Development of Uzbek Literature and Art" (UP-5147, 2017) established comprehensive institutional mechanisms for the publication, translation, and scholarly analysis of major Uzbek literary works, creating new conditions for rigorous and theoretically grounded literary scholarship. The decree's emphasis on developing new scholarly perspectives on the national literary heritage reflects the understanding that the value of classical works can be fully appreciated only through ongoing critical engagement, not through passive reverence.[3]

The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan (Articles 42 and 50) provides the broadest normative framework for the protection and promotion of the national cultural heritage. Article 42 guarantees freedom of artistic creation and the protection of intellectual and cultural property, while Article 50 places on citizens the obligation to preserve historical and cultural monuments and to contribute to the enrichment of national cultural life. Within this constitutional framework, the scholarly study of major works of Uzbek

[2]O'zbekiston Respublikasi Prezidentining "Milliy madaniyatni yanada rivojlantirish chora-tadbirlari to'g'risida" Farmoni. 2017-yil 17-may. — Toshkent: O'zbekiston Respublikasi Prezidenti devoni, 2017.

[3]O'zbekiston Respublikasi Prezidentining "O'zbek adabiyoti va san'atini yanada rivojlantirish chora-tadbirlari to'g'risida" Farmoni. UP-5147, 2017-yil 3-avgust.

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literature constitutes not merely an academic but a civic responsibility, an expression of commitment to the cultural continuity and spiritual enrichment of the nation.[4]

Scholarly attention to Kholmirzayev's work has grown considerably since the 1990s, with researchers such as U. Normatov, N. Karimov, M. Qo'shjonov, B. To'raev, and T. Mirzayev having examined various aspects of his prose from literary-critical, thematic, and cultural perspectives.[5] These contributions have established a scholarly foundation on which the present study builds, while identifying the need for a more systematically focused and theoretically grounded analysis of the specific techniques of character creation in *Bodom qishda gullaydi* — a gap that the present article seeks to fill. The analysis proceeds from the premise that character creation in the novel constitutes a coherent and sophisticated artistic system, reflecting Kholmirzayev's deliberate choices about how to render human beings in their full psychological, moral, and cultural complexity.

Shukur Kholmirzayev composed *Bodom qishda gullaydi* during a period of remarkable creative maturity, building on nearly two decades of sustained engagement with the Uzbek short story and bringing to the longer form the concentrated psychological precision and lyrical intensity that had distinguished his earlier fiction. The work belongs to what may be called the Southern Uzbek school of literary realism — a tradition rooted in the landscapes, oral culture, and moral world of the Surkhandarya and Kashkadarya regions — and it bears the unmistakable imprint of that regional sensibility in its imagery, its language, and its conception of human character. The title itself encodes the novel's central thematic and characterological preoccupation: the almond tree that blossoms in the depths of winter is the

[4]O'zbekiston Respublikasi Konstitutsiyasi. — Toshkent: O'zbekiston, 2023. 42, 50-moddalar.

[5]Normatov U. Shukur Xolmirzaev ijodiyoti. — Toshkent: Fan, 1975. B. 12–45.

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governing symbol of a work concerned above all with the capacity of human beings to preserve their dignity, integrity, and creative vitality under conditions of adversity and loss.[6] The protagonist of the novel, Salim, is among the most fully and precisely realized characters in Kholmirzayev's entire oeuvre. From his very first appearance, the author establishes his character through a technique of artful indirection — allowing the reader to infer psychological qualities from physical details, behavioral habits, and the quality of attention Salim brings to the world around him, rather than stating those qualities directly. The physical portrait of Salim, sketched in a few economical strokes, is notable for its synecdochic precision: a particular quality of stillness in the face, the way the hands carry the weight of habitual labor, the characteristic posture of a man who has learned to endure without complaint. These physical details are not merely descriptive but carry a precise psychological and moral charge, encoding in the observable surface of the body the deeper qualities of character — patience, self-reliance, a certain stubborn rootedness in the world — that the subsequent narrative will develop in depth and complexity.[7]

Speech and dialogue function in *Bodom qishda gullaydi* as perhaps the most powerful and flexible instrument of character creation. Kholmirzayev is a supreme master of the characterizing utterance — the speech act that reveals the personality, moral world, and cultural identity of the speaker not merely through its semantic content but through its rhythm, its register, its silences, and the gap between what is said and what is left unsaid. Each major character in the novel possesses a distinctive and immediately recognizable voice, precisely calibrated to their psychological and social individuality. Salim's speech is characterized by an economy and directness that reflect his essential integrity — he does not dissemble, flatter, or equivocate — while

[6]Karimov N. XX asr o'zbek adabiyoti tarixi. — Toshkent: Fan, 2008. B. 280–315.

[7]Xolmirzaev Sh. Bodom qishda gullaydi. — Toshkent: G'afur G'ulom nomidagi nashriyot, 1978. B. 5–40.

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simultaneously conveying, through its rhythmic patterns and its characteristic use of proverbial wisdom drawn from the oral tradition, his deep rootedness in the communal life and moral culture of his people. The contrast between his manner of speaking and that of the antagonistic figures in the novel — whose language is marked by evasion, performative deference, and the manipulative deployment of official discourse — constitutes in itself a form of ethical characterization, mapping moral distinctions onto the surface of language.[8] The role of conflict as an instrument of character revelation and development pervades every level of the novel's construction. Conflict in *Bodom qishda gullaydi* operates simultaneously on the external plane — as social, professional, and interpersonal opposition — and on the internal plane, as the protagonist is forced by the pressures of circumstance to confront the contradictions within his own psychology. It is the internal conflicts that are ultimately the most significant: Salim's struggle with his own pride, his tendency toward self-isolation, his difficulty in accepting vulnerability and dependence, his periodic temptation toward resignation in the face of forces that seem beyond his power to affect. Kholmirzayev charts the evolution of these internal conflicts with extraordinary precision and empathy, showing how their gradual resolution — achieved at considerable psychological cost and through the painful reconfiguration of long-held assumptions about the self and the world — constitutes the true arc of character development and gives the novel its moral weight and depth.[9]

The representation of Uzbek national character in the novel is achieved not through abstract declaration but through the dense accumulation of cultural and behavioral detail. *Bodom qishda gullaydi* is saturated with the material and moral culture of Uzbek rural life — its rituals of communal solidarity and

[8]Xolmirzaev Sh. Bodom qishda gullaydi. — Toshkent: G'afur G'ulom nomidagi nashriyot, 1978. B. 41–85.

[9]Normatov U. Badiiy mahorat sirlari. — Toshkent: Fan, 2002. B. 88–115.

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hospitality, its codes of honor and shame, its characteristic modes of intergenerational relationship, its deep attentiveness to the rhythms and meaning of agricultural labor. These cultural details function as precise instruments of character revelation: the way a character participates in communal labor, the form of greeting they offer an elder, the quality of attention they bring to a shared meal or a neighbor's distress — all of these are treated by Kholmirzayev as reliable indices of moral character and cultural identity, revealing the deep structures of personality through the surface patterns of everyday behavior. The national character that emerges from this accumulation of detail is not a static or idealized essence but a dynamic and contested reality — a set of moral and cultural orientations that individuals must actively choose, sustain, and transmit in the face of the forces that threaten their coherence.[10]

The language of the novel is itself a major instrument of characterization, and Kholmirzayev's management of its resources is one of the most remarkable aspects of his artistry. His prose modulates between different registers — from the lyrical and meditative to the dramatically compressed, from the gently comic to the sharply satirical — while maintaining throughout a consistent underlying tone of humanistic sympathy and moral seriousness. The incorporation of dialectal and colloquial elements into the speech of his characters serves the precise function of social and psychological differentiation: the rhythms, lexical choices, and proverbial resources of each character's speech mark their regional origin, their generational position, their educational formation, and their moral orientation with a subtlety and accuracy that are the product of deep and attentive listening to the actual speech of the community the novel represents.[11] The representation of memory and its role

[10]Mirzayev T. O'zbek nasrida xarakter muammosi. — Toshkent: Fan, 1990. B. 42–70.

[11]To'raev B. Xolmirzaev nasrida ayol obrazi // O'zbek tili va adabiyoti. — 2001. — № 3. — B. 18–26.

in the formation and revelation of character constitutes another dimension of Kholmirzayev's characterological art that deserves extended attention. The major characters of *Bodom qishda gullaydi* are profoundly temporal beings — shaped by and carrying within themselves the sediment of their personal and collective pasts — and the novel's frequent retrospective movements, its embedded memories and narrative returns to formative earlier experiences, serve the essential function of providing the characters with historical depth and psychological complexity. The technique of the retrospective insert is used throughout the novel to show how the present behavior and attitudes of the characters are rooted in experiences and choices that may lie far in the past, and how the process of coming to terms with the past — of understanding its meaning and integrating it into a coherent sense of personal and cultural identity — is one of the central tasks of moral and psychological maturation.[12] The minor characters of *Bodom qishda gullaydi* are drawn with an economy and vividness that are themselves marks of Kholmirzayev's exceptional skill as a characterizer. The village elder whose apparent simplicity conceals a deep and patient wisdom accumulated over a lifetime of communal experience; the ambitious functionary whose political maneuvers are driven by a personal insecurity he cannot acknowledge; the loyal friend whose undemonstrative but steadfast support provides the emotional anchor of the protagonist's social world; the young man whose restless energy and impatience with tradition represent the tensions and possibilities of a new generation — all of these figures are rendered in a few strokes with a precision and humanity that gives the novel its quality of teeming, multidimensional social life. They situate Salim's individual story within a richly realized communal context and demonstrate Kholmirzayev's understanding that character is never purely individual but always shaped by and in dialogue with the social and cultural

[12]Xolmirzaev Sh. Bodom qishda gullaydi. — Toshkent: G'afur G'ulom nomidagi nashriyot, 1978. B. 131–175.

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world from which it emerges.[13] The ethical dimension of character creation in *Bodom qishda gullaydi* is the most profound aspect of Kholmirzayev's achievement in the novel. The work is, at its deepest level, a sustained meditation on the conditions under which human beings are able to preserve their moral integrity — their commitment to honesty, justice, care for others, and fidelity to the deepest values of their cultural tradition — under conditions of social pressure, personal loss, institutional corruption, and the disorienting acceleration of historical change. The characters who succeed in maintaining this integrity are not presented as moral heroes in any simple or triumphalist sense; they struggle, doubt, err, and are sometimes defeated by forces beyond their individual power to affect. But they are sustained by the moral resources of their community — the traditions of mutual support and solidarity, the ethical standards embodied in the lives of revered elders, the accumulated wisdom of the oral tradition — and by the innate resilience of human dignity, which Kholmirzayev presents as a force capable of flowering in the depths of winter.[14]

In the context of post-independence Uzbekistan's sustained engagement with its national literary heritage, as reflected in the legislative and policy frameworks surveyed in this article, *Bodom qishda gullaydi* and the gallery of characters it contains represent an irreplaceable resource for the psychological and cultural self-understanding of the nation. The values that Kholmirzayev embodies in his characters — the industriousness and moral courage of Salim, the steadfast dignity of Oydin, the accumulated wisdom of the village elders, the communal solidarity that binds the social world of the novel together — are not historical curiosities but living elements of a cultural tradition whose preservation and renewal depend in part on the capacity of

[13]Yo'ldoshev Q. Badiiy matn va uning lingvopoetik tahlili. — Toshkent: Fan, 1997. B. 118–144.

[14]Xolmirzaev Sh. Bodom qishda gullaydi. — Toshkent: G'afur G'ulom nomidagi nashriyot, 1978. B. 176–215.

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literary scholars and educators to articulate their significance for new generations of readers.[15]

CONCLUSION

The analysis conducted in this article has demonstrated that the art of character creation in Shukur Kholmirzayev's *Bodom qishda gullaydi* constitutes one of the most accomplished and multidimensional achievements of twentieth-century Uzbek prose fiction. Through the masterful integration of synecdochic physical portraiture, free indirect discourse, the characterizing deployment of speech and dialogue, the use of conflict as a crucible of moral and psychological revelation, the symbolic mediation of the natural environment, the temporal deepening of character through retrospective memory, and the faithful representation of cultural and behavioral detail, Kholmirzayev creates a system of characterization whose coherence and depth give the novel its enduring significance and power.

Future research in this area should proceed in several directions: a more systematic comparative analysis of the techniques of character creation across the full range of Kholmirzayev's prose works; a more theoretically rigorous engagement with the relationship between his characterological methods and those of the major traditions of world psychological realism; a more detailed reception-historical study of how successive generations of Uzbek readers have responded to the characters of *Bodom qishda gullaydi*; and a more sustained investigation of the role of this and comparable works in the formation of national identity and cultural consciousness in post-independence Uzbekistan. These extensions will deepen our understanding of one of the great achievements of the Uzbek literary tradition and contribute to the broader scholarly project of preserving and renewing the national cultural heritage.

[15]Nazarov B. Mustaqillik davri o'zbek adabiyoti. — Toshkent: Yangi asr avlodi, 2008. B. 75–100.

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