

NATIONAL CHARACTER AND CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN THE STORIES OF SHUKUR XOLMIRZAYEV**Jalilova Latofat Axmedovna**

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Abstract: This article analyzes the artistic interpretation of national character and contemporary social problems in the stories of Shukur Xolmirzayev. The writer occupies a significant place in modern Uzbek prose with his realistic depiction of rural life, human psychology, social contradictions, and national values. The study examines how the author reflected moral changes in society, the spiritual world of ordinary people, and conflicts between tradition and modernity through artistic images. Particular attention is given to the stories "O'zbeklar," "Hayot abadiy," "Bodom qishda gulladi," "Qora kamar," and several other works. The article employs comparative-literary, hermeneutic, and contextual analysis methods. The findings show that Shukur Xolmirzayev's stories reveal the transformation of Uzbek society during the Soviet and independence periods while preserving national identity and ethical principles. The article concludes that the writer's prose serves as an important literary source for understanding social psychology and national consciousness in Uzbek literature.

Keywords: Shukur Xolmirzayev, Uzbek prose, national character, social problems, realism, artistic interpretation, rural life, Uzbek literature, human psychology, literary analysis.

Introduction

Uzbek literature of the twentieth century experienced major thematic and stylistic transformations. Particularly during the second half of the century, prose writers increasingly turned toward realistic depictions of social life and the inner world of ordinary people. Among such writers, Shukur Xolmirzayev occupies a distinctive position. His stories are characterized by psychological depth, concise narration, and faithful representation of national realities.

Shukur Xolmirzayev entered Uzbek literature in the 1960s and became recognized as one of the leading representatives of modern Uzbek storytelling. Literary scholars note that his works vividly portray the moral atmosphere of society, especially the lives of villagers and intellectuals [1]. His artistic worldview was shaped by the traditions of Uzbek realism and influenced by both classical and contemporary literary processes [2].

The concept of national character occupies a central place in Uzbek literary criticism. It refers to the representation of people's mentality, traditions, ethical values, worldview, and behavioral norms through literary images [3]. In Shukur Xolmirzayev's stories, national character is manifested through depictions of hospitality, patience, dignity, familial responsibility, and attachment to land and tradition. At the same time, the writer explores social conflicts caused by ideological pressure, urbanization, moral decline, and generational change.

The relevance of studying Shukur Xolmirzayev's prose lies in the necessity of understanding how literature reflects historical transformations in society. His stories provide important insights into the social and spiritual life of Uzbekistan during the late Soviet and early independence periods.

Methodology

The article applies several literary research methods. The comparative-literary method was used to compare different stories and identify recurring artistic motifs related to national character and social problems. The hermeneutic method enabled interpretation of symbolic images, dialogues, and psychological details within the stories. Historical-contextual analysis was applied to examine the connection between literary representation and socio-political conditions of the period.

Primary sources include collections of Shukur Xolmirzayev's stories published in Uzbek literary editions and separate books. Secondary sources consist of scholarly works devoted to Uzbek prose, realism, literary psychology, and studies on the writer's artistic style. The analysis focuses on narrative structure, characterization, thematic layers, and ideological context.

Results

The research demonstrates that Shukur Xolmirzayev's stories consistently combine realistic social observation with deep psychological analysis. His characters are not idealized heroes but ordinary individuals facing moral and social dilemmas.

One of the major findings is that the writer presents national character primarily through everyday life. Rural settings, family relations, labor culture, and communication patterns become important artistic tools. In stories such as "Bodom qishda gulladi," nature imagery symbolizes both hope and contradiction. Literary critics emphasize that the writer frequently uses landscape descriptions to reflect psychological states [4].

Another result concerns the depiction of social problems. Many stories portray tensions between traditional morality and Soviet ideological demands. The writer reveals how bureaucratic systems, hypocrisy, and materialism affect human relationships. In "Qora kamar," for example, the protagonist experiences internal conflict between personal conscience and social expectations [5].

The study also shows that Shukur Xolmirzayev's prose highlights generational differences. Older characters often represent moral stability and traditional wisdom, while younger figures struggle with identity and changing social realities. This contrast reflects broader transformations in Uzbek society during the twentieth century.

Additionally, the author's narrative style contributes significantly to thematic expression. His concise dialogues, symbolic details, and realistic speech patterns strengthen the authenticity of characters and settings. Scholars have noted that the simplicity of his language conceals substantial philosophical depth [6].

Analysis and Discussion

The category of national character in Shukur Xolmirzayev's stories is inseparable from the social environment in which his characters live. Unlike romanticized portrayals of rural life, the writer presents villages as complex social spaces where moral virtues coexist with contradictions and conflicts.

In many stories, the image of the Uzbek village symbolizes continuity of tradition. Agricultural labor, respect for elders, and communal solidarity form the ethical foundation of society. However, the writer also demonstrates that these values are vulnerable to social change. During the Soviet period, collectivization and ideological pressure altered traditional social structures. Through subtle artistic details, Shukur Xolmirzayev reveals how these transformations affected ordinary people [7].

The story "O'zbeklar" is particularly important for understanding the writer's interpretation of national identity. The narrative portrays ordinary individuals whose behavior reflects collective ethical norms. Hospitality, modesty, and patience are not presented as abstract qualities but as practical forms of social interaction. Literary scholars argue that the story functions as a sociocultural portrait of Uzbek mentality [8].

Psychological realism is another defining feature of the writer's prose. Unlike many ideological works of the Soviet era, his stories avoid schematic characterization. Characters frequently experience internal contradictions. They struggle between duty and desire, tradition and change, sincerity and social conformity. This complexity enhances the realism of the narratives.

The writer's attention to moral issues is especially evident in stories depicting social hypocrisy. Bureaucratic indifference, false heroism, and moral compromise appear as recurring themes. In several works, officials and socially respected figures are shown to possess hidden

ethical weaknesses. Through irony and subtle criticism, the author exposes the gap between official ideology and real human experience [9].

Nature imagery occupies a special place in the artistic structure of the stories. Descriptions of mountains, deserts, orchards, and seasons are closely connected to emotional and philosophical meanings. In “Bodom qishda gulladi,” the blossoming almond tree becomes a symbol of fragile hope and spiritual resilience. Such symbolic details enrich the narrative without weakening its realistic foundation.

Another important aspect concerns gender representation. Female characters in Shukur Xolmirzayev’s stories are often depicted as morally strong individuals who preserve family stability despite social difficulties. Mothers and elderly women embody patience and ethical continuity. At the same time, the writer does not idealize women; instead, he portrays them as psychologically complex individuals shaped by social conditions [10].

The issue of time and historical transition is central to the writer’s artistic worldview. His stories frequently portray moments of uncertainty when established values are questioned. The late Soviet period generated ideological fatigue and moral confusion, which are reflected in the emotional atmosphere of many narratives. Characters often feel alienated or spiritually exhausted, yet they continue searching for meaning and dignity.

Shukur Xolmirzayev’s prose also contributes to the development of modern Uzbek literary language. His dialogues reproduce natural speech patterns and regional expressions without excessive ornamentation. This linguistic authenticity strengthens the realism of the stories and reinforces their connection to national culture [11].

From a literary perspective, the writer’s artistic method combines realism with elements of psychological symbolism. Everyday objects, gestures, and landscapes acquire deeper meanings through narrative context. This approach allows the author to express philosophical ideas indirectly, avoiding overt didacticism.

The writer’s contribution becomes particularly significant when viewed within the broader development of Uzbek prose. Earlier Soviet literature often emphasized collective ideals and ideological optimism. In contrast, Shukur Xolmirzayev focused on individual psychology and moral ambiguity. His works therefore represent an important transition toward greater artistic freedom and realism in Uzbek storytelling [12].

Contemporary literary criticism continues to recognize the relevance of his stories. Modern readers encounter in his works many issues that remain socially important: generational conflict, preservation of national identity, ethical responsibility, and the psychological consequences of social change. For this reason, his prose retains both literary and cultural significance.

Conclusion

The analysis demonstrates that Shukur Xolmirzayev’s stories occupy an important place in modern Uzbek literature due to their realistic depiction of national character and social problems. Through psychologically complex characters and authentic social settings, the writer portrayed the moral and spiritual transformations of Uzbek society during a critical historical period.

The study confirms that national character in the writer’s prose is expressed through everyday behavior, family relations, labor culture, and ethical values. At the same time, the stories critically examine social contradictions, ideological pressure, moral decline, and generational conflict. The combination of realism, symbolism, and psychological depth enabled Shukur Xolmirzayev to create works of enduring literary value.

His prose remains relevant because it reflects universal human concerns while preserving distinct national features. Therefore, Shukur Xolmirzayev’s literary heritage continues to serve as an important source for studying Uzbek cultural identity, social psychology, and the development of modern prose traditions.

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