

## ARTISTIC INTERPRETATION OF THE HUMAN–SOCIETY RELATIONSHIP IN LUQMON BO'RIXON'S NOVEL PEOPLE IN THE SCORCHING HEAT

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**Abstract:** *This article examines Luqmon Bo'rixon's novel People in the Scorching Heat (2015) through the lens of human–society relations within post-independence Uzbek prose. Drawing on the theoretical frameworks of Georg Lukács, Mikhail Bakhtin, and Yuri Lotman, and engaging with scholarship in Uzbek literary studies, the study analyses how the novel's central characters — Lola, Samad, and Ashur — embody the conflict between individual selfhood and the constraints of a patriarchal social order. Particular attention is given to the novel's use of psychological parallelism, irony, and symbolic imagery as vehicles for social critique. A comparative reading of Lola alongside Chingiz Aitmatov's Jamila illuminates divergent narrative strategies for representing female agency. The article argues that Bo'rixon's work constitutes a landmark achievement in contemporary Uzbek fiction, rendering perennial tensions between personal freedom and collective norms in psychologically nuanced and aesthetically sophisticated terms.*

**Keywords:** *literary style, psychologism, individual and society, female character, irony, symbolism, post-independence Uzbek prose.*

### INTRODUCTION

The decades following Uzbekistan's independence in 1991 witnessed a significant reorientation of national prose literature. Writers increasingly turned inward, exploring the psychology of individuals caught between inherited tradition and the demands of a changing society. Within this literary landscape, Luqmon Bo'rixon's novel *People in the Scorching Heat* occupies a distinctive position: it combines the social panorama of rural Uzbek life with a penetrating psychological inquiry into the human costs of rigid communal norms.

Georg Lukács, theorising the novel as a genre, described it as the encounter of a 'problematic individual with a problematic reality' [2]. This formulation captures the structural logic of Bo'rixon's narrative with precision. Each of the novel's protagonists is caught in a web of social expectations that systematically constrains their capacity for self-determination, and the plot acquires momentum precisely from the friction between inner aspiration and external pressure.

The novel's title is itself a central interpretive key. Heat and scorching sun function not merely as climatic descriptors but as a governing metaphor for oppressive social conditions: the weight of tradition, the suffocation of individuality, and the slow erosion of identity that accompanies displacement from one's origins. The present article traces how this metaphor organises the novel's symbolic architecture and sustains its critique of patriarchal social structures.

The study employs a combination of comparative-typological, psychological-phenomenological, and gender-analytical approaches, situating the novel within both the Uzbek literary tradition and broader Central Asian narrative culture.

## 2. LOLA: FEMALE SELFHOOD UNDER PATRIARCHAL CONSTRAINT

The character of Lola stands at the thematic and ethical centre of the novel. A woman of quiet dignity and inner complexity, she is transplanted to a desert village as a young bride and subsequently subjected to a process of social reduction that strips her of individual identity. Following the death of her husband Oroq, the village community transforms Lola into what the narrator calls a 'living widow-statue': an object of communal veneration rather than a human subject with desires, grief, and a future of her own.

Nosirova's research on psychologism in Uzbek prose establishes that the full disclosure of a character's inner world most often occurs against a background of social conflict [5]. Lola's psychological portrait bears out this observation with particular force. Her silences, her refusals — most tellingly, her rejection of her mother's offer to return to the city — speak louder than any explicit statement of feeling. Bo'rixon withholds authorial commentary and allows Lola's situation to accumulate its own moral weight.

From the perspective of contemporary gender studies, the community's treatment of Lola exemplifies what feminist scholars term 'objectification': the reduction of a person to a symbol or function, with the attendant erasure of her subjective needs and desires. The village does not mourn Lola's losses or recognise her longing for companionship; it repurposes her into a monument to widowhood, visiting her grave-like dwelling as though she were already dead. As the narrator observes, the residents arrive at every wedding to pay homage at the foot of Oroq's statue, forgetting that Lola is a living woman who also longs to lean on someone's shoulder — a detail that encapsulates the novel's central indictment of communal hypocrisy.

A comparative reading of Lola alongside Jamila, the protagonist of Chingiz Aitmatov's celebrated 1958 novella, illuminates two distinct narrative resolutions to the same fundamental predicament. Both women are embedded in patriarchal rural communities that deny them autonomous selfhood; both experience the conflict between social obligation and personal longing with acute intensity. Yet where Jamila ultimately acts — she breaks with convention, follows the man she loves, and achieves a form of liberation — Lola is consumed by the very system she inhabits. She is murdered by her brother-in-law Ashur, a figure whose performance of communal honour conceals cowardice and criminality. Aitmatov's text, written in the Soviet period, allows its heroine a triumphant exit; Bo'rixon's, composed in post-independence Uzbekistan, offers no such escape. The difference speaks to both the authors' respective historical moments and their divergent artistic philosophies regarding the transformative possibilities available to women in Central Asian societies.

## 3. PSYCHOLOGICAL PORTRAITURE AND ARTISTIC TECHNIQUE

Bo'rixon's narrative technique is marked by restraint and indirection. Rather than offering the reader authorial exposition of characters' inner states, he constructs psychology through action, dialogue, and the telling detail. This approach aligns with what Yuri Lotman called the communicative power of the 'unsaid': in a literary text, what is withheld or left implicit frequently carries greater semantic weight than what is explicitly stated [3]. The novel's psychological depth derives precisely from this economy of means.

Psychological parallelism — the alignment of exterior landscape with interior condition — constitutes one of the novel's most consistently deployed devices. The scorching heat that envelops the village is never merely meteorological; it registers the characters' emotional and existential states with unfailing precision. The child narrator Samad's description of the village shimmering in the desert haze — likening it to 'a mass of concrete and iron melting and flowing away in the scorching heat' — functions simultaneously as landscape painting and as commentary on the spiritual dissolution of the community. Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope, the inseparability of space and time in novelistic meaning-making, provides a useful framework for understanding how Bo'rixon fuses physical setting with psychological and moral condition [8].

Irony is the dominant rhetorical mode of the novel's social critique. Sheraliyeva characterises irony as a stylistic phenomenon constructed from contradiction and concealed laughter [6]; Bo'rixon employs it with considerable sophistication. His portrait of Ashur — braggart, would-be guardian of honour, and actual thief — is sustained through ironic juxtaposition: the gap between Ashur's self-presentation and his actual conduct is never commented upon directly but is made unmistakably clear through the accumulation of telling episodes. The narrator's remark that Ashur's entry into a gathering signals the end of its 'civilised' phase — structured as an analogy between rising body temperature and the onset of illness — compresses an entire social critique into a single image.

The system of character names reinforces the novel's symbolic architecture. 'Lola', meaning tulip, evokes fragile beauty and natural growth; her transplantation to an alien soil becomes, in this light, a figure for the violence done to her by social convention. 'Oroq', meaning sickle, implies that Lola has been harvested and uprooted — cut from her natural environment and replanted in ground inhospitable to her flourishing. These onomastic choices, far from being incidental, constitute a further layer of the novel's ironic commentary on the relationship between naming and fate.

#### 4. THE INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY: A PHILOSOPHICAL READING

At its philosophical core, *People in the Scorching Heat* poses a question that traverses the history of the novel as a genre: under what conditions, and at what cost, can the individual assert the integrity of their own life against the demands of the collective? Rahimjonov's work on character systems in Uzbek fiction emphasises that characters must always be read in relation to their social environment rather than in isolation [4]; Bo'rixon's novel dramatises the consequences of this interdependence with exceptional clarity.

The novel refuses the simplifications of either idealism or cynicism. No character is presented as wholly virtuous or wholly condemnable; each is shaped by circumstances that both enable and constrain their agency. This ethical complexity is consistent with what Sharafiddinov identified as a defining quality of accomplished Uzbek prose: the harmonisation of social environment and character psychology in a manner that yields genuine insight rather than schematic illustration [1]. Bo'rixon achieves precisely this harmony.

The motif of displacement — the community's forced relocation from mountain to desert — carries philosophical resonance that extends well beyond the historical and sociological. To be uprooted from one's place of origin is, in the novel's symbolic logic, to

lose access to the sources of identity itself. Characters who have been severed from their roots find that their capacity for self-determination has been diminished alongside their sense of belonging. This theme speaks directly to the anxieties of a post-Soviet Uzbek society navigating the transition between a dismantled past and an uncertain present — a context that lends the novel considerable contemporary relevance.

The critical voice of Qozoqboy Yo'ldoshev, who described *People in the Scorching Heat* as a work in which 'the novel's core conception is concentrated in the characters' words', and who noted its insistence that human beings cannot live by ideas alone but must honour the claims of both body and spirit, points to the humanistic depth that underlies Bo'rixon's social critique. The novel does not simply condemn tradition; it mourns what is lost when tradition calcifies into oppression and ceases to serve the human beings it was meant to sustain.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This article has examined Luqmon Bo'rixon's *People in the Scorching Heat* as an exemplary work of post-independence Uzbek prose, analysing its treatment of the human-society relationship through close reading of its central characters, symbolic structures, and narrative techniques. Four principal conclusions may be drawn from this analysis.

First, the 'scorching heat' of the title operates as a multi-layered symbol encoding climatic, social, and psychological dimensions simultaneously; it is the novel's most persistent and productive figure of meaning. Second, the character of Lola offers one of the most psychologically penetrating portraits of female experience in contemporary Uzbek fiction, dramatising the process by which a patriarchal community reduces a living person to a symbol and thereby forecloses her capacity for selfhood. Third, Bo'rixon's narrative technique — characterised by restraint, irony, psychological parallelism, and symbolic onomastics — constitutes a distinctive and highly accomplished contribution to the Uzbek literary tradition. Fourth, the novel's central concerns — female autonomy, the conflict between individual and collective, the critique of ossified custom — retain their urgency in the present, making the work not merely a historical document but an ongoing provocation to social reflection.

Taken together, these findings suggest that *People in the Scorching Heat* merits sustained attention from scholars of Uzbek literature, Central Asian studies, and comparative literary criticism. Bo'rixon's achievement lies in having rendered the perennial tension between personal freedom and communal obligation with a psychological specificity, a formal sophistication, and a moral seriousness that place his work among the enduring contributions of twenty-first-century Uzbek prose.

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