

## The Role of Plot and Conflict in O'tkir Hoshimov's Novel "Lives Passed in a Dream"

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**Abstract.** *This paper analyzes the issues of plot and conflict in O'tkir Hoshimov's novel "Lives Passed in a Dream." In the work, the plot is constructed based on real-life events and develops through the contradictions between human fate, society, and the individual. The novel's plot is enriched not so much by sequential events as by the characters' inner experiences, psychological struggles, and life choices. Conflicts are primarily internal (psychological) and external (social) in nature, serving to reveal the main characters' spiritual quests, pangs of conscience, and the problems of the era.*

**Key words:** *O'tkir Hoshimov, "Lives Passed in a Dream," plot, conflict, internal conflict, external conflict, psychological realism, human fate, spiritual anguish, society and individual, literary analysis.*

One of the most powerful means of revealing a person's spiritual world is the art of words and fiction. Today, the range of themes in our national literature is becoming increasingly diverse. As social thought gradually abandons old views and approaches, great opportunities are emerging in the field of literary studies, as in all fields of science, for a deep and comprehensive study of important theoretical issues. The systematic study of literary criticism and the artist's creative skill is of particular importance today. This is because the enrichment, renewal, and development of national artistic and aesthetic thinking is impossible without this process. In particular, it is crucial to conduct in-depth studies of the works of writers who have achieved artistic and vivid depictions of life, created unique characters, and enriched the treasury of our national literature with new poetic discoveries. From this perspective, the thorough study of the works of Utkir Hoshimov, one of the brightest representatives of 20th-century Uzbek prose, and the examination of his unique style and artistic mastery is of great significance. Indeed, Utkir Hoshimov is a rare writer who has succeeded in elevating words to the level of true art.

By the late 1980s, significant changes began to occur in society. Thanks to the policies of perestroika and glasnost, existing problems began to be freely discussed. The true state of the socialist system, which had ruled for many years but was gradually decaying, came to light. The Communist Party made several attempts to implement changes to maintain its position and renew society. However, the results of these attempts led to more undesirable consequences. In Uzbekistan, the campaign initiated by the center to combat crime and corruption turned into a large-scale repressive campaign called the "Uzbek affair." These processes echoed the repression scenes of the 1930s-1950s. Such complex and difficult periods created unique characters in the life of society, and these events laid the foundation for the emergence of new images and themes in literature. The collapse of the system that many people believed in and hoped for, and the extinguishing of the dreams of those who dedicated their lives to this system, are artistically depicted in Utkir Hoshimov's novel "Lives Spent in Dreams." This work not only reveals the true face of the authoritarian system but also clearly shows the meaninglessness of the views people had believed in.

Utkir Hoshimov's novel "Lives Lived in Dreams" is considered one of the most beautiful novels not only of the author but also in Uzbek literature. The characters of Rustam Shomatov and Commissar Soat Ganiev serve to define the ideological concept of the work. The characters are beautifully revealed through dialogues. The author assigns a specific task to each character in the work. Dialogues serve to develop the plot and reveal the characters.

Asror Samad: "Times will pass, people will change, progress will reach new heights, but it wouldn't be surprising if this novel by Utkir Hoshimov, like other classic works, remains in the public eye!"

If you want to cry but can't, if you don't release the hardened sorrows from your heart with tears, there's a pain in the heart. Something is stuck in my throat; it neither goes down nor comes out, and if my tears were to flow, would that thing in my throat soften! On the one hand, I want to cry out of pity for the fate of the heroes, and on the other hand, the actions of the oppressors provoke my anger, hardening that cry in my throat. If crying is water, anger is a stone, a dam; it won't give way to water. Both the tears that couldn't rise to my eyes and the intensity of anger that hardened my heart are due to Utkir Hoshimov's novel "Lives Lived in Dreams."

I read the novel three times. The first time while preparing the writer's two-volume "Selected Works" for publication, the second time as an ordinary reader, and the third time again as an editor, and each time the flood waters of crying and the boulder of anger collide in my heart. The misfortune that befalls every Uzbek household pains my heart, and the people who bring misfortune to every household make my anger overflow, and a groan, resembling a roar, erupts from within me.

The dialogues of Rustam, Shahnoza, Rustam's parents, Ilhom, Salima, Tursunboy, Khayriddin, Sasha, Temur, Shahnoza's father and other such characters are very natural, because they are people who are forced to meet each other due to life circumstances. The love of Rustam and Shakhnoza, as well as the meetings and conversations of other characters, are described in a way that is pleasant to read with their naturalness, in accordance with the development of events. The writer presents the theme of love in parallel: the love of Rustam and Shakhnoza is pure, clean, and clear as a spring. Especially Rustam, who was spiritually weakened during the Afghan war, is strongly supported by Shahnoza's love, and the fact that Rustam cleans the snow from his grave with his palm deeply affects the reader. On the other hand, the relationship between Grisha and Larisa is completely different: Grisha looks only with lust at Larisa, who is eight years older than him and has one child. This is not love, but a light sensual feeling. Then, having learned that Larisa had drunk starch, mistaking Grisha for milk, she drove him out of the house. This parallel shows the writer's different views on love.

The fate of the people of the 30s and 40s, their clash with the newcomers Vasilyev, closely connected with the fate of Rustam, is an extraordinary event for the novel. The writer gives logical coherence and connection to these extraordinary situations, and this connection is mainly carried out through the influence of the image of the Commissioner. Through the commissioner, the relationships between the events are strengthened, and the plot acquires more meaning and firmness. From the very beginning, the author does not try to criticize the image of the commissioner, but the reader does not develop any warmth or good attitude towards him. Initially, the reader imagines the commissar as "an elderly person who has aged, deteriorated in health, and passed away with light jokes." But his "heh-heh" laughter and his words to Qurbonoy, "God has no other business than you! So-and-so is eager to hear his servant's plea," evokes inappropriate feelings against him from within the reader. In the next part of the novel, the contradiction between the images of Qurbonoy and Komissar becomes even clearer. Qurbonoy is a patient, faithful woman who can endure all difficulties, but deeply feels pain from within. The Commissioner is depicted as an oppressive, cold person who uses his power to burden others. Their dialogue reveals precisely this contradiction - Qurbonoy's meekness and patience, and the Commissar's cruelty and coldness. Through this, the writer sought to reveal more deeply the issues of injustice and humanity in society. The contrast of these two images further enriches the philosophical foundation of the novel.

In Utkir Hoshimov's works, there are many elements similar to fairy tales. They add more depth and meaning to the content and images of their works. In particular, the fairy tale in the novel "Lives in a Dream" was created to more accurately and symbolically depict the image of the Commissioner.

Through this fairy tale, the writer aims to convey to the reader the coldness, oppression, and inhumanity in the Commissar's personality in a more impressive way. Such artistic methods demonstrate the unique creative skill of Utkir Hashimov, showing that folklore and symbolic images are combined with reality in his works. At the same time, these methods help the writer to reveal more deeply the problems of injustice and humanity in society.

Plot is a method of expressing events in a work according to the creator's artistic purpose. Events may not always be presented sequentially or in a clear order, as they are shaped by the author's creative intent and the work's logical structure. The plot of each literary work is created through the actions of characters of various significance. These actions can be external events or changes in the characters' inner emotional experiences, thoughts, and feelings. Based on this, two types of plots are distinguished depending on which type of action - external or internal - predominates in the work: a) plots based on the dynamics of "external action" and b) plots based on the dynamics of "internal action." In plots based on external action dynamics, the characters' actions, struggles, and conflicts in pursuit of specific goals are depicted, along with turning points in their lives, leading to certain changes in their fate and social status. Simply put, in such works, events are fully portrayed and hold artistic and aesthetic value on their own. Works based on the second type of plot began to appear in our literature much later, starting from the 1980s. In the work "Lives Lived in a Dream," which we are analyzing, the dynamics of external action form the main foundation of the plot. It details the events in the lives of characters such as Rustam, Komissar, and Qurbonoy xola, their turning points and changes. Nevertheless, the characters' inner thoughts and psychological changes are not overlooked - that is, plot elements based on internal action dynamics are also present in the work. In literary theory books, it is noted that "when events depicted in a literary work are connected into a system, two main types of relationships are observed between them. Based on the interrelationship of events in the plot, chronicle and concentric plot types are distinguished." In a chronicle plot, the temporal relationship between events (event B occurred after event A) predominates, while in a concentric plot, the cause-effect relationship (event B occurred because event A occurred) takes precedence. In the novel "Lives Lived in a Dream," both types of plots - those based on external and internal actions - are harmoniously combined. In the work, along with the main plot, the chronological sequence of the hero's fate and character development, characteristic of a chronological plot, are also revealed in detail through auxiliary plot lines. Thus, the author effectively covers a wide range of life experiences. Additionally, the method of retrospection - going back in time - is widely used in the novel. Based on observations, it can be seen that this type of plot occupies a central place in the work compared to others. Plot is a way of expressing events in accordance with the artist's artistic purpose. Events may not always be presented sequentially or consistently, as they are shaped by the author's artistic intent and the work's logical structure.

In any work, as noted in scientific literature, the traditional sequence of exposition, plot, development of events, culmination, and resolution is not always preserved. This can be clearly seen in the novel "Lives Lived in Dreams." For example, at the beginning of the work, it begins with the last diary of the main character Rustam, and then moves to the description of the daily worries and life of aunt Kurbanoy. It is precisely with the discovery of Rustam's body by Aunt Qurbonoy that the novel begins from the culmination point. The writer then gradually reveals Rustam's death and the events related to it, using the method of retrospection. Therefore, the plot of "Lives in a Dream" differs from a simple sequence and is divided into several lines:

1. Rustam - Shahnoza - Rustam's father line.
2. Qurbonoy xola - To'lagan - Fotima line.
3. Commissioner Soat Ganiev Line.

The writer develops each plot line independently, each of which has its own conflict, knot, development of events, culmination, and resolution.

The development and even completion of life processes, social life, or works of art often arise through conflict - that is, contradictions. Because human life is full of various contradictions from the very beginning. Opposing forces, such as good and evil, good and evil, white and black, constantly oppose

each other. These contradictions find their expression in fiction. Literature has long reflected the eternal dreams and eternal problems of humanity, and it is these problems that manifest themselves in the form of conflict-contradictions in works of art.

Conflict (from the Latin \*conflictus\* - collision) is the artistically expressed clashes and struggles of characters within the plot of a work, as well as the conflicts and contradictions arising between the hero and the environment or their inner spiritual world. The concept of conflict is traditionally used mainly in works of the epic and dramatic genres.

In a work of art, contradictions acquire central significance. It is they that give impetus to the development of events, giving the plot a sharp and dramatic tone. Contradictions that can be encountered in literature, cinema, or life situations manifest themselves in various forms. These contradictions are divided into types according to their nature. In Professor Dilmurod Kuronov's "Dictionary of Literary Studies," three main types of conflict are indicated: 1) intercharacter; 2) hero and environment; 3) internal, that is, psychological.

It should be noted that conflicts in a work of art often appear in a mixed form and are inextricably linked with each other. One conflict gives rise to another or is expressed through another conflict. For example, a character's conflict with the environment can manifest itself in their relationships with other characters or in their inner emotional experiences.

The novel "Lives in a Dream" is considered a work of art written with deep pain. In it, the author's views on life are deepened, and he forms very instructive and truthful generalizations from his observations. Moreover, the approach to the human spiritual world is much deeper and more detailed than in other works.

Rustam is the main character of the work, who is depicted as a brave, courageous, and honest young man. All the events in the work are expressed through his diary. While in his second year at the university, he was sent to war to defend the peace of the homeland. However, the war took place far from the country's borders, in Afghanistan, where they faced many difficulties and saw blood. Rustam witnessed the deaths of many of his comrades in battle and was even wounded in one battle. Despite the necessary treatment, the consequences of the injury did not leave him for the rest of his life. Nevertheless, he continued to fight bravely and returned to his homeland after the war ended. But when he returned home, many problems awaited him. When he went home, he met everyone, only he couldn't see his father. The reason was simple - "they wrote together, they took bribes." Having faced many difficulties, this young man got married and continued his studies. He tried to buy a house because the distance between his house and his place of study was large, and living in the student campus was inconvenient for him.

During the Soviet era, when the method of socialist realism prevailed, conflicts in literary works were primarily based on social class. It was emphasized that these conflicts should be resolved through revolutionary means. Conflicts were expressed as struggles between individual morality and collective consciousness, as well as between the spirit of private ownership and the interests of the public and the people.

In the novel "Lives Passed in Dreams," Rustam, his young wife Shakhnoza, and his parents and brothers living in Piskent form the main plot chain. Through these characters, the writer skillfully depicts the horrors of the war in Afghanistan. Through Rustam's parents and brothers, all the complexities and depravities of the "Uzbek Affair" are revealed. Thus, "Lives Passed in Dreams," as a novel that truthfully reflects life, occupies an important place both in the writer's body of work and in Uzbek literature.

After Uzbekistan gained independence, O'tkir Hoshimov wrote the novel "Lives Passed in Dreams," the satirical novella "Two Times Two is Five," the drama "Repression," and nearly 200 short stories, parables, and philosophical notes in his book "Notes in the Margins of a Notebook." He also wrote numerous journalistic articles in the 1990s.

"Lives Passed in Dreams" is considered O'tkir Hoshimov's major work written during the Independence period. The effects of independence are clearly felt in the spirit and content of the work.



Unlike in the Soviet era, there is no obligation to tie human character solely to social essence; the writer faced no limitations in his expression. As a result, Hoshimov achieved a deeper, freer, and more profound interpretation of people.

In O'tkir Hoshimov's novel "Lives Passed in Dreams," artistic conflicts form the main dramatic and ideological basis of the work. The author deeply analyzes the most delicate experiences of the human soul and the internal spiritual struggles that arise in the process of combating social injustices. These contradictions are especially striking in the character of Rustam - through him, the sharp contradictions between the individual and society, conscience and violence, truth and ideology are artfully revealed.

Rustam is depicted as a truthful, just person who strives to find a worthy place in society but encounters Soviet ideology and its violent, repressive system. His internal contradictions - the desire to live with conscience, humanity, and justice - create a strong dramatic situation when they clash with external factors in society such as lies, slander, persecution, and repression. Rustam's spiritual sufferings have great artistic and ideological significance not only as his personal tragedy but also as a symbol representing the spiritual tragedy of an entire generation.

The external aspect of the contradictions in the novel is connected with the policy of the Soviet totalitarian system, which contradicts human values: honor, faith, and conscience. The imprisonment of innocent people, their punishment based on slander, and the violation of human freedom form the social foundation of the events in the work. Rustam's struggle against these injustices and the spiritual changes in his inner world reveal the deep philosophical content of the novel.

Thus, the artistic contradictions in "Lives Passed in Dreams" represent a profound dramatic struggle between historical truth and human conscience. The author reveals these conflicts through Rustam, exposing the severe impact of the Soviet period on the human psyche. Rustam, with his honesty, loyalty to life's principles, and truthfulness, opposes the system, but this resistance leads to his spiritual weakening, ultimately forcing him to give up on life. Thus, it is shown that conflicts are not only the main element of the plot but also an important means of understanding social and philosophical truths.

In conclusion, the artistic contradictions in the novel reflect O'tkir Hoshimov's deep artistic assessment of the relationship between man and society, historical injustices, and issues of conscience and spirituality. Through the internal and external conflicts in Rustam's character, the author presents the difficult historical trials of the Uzbek people, their spiritual endurance and honor at a high artistic level. Therefore, the novel and its conflicts are of great importance not only as a literary work but also as a historical and moral source.

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