

# ARTISTIC AND AESTHETIC ANALYSIS OF ABDULKHAMID CHOULPON'S NOVEL NIGHT AND DAY

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**Abstract.** Abdulhamid Choulpon's unfinished novel *Night and Day* is widely recognized as the first socio-psychological work in Uzbek prose. This paper analyzes the novel's artistic, ideological, and symbolic dimensions, focusing on how Choulpon critiques patriarchal norms, colonial oppression, and religious hypocrisy through a psychologically rich narrative. Using a close reading method, the study examines key characters, especially, Zebi—as representations of Uzbek women's inner lives, societal constraints, and spiritual resilience. The central metaphor of “night” and “day” reflects the broader national struggle between ignorance and awakening. Through natural imagery, contextual antonymy, and culturally embedded dialogue, Choulpon crafts a realistic portrayal of early 20th-century Uzbek society. The novel's lyrical style, combined with its ideological critique, positions *Night and Day* as a significant work of literary resistance and cultural introspection, reflecting the psychological and social awakening of a nation in transition

**Keywords:** Uzbek literature, socio-psychological novel, symbolism, patriarchal critique, colonialism, female subjectivity, psychological realism, national awakening, Uzbek culture, literary realism, Eastern etiquette, metaphor, character analysis

**Introduction.** Abdulhamid Choulpon's *Night and Day* is one of the first examples of realistic dialogue in Uzbek prose, although only the “Night” section of the novel was written. Despite its modest size, the work creates a unique dramatic logic through the interplay of time and space, inner psychological forces, and social contradictions. In the novel's conception, the opposition of “night” and “day” forms the central metaphorical conflict: “night” symbolizes ignorance, submission to fate, and social pressure, whereas “day” represents awakening, freedom, and conscious life. This tension appears consistently in the plot development, in the psychology of the characters, and in the descriptions of nature. The events unfold from spring to the end of winter, and the epigraph “When spring comes, the work begins” highlights the cyclical flow of time, the rhythms of life, and the idea of national awakening, all expressed with high aesthetic value. Structurally, rather than presenting a wide chain of events, Choulpon emphasizes realistic-psychological aspects centered on the inner processes of a single character. This approach justifies calling the work the “first socio-psychological novel in Uzbek prose.”

**Methods:** This study adopts a qualitative literary analysis method grounded in:

- **Close reading** of selected excerpts from the novel
- **Thematic and symbolic analysis** of character representation, language, and cultural motifs
- **Contextual interpretation** informed by the socio-historical background of early Soviet Turkestan
- **Aesthetic and psychological critique**, examining Choulpon's use of metaphor, dialogue, and internal monologue

The focus is particularly on the representation of female subjectivity, patriarchal structures, and national identity, with attention to both narrative style and ideological content.

At the center of the novel is the main character, Zebi, who embodies national beauty, sincerity, and pure emotions. Through this figure, Choulpon delicately conveys the inner world of Uzbek women, their modesty, and their spiritual refinement. To depict Zebi's character, the author uses several artistic and aesthetic devices. For example: "*Zebining qish ichi siqilib, zanglab chiqqan ko'ngli bahorning iliq hovuri bilan ochila tushgan...*"<sup>1</sup> Here, landscape art serves as an aesthetic means of expressing the heroine's soul. The awakening of nature becomes a symbol of Zebi's hidden aspirations. Choulpon reveals Zebi's desires not through outward description, but through inner monologue and psychological turmoil. For instance, Zebi is forced to convey her wishes to her father indirectly through her mother, which shows the limitations placed on her personal freedom.

Through the image of Razzoq the Sufi, the author exposes the hypocrisy hidden beneath the mask of piety in society. Choulpon masterfully uses contextual antonymy in this character's depiction. The title "Sufi" would normally be expected to imply piety, honesty, and religiosity. However, throughout the novel Razzoq the Sufi appears in complete contradiction to this meaning. He not only fails to value human compassion and love but also shows his disdain for his wife by calling her "Fitna" (discord). Here, the conflict between name and deed functions as an aesthetic device, revealing the falsity of the Sufi's piety and exposing his true nature to the reader.

**Discussion.** The word "Fitna" itself carries a unique aesthetic weight. Borrowed from Arabic, in Uzbek literature it is usually associated with negative meanings such as rebellion, destruction, and enmity. By choosing this term, the author intensifies the Sufi's harsh and unjust attitude toward his wife. Through this, Choulpon unmasks the patriarchal views dominating Uzbek society, criticizing stereotypes that restricted women's individuality and freedom. Furthermore, a semantic contrast is created between Hamro ena's first affectionate words to a newborn child and Razzoq the Sufi's lifelong lack of laughter. This opposition deepens the psychological portrayal of the character and enhances the aesthetic effect of the text.

Choulpon depicts Qurvonbibi in two dimensions: on one hand, she is portrayed as a woman not entirely free of intrigue and deception ("*So'figa achchiq qilib bo'lsami, yo o'zining yaratilish hamirida shu narsani bormi, har qalay, fitnalikdan, ya'ni makr va firibdan xoli emas. Erining xotin-xalaj oldida gapirmaganiga uncha xafa bo'lmasa ham, lekin o'z halol xotini oldida gapirmaganiga kuyunadi va shu kuyish orqasida firib yo'li bilan so'fini gapirtiradi, ba'zida tillarini burro qilib sayratadi...*"<sup>2</sup>), while on the other hand, she represents the concerns of an ordinary, honest housewife, preoccupied especially with her daughter's dowry. Her dissatisfaction with the Sufi is expressed primarily on psychological grounds: (*Chinakam, bechora Qurvonbibi kiyim-kechak, ayniqsa, yolg'iz qizining sepi xususida ko'p tashvish tortadi. Shunday tashvishlar ustida u chiqolmay ketib, ba'zi-ba'zida so'figa xarxasha ham qilib*

Choulpon. Kecha va kunduz. – Toshkent.: Akademnashr, 2016. B. 4.

<sup>2</sup>Axmedova.M.U., Oxunova. M.U. "Kecha va kunduz" romani qahramonlarining ta'riflarini qo'llashda ijodkor mahorati va qo'llangan antroponimik birliklar ahamiyati . Academic research in educational sciences, vol. 3, no. 5, 2022. – B.412.

ko 'radi.)<sup>3</sup> In this sense, Qurvonbibi symbolizes a woman's striving for dignity and recognition. Even if through manipulation, her attempts at self-expression show her inner resistance to social constraints.

The figures of Zebi and Saltanat appear as symbols of freedom. The author represents their fate through metaphors of cages and flight: expressions like "the cage window opened" and "to flutter away" reflect women's inner longing for liberation. The scene where the veil is taken "for show" exposes the hollow shell of social customs and traditions. In this way, Choulpon presents women's desire to live as free individuals in a powerful, symbolic, and aesthetic manner.

Through the character of Enaxon, the author illustrates social stratification and the place of women in weaker segments of society. Enaxon, who lost her father in childhood and depended on her mother and brother for support, embodies how poverty confines a woman's fate. Here, Choulpon harmonizes psychological realism with social tragedy.

The character of Xolmat is portrayed as the embodiment of the hardworking son of the people ("Esini taniganidan beri mehnat peshida chopadi").<sup>4</sup> From childhood he tended village cattle, helped his family, and was respected by the community. Through him, Choulpon glorifies the natural purity, diligence, and sincerity of the people. The villagers' "admiring recollections" of him reveal the author's intent to idealize folk values. Xolmat thus symbolizes the strength and resilience of the people.

At the same time, the characters of Miryoqub and Akbarali play important roles as contrasting focal points of social conflict and psychological suffering. Miryoqub is a complex figure inclined toward a new bourgeois lifestyle yet not fully detached from his old environment. Akbarali symbolizes the bureaucratic order of colonial Turkestan, through which Choulpon offers a critical portrayal of the colonial regime.

The novel skillfully depicts family relationships, women's roles in domestic life, and their distinctive qualities in Uzbek society. In Zebi's character, the author reveals women's obedience, modesty, and deference. In her dialogue with Akbarali mingboshi, Zebi submits wordlessly to orders, continuing her service despite his harshness and rudeness, reflecting national values in artistic form. For instance:

" - Tur, hay! – dedi Zebiga.

Zebi yotgan joyidan turib, fonarni balandlatdi.

- Dasturxonni yoz! Yegulik narsang bormi?

- Ha kosada osh bor.

- Ber buyoqqa.

Zebi erining mast ekanligini bilsa-da, uning ovozdagi bu g'ayritabiiy qo'rslik va qattqlikka hayron bo'ldi, boshini ko'tarib, unga tikildi, "o'zimi, boshqami?" deganday...

<sup>3</sup> Axmedova.M.U., Oxunova. M.U. "Kecha va kunduz" romani qahramonlarining ta'riflarini qo'llashda ijodkor mahorati va qo'llangan antroponimik birliklar ahamiyati . Academic research in educational sciences, vol. 3, no. 5, 2022. – B.412.

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<sup>4</sup> Axmedova.M.U., Oxunova. M.U. "Kecha va kunduz" romani qahramonlarining ta'riflarini qo'llashda ijodkor mahorati va qo'llangan antroponimik birliklar ahamiyati . Academic research in educational sciences, vol. 3, no. 5, 2022. – B.413.

- *Nimaga menga qaraysan? Yo mastmisan, sintaloq? – dedi mingboshi.*

*Zebi indamasdan dasturxonni yoyib, oshni qo'ydi.*"<sup>5</sup>

Zebi is scolded for gazing at her husband's face in astonishment, since in the cultural climate of that era, looking directly at a man was considered disrespectful. Yet her gaze expresses not insolence but wonder; still, she does not attempt to explain herself and continues her service in silence. This episode highlights Zebi as a symbol of the patience, modesty, and obedience of Uzbek women.

Qurvonbibi also plays a significant role in the novel. To console her daughter Zebi, she resorts to a "small lie," not for her own sake but for her child's. Expressions like "He is an important man, it would be shameful..." combine Eastern etiquette and respect with determination. Although this maternal lie later leads to tragedy, it remains an artistic expression of Uzbek mothers' love, devotion, and self-sacrifice. Alongside Qurvonbibi, other mother figures such as Umrinisabibi, Khadichakhon, and Sultonkhon's mother appear in the novel, all united by the motif of maternal love. Choulpon's language is simple and folk-like, yet deeply meaningful. Words like "katta odam" (important person), "otin," "otincha" enrich the national color, reflect the atmosphere of the era, and embody the people's mentality. Thus, *Night and Day* captures national spirit, Eastern etiquette, women's patience, devotion, and motherhood at a high artistic level, carving out a unique place in Uzbek literature.

The novel also highlights kinship, neighborly relations, respect for elders, and kindness toward the young as inseparable parts of national life. These values are revealed through the characters' speech and behavior. In the dialogue between Zebi and Sarvibibi, respect for elders is especially emphasized. On a journey, Zebi does not dare wake her mother loudly but addresses her softly; even when there is no reply, she tries again in a gentle voice. Words like "dear mother" and the soft tone are employed by the author as symbols of reverence. This scene reflects the traditional Uzbek etiquette of not contradicting or disrespecting elders.

Respect toward the young is also evident in Hamro ena's treatment of an infant. She speaks affectionately, using terms of endearment like "my dear, my guest," "what made you sad?" and requests like "smile," "laugh," "beam." These expressions show her treating the child with honor and affection, recognizing the baby as a valued human being.

**Results.** The Uzbek people have long been known for their hospitality. Inviting even a neighbor's guest into one's own home and honoring them with food has become a cultural norm. Despite the hardships of life in that era, people strove to preserve this tradition.

Enaxon and her family first receive an invitation from a respected village household, then from Sultonkhon, a newlywed of just five months. This event brings joy to Enaxon's family, as she wishes to spread a generous table for her friends, and Sultonkhon, within her means, warmly welcomes them:

*"Mehmonlarga qo'lidan kelguncha yaxshi dasturxon solib, qo'ni-qo'shni qizlar va kelinchaklarni chaqirtirib, allaqaylardan tori uzilgan dutorlarni toptirib kelgan va ularni xursand qilmoq uchun tirishib-tirmashgan"*<sup>6</sup>

Through Enaxon, Choulpon not only portrays Uzbek hospitality but also conveys the feelings of kindness and solidarity between people. Her inviting neighbors to join the gathering demonstrates the compassion and good manners of that era.

<sup>5</sup> Абдулҳамид Чўлпон. Кеча ва кундуз: Роман – Т.: "Янги аср авлоди", 2013 – Б.294-295.

<sup>6</sup> Абдулҳамид Чўлпон. Кеча ва кундуз: Роман – Т.: "Янги аср авлоди", 2013 – Б.35.

Examples of Uzbek etiquette are also seen in Khadichakhon and her daughter Fazilat, as well as in the exchanges between Zebi and a stranger. For example:

*“Dasturxonni muncha yomon ekan, sen chaqirmabsanda, mehmonlarni. Biz bu yerda qiyomat qilib kuzatardik...”*

*-Shuni ayting-a! – dedi Poshshaxon.*

*-Men sizdan so‘roqsiz chaqirishga botinolmadim. Ikkovimiz maslahat qilishdik, ertagi kunga Sultonxon ayam chaqirib keldi.”<sup>7</sup>*

Fazilat’s words — “... sizdan so‘roqsiz chaqirishga botinolmadim” — reflect her fine upbringing and delicate character. Though the only daughter of a wealthy family, her unwillingness to act without her mother’s permission demonstrates her manners and moral refinement.

**Conclusion.** In the novel, Choulpon broadly celebrates Uzbek traditions and cultural realities. For instance, the custom of not calling one’s husband by name, or the sincere “co-wife” relations among women, reflect national character and the social-cultural context of the time. This approach allows the novel to serve as a “realistic portrait in a national-cultural context,” enabling the reader to sense the spirit of the age.

Choulpon’s artistic style blends elements of folk literature with modern rhetoric, establishing realism in Uzbek prose. The novel’s language, enriched with metaphor, imagery, and poetic pairing, carries a lyrical poetics. For example, Zebi’s voice is compared to a “bright star,” elevating realism to artistic perfection.

The artistic and aesthetic value of the novel is closely linked to its ideological content. In Choulpon’s work, not only are individual characters depicted, but also the historical awakening of the people and their spiritual struggle against oppression. As Shawn T. Lyons notes, *Night and Day* is a bold prose work criticizing Soviet colonialism, employing satire, farce, and psychological triptych techniques to ridicule the ruling regime. Thus, the novel represents a literary panorama of Uzbekistan’s striving for national independence and mental awakening.

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<sup>7</sup> Абдулҳамид Чўлпон. Кеча ва кундуз: Роман – Т.: Янги аср авлоди , 2013 – Б.56.