

Language and Style Issues In The Works Of Uzbek Criminal Fiction Writers

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Abstract: Although the criminal genre in Uzbek literature has not yet been fully studied from a theoretical perspective, literary works belonging to this field are actively being written under such genre labels as adventure, detective fiction, thriller, and crime prose. In recent years, many works devoted to the mysterious “paths” of crime have been published. Among them, there are artistically mature examples, as well as texts criticized by literary scholars and readers as “market literature” or “light fiction.” This article examines language and style issues in Uzbek criminal fiction and analyzes the creative styles of writers working in this thematic direction. Special attention is given to the works of O’lmas Umarbekov, Tohir Malik, Xurshid Do’stmuhammad, and Komiljon Sindarov, whose contributions have shaped the development of national detective and criminal prose. The article argues that successful criminal fiction depends not only on unexpected events and mysterious plots but also on artistic style, psychological depth, compositional skill, linguistic precision, and the meaningful use of details. The study also discusses weaknesses found in some contemporary Uzbek criminal works, including excessive narration, insufficient artistic refinement, dependence on sensational events, and the danger of unintentionally romanticizing criminal characters.

Keywords: Uzbek Literature, Criminal Fiction, Detective Genre, Style, Language, Tohir Malik, Komiljon Sindarov, O’lmas Umarbekov, Xurshid Do’Stmuhammad, Artistic Detail

Introduction

Although the criminal genre in Uzbek literature has not yet been sufficiently studied from a theoretical point of view, works belonging to this field are being created under such genre names as adventure, detective fiction, thriller, and crime prose. In particular, in recent years many literary works depicting the mysterious “streets” of crime have been published. Among these texts, one may find artistically mature and carefully constructed works, as well as examples that have been criticized by literary scholars and the reading public as “market literature” or “light fiction.”

The development of criminal fiction in Uzbek literature shows that this genre has already formed its own readership. Readers are attracted by mystery, investigation, unexpected turns, psychological tension, and the restoration of justice. However, the popularity of the genre does not automatically guarantee the artistic quality of every work written in this direction. A crime narrative may contain a shocking event or a mysterious

murder, yet still fail as literature if it lacks artistic depth, stylistic refinement, convincing characterization, and compositional discipline.

This article analyzes works devoted to crime in Uzbek literature and examines the style of writers who create in this thematic field. As noted in the source material, among works dealing with crime in Uzbek literature, the detective genre is one of the most popular forms. The detective work gains its originality not only through the depiction of unexpected events but also through the specific formation of composition, narrative structure, and suspense. The best examples of Uzbek detective fiction demonstrate that style and structure are inseparable: the way an event is narrated is as important as the event itself.

One of the early examples of Uzbek detective fiction is O'lmas Umarbekov's story *Yoz yomg'iri* (*Summer Rain*). Literary scholar E. Xudoyberdiyev emphasizes that this work begins from the point of culmination, namely the murder of Munisxon, and only afterwards does the author reveal the details, causes, and essence of the event. According to Xudoyberdiyev, this technique requires great mastery because the dramatic situation that begins on the first pages must be sustained until the end of the work (Xudoyberdiyev, n.d., p. 63). This compositional strategy shows that in detective fiction the beginning is not merely an introduction; it may serve as a dramatic explosion that determines the emotional and structural rhythm of the entire text.

The present study therefore focuses on the relationship between language, style, and composition in Uzbek criminal fiction. It argues that the artistic value of criminal prose depends not only on the crime itself but on how the writer organizes the narrative, constructs psychological motivation, uses details, presents dialogue, and leads the reader toward moral and intellectual conclusions.

Literature Review

The problem of style in Uzbek criminal fiction is closely connected with broader questions of literary mastery, genre development, and reader reception. In Uzbek literature, the detective and crime genres developed later than in English and Russian literary traditions, but they have gained considerable popularity among readers. This popularity is especially visible in the works of writers such as Tohir Malik, O'lmas Umarbekov, Xurshid Do'stmuhammad, and Komiljon Sindarov.

When discussing the creative style of Uzbek writers who have worked with criminal themes, it is necessary to pay special attention to Tohir Malik. He is one of the writers who enriched Uzbek literature with numerous works on crime and made an important contribution to the formation of the national detective style. Detective narration occupies a special place in his creative work. Tohir Malik may be regarded as one of the writers who helped establish this direction in modern Uzbek prose. After his stories *Alvido, bolalik* (*Farewell, Childhood*) and *Charxpalak* were warmly received by readers and awarded annual prizes, he began working on the novel *Shaytanat*. The first four books of this work were written over fifteen years, published in large numbers, and adapted into a twenty-part film. Believing that it was too early to put a final full stop to the work, the writer published the fifth book in 2011. During this period, he also wrote such works as *Murdalar gapirmaydilar*, *O'lim uchburchagi*, and *Talvasa* (Malik, n.d.-a, n.d.-b, n.d.-c, n.d.-d).

Tohir Malik became known to almost every Uzbek household through *Shaytanat*, and his works contributed to the moral and spiritual development of readers. His detective and didactic works are among the most widely read books among Uzbek youth. In this context, *Alvido, bolalik* can also be included in the group of the writer's detective-oriented works.

One of the important features of Tohir Malik's style is that when readers encounter even the most morally corrupt characters in his works, they do not simply hate them. On the contrary, readers are often encouraged to feel pity for their fate. This is because the writer studies human beings, their inner experiences, and their psychological world with great attention. He leads the reader into this psychological world and directs them to analyze the reasons that brought the character to such a state. Thus, in Malik's works, crime is not presented only as an external act; it is also shown as the result of spiritual weakness, social pressure, moral collapse, and personal tragedy.

Another characteristic feature of Tohir Malik's criminal prose is that it is not limited to events observed or heard in real life, nor only to artistic invention. His works are also enriched with a style close to religious and moral-didactic texts, as well as with instructive quotations. The writer's well-known statement about *Shaytanat* may be considered a concise definition of his attitude toward works on crime. He explains that he called the criminal world "Shaytanat," meaning "the world of oppressors led by devils," and that his purpose was to warn people not to approach that dead-end street, at the end of which there is only humiliating and painful death (Malik, n.d.-a). This shows that for Malik, criminal fiction is not only entertainment or suspense; it is also a moral warning.

In the literature of Uzbek crime fiction, another important writer is Xurshid Do'stmuhammad. His works are significant because they continue and creatively develop themes related to women's rights, violated honor, injustice, and rebellion against oppression. These themes were also treated in O'lmas Umarbekov's *Fotima va Zuhra*. In Do'stmuhammad's *Chayongul*, the themes of women's rights, violated dignity, revolt against injustice, and the strong dynamics characteristic of criminal works are clearly visible.

In discussing *Chayongul*, the author himself draws attention to the symbolic names ChamanGul, Gulsum, and Gulshod, emphasizing that these women are beautiful beings like flowers, but all of them are ruined by one tragedy. He asks why nobody tried to stop Gulsum when she left with a knife in her hand, saying that she would kill and destroy. He also asks whether people were afraid for their own lives or whether Uzbeks had become indifferent to one another's fate (Do'stmuhammad, n.d.-a). This reflection shows that Do'stmuhammad's crime prose is not merely about murder; it is about social indifference, moral responsibility, and the consequences of collective silence.

In his article on the creative history of this work, Do'stmuhammad compares the specific styles of English and Uzbek crime narratives. He recalls watching the film *And Then There Were None* and observing that although many people are killed during the film, there is no loud noise, panic, or chaos. He also refers to the film *A Purely American Murder*, where the murderer kills his victims with elegance and restraint. In contrast, he notes that an Uzbek killer would not approach the victim so quietly or delicately. This comparison led him to write *Sof o'zbekcha qotillik (A Purely Uzbek Murder)* (Do'stmuhammad, n.d.-b). The writer also

states that he took the form of *Sof o'zbekcha qotillik* from Gabriel García Márquez's *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* (Do'stmuhammad, n.d.-b; García Márquez, 1981/2003).

This example demonstrates that Uzbek criminal fiction develops not in isolation but through dialogue with world literature and cinema. Writers observe foreign models, compare them with national life, and transform them through Uzbek cultural, psychological, and social realities.

Another important issue in the literature review is the critical attitude toward contemporary detective writing. The authors of the article "Milliy detektivning shakllanish omillari" cite Y. Solijonov's observation that many so-called adventure and detective works have appeared, but two out of three do not meet the requirements of the genre. According to this view, responsible writers spend months or years creating a carefully completed work, while some authors produce such texts hastily and superficially. Therefore, new detective writers should first study the requirements of the detective genre and only then begin writing (Solijonov, as cited in "Milliy detektivning shakllanish omillari," n.d.).

At the same time, it would be incorrect to place the concepts of adventure and detective fiction side by side with the label "light literature." Omon Muxtor notes that the works of Xudoyberdi To'xtaboyev, Tohir Malik's *Shaytanat*, and Said Ravshan's *Qironcha* are read with genuine interest and cannot be dismissed as short-lived works. Some of them have lived for ten, twenty, or even fifty years and have provided readers not only pleasure but also spiritual and psychological nourishment (Muxtor, n.d.). This view is important because it protects the detective genre from being unfairly reduced to entertainment. A detective work may be popular and readable, yet still artistically and morally meaningful.

Methodology

This study uses a descriptive-analytical and comparative-literary method to examine language and style issues in Uzbek criminal fiction. The article is based on literary examples from Uzbek crime and detective prose, as well as on critical opinions expressed by writers and literary scholars.

The main materials analyzed include the works of O'lmas Umarbekov, Tohir Malik, Xurshid Do'stmuhammad, and Komiljon Sindarov. Particular attention is given to Umarbekov's *Yoz yomg'iri* and *Fotima va Zuhra*, Malik's *Shaytanat*, *Alvido*, *bolalik*, and other crime-related works, Do'stmuhammad's *Chayongul* and *Sof o'zbekcha qotillik*, and Sindarov's detective novels and stories such as *Kechikkan qasos*, *So'pogsoydagi sirli qotillik*, *Qimmatga tushgan xato*, *Temuriylar kutubxonasining siri*, *Amirlikning oltin taxti izidan*, and *Tungi qotillik*.

The analysis proceeds in several directions. First, the study examines how composition functions in Uzbek detective prose, especially in works that begin with a dramatic event or culmination. Second, it analyzes the psychological and moral dimension of criminal fiction, with special attention to Tohir Malik's didactic and psychological style. Third, it examines the representation of women's fate, honor, and social indifference in Xurshid Do'stmuhammad's works. Fourth, it studies Komiljon Sindarov's use of professional legal experience and investigative detail as a stylistic and structural resource. Finally, the study identifies several weaknesses found in some contemporary criminal works and discusses their negative influence on artistic quality.

The article treats style not only as language but also as a system of narrative choices. These choices include the arrangement of plot, the construction of suspense, the depiction of psychological states, the use of details, the balance between narration and dramatization, and the moral position of the author.

Result and Discussion

Composition and Dramatic Beginning in Uzbek Detective Fiction

Detective fiction differs from many other prose genres because its composition is often built around secrecy, delayed explanation, and gradual discovery. In traditional narrative, events may be presented from beginning to end in chronological order. In detective fiction, however, the story may begin from the culmination or from the consequences of a crime. Such a beginning immediately creates tension and forces the reader to ask questions: Who committed the crime? Why did it happen? What hidden circumstances led to the event?

O'lmas Umarbekov's *Yoz yomg'iri* is a strong example of this technique. As E. Xudoyberdiyev notes, the story begins from the culmination, that is, the murder of Munisxon, and only later does the author reveal how the event happened, what caused it, and what its essence is (Xudoyberdiyev, n.d., p. 63). This method demands great skill from the writer because the dramatic tension introduced at the beginning must continue until the end. If the writer fails to maintain this tension, the work loses its emotional and investigative force.

This compositional feature shows that the Uzbek detective tradition has not developed only through imitation of foreign models. It has also produced its own examples of narrative experimentation. Beginning a story from the point of crisis allows the writer to place the reader immediately inside the dramatic situation. It also creates a retrospective structure in which the meaning of the opening event is gradually clarified.

Tohir Malik's Moral-Psychological Style

When discussing Uzbek criminal fiction, Tohir Malik occupies a central place. He is among the writers who created numerous works on criminal themes and contributed to the formation of national detective style. His works combine detective narration with moral and spiritual reflection. The criminal world in his fiction is not presented as an attractive world of adventure but as a destructive space that leads human beings toward suffering, humiliation, and death.

The writer's own explanation of *Shaytanat* makes this position clear. He states that he called the criminal world "Shaytanat," or "the world of oppressors led by devils," in order to warn his readers: "Be careful, my brothers, do not come close to this street. At the end of this dead-end street you will find only painful and humiliating death" (Malik, n.d.-a). This statement shows that Malik's detective and criminal works are strongly didactic. They are designed not only to entertain but also to warn, educate, and morally awaken readers.

In Malik's works, the reader often encounters criminals whose actions are morally condemnable but psychologically understandable. The writer does not justify crime, yet he

studies the path that leads a human being toward crime. He examines the inner world of his characters, their fears, temptations, weaknesses, and suffering. As a result, readers may feel pity even for negative characters. This complexity is one of the strongest aspects of Malik's style.

Another important feature of Malik's criminal prose is his use of religious and moral-didactic language. His works often include reflections, warnings, and quotations that are close in tone to religious and educational texts. This gives his detective prose a specific Uzbek moral atmosphere. The crime is never only a legal violation; it is also a spiritual fall.

Xurshid Do'stmuhammad and the Nationalization of Crime Narrative

Xurshid Do'stmuhammad's works demonstrate another direction in Uzbek criminal fiction. His works often connect crime with gender, honor, social silence, and collective responsibility. In *Chayongul*, the fate of women becomes central to the moral and emotional structure of the text. The names ChamanGul, Gulsum, and Gulshod symbolically emphasize beauty and fragility, while the tragedy that destroys them reveals the violence hidden inside social relations (Do'stmuhammad, n.d.-a).

Do'stmuhammad's reflections on the origin of *Sof o'zbekcha qotillik* are especially important. He compares foreign crime films with Uzbek reality and observes that murders in some Western narratives are represented with coldness, quietness, and external restraint. In contrast, he suggests that an Uzbek murder is connected with noise, emotion, social involvement, and collective tension (Do'stmuhammad, n.d.-b). This comparison leads him to search for a national form of criminal narrative.

The writer also acknowledges that he took the form of *Sof o'zbekcha qotillik* from Gabriel García Márquez's *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* (Do'stmuhammad, n.d.-b; García Márquez, 1981/2003). This is significant because it shows that the national crime narrative may be shaped through creative borrowing. Do'stmuhammad does not simply copy foreign models; he adapts them to Uzbek social psychology, national character, and real-life circumstances.

The structure of his work is also noteworthy. Events develop gradually and then suddenly rise to a climax. This movement leaves a strong emotional trace in the reader's heart. The gradual development of events and sudden dramatic rise correspond to the moral idea of the work: tragedy does not appear suddenly from nowhere; it grows from silence, indifference, injustice, and unresolved pain.

Criticism of Weaknesses in Contemporary Detective Writing

Despite the development of Uzbek criminal fiction, not all works in this field reach a high artistic level. Some literary critics have expressed concern that many texts published under the name of adventure or detective fiction do not meet the requirements of the genre. As Y. Solijonov notes, while responsible writers may spend months or years perfecting one work, some authors produce detective texts too quickly and without sufficient artistic preparation (Solijonov, as cited in "Milliy detektivning shakllanish omillari," n.d.).

This problem is connected with the mistaken belief that a sensational event is enough to create a successful crime story. Some authors discover or imagine an unusual crime and assume that the event itself will bring literary success. However, a crime event alone does not create literature. A writer must transform the event into an artistic structure through language, psychology, composition, and moral meaning.

Abdulla Qahhor's views are highly relevant in this context. In his speech at a youth seminar in 1944, he argued that a writer who writes about something he has not felt cannot make the reader feel it either. According to Qahhor, a work that does not touch the reader's heart has no real relation to literature. He compares emotionally unfelt writing to a paper flower: it may resemble a flower externally, but it has no life (Qahhor, 1944). This idea is especially important for criminal fiction. If the writer does not emotionally and intellectually enter the world being described, the crime narrative becomes dry, artificial, and unconvincing.

Qahhor also criticized works that hide weakness behind noble intentions. He argued that no matter how noble the goal may be, a literary work must still attract the reader artistically. Using Chekhov's metaphor, he suggests that even if sugar is sprinkled on a frog, one still cannot eat it (Qahhor, n.d.). This means that good intentions cannot replace artistic mastery. A detective work may aim to promote justice, morality, or legal awareness, but if it lacks artistic quality, it cannot become a powerful literary work.

Komiljon Sindarov and Professional Experience in Detective Fiction

Among contemporary Uzbek criminal fiction writers, there are also authors who write based on events they have heard, known, or encountered in their professional activity. Because they understand the deeper roots of criminal events, they are able to create convincing solutions and attract readers' attention. One of the most productive contemporary writers in this direction is Komiljon Sindarov, Doctor of Legal Sciences and member of the Writers' Union of Uzbekistan.

Sindarov is a lawyer by profession, and he entered the world of literary creativity a little more than a decade ago. Today he is gaining a specific place and reputation in the Uzbek detective genre. By transferring details of criminal cases encountered in professional practice into literary form, he creates mysterious events and unexpected solutions that attract readers.

His works such as *Qimmatga tushgan xato*, *Temuriylar kutubxonasining siri*, *Kechikkan qasos*, *Amirlikning oltin taxti izidan*, and *Tungi qotillik* can be regarded as texts that contributed to a new stage in the development of the Uzbek detective genre (Sindarov, n.d.-a, n.d.-b, n.d.-c, n.d.-d, n.d.-e).

Sindarov himself notes that he was often not in a hurry to publish his writings in the periodical press. He also states that if it had not been for the encouragement of the respected writer Xudoyberdi To'xtaboyev, he might not have attempted to write detective fiction. According to Sindarov, To'xtaboyev read his poems many years earlier and suggested that he had an inclination toward prose and should write detective works (Sindarov, n.d.-f). This

statement shows that Sindarov's movement into detective fiction was not accidental but connected with literary encouragement and recognition of narrative potential.

Poet Zulfiya Mo'minova comments that a writer should create works that lead readers toward enlightenment, and that Sindarov has shown through his writings what a real detective work should be. She also notes that his works strongly attract readers to reading and call them toward fiction (Mo'minova, n.d.). This assessment emphasizes the educational and literary significance of Sindarov's detective prose.

The Structure of *Kechikkan qasos*

Sindarov's detective novel *Kechikkan qasos* is one of the works that readers received with particular interest. The knot of the novel begins with the mysterious deaths of all family members of bank manager Zuhridin Tog'ayev, who is brutally murdered, his body burned, and his bones buried in a cemetery. Investigators arrive from the capital to uncover the case and begin working together with their local colleagues.

In the novel, the author depicts the difficult nature of investigative work by showing how investigators question each suspect and witness according to their character and worldview. This is an important stylistic feature. The investigation is not presented mechanically. Each dialogue is adapted to the psychology of the person being questioned. Thus, the language of interrogation becomes a means of characterization.

The plot is built on complicated puzzles. In order to find the answer to one question, investigators must open a case from twenty years earlier. Mistakes made at that time are revealed. The "golden rule" of investigation in the novel is that finding and punishing the real guilty person is important so that an innocent person does not become the victim of injustice and the real criminal does not remain free. If this principle is violated, new crimes may arise, and most importantly, distrust toward justice may poison people's hearts.

In order to mislead the investigators, the real killer secretly places shoes covered with cemetery soil in the yard of Xolmatboy, who had argued with the deceased Zuhridin and become estranged from him. Xolmatboy, who has become mentally unstable, even confesses to the murder. However, investigator Faxriddin Karimovich does not believe, despite these pieces of evidence, that Xolmatboy is the real killer, and continues the investigation.

As a result, events connected with a school director who was slandered, imprisoned, and died in prison twenty years earlier, during the time when Zuhridin worked as a state farm director in Zomin, are recalled. It is discovered that after the director's death, his wife hanged herself and his son was hit by a car. The only surviving daughter was sent to an orphanage. At the age of thirteen, she ran away from the orphanage, and the story was forgotten.

Through the chain of investigation, it becomes known that this girl is Zubayda, whose real name is Mayram, and who had been pretending to be deaf and mute in Zuhridin's house. Mayram, who had passed several investigations without being found guilty, donates a large portion of Zuhridin's illegally obtained money to orphanages and is arrested in an airplane cabin while flying to Sharjah. Having lived for nearly twenty years

pretending to be deaf and mute for the sake of revenge, Mayram finally “speaks” and gives testimony before the investigators. Justice is restored: the real killer is identified.

The educational significance of the novel lies in the idea that no matter how much a crooked deed is covered up, one day its trace will appear. Sh. Jabborov’s positive assessment of the novel is also relevant here. He notes that it is pleasing to say that the author’s work in the detective genre is successful (Jabborov, n.d.).

So‘poqsoydagi sirli qotillik and the Historical Detective

Another memorable work in Sindarov’s creative output is the detective story *So‘poqsoydagi sirli qotillik*. This work is a logical continuation of the author’s previous texts. It depicts the difficult efforts of prosecutor’s investigator Sanjarbek and his colleagues to solve a terrible and mysterious murder committed in one of the remote villages. The same investigator also appears in earlier works, which creates continuity across Sindarov’s detective prose.

The originality of this work lies in the fact that although the main events take place in the present century, more precisely in 2012–2013, one end of the story reaches back to the sixteenth century, to the period of Shaybanid rule. This historical connection becomes the basis for uncovering the mysterious murder. In terms of its character, the work may be evaluated as a good example of the historical detective genre.

This combination of contemporary crime and historical memory expands the possibilities of Uzbek detective fiction. It shows that crime may not only be a present-day event; it may also be rooted in past conflicts, historical secrets, forgotten documents, and inherited injustice. Through such a structure, Sindarov connects legal investigation with historical inquiry.

Factors Weakening Contemporary Criminal Fiction

Uzbek writers today are trying to depict unexpected aspects of real-life events in works on criminal themes. Criminal fiction has formed its own readership. However, not all works are of high artistic quality. Several factors may explain this.

Tohir Malik, who is known for many famous criminal works in Uzbek literature, warns that just as meaningless shallow songs have increased, so too have works called “detective” that do not meet even the smallest requirements of literary fiction. He argues that measures should be taken against this situation, though simply rejecting such works is not enough (Malik, n.d.-g).

One reason for the failure of some contemporary criminal works is that writers do not work tirelessly on their texts. Some young authors write directly on the computer and seem to have lost the habit of repeated editing. As a result, dryness is felt in their works. The language lacks richness and sweetness. The language of Qodiriy and Cho‘lpon seems foreign to them. If a contemporary young writer were to write *O‘tkan kunlar*, he might simply say that Kumush was “a very beautiful girl” and avoid the detailed description of her washing her face or the subtle artistic scene reflected in the water. If he were to write

Kecha va kunduz, he might simply write “spring came again” and lack the patience to describe the delicate hands of girls squeezing usma (Malik, n.d.-h).

Based on the views of Abdulla Qahhor, who became known as a master of concise and polished sentences, and Tohir Malik, who raised Uzbek criminal literature to a higher level through his works, several factors negatively affecting the artistic quality of contemporary criminal fiction may be identified.

First, some writers rely too much on the sensational nature of the chosen event and write hastily without sufficient attention to artistic quality. Second, some works give too much emphasis to narration and are written without emotional involvement. Third, some authors begin to feel like detectives themselves and write in the language of legal documents rather than artistic prose. They become overly interested in revealing investigative secrets, creating puzzles, and impressing readers with solutions. Fourth, some works make a criminal the main character and, while not denying his betrayal or immoral actions, excessively portray his inner world as if it were completely pure. Such works may be misread by inexperienced young readers as a justification or romanticization of crime.

These problems show that criminal fiction requires responsibility. The writer must not only construct an interesting plot but also consider the moral and psychological effect of the work on readers. Crime should not be beautified. A criminal character may be psychologically complex, but the work must not erase the moral seriousness of crime.

Conclusion

The analysis of language and style issues in Uzbek criminal fiction shows that this genre is developing actively but unevenly. On the one hand, Uzbek literature has produced strong examples of detective and criminal prose through the works of O’lmas Umarbekov, Tohir Malik, Xurshid Do’stmuhammad, and Komiljon Sindarov. These writers have contributed to the formation of national criminal fiction by developing suspenseful composition, psychological characterization, moral-didactic reflection, social criticism, and professional investigative detail.

On the other hand, the popularity of the genre has also led to the appearance of superficial works that do not meet the artistic requirements of literature. Some writers rely on sensational events, excessive narration, legalistic language, or artificial puzzles, while neglecting style, psychology, composition, and emotional truth. As Abdulla Qahhor emphasized, a writer must feel what he writes; otherwise, the reader will not feel anything either (Qahhor, 1944). This idea remains highly relevant for contemporary Uzbek criminal fiction.

The best examples of Uzbek criminal prose demonstrate that crime literature should not be understood as “light” or merely entertaining literature. When created with artistic responsibility, it may provide readers with pleasure, moral reflection, psychological insight, and spiritual nourishment. Tohir Malik’s *Shaytanat*, O’lmas Umarbekov’s *Yoz yomg’iri*, Xurshid Do’stmuhammad’s works on women’s fate and social indifference, and Komiljon Sindarov’s professionally grounded detective narratives show the artistic potential of the genre.

Thus, successful criminal fiction requires the unity of language, style, and structure. The crime itself is only the starting point. The true literary value of a criminal work depends on the writer's ability to organize events, reveal character psychology, use details meaningfully, create suspense, preserve moral balance, and transform criminal reality into artistic truth.

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