

**THE PORTRAYAL OF INTERNAL MIGRATION IN UZBEK LITERATURE:
HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND AESTHETIC INTERPRETATION****Namazova Manzura Urakovna**

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Abstract. This article provides a comprehensive examination of internal migration in Uzbek literature. Internal migration is defined as intranational population movement, primarily from rural to urban areas. The study analyzes this phenomenon across two distinct historical periods: the Soviet era (1930-1980) and the post-independence period (1991-present). The research employs narrative analysis and psychological-interpretive methods to trace the transformation of internal migration from a symbol of socialist progress into a source of economic and psychological suffering. The article identifies four key thematic patterns: rural-urban cultural conflict, nostalgia and contradictory desire, identity crisis, and social criticism. The study applies Homi Bhabha's concept of «third space» to reveal both distinctively local characteristics and emerging global resonances. The research demonstrates that internal migration literature serves a crucial social function by exposing the internal psychological dimensions of migration alongside its external manifestations. The study concludes that younger generation writers (2010-2020) are increasingly incorporating hybrid identity and environmental factors into this established literary tradition.

Keywords: internal migration, Uzbek literature, rural-urban migration, Soviet realism, post-Soviet transition, identity crisis, nostalgia, «third space,» narrative analysis, cultural displacement.

Internal migration constitutes a fundamental demographic and social phenomenon of modernity. This term refers to population movement within national borders, typically from rural to urban areas, from mountainous regions to valleys, or between provinces. Unlike international migration, which has generated extensive literary and theoretical attention, internal migration has received comparatively limited scholarly analysis, particularly in Central Asian contexts. This article addresses this gap by examining how Uzbek literature has represented internal migration across two distinct historical periods. The first period encompasses Soviet industrialization and collectivization (1930-1980). The second period covers post-independence economic transition (1991-present).

The significance of this theme extends beyond demographic documentation. Internal migration in Uzbek literature serves as a privileged lens for examining psychological transformation, cultural dislocation, social adaptation, and identity crisis. The movement from village to city encapsulates broader processes of modernization. This movement generates narrative forms that oscillate between celebration and critique, progress and loss.

The theoretical framework of this study combines three methodological approaches. First, the research employs narrative analysis to examine textual structures. Second, the study uses psychological interpretation to analyze character development. Third, the research applies postcolonial theory to understand cultural positioning. These methods examine how textual strategies—internal monologue, dialogue, and realistic detail—construct migration experience. While internal migration lacks the explicit postcolonial dimensions of international diaspora, Homi Bhabha's concept of «third space» proves productive for analyzing the in-between condition of rural-urban migrants who belong fully to neither world.

Soviet-era internal migration possessed predominantly economic and political character. This migration was driven by four major factors: collectivization, industrialization, post-war industrial reconstruction, and mass rural-to-urban relocation. These processes generated distinctive literary responses that combined socialist realist conventions with genuine psychological insight.



The Soviet Uzbek literary establishment faced a clear ideological imperative. Migration had to represent progress toward modernity, education, and socialist consciousness. However, major authors negotiated this requirement with nuanced representation of human costs.

Abdulla Qahhor stands as the most accomplished portrayer of internal migration in Uzbek literature. His stories and novellas trace the psychological suffering, adaptation difficulties, and cultural contradictions of rural-to-urban migrants with unprecedented depth.

«Sarob» (Mirage, 1939) provides a paradigmatic example of Qahhor's approach. The protagonist is a young man who migrates from village to city seeking education and modernity. This character experiences profound psychological dislocation throughout the narrative.

The story employs a third-person limited perspective. This narrative technique closely follows the protagonist's consciousness and generates intense identification with his experience. Qahhor alternates between present-tense city experience and memory-flashbacks to village life. This structural alternation creates tension between «then» and «now.»

The city appears as a space of alienation in Qahhor's symbolic geography. The narrative presents «cold» human relations, anonymous crowds, and material calculation as dominant urban characteristics. The village, retrospectively constructed through memory, becomes a space of warmth, authenticity, and organic community. This binary opposition serves both realistic and symbolic functions.

Qahhor's detailed representation of the protagonist's internal monologue reveals what might be termed «migration melancholia». This condition involves simultaneous desire for modernity and impossible return to pre-migration wholeness. The story's conclusion generates tragic recognition when the protagonist acknowledges his irrecoverable transformation.

Qahhor employs specific stylistic features to materialize cultural conflict. The author uses folk-proverbial language for village reminiscences. This linguistic choice contrasts with urban bureaucratic and commercial discourse. The differentiation between these language registers embodies the cultural conflict between rural and urban worlds.

Qahhor presents internal migration as transformation of the inner world. This transformation involves a contradiction between aspiration toward «new life» and nostalgia for the past. His characters occupy a liminal position. They cannot fully embrace urban modernity, yet they cannot return to village authenticity.

Oybek's works present internal migration through the prism of collectivization and industrialization. The author emphasizes social transformation over individual psychology.

Textual analysis: «Navoi» (1945) and industrial narratives

Oybek's works operate within a specific ideological framework. The author's protagonists typically embrace migration as a necessary sacrifice for socialist construction. The «new Soviet person» forms through overcoming rural «backwardness» and adapting to industrial discipline.

Despite ideological optimism, Oybek's texts contain an undercurrent of loss. Village community dissolution, traditional skill obsolescence, and generational conflict appear as necessary but painful costs of progress.

Oybek's migrants are collective protagonists rather than individualized psychological subjects. The author depicts workers' brigades and kolkhoz youth groups. This character typology reflects socialist realist aesthetic priorities.

Comparative assessment reveals important differences between Qahhor and Oybek. Qahhor emphasizes irrecoverable loss. Oybek emphasizes constructive transformation. Both authors, however, represent migration as fundamentally disruptive of traditional rural life.

G'afur G'ulom and Hamid Olimjon addressed wartime and post-war relocations in their works. These authors depicted evacuation, reconstruction, family separation, labor difficulties, and cultural adaptation. Their works extended the internal migration theme to encompass forced displacement and national trauma.

Table 1. Soviet Period Internal Migration Literature: Comparative Overview



Author	Major Works	Migration Context	Narrative Emphasis	Ideological Orientation
Abdulla Qahhor	«Sarob,» «Qanotli qushlar»	Rural-to-urban (education, employment)	Psychological suffering, nostalgia	Ambivalent modernism
Oybek	«Navoi,» «Quyosh bolyori»	Collectivization, industrialization	Social transformation, collective heroism	Socialist optimism
G'afur G'ulom	Wartime poetry, sketches	Evacuation, reconstruction	National survival, family separation	Patriotic mobilization
Hamid Olimjon	Post-war narratives	Post-war reconstruction	Labor heroism, generational change	Socialist construction

Soviet-era Uzbek literature represented internal migration through realist and social-critical methods. Authors employed protagonists' internal monologues, dialogues, and life details to contrast village traditional life with urban new values. This period established fundamental narrative patterns that post-independence literature would later transform. These patterns include: rural-urban binary, nostalgia structure, psychological depth, and social criticism potential.

Independence generated new internal migration dynamics. Four factors intensified rural-to-urban relocation during the economic transition period. These factors were: unemployment, agricultural difficulties, urban development, and economic inequality. Major destination cities included Tashkent, Samarkand, and the Ferghana Valley region. Unlike Soviet-era ideologically-framed migration, post-independence movement appeared as survival strategy and aspiration for economic opportunity.

Demographic data indicates significant internal migration. Tashkent's population grew from approximately 2.1 million (1991) to over 2.9 million (2020). This growth occurred primarily through internal migration. This massive population movement generated distinctive literary responses.

Post-independence literature represents internal migration through psychological and social-spiritual dimensions with increased depth.

Contemporary narratives emphasize family separation. These stories depict village youth studying or working in cities while separated from parents, traditional community, and rural social networks.

Protagonists experience identity crisis in contemporary works. These characters cannot fully accept village traditions or urban «modern» values. They inhabit an in-between condition. This condition generates what might be termed «internal migration identity crisis.» This crisis is distinct from international diaspora experience but structurally analogous.

Urban life receives critical treatment in contemporary literature. Authors depict high costs, unemployment, and cultural alienation. Migration appears as economic necessity generating social suffering rather than progressive transformation.

Younger generation writers have actively appropriated the internal migration theme. These authors produce works with intensified psychological depth.

Narrative analysis of selected stories reveals consistent patterns across contemporary works.



Authors provide detailed realistic description of urban topography. City spaces—streets, markets, rental apartments, educational institutions—serve as materialization of migration experience. The city appears as simultaneously opportunity-space and alienation-space.

Extended internal monologue techniques represent migration's subjective dimensions. These techniques, influenced by global literary modernism, construct complex psychological portraits through characters' dreams, memories, and fantasies.

Younger writers increasingly represent the protagonist's condition as «unhomeliness.» This concept, drawn from Bhabha, describes belonging fully to neither village nor city. This «third space» of cultural hybridity represents theoretical sophistication and global literary influence.

Contemporary narratives typically construct village memory as lost wholeness. Yet these narratives recognize this wholeness as irrecoverable. This construction generates a melancholic tone distinct from Soviet-era optimistic or tragic resolutions.

Story patterns in contemporary journals reveal consistent narrative structures. These structures include: protagonist's arrival in city with disorientation and sensory overload; initial optimism and subsequent difficulty; family communication through phone calls, remittances, and occasional visits; romantic relationships complicated by migration status; and ambivalent conclusion with neither successful adaptation nor return.

Comparative analysis with world literature reveals shared patterns across cultures. Internal migration universally generates four phenomena: rural-urban cultural conflict, nostalgia structure, identity transformation, and social criticism.

These patterns appear in Chinese «root-seeking» literature (Moyan), African urbanization narratives (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o), and Latin American rural-urban migration texts.

Uzbek internal migration literature possesses specific characteristics shaped by historical context.

Post-Soviet transition trauma distinguishes Uzbek literature from other traditions. Unlike postcolonial international migration's global identity crisis, Uzbek internal migration emphasizes local, post-Soviet transition suffering. This suffering includes economic collapse, institutional transformation, and value uncertainty.

Soviet legacy continues to shape contemporary migration. Contemporary migration continues Soviet-era rural-urban patterns while inverting their valuation. Where Soviet literature celebrated urbanization, post-independence literature often critiques its costs.

Family-centered narrative represents a distinctive Uzbek characteristic. Strong Uzbek family and intergenerational focus generates migration stories centered on family separation and reunion. This focus differs from individualist Western narratives.

Realist aesthetic predominance characterizes Uzbek approaches. Unlike magical realist or postmodern treatments elsewhere, Uzbek literature maintains realistic, documentary, and psychological approaches.

Table 2. Comparative Analysis: Global vs. Uzbek Internal Migration Literature

Dimension	Global Internal Migration Literature	Uzbek Context
Historical context	Industrialization, postcolonial urbanization	Soviet collectivization, post-Soviet transition
Primary causation	Economic opportunity, escape from rural poverty	Soviet ideological mobilization; post-Soviet economic necessity



Dimension	Global Internal Migration Literature	Uzbek Context
Narrative mode	Magical realism (Latin America), urban naturalism (Europe)	Socialist realism (Soviet); psychological realism (contemporary)
Ideological orientation	Ambivalent modernity; critique of capitalist urbanization	Socialist optimism (Soviet); critical realism (contemporary)
Identity focus	Individual modernization; class consciousness	Family and community rupture; national-cultural identity
Temporal structure	Historical progress or cyclical return	Nostalgia for lost wholeness; irreversible transformation
Environmental dimension	Emerging (climate migration)	Emerging (drought, desertification increasingly referenced)

Globalization influences contemporary Uzbek internal migration literature in three ways.

Younger writers increasingly engage with postcolonial theory. These authors employ Bhabha's «third space» and hybridity concepts to conceptualize internal migration experience.

Climate change, drought, and desertification increasingly appear as migration causes. These environmental factors connect Uzbek literature to global cli-fi tendencies.

Smartphone-mediated family contact, social media representation of rural life, and digital remittance practices appear as new narrative elements.

While Bhabha's «third space» concept developed for postcolonial diaspora contexts, productive application to internal migration requires modification. Internal migrants occupy an «internal third space.» This space involves cultural and psychological positioning between rural and urban, traditional and modern, that occurs within national boundaries.

This «internal third space» possesses three distinctive characteristics.

Reversibility distinguishes internal from international migration. Unlike international migration, internal movement permits return. This reversibility generates permanent negotiation between here and there.

National continuity reduces «othering» while maintaining cultural difference. Shared language and citizenship create this continuity.

Familiar strangeness characterizes urban spaces. These spaces are known through media, education, and prior visits. They are simultaneously familiar and strange upon migration.

These characteristics generate specific narrative forms: cyclical rather than linear temporality; ambivalent rather than tragic resolution; and social criticism directed at national conditions rather than colonial or global structures.

Internal migration portrayal in Uzbek literature reveals local dimensions of human destiny. Soviet-era representation interpreted migration as a symbol of social progress. Independence-era literature treats migration as a source of economic and psychological suffering. This thematic evolution strengthens literature's social function by exposing migration's internal, psychological dimensions alongside its external manifestations.

The established tradition of internal migration literature provides foundation for future development. Younger generation writers can deepen this theme through three approaches.



Environmental integration can connect internal migration to climate change, water scarcity, and desertification. These factors are emerging as urgent Central Asian realities.

Virtual connectivity can represent smartphone-mediated family relationships, digital remittances, and social media's transformation of rural-urban connection.

Theoretical synthesis can further engage with global migration theory while maintaining local specificities.

Internal migration literature serves a crucial cultural function. This literature preserves memory of transformation, gives voice to marginalized migrant experience, and imagines possible futures. As Uzbekistan continues urbanizing—projected to reach 60% urban population by 2030—this literary tradition will likely intensify and diversify.

The comparative methodology employed in this study demonstrates both shared human experiences and nationally specific characteristics. Shared experiences include nostalgia, identity crisis, and cultural dislocation. Nationally specific characteristics are shaped by Soviet and post-Soviet historical conditions. Uzbek internal migration literature, while distinct from international diaspora traditions, contributes to global understanding of modernization's human costs and possibilities.

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