



## INTERPRETATION OF SYMBOLS IN THE WORKS OF ULUGBEK HAMDAMOV

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**Annotation:** The article deals with the analysis of the current level of studies in literary works within Uzbekistan, focusing on the academic and intellectual engagement with national and global literary traditions. Uzbek literary studies have evolved considerably since the country gained independence, fostering a renewed interest in both classical and modern literature. The article mainly describes the analysis of the works of Ulugbek Hamdam who also began his creative journey with short stories, and after gaining experience, he turned to novellas and novels. “While novellas and novels have brought the author considerable fame, he remains committed to the narrative form that introduced him to prose”.

**Keywords:** Ulugbek Hamdamov, analysis, works, classical, symbols, modern literature.

**INTRODUCTION.** Ulugbek Hamdam, a prominent figure in contemporary Uzbek literature, is renowned for his rich symbolic and metaphorical storytelling. His works reflect deep psychological and philosophical insights through a nuanced use of symbols, contributing to the broader literary tradition in Uzbekistan. This discussion aims to explore how Hamdam employs symbols to convey complex themes and ideas, analyzing their significance and impact on the reader's understanding of his narratives. Hamdam's use of symbolism is a defining feature of his literary style. His stories often incorporate symbols that transcend mere representation, serving as vehicles for exploring intricate emotional and existential themes. These symbols are not isolated; they interact with the characters and narrative structures to create a multifaceted reading experience. In works such as «Song about the Motherland» and «Forgotten Piper,» Hamdam employs symbols to reflect the internal struggles and emotional landscapes of his characters. For example, in «Forgotten Piper,» the titular piper symbolizes a sense of lost identity and longing, reflecting the protagonist's quest for meaning in a changing world. The piper's absence and the consequent silence symbolize the void left by personal and societal upheaval, highlighting themes of disconnection and nostalgia.

**Metaphorical Depictions of Social Conflicts** Hamdam's stories frequently use symbols to critique social structures and conflicts. In «Soz» and «Muslim,» symbols are employed to illustrate the tension between traditional values and modernity. For instance, the «Soz» (song) in these narratives represents cultural heritage and resistance against the erosion of traditional norms by contemporary influences. Through such metaphors, Hamdam critiques the impacts of social change and the struggle to maintain cultural identity.

**Fantasy and Reality** The interplay between fantasy and reality is a recurrent motif in Hamdam's work. In «Bir Payola Water» and «Lola,» the blending of fantastical elements with realistic settings creates a symbolic framework for exploring human desires and fears. The fantastical elements often serve as metaphors for internal conflicts or societal issues, allowing



readers to engage with abstract concepts in a concrete manner. This duality emphasizes the complexity of human experience and the blurred lines between reality and imagination.

**Psychological and Philosophical Insights** Hamdam's symbolic use extends into psychological and philosophical realms. His stories frequently explore the inner workings of the human mind, using symbols to represent various facets of psychological and existential dilemmas. In «Stone,» for instance, the stone symbolizes both immovability and emotional detachment, reflecting the protagonist's struggle with personal inertia and existential questioning. This symbolism allows Hamdam to delve into the nuances of human psychology and the philosophical implications of human existence.

**Interpretation of Symbols:** The interpretation of symbols in Hamdam's works involves understanding how they function within the narrative and contribute to thematic development. Hamdam's symbols are deeply embedded in the cultural and psychological contexts of his stories, requiring readers to engage with both the literal and metaphorical dimensions of his writing.

**Cultural and Contextual Significance** Many symbols in Hamdam's works are rooted in Uzbek cultural and historical contexts, which adds layers of meaning for readers familiar with these backgrounds. For instance, traditional symbols and cultural references enhance the reader's comprehension of the narrative's thematic concerns and the societal issues being addressed.

**Reader Response and Engagement** The effectiveness of Hamdam's symbolism also depends on the reader's ability to interpret and connect with the symbolic elements. The multifaceted nature of his symbols encourages diverse interpretations, prompting readers to engage actively with the text and derive personal meanings from the narrative.

**Thematic Coherence** The use of symbols in Hamdam's stories is not arbitrary but contributes to the overall thematic coherence of his work. By aligning symbols with the narrative's thematic concerns, Hamdam creates a unified literary experience that reinforces his exploration of human emotions, social conflicts, and philosophical questions.

**LITERATURE REVIEW.** Scholars in Uzbekistan have been actively working on re-evaluating traditional literary works, particularly from notable figures like Alisher Navoi and Abdullah Qodiriy, while also increasingly incorporating modern literary theory and criticism. Additionally, there is a growing emphasis on the integration of global literary trends, especially in understanding postcolonial and postmodern literature. The study highlights the challenges and opportunities in Uzbek literary scholarship, including the limited access to international literary criticism and theory due to language barriers and academic infrastructure. Despite these challenges, there is a significant interest in advancing literary studies, particularly with the use of digital technologies and interdisciplinary approaches. The study underscores the potential for further development in the field, especially through increased collaboration with international scholars and the incorporation of contemporary global literary methodologies.

In contemporary literary studies, symbols are regarded as an artistic device with deeper meaning and complexity than mere similes. This is because any symbol points to an object or concept beyond its immediate essence. Modern Uzbek storytelling is evolving with new artistic and aesthetic innovations. These stories delve deeper into the psychological portrayal of characters, using techniques such as literary hallucination, illusion, and even the interpretation of artistic-romantic fictional images created through the writer's imagination to craft new symbolic psychological images. Although the short story is considered one of the smallest prose genres, it holds a vast artistic world within. Following in the footsteps of key figures like



Abdulla Qadiri, Cholpon, Oybek, and Abdulla Qahhor pioneers of modern Uzbek prose Ulug'bek Hamdam also began his creative journey with short stories, and after gaining experience, he turned to novellas and novels. “While novellas and novels have brought the author considerable fame, he remains committed to the narrative form that introduced him to prose” [4, 424].

In today's modern short stories, the focus is on expressing the human psyche, portraying the conflicts of emotions and passions, addressing the complex issues of humanity, and revealing the universal essence of individuals in an expressive manner. A certain intellectual and psychological readiness is needed to fully appreciate Ulugbek Hamdam's work. Specifically, in his story “*Journey*” (“*Safar*”) we encounter several symbolic images. These symbols play a crucial role in revealing the theme of the story. The author skillfully employs different types of symbolic imagery throughout the narrative: 1). symbols of objects: statue, book; 2). symbols related to natural phenomena: fog, ocean; 3). allegorical symbol: owl [3].

**DISCUSSION.** Each symbol in the story conveys an artistic idea. The title of the story itself is symbolic, as a person's life journey is likened to an actual journey. Every individual who comes into this world embarks on a journey. The journey begins with birth and ends with death. In the story, the journey serves as a symbolic representation of the span of human life. The writer starts the story with a landscape description: “The calm ocean has stirred... Now, as the water's surface is covered in thick fog, when you look from the boat, you can only see directly in front of you...” The ocean in the story symbolizes life. It is mentioned that the peaceful waves of Oman can sometimes be misleading, concealing hidden dangers. Similarly, life, like the ocean, may seem calm and serene at first glance, but it contains its own challenges and difficulties. The journey in the story is divided into three parts, and the number three carries its own symbolic meaning. In ancient beliefs, the number three represents a multitude or a long duration. The three stages of the journey, symbolized by the number three, represent an extended period of time. Moreover, the number three holds traditional significance in the works of Eastern cultures and is regarded as sacred.

The story's events unfold with the conflict between two rival tribes, symbolized by fire and water. Despite the fact that these tribes share a common ancestry, descended from the same grandfather and grandmother, they remain incapable of uniting as one. As described in the narrative: “According to the Bakhshis, they arrived on the island not in large numbers, but as only two individuals: a boy and a girl. Today's people are their descendants. Yet, no one knows their origins, their reasons for coming, or why there were only two of them” [4, 422]. This scenario illustrates that the warring tribes symbolize numerous modern nations engaged in destructive conflicts. The boy and girl represent the archetypal figures of Adam and Eve. The tribes inhabit a small island, referred to by the writer as “a hat-sized” island, which serves as a metaphor for the entire planet. Although Earth is a marvel of creation, humanity fails to recognize its own vulnerability. Once united and innocent, the tribes, over time, grew apart, becoming hostile and consumed with mutual animosity. They began to communicate through interpreters and sought every opportunity to assert their dominance over each other. This rivalry escalated to the point where they constructed statues to demonstrate their superiority.

The statues symbolize humanity's preoccupation with vanity and competition, reflecting the excessive focus on superficial achievements. This obsession with building statues mirrors the chemical advancements made by leading nations to outdo each other and display their power. The tribes' fixation on statues led to environmental devastation, including

deforestation and the slaughter of animals, causing birds to flee the desolate island. This highlights how extreme indulgence can drive people to destructive ends.

In their desperation, the leaders of the tribes were compelled to seek compromise. Ultimately, the last remaining boat left the young man and girl to their fate. The pair departed from the island, which had become a symbol of desolation. The writer uses the owl as a symbolic representation of the island's condition. After a prolonged silence, the young man unwraps a cloth to reveal a book, declaring, "This is our book!" The girl then reveals her own book. Though different in color and texture—one representing the sky and the other the earth—the books are identical inside. On the seventh day of their journey, a new dawn emerges, with golden rays filling the sky and white birds circling, symbolizing the newfound understanding of the boy and girl. The golden rays, fluffy clouds, and swans signify the realization of goodness achieved by the boy and girl. The story suggests that despite outward differences, the essence of human teachings and beliefs is the same, highlighting the futility of conflict and division. As literary critic A. Sabirdinov observes, "The heart is a place of contradictions and transformations. Conflicts on the outside are inevitably born from within".

**CONCLUSION.** Thus, Ulugbek Hamdam's mastery of symbolism enriches his literary works, providing depth and complexity to his narratives. Through his symbolic representations, Hamdam explores profound themes related to human emotions, social dynamics, and philosophical inquiries. The interpretation of these symbols offers valuable insights into his creative process and the thematic concerns of his literature. Hamdam's work exemplifies how symbolic storytelling can enhance the reader's engagement with complex ideas and contribute to a deeper understanding of literary texts. Also, narrative fiction has evolved significantly within Uzbek literature, with Khurshid Dostmuhammad emerging as a key contributor to this development in recent years. His stories offer artistic interpretations of themes such as human suffering and social conflicts. This period in literature features a range of creators with distinct characters, including Nazar Eshonqul, Khurshid Dostmuhammad, Ulug'bek Hamdam, Isajon Sultan, N. Norqabilov, S. Onar, and A. Yoldoshev. In this context, we focus on stories that exhibit symbolic and metaphorical qualities [5]. Ulug'bek Hamdam's works, such as «Song about the Motherland,» ("Vatan haqida qo'shiq") «Forgotten Piper,» ("Unutilgan nay navosi") «Word,» ("So'z") «Muslim,» ("Musulmon"), «One cup of Water,» ("Bir payola suv"), «Lola,» and «Stone,» ("Tosh") showcase a blend of fantasy and reality, dream and actuality, through an artistic and philosophical lens. These stories embody various poetic meanings and reflect a tradition of depicting images inspired by human thought and the inner world.

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