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METHODOLOGICAL JOURNAL**<http://mentaljournal-jspu.uz/index.php/mesmj/index>**ULUGBEK HAMDAM'S NOVEL "THE ROAD": THE SKILL OF  
INTERPRETATION AND THE ART OF ANALYSIS. INTRODUCTION TO THE  
POETICS OF THE NOVEL****Zulfiya Pardaeva***Doctor of philology, professor  
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**Abstract:** Ulugbek Hamdam's novels "Balance", "Sabo and Samandar", "Rebellion and Obedience", "Father" are distinguished by their unique poetics. The writer's new novel "The road" shows the skill of complex, multi-layered artistic interpretation of the writer's Roman thought. The artistic skill of the writer is not only in the interpretation of religious, encyclopedic, philosophical, historical knowledge in the novel, but also in the fact that the reader is required to be aware of the sources used by the author. The novel "The road" is a novel based on a complex artistic system. Synthesized styles of realism, modernism and postmodernism are successfully used in the novel.

**Introduction.** The novels of writer Ulugbek Hamdam occupy a distinctive place in contemporary Uzbek literature. His works "Muvozanat" (Balance), "Sabo va Samandar" (Sabo and Samandar), "Isyon va itoat" (Rebellion and obedience), and "Ota" (Father) stand out for their unique poetics. In particular, the novel "Rebellion and obedience" has earned its rightful place in the lineage of world fiction through the breadth of the issues it explores, its artistic imagery, philosophical reflection, psychological collisions, and the way its system of characters serves the author's conceptual idea of this we can speak without reservation.

The novel "The Road", first published in issues 6–7 of the journal "Yoshlik" in 2015 and later included in the 2022 collection "Yaxshiyam sen borsan" (Thank Goodness you exist), testifies to the complex, multi-layered mastery of artistic interpretation that defines the

author's novelistic thinking. What we came to appreciate in the course of reading is that the author's artistic skill lies not only in the way religious, encyclopedic, philosophical, and historical knowledge is woven into the novel, but also in the implicit demand placed on the reader: one is expected to be familiar with the very sources the author draws upon. Notably, references to these sources are not indicated within the text itself a technique characteristic of postmodernist style.

It is also worth emphasizing that many episodes unfold within the protagonists consciousness and are rendered through a retrospective narrative structure a feature distinctly associated with modernism. Like the works of Timur Pulatov and Marcel Proust, "The road" invites the reader to read slowly, unhurriedly, thoughtfully" (Khurshid Dustmukhammad).

As we observe the emergence of synthesized styles in world fiction at the turn of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, we find that this same process is unfolding within Uzbek novels as well. Works such as Khurshid Dustmukhammad's

"Donishmand Sizif" (The wise Sisyphus), Nazar Eshonqul's "Gorugli", and Ulugbek Hamdam's "Rebellion and obedience" all belong to the genre of the synthesized novel. "The road" is likewise a novel built upon a complex artistic system.

The distinguished twentieth-century Spanish philosopher Jose Ortega y Gasset once described modernism as "a literature for the few." In our view, "The road" too is not easily digestible by the ordinary reader. Each paragraph of the novel's structure is thematically interconnected yet composed of episodes interpreting vastly different sources the reader is expected to be versed in divine knowledge: the suras and verses of the Holy Quran, their exegesis, hadiths and narratives, the "Qisas al-Rabghuziy" specifically the story of Adam the Pure, peace be upon him, and Eve as well as the artistic and aesthetic views and creative works of Mawlana Rumi, Alisher Navai, and Boborahim Mashrab. In a word, Ortega's description of "literature for the few can aptly be applied to "The road".

Literary scholar S. Kamilova, who wrote the preface to Ulugbek Hamdam's novel "The road", offers the following assessment: "A vivid aspiration toward creating modernist text is evident in the short novel "Solitude" and the novel "The road". The precise rendering of images, the depiction of characters in their dynamic development, the investment of details with particular meaning and function, and numerous other such techniques are characteristic of U. Hamdam's arsenal of realist text-making".

**Methodology.** It is worth noting that "The road", a work of particular significance within Ulugbek Hamdam's philosophical novels, likewise displays a range of distinctive artistic qualities. The synthesized styles of realism, modernism, and postmodernism employed with

great success in the novel serve the representation of Quranic motifs within the text. The extensive use of stream-of-consciousness techniques has further enriched the possibilities of artistic psychologism.

Let us now pay our attention to the poetics of the novel "The road". The essence of the novel is disclosed through the epigraph, drawn from verses 15 and 16 of Surah An-Nahl of the Holy Quran: "And He has cast into the earth firmly set mountains, lest it shift beneath you, and rivers and roads, that you may be guided, and landmarks. And by the stars they are guided."

The inspired words of Mawlana Rumi "I am but a helpless drop, yet within my heart lives the longing of an ocean" give artistic expression to the author's conceptual idea. Reading the novel invites contemplation. Retrospective thoughts become intertwined with associative reflections. At times one cannot distinguish dream from wakefulness. Surah Yasin comes to mind, and one grasps the miracle. As the author gives artistic expression to a world no painter could render, no genius could create and, most perfect and sublime of all, the PATH from the day of Man's creation to his present state of refinement the human traveller, who has pondered, reflected, meditated, and entered into dialogue, now through scenes of real life, now through dreams, now in the recesses of imagination, searches for his own path. The tales, reminiscent in form and spirit of "One thousand and one nights", appear self-contained at first glance, yet on closer reading each completes the other. Man seems to be reforming his entire life's journey, yet in truth, from the very day of the Great Creator, the path of humanity reveals itself as a symbol.

The miraculous words of Surah Yasin depict the creation of the world in the form, the inner nature, the eyes, and the spirit of Man. One stands in awe before the miracles of the Great Creator: mountain ranges merging with the horizon, clouds pressing their chests against the sharp blades of peaks, the manifold world nestled in the bosom of marble waters all of it was created for Man before Man himself was created.

Just as the enchanting laments of "Munojot" bind the human soul to the ages, just as the magical strains of "Beethoven's sonata № 6" mentioned in the letter written by Zheltkov in I. Kuprin's work revealed the meaning of love to Vera Sheina, so throughout the novel one becomes acquainted with a single melody, a single harmony, a single enchantment.

**Results and Discussion.** The artistic interpretation realized in "The road" is the essence and philosophy of what it means to be born human. In the creation of MAN, the most beautiful feelings were instilled within him as a melody, as a voice along with his duty and the responsibility of being truly human, and this was given to all of mankind.

In terms of form, the novel is composed of mutually complementary tales, dreams, and the like. Underlying each interpretation is a foundation of encyclopedic, Islamic, and philosophical knowledge. In the episode “The Event before the dream,” the “mysterious, enchanting, whispering voice” that precedes the creation of Man is described as a long road. This passage may be received as the novel's introductory word.

The story of mankind, created ages beyond reckoning, is rendered in the form of a dream. The encyclopedic scholar A. Abdurakhmonov provides the following information: “According to the assertions of renowned geophysicists D. Raup and J. Valentine, life on Earth has ended and begun anew been “reborn” as many as ten times, each cycle proceeding on a different biochemical basis. Life on Earth first emerged approximately 3 billion 620 million years ago.”

In the “Qisas al-Rabghuziy” specifically in “The story of Adam the pure, peace be upon him, the story of Adam and Eve” it is written: “The first man on the face of the earth, its sultan and prophet, was created from clay, brought to life by divine power, raised to the great heavens, admitted into paradise, and given Eve as his companion. He fell prey to the whisperings of Iblis, was separated from radiant paradise, and banished to the dark world. For three hundred years he offered praise and glorification to Allah and made repentance. His supplications were accepted.” . In “Knowledge leading to happiness” (Saodatga eltuvchi bilim) as well, we find confirmation that the Universe and Man were created multiple times by the Great Allah, and in the novel “The road” too, this repeated creation is disclosed through the voice of the protagonist.

The tale titled “The first dream” begins as follows: “And so, everything the “everything within us and around us was, at the very beginning, gathered into a single point. Yet this was such a point that it was a thousand, a million nay, billion times greater than our present mother earth. And that great, singular point one day in truth, in those times there was no such concept as day and night exploded violently from deep within itself... In short, it was in this way that the world as you and I see, feel, and know it came into being.” (p. 10–12).

In the account of the dream, it is told that as a result of this “great explosion,” the cosmos came into being the heavens and all that lies beneath and within them: the various planets, the mineral kingdom, the plant kingdom, the animal kingdom, and mankind. For had it not been commanded from eternity: “Be!”... (p. 11). The consciousness of the sleeping man is alert. In his dream he recounts that which was commanded by Allah with the word “Be!”: It is well known that in several places in the Holy Quran, specifically in verse 117 of Surah Al-Baqarah, verses 47 and 57 of Surah Al-Imran, verse 73 of Surah Al-An’am, verse 40 of Surah An-Nahl, and verse

35 of Surah Maryam the phrase “كُنْ فَيَكُونُ” appears. What is the meaning of this phrase, and what differences of opinion exist among the scholars of Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jama’ah regarding it?

To understand the lexical meaning of this phrase, we may take a single example verse 82 of Surah Yasin in which Allah the Exalted says:

إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ

That is: His command, when He desires a thing, is only that He says to it: “Be!” - and it is.” Thus, to summarize, we may say the following: in the view of the Ash’arites, the creation and coming into existence of things is bound to Allah the Exalted’s command “كُنْ” (Be). In the view of the Maturidites, however, the coming into existence of things is bound to Allah the Exalted’s “ijad” (act of bringing into being) and “taqwin” (act of constituting), while Allah the Exalted’s utterance of “كُنْ” (Be) to a thing serves to manifest His majesty, greatness, and power”.

Here is the translation: We shall call the protagonist simply MAN (Adam). The divinity revealed in Man’s dream is the creation of himself, of the heavens, and of the universe. All the dreams Man sees are divine, and the wonders occurring within them have been sent down through the grace of Allah as set forth in the Holy Quran. The time that passes from dream to dream is boundless and infinite; the spaces depicted are without limit or border. The wonders that occur are from Allah; the mysteries are from Allah.

In the image of Man, the protagonist is present across Time and Space, and the author bears witness through dream and existence to miracles that occurred many millennia ago: “It was only as time passed, as I dreamed again and again, that I began to understand that what I had seen was a dream. The very first time, I had thought my dream was a continuation of my life. Perhaps someday I shall again be inclined to think so, but now I knew it to be a dream a shadow, so to speak, of my waking life. For the reality revealed to me in my dream bore little resemblance to what I encountered in waking life.” (p. 11)

The fragments the protagonist recounts are understood to be the UNIVERSE in the process of being created by Allah: “In short, the fragment I had mounted like a grey horse flew for a long time and at last collided with another fragment a thousand, perhaps a million times larger than itself. This produced yet another explosion. The universe seemed to fill with lightning; countless sparks flew in every direction, along with various kinds of dust and particles whose names I did not know at all. As a result, the interior of the great fragment began to seethe. It seethed for so long that, by our present reckoning, billions of years passed. At last, it cooled. And in the place where we had come to rest, liquid appeared, that is to say, water, water!...” (p. 13–14)

In the following Quranic verses, we do not encounter a single erroneous piece of information characteristic of the era of Muhammad (peace be upon him): “And We sent down from the sky blessed water, rain and caused to grow thereby gardens and grain from the harvest, and lofty palm trees having clustered dates, as provision for the servants. And We have given life thereby to a dead land a city. Thus will be the resurrection.” (Surah Qaf, verses 9–11)

“And We sent down water from the sky in measured amounts and settled it in the earth. And indeed, We are able to take it away. And We caused to grow thereby for you gardens of palm trees and grapevines in which for you are abundant fruits, and from which you eat.” (Surah Al-Mu’minun, verses 18–19)

“And We have sent the fertilizing winds and sent down water from the sky and given you drink from it. And you are not its retainers rather, We store it for you in rivers and lakes.” (Surah Al-Hijr, verse 22)

In the unfolding of the “Third dream” in the novel, the protagonist’s father appears. A pool of mirage water seems to shimmer before the eyes of the thirsty father and son. Weary as they are, the father and son do not stop. The history of millennia signals to the protagonist’s consciousness that ahead lies a boundless ocean. The passage of time and space binds ancestors to their descendants. As the events that have occurred in the world are narrated through the voice of the protagonist-narrator, we understand that these events happened at some point in the distant past, and that the protagonist serves merely as a vessel through which they are recounted. Reading page by page draws us closer to the essence of the novel. The greatest miracle of Allah the creation of mankind and the path it has traversed to its present state of perfection seems to emerge from the dormant recesses of human consciousness.

The episode in the “Third dream” is connected to the formation of human intellect: “But what is curious is that I had begun to give them names. Here, for instance, a piece broke away from a wave, took on the form of some creature, and I gave it the name “fish.” Before long, fish multiplied all at once, and some of them even gradually began to change their form and appearance, transforming into various other shapes. In the embrace of great towering waves I began to perceive with my consciousness creatures that crawled, crept, ran, walked, and finally flew, and I gave each of them a name: dinosaur, ichthyosaur, mammoth, crocodile, snake, lizard, spider, dragonfly, elephant, monkey, dove... Among them, the one that remained most vividly in my memory was the horses. White horses! Luminous horses, like the foam in the mouth of a wave!” (p. 15–16)

The human perception that the author interprets was the intellect bestowed by Allah: “The Creator taught Adam the knowledge of names “Asma’ Ilm”. He showed all things to the

angels and asked them their names. The angels were unable to answer. Then He commanded Adam to tell their names. And Adam named all things. A proclamation came from the Creator: "O angels, did I not tell you that I know what you do not know?! Now it has become clear to you that Adam is a scholar, while you are worshippers. In My sight, one scholar is more virtuous than a thousand worshippers. Wherever there is a scholar, let the worshipper come to his aid. Let the scholar be the one who is served, and you be the servants; let him be the mosque, and you be the prostrators."

Let us pay our attention to the literary scholar, philosopher, and one of the foremost authorities on Sufi thought, Najmiddin Komilov, and his treatment of the way Alisher Navai's divine thinking unfolds within artistic thought: "Divine ideas and symbols represent for him the ideal world toward which man eternally strives, while the earthly world is the mirror of that ideal world a field of lesson and example." For in man are reflected the wisdoms and the essence of the cosmos, of the divine world. "Whatever exists in the macrocosm exists in the microcosm," says Navai. The macrocosm "olami kubro" is the greater world, that is to say, the universe, existence itself. The microcosm "olami sugro" is the lesser world, that is to say, man. Such a view in fact traces back to the narrative concerning the creation of Adam. Adam, as stated in the Holy Quran, was created from clay, after which Allah breathed His spirit into him and bestowed upon him a soul. Thus, man came into being from matter and spirit, or from nature and the divine. For this reason, within the very nature of man, the metaphorical and the real, the divine and the worldly are united. This accords with the doctrine of "wahdat al-wujud" the unity of existence which holds that the world is one. That is to say: Contemplate your own existence, Whatever, you seek, seek it within yourself."

As we analyse the station of man in the novel "The road", we find the wisdom of the spiritual wayfaring (soliklik) toward which the protagonist strives reflected in Navai. For the very essence of Navai's faith encompasses Sufi ideas and the human heart, the wisdom of the king and the beggar alike, the spiritual refinement of man, the world of the Heart and the unseen, moral purification and the mystery of divine love and he speaks of the eternity of cherished and wondrous feelings and their influence upon our life today.

The beginning of the novel's protagonist's life is the creation of mankind; its end remains unseen. His path is the path of spiritual wayfaring. In the course of interpreting the novel's poetics, the author's artistic conception gradually comes into view. The author seeks an answer to the question: what was the purpose behind the creation of man? We find the answer in Navai: "For Navai, the Lord is the Creator of the universe, and the purpose of creating the universe is the creation of man, the crown of all creation. The poet considers the understanding of this to

be the foundation of faith and regards Islam as a great enlightenment, that is to say, the enlightenment of knowing the world, the Divine, and the self.”

The novel’s protagonist is likewise on a journey. The dialogue employed by the author, the questions the protagonist poses to himself and the answers he gives, helps one grasp the true essence of the road.

As we read the novel, we come to understand that it is dedicated to the interpretation of the divine enchantment of the Holy Quran, and that these interpretations are steeped in the Sufi knowledge of Jalaluddin Rumi. As Mawlana himself wrote: “Build a fortress of goodness, for nothing can equal it in strength.” “A voice came. A voice!.. I found myself listening to it involuntarily, involuntarily...”

“The secret of the Quran lies in Surah Al-Fatiha; the secret of Al-Fatiha lies in Bismillah; the secret of Bismillah lies in the letter Ba; the secret of the letter Ba lies in the point beneath it and I, a human being, am that very point...” so spoke the voice. [p. 18]

In the exegetical sources expounding the virtues of Surah Al-Fatiha, it is described as a surah that encompasses within itself the meanings of the entire Holy Quran and possesses immense virtues. Hasan al-Basri said of this surah: “Allah the Exalted gathered all the knowledge contained in the earlier scriptures into the Quran. Then He gathered the Quran in its entirety and placed it within Surah Al-Fatiha. Whoever knows the exegesis of Surah Al-Fatiha has understood all the meanings for which the Quran was revealed.”

The author’s mastery lies in this: while the symbolic rendering of mankind’s journey from the very beginning of creation to the present day is conveyed in relation to the Holy Quran, the image of the protagonist, the path of mankind’s spiritual wayfaring is given artistic interpretation through the Sufi path (tariqah) of Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi. The practices (sunnahs) enjoined upon mankind by Allah are expounded in detail in Sheikh Muhammad Sadik Muhammad Yusuf’s book “Iymon” (Faith). The meaning that follows from this is that “the four states: shari’ah (sacred law), tariqah (the spiritual path), ma’rifah (divine knowledge), and haqiqah (ultimate truth) are the stages of perfection on man’s path toward knowing Allah. The enlightened person, at the very moment he fully knows and comprehends his enlightenment, is the most complete, perfect, and accomplished human being. To explain it even more simply: these are the levels of sincerity and purity in the performance of religious obligations, the degree of spiritual feelings and emotions that encompass a person in the course of carrying out those obligations, and the measure of spiritual cultivation”.

**Conclusion.** We have titled this first article “Ulugbek Hamdam’s novel “The road”: The art of interpretation and the craft of analysis. An Introduction to the Novel’s Poetics.” We would

define the work as an intellectual piece of a philosophical nature that incorporates the artistic qualities of neorealism within the novel genre. Although modest in volume, the work meets the demands of the genre; at the same time, it is difficult to set forth a full analysis within the confines of a single article. It is certain that “The road” will captivate many with its charm.

We believe that every literary scholar would approach the analysis of the text of the novel “The road” on the basis of the hermeneutic method. At the same time, immanent analysis serves to reveal the possibilities of the text and the subtext. Through the methods of comparative-typological analysis, the possibilities for juxtaposing the original text with the literary text are further broadened. We have found it fitting to conclude this first article with the words of Khurshid Dustmukhammad: “A book must be read with understanding and comprehension”.

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