



The Portrait Of The Human Spirit In Ulugbek Khamdam's Novel "Balance"

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ABSTRACT

This article psychologically sheds light on the depiction of the human psyche in Ulugbek Khamdam's novel "Balance", the conflicts in the characters' inner worlds, spiritual quests, and the personal tragedy during the period of social change in the work, as well as the disruption of the balance between "I" and "the world".

Keywords:

Human psyche, "lost man", belief, faith, balance, spiritual evolution

Introduction. Literature has always served as a mirror reflecting the essence of society, embodying its values, beliefs and struggles. Ulugbek Khamdam, one of the most active and thoughtful writers of Uzbek literature of the independence era, also stands out in the world of modern Uzbek literature as a prominent figure whose novels testify to the harmony of national identity and universal human experiences. Through his novels, touching stories, and subtle characterizations, U. Khamdam sets in motion the complexities of cultural heritage and individual aspirations, and invites readers to a journey that transcends geographical boundaries.

Ulugbek Khamdam's work is full of innovation and renewal. This is also recognized by literary scholars and critics. The novel "Balance", which

was a breakthrough for the writer and was liked by both young and old readers, was published, and not a single critic or literary scholar could fail to react to it. The role of teacher O.Sharafiddinov in the birth of "Balance" is great. The writer always acknowledges this with gratitude in meetings and conversations: *"Reading the novel, I came to believe that realism has many undiscovered possibilities in depicting today's man"*.

Literature review. Ulugbek Khamdam captured the state of mind and heart that tormented many people at the time the novel was written. Dilmurod Kur'anov explains this as follows: "Balance" is a novel that is extremely topical in terms of its subject matter and, most importantly, was written at the right time..." [1; p. 6]. The novel "Balance" captures the state of

imbalance in our recent past, the period when changes in our usual lifestyle and our psyche caused sharp changes. The work is dedicated to a very relevant problem in this regard. The theme chosen in the novel, the idea of the work is felt from the title of the novel. The novel extensively covers the violation of the criterion in the heart of a person standing on the threshold of a new era due to changes in the social system, time and place, and the upheaval of the maintained balance.

Research Methodology. In “Balance”, the criterion in the heart of a person standing on the threshold of a new era is widely covered, as a result of changes in the social system, time and space, the disruption of the maintained balance to a certain extent. The concept of balance, which at first glance seems simple, finally acquires great significance throughout the work. It begins to manifest itself in every aspect of life, human spirituality. In the work, the author connects this concept as the main criterion to illuminate the period and environment after independence. *“Independence is not a dry slogan, a red label, which some still look at with mockery and try in vain to treat as such! It is the greatest socio-political, spiritual and moral level that our people have achieved in the last hundred years, and which is unparalleled in the history of any nation! So, did we reach this level easily? Did we go to bed with our hands tied at night and wake up free in the morning?... Of course not!”* [1; p. 7].

Analysis and Results. The composition and plot of the work are also based on this. It is natural for every reader to feel the fate of the main character of the novel, Yusuf, and his suffering. The author tried to illuminate the social, political, and spiritual environment of that time using the fate of the characters. We can learn this from Yusuf’s views in the novel: *“After all, what was Said like yesterday when he was working as a leader, and what is he like today when he leaves work and is left alone at home*

with his fate? Yesterday, his face, his words, and all his actions exuded strength. It was clear that he had devoted himself to a very ambitious and worthy goal and was boldly taking steps on that path. His successes were so great that he could not even remember his once dear friend Yusuf. What about today? Today, he has been alienated from everything, and there is not a trace of his former enthusiasm or the fire that used to burn in his eyes: he has sunk. So, he has lost the loftiness of feeling one with the majority, the goal and interest that held him back, and has become socially and spiritually isolated” [1; p. 316].

First of all, Yusuf is a man of his time who thinks secularly, this person who has dedicated his life to creating a true history of the nation, a mature person who deeply feels the changes of the times, the historical process, has an independent opinion about the future of the country. In the whirlpool of the storms of the transition to market economic relations, he initially loses himself, in other words, loses his balance. The writer describes this as “something inside Yusuf snapped”. Literary scholar Marhabo Kuchkarova writes about this: “In the work, the author reveals how fragile the feelings of love, friendship, and togetherness that we believe to be the highest feelings, sometimes worship them, are. In particular, this is proven in the friendly relations between Yusuf, Mirazim, and Said. The work puts forward the philosophy that even friendship loses its sincerity over time. For example, the hero of the work, Yusuf, trusted his friends. But his friends do not trust him. He and his wife slept on the same pillow with high hopes, but they get divorced because their goals, aspirations, and needs are different” [3.].

The writer also gave symbolic meanings to the characters of the work when choosing names. For example, Yusuf, Amir, Gulshoda, Oygul. It is no coincidence that the character who sets all the events in the novel in motion is called Yusuf. Because in Eastern literature, the seventh son of

Jacob, who is handsome and intelligent, is Yusuf. The writer, taking into account this ancient tradition, names his hero Yusuf. He goes through many trials, suffers financial difficulties, is separated from his family and children. The important thing is that no matter what thoughts he indulges in, no matter how he wanders through various streets, no matter how much he is sometimes tormented by injustice and helplessness, deep down in his soul he remains loyal to his identity and sense of justice, and never stops thinking about the sorrow of the nation and the land.

The largest and most influential character in the novel is undoubtedly the character of Amir. Amir is a man who has not adapted to his time, in a sense a "lost man". Despite his healthy spirit and homeland, he is thrown into a madhouse. Amir is forced to surrender himself to madness while remaining healthy. He symbolically sees himself in the form of a plucked feathered bird in the hands of the mad. When he cannot achieve his dreams in the life he lives, unsatisfied desires - the life of his dreams, unfulfilled love - leave their negative mark on his future fate. Amir's tragedy is the tragedy of a fanatic who does not know his limits in the matter of religion and Religious-Islamic beliefs. Amir's sad fate is a manifestation of the helplessness that emerged in the process of restoring Religious-Islamic values. In fact, this man, who was an intelligent teacher and a good poet, completely turns away from worldly affairs and worries, and lives a life of poverty, only through piety, obedience, worship, and gratitude. He forces others to follow this path, even his father, mother, brothers, and relatives, who have different views, do not give a day to him, morning and night he prays, and in times of distress he puts his family, his sick spouse, and his children in a difficult situation. However, at the words of a foolish person who has never seen a teacher, he sits down on a "chill", goes on a journey to the mountains in a crazy state, suddenly faces the

torment of hell, is suspected of theft, and is shamefully punished. [2.]

The author tries to clearly show the conflict between the characters in the very first lines he gives to the characters of the novel. Yusuf, who came from the city to the village, to his father's house, while talking with his brother Amir, cannot reconcile with him on the issue of religion and belief. Amir asks Yusuf:

- *I heard that you stopped praying. Is that true?*

- *What is the primary thing in Islam, brother? -*

Yusuf answered the question with a question.

- *Faith.*

- *Why is not your first question about faith?"* [1; p. 72].

Yusuf's argument with his brother is about faith and action. When the emir says that faith must be accompanied by action (worship), Yusuf emphasizes that for a Muslim, first of all, it is not prayer, but purity of heart that is important: "...people are divided into three according to their deeds: those who protect the Supreme Order, those who destroy it, and those who are indifferent. For some reason, I have such a conviction in my heart that if a person is one of the builders of that Supreme Order, whether he prays or not, whether he goes on pilgrimage or not, he is still a true Muslim". Yusuf is offended that his brother limits himself to prayer and ignores his family and livelihood. He tries to teach his brother that it is necessary to take a middle path in religion, that the concept of worship is a broader concept, that earning a living through honest work and raising children are also obligatory acts. However, Amir is not idle either, he replies, "*No matter how much you argue, what Allah has made obligatory will remain in place. No matter how many excuses you make to change it, it is useless*". Here, the writer does not try to say that the conclusions of both sides are correct. Because, in the matter of faith, both characters are characters who have lost their balance.

Amir is one of the most complex and contradictory characters in the novel. Sometimes he seems very intelligent and thoughtful, sometimes he is ignorant. Sometimes he is a moderate believer, sometimes he becomes a fanatic. So, at first glance, it is difficult to understand Amir. However, if you look at his complicated life and fate, you can understand such a complex character of the hero. The true roots of Amir's tragedy go back to the exclusion of religion from public life during the Soviet era. That is, one of the important vital and spiritual needs of people is stifled. *"Until I was thirty-five, it was the time of the Russians. We did not know what the Quran was"* [1; p. 64] - says Amir. After the country gained independence, people were given religious freedom. However, at the same time, times became more complicated, and the economic balance was disrupted. Amir, who was a teacher in the village and had been making a decent living, had a chaotic life. At such a time, Amir sought salvation in religion. The teacher, who was left defenseless in the arms of the state and society, threw himself into the arms of religion with all his being. As a result, he forgot about this world and lost his balance in life. Amir understood only the acts of prayer, hajj, and zakat, and ignored the obligatory acts related to social life, such as feeding and protecting his children. He said that disbelief and inaction throw a person off balance, and gave the example of Western life. Then Yusuf commented, "Brother, if we do not reach the level of material life that they have established, it seems clear that our spiritual integrity will also be compromised".

In short, in the fate of Amir, we see a living example of the hadith of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) that *"Whoever is firm in his religion, his religion will overcome him"* [7.].

Said is a classmate and close friend of Yusuf. Unlike Yusuf, he chose power, not knowledge.

He saw MONEY and POWER as the main driving force of people and society. He evaluates his friend Yusuf's views on history, national pride, culture, and enlightenment as delusions. However, such views create gaps in his "power". Mirazim, on the other hand, is a completely different world, and if the world were flooded, he would not be able to reach his ankles. "My stomach is full, my head is healthy, that's enough for me. Seven of our ancestors were merchants, and I will continue their work without thinking" [p. 91].

Mirazim is a wealthy businessman. Whatever he desires, he has it. Luxurious houses, the latest cars, beautiful women for entertainment, luxurious parties - these are the "blessings" of life that Mirazim has found. *"Life spared nothing from Mirazim, it took away everything he could reach for. There was only one thing - the goal that awaited him ahead - there was no destination"* [1; p. 315]. The problem is that he has no other dreams and desires. More precisely, there is no spiritual basis that would create the basis for the birth of other desires. Therefore, Mirazim, who has acquired all the blessings that can be achieved with money, begins to feel a huge emptiness in the depths of his soul. His relationship with his wife Zakhra breaks down. He cannot find family happiness. Moreover, he feels that the business empire he has built is fragile, that the ashes of this empire will be scattered to the sky as a result of the departure of a single person from office, and for this reason he always lives without pleasure. Ulugbek Khamdam depicts a typical official of his time using the image of Said. His fiery speeches are not at all in line with real life, but completely contradict it. At one of the parties, Said says: *"Now the time has come to live with our chests crossed. Finally, the sun has touched the shoulders of the Uzbeks"* [1; p. 123]. Remember the question asked by Yusuf's childhood friend Sadik in the village during Said's time: "Why are we hungry?!" The irony of the writer is that no

matter how smart and insightful Said is, what he says is sincere - first of all, he himself believes in this. If it were not so, he would not have said such extravagant things to his dear friends in a narrow circle, many years ago. Said's fiery speech continues: *"How many dozens of countries have recognized Uzbekistan. How many capitals do we have embassies in, how many embassies of dozens of countries are in our Tashkent. Yusuf, believe me, we really need people like Mirazimboy who are rich and selfless like you"* [1; p. 124].

Although Yusuf believes that his friend's words are sincere, he knows that they are not his own. That is, these are the stereotypes that are common to all officials: *"...how can he find his own words and speak? After all, for this, doesn't a person need to have his feet firmly on his own ground - in the environment he has built through his own intelligence, understanding, strength and energy?"* [1; p. 125] - Yusuf thinks. After graduating, Said, who has climbed the career ladder, reaches a certain stage, but when he reaches reality, he becomes disconnected from the environment he lives in. The writer sees this as following the lead of the chief official who is pulling the cart, and everyone around him is forced to follow him, regardless of what song he sings.

Yusuf studied at the university with a goal, and then worked there. He followed only an honest path. He supported his family with his monthly salary. But it was difficult to make a living in the city with only this money. The difficulties of life increasingly took their toll. Moving from one rental to another, financial difficulties caused his relationship with Oygul to take a sharp turn. No matter how close and united the family is, financial difficulties still have their effect. The balance between them weakens. And when he loses his son, he completely loses his balance. The image of Yusuf is a nationalist, patriot, and a person with a high spirit.

The historian in the novel, Mukhammadjon aka, is a man of the past. He realizes that his life is built on a false foundation. That is why his eyes are wide open. The release of the birds from the cage symbolizes the will of man. As Mukhammadjon aka releases his beloved birds, he says: *"There are no gardens or mountains left here. They have destroyed everything, torn it apart, and turned it into cotton fields!... Go, my bird, fly, now fly!"* [1; p. 35]. The spirit of the times influences human experiences, and man struggles with himself and realizes what he has done.

The characters created by Ulugbek Khamdam are people of today, and it is noteworthy that they are given their emotions and subtle aspects in the characters. The writer's novels are distinguished by their special position, the harmony of theme and idea in them, their unique style and skill, the new interpretation of images, and the vitality of the characters. The concept of balance is expressed widely and impressively in the writer's novels. The author reflects that the alternation of balance and imbalance in the world is a phenomenon of law, nevertheless, a person must strive to live in harmony with the essence of the existence of the world, this is a human task, the meaning of human life. From the work, we can conclude that if the whole world is based on the law of balance, then society and the people who form its basis are stable due to this very balance. As soon as the balance is disturbed, various unexpected changes and deviations begin in life, that is, among its members.

Conclusion and Recommendations. In conclusion, it can be said that Ulugbek Khamdam's work occupies a significant place in the Uzbek literature of the 20th century in terms of its richness in creative research. The formal and substantive innovations in his work proved the breadth of possibilities of Uzbek prose and raised it to another level. The title of the work, and the main content understood from it, are

about the importance of a person consisting of body and soul being able to establish two types of balance - religion and worldly affairs, and material and spiritual. If the whole universe is based on the law of balance, then the people who form its basis are also stable due to balance. As soon as the balance is disturbed, changes occur in society and in the psyche of people.

When we read not only the novels of the writer, but also his stories and stories, we see that he fully demonstrated his writing skills by describing the heroes of the work and the psyche of the era in truthful aspects. An in-depth scientific study of Ulugbek Khamdam's work provides new information for literary studies.

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