

# The Concept Of Perfection In Uzbek Prose And The Synthesis Of Transformations

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**Abstract:** This article examines how contemporary Uzbek prose conceptualizes *komillik* (“perfection,” moral-spiritual completeness) through a synthesis of transformations at the levels of ethics, narrative form, and cultural memory. Building on classical virtue paradigms and Sufi anthropology (e.g., *al-insān al-kāmil*), the study argues that Uzbek prose resemanticizes perfection not as a static ideal but as a dynamic, metamorphic process shaped by historical rupture (Soviet/post-Soviet), globalization, and dialog with world poetics. Using narratological categories of modality (mood, voice, focalization) and emplotment, the article outlines how protagonists undergo ethical and existential trials—oscillating between “rebellion” and “obedience,” solitude and community, tradition and innovation—thereby converting adversity into self-knowledge and civic responsibility. Intertextual engagements with Qur’anic and mythic motifs (creation, exile, temptation, repentance) are shown to function as transformational engines that re-configure character, plot, and value systems. The paper further situates Uzbek prose within East–West comparative frames: Western metaphor-driven models of self-making meet Eastern metonymic “trace” thinking and Sufi imaginal poetics, yielding hybrid forms that sustain both national identity and universal ethical inquiry. The conclusion posits that Uzbek prose presents perfection as a pathway—a disciplined overcoming of the lower self, a cultivated humility toward community, and a literarily mediated openness to the sacred—achieved through continuous metamorphosis across text, context, and readerly reception.

**Keywords:** Uzbek prose; *komillik*; perfection; *al-insān al-kāmil*; metamorphosis; narrative modality; Sufi poetics; intertextuality; East–West comparison; ethical criticism.

**Introduction:** When we take stock of the creative quests of the younger generation that emerged in the 1990s, the glorious path they are treading naturally makes each of us reflect. From the very first days of independence, the aspiration toward the complete (perfect) human became the very essence of our reforms. After 130 years of subjugation, oppression, and darkness, a true breath of freedom and a breeze of liberty struck our people’s chests. For the road that leads a person from birth to death is the recognition of God. Under the dominance of the former Union’s single-party rule, literature was fully ideologized. In the West—the cradle of civilization that had undergone systematic and massive transformations—there was scarcely any sphere left untouched by the influence of art and literature. Based on these very metamorphoses, artistic literature too fully assimilated

a new human concept. As a mirror held up to society, this jewel of artistry deserves praise for seeking to fill that immense void. Just as love and hatred walk side by side, perfection, too—with its qualities and degrees—earns a special place by its constant resolve to nurture the human spirit. At a time when Uzbek literature was overflowing with literary formulas inspired by the West, it was essential that a writer live within the heat of life itself to depict the truth of life through symbols or metaphors. A new wave entered Uzbek prose. With great urgency, these writers labored tirelessly to reform a rapidly changing society and to encourage the nation to join the ranks of more advanced states. United under the motto of a single society, a single family, a single homeland, they could now ponder Turkestan’s glorious past and glorious future. Independence was meant to transform us into many

things—into the most advanced of countries. Yet the policy of good-neighborliness and the reforms undertaken could not fully convey the complexion of a globalized world. Even so, the homeland flourished—freeing itself from bondage, subservience, oppression, and vice.

Among the writers who came to the fore in the 1990s, the “transition period” metamorphosis is vividly manifested in the stories, novellas, and novels of the gifted author Ulug’bek Hamdam. Humanity has always struggled to answer the countless questions before it. It is difficult to probe the psychology of a hero who hesitates before life’s questions—between morality and religion, and the alluring song of evil. Hamdam’s novel *Rebellion and Obedience* is commendable for its service in filling precisely this gap. With this work, the author advances very broad generalizations.

As Professor Shahlo Botirova notes: “Another feature of the novel *Rebellion and Obedience* is its distinctive form—compressed description, brevity of detail—and, in the course of this, the way it achieves artistic wholeness by skillfully infusing theological and religious insertions into the depths of the text while developing the aesthetic gradation of character. The novel opens with an unexpected situation. Thus, already on the first day of creation—symbolized by night in the preface—there is a hint toward the hero’s subsequent life and fate. The genre’s internal discipline, the sequence of events, the writer’s artistic intention and scope—all of these logically ground the notion that humanity is stepping toward purification—that it is in a state of rebellion.” Indeed, as rightly emphasized, a person’s rebellion always converges upon purification, perfection, and the ways these can be brought forth. At the same time, as a reflection of any situation, we see in the actions of the novel’s characters the conclusion that one is oneself chiefly to blame both for becoming good and for becoming bad. It must be stressed that, in this rebellious moment, we must also ask: with what problems is society living? In this respect the issue is very intriguing. At the same time, we must not forget that reforming society is not within the power of a single writer alone; representatives of other fields also have their share.

According to Prof. D. Turayev’s assessment of the novel:

“In *Rebellion and Obedience*, Ulug’bek Hamdam vividly depicts the spirit of our time and the positive hero of our age in the figures of the Doctor and the Teacher—characters who, with hatred, look upon the godless geniuses of this world’s tyrants who, attempting to equal God, have carried out the idea of creating an artificial human—a clone; who voice dissatisfaction

with a God who ‘lacks the power’ to overcome the Devil that opened the way for these tyrants’ evil deeds; and who suffer from the defeats incurred in the relentless struggle for goodness and virtue.”

Indeed, the agonies of the transition period remained naturally preserved in everyone’s psyche. Between what we found and what we lost, many gaps emerged. Not everyone became accustomed to doing the work that pertained to their own field. Taste and enlightenment failed, in due time, to rein in this very concept. As a result, every sphere went off course. As the President rightly remarked, “We could not create adequate conditions for our teachers, because the times were hard”—and in saying so, he spoke the full truth. This very concept migrated into the literary work in the language of symbols and the form of metaphor. It should be noted that all layers of life were in need of reform and were designating ever-new concepts. The Westerner had already gone through this in the 1930s–40s of the twentieth century. This principle developed very late among us. The reason is that communist ideology resisted—zealously and stubbornly—the establishment of the idea of the perfect (complete) person. Now that this notion has begun to bud as a global problem, it has also proved that there were hard days in the fate of the intelligentsia. If we say that *Rebellion and Obedience* came into the world in just this way, we will be telling the truth:

“At last, I am well-off, yet nothing has changed! The fire in my chest is still roaring—it is scorching me to a cinder,” Akbar would subject himself to restless self-questioning at such times. He seemed to know the force, the first cause, that was giving birth to all his torments, but he did not want to admit it; he tried not to recall it. “How can one escape the fire of *Rebellion* that neither poverty nor wealth can affect?...” he wondered. What Akbar came to understand was this: in a larger sense, the human being is not of his own volition. Just as he is without choice in coming into the world, so he is without recourse in leaving it. No one asks him anything. The human being is a kind of raw material in the hands of a certain power. This power shapes humankind as it pleases: if it wishes, it grants health and beauty; if it wishes, it makes one blind or ugly.”

In Akbar’s powerful cries, the pains of the nation’s intelligentsia find their embodiment. The great anguish of “we needed to raise a perfect (complete) person,” has seized his inner being and, especially in order to know the truth of life, leads him to travel to lands he does not know. Akbar is a man of a new era. His rebellion has not yet clarified. Thanks to the guidance given him by the Doctor, he is stepping boldly toward balance. Even so, the fire in his heart sternly disciplines

the growth and changes within him. The transformations occurring in the external world crash into Akbar's inner self and shatter into pieces. The aim is to show that this lies at the root of the nation's pain and worry, the people's lamentation, and the misguided policy of education and upbringing.

Prof. J. Eshonqulov writes: "The human psyche is a very vast world, and the feelings and emotions within it manifest themselves in two forms. The first are conscious feelings that submit to a certain logic and possess firm conclusions and orientations toward the external world. These feelings express a person's attitude toward society, people, and the environment, and the views that constitute a certain understanding of these; they synthesize all this—in other words, the mind participates directly. The second are subconscious feelings, which have not surfaced into consciousness but are always present in the human psyche and maintain constant contact with the external world. These feelings constitute the basis of human action and psychology."

When grasping the concept of the perfect (complete) person, one must first distinguish the degree to which thought rises and the difference between that and its abasement. Indeed, in Z. Freud's aspirations for this doctrine, it is shown that anyone can err and end up afflicted with contrition. Perfection does not take shape by itself; it stabilizes only when it becomes a universal phenomenon. In world literature, this issue should be evaluated from every angle. It should be noted that the human being is forgetful. During his life, to whom did Akbar not show kindness? He felt the pains of the transition era in his own body. He sought advice from his Teacher. He was told that, for now, a learned person like him was scarcely needed by this society. He was told to travel far from tribe and homeland. He did so, and as a result came face to face with people steeped in countless sins. In this encounter motif, psychological depression served only to make Akbar's mood irritable. Various bargains are set before a person. He comes late to understand that the destination of these bargains is—rebellion and obedience. For this reason, the perfect person must be imbued with the metamorphosis of conquering the nafs (lower self). Perfection lies hidden in the nature of any person. Yet it often does not come to the surface.

Robinson Crusoe overcomes life's trials with knowledge and learning. Had he not surmounted these difficulties, he could not have been so sincere. Akbar likewise travels. He dispenses enlightenment. He works in newspapers and journals. Underneath all of this lies the same reflection: the color and shape of happiness, desires, dreams, and hardships—these temper the hero in serious trials, and this in itself appears as the

true face of a global metamorphosis.

"Akbar's dissatisfaction was born more or less on this ground. His greatest objection was aimed at the one who loosed the arrow—the Almighty. 'Why, having given humankind such a sensitive heart and delicate perception, did You create him so transient and powerless?! If You wished to create him thus, then for the children of Adam what need was there of a sensitive heart and a delicate perception?.. After all, because of these very qualities he constantly feels unhappy...,' he would say in rebellion to the Creator. 'For the human being has sensed that his soul is beautiful, and does not the transience of this beauty, the unbearably pitiable nature of what is written on his brow, give birth to discontent—to Rebellion?... I know, I understand well, man did not come to be by himself. Undoubtedly, behind all living things are You, O Creator! And knowing this, I also understand that to raise one's head openly against one's own fate is not of reason or intellect. Yet despite that, I am raising my head. I can find no other recourse than to rise up. Why, for what reason?.. Come, answer Yourself, O Maker!..'"

Ulug'bek Hamdam's novel *Rebellion and Obedience* embraces the harmony of family and encounter. Remembering the Doctor's tireless concern—in his mind and imagination—Akbar audits and interprets his own life, living with thoughts of what his today will be from his yesterday, and what his tomorrow will be from his today. He prepares for travel, journeys through the country, studies people, and believes that by overcoming hardships he is plunging earnestly into independent thought and adapting to society. Characters like Akbar have never lived as a seamless whole. It is revealed with stark realism that for the sake of a single slap he is imprisoned; that the teacher has no esteem or value; that the wealthy and the base look down upon those who live average lives. In this interpretation, U. Hamdam propels Akbar through the novel's plot with the motif of trial. In many instances the motif of trial shows that God casts His servant into ceaseless tests so that he may be purified, adorning his heart and consciousness with faith. At such a time, Diana—who comes face to face with him—also begins to move toward the straightening of her life. The fates of Diana and Akbar are displayed in a broad perspective through the motifs of purification, return, and repentance in the novel. We must observe the scene in which Akbar, left alone with his deep thoughts, senses the changes within. Akbar was a rebel—a hero who set out upon the road to be purified.

The writer's aim is that, on the condition that the fire of rebellion subsides and yields to obedience, Akbar accepts the Doctor's counsel. He realizes in his forties the importance of feeling change within himself. As

Diana likewise experiences the outcome after their meeting and acquaintance, it is vital that both protagonists dispel the faults and defects of their past and come to obedience. These reflections converge upon the expulsion of Man from Paradise, his becoming earthly, and his living out his life with good deeds and merits. Akbar also weighed on the scales of deep reflection why a person's sins should be washed away after descending to earth, and how one might be rid of them. Error is always a measure that urges a person toward purification, toward good deeds, toward a deeper knowledge of people's psychology—toward measuring seven times and cutting once. He had not lived together with Farida for many years; at the cost of the successive trials and tribulations that befall him, he gradually comes to understand that every drop of human love is, for him, as necessary as water and air.

According to doctor of philosophy, associate professor M. Quchkarova: "In contemporary Uzbek prose there has arisen a strong need for ancient myths and legends. The artistic construction of a work formed on the basis of a subjective myth created by a particular author, or on mythological thinking, together with the participation of mythologemes, plots and motifs—this is constituting a new literary current in present-day Uzbek literary studies: neo-myth prose. The neo-myth prose created by twentieth-century writers is not, in terms of content and essence, a mere repetition of myths; rather, it is a new look at mythological plots and images (mythologemes). In particular, today's Uzbek writers have created, with a fresh gaze and a new spirit, narratives drawing on stories from the Qur'an (the meeting of Adam and Eve, their expulsion from Paradise to earth; Satan's expulsion from Paradise; Gog and Magog; the story of Cain and Abel; the 'Legend of the Companions of the Cave,' and others) and on religious-mythological figures: Satan, Jinn, the creature of the underwater realm, the ruler Iskandar (Alexander), the seven brothers who fell asleep in the cave and their dog. For example, in Sh. Botayev's novel *Shox* there is the Chimera, and in N. R. Muhammad's story *Shaytoni Buzurg* ('The Great Satan') the image of the Great Satan is created with reliance on sūras, verses, narratives, and tales from the Qur'an and other religious sources."

Indeed, as M. Qo'chqarova rightly emphasizes, the neo-myth has begun to resound from different angles in the novels of the new era, especially in works created after the 2010s. Although it had appeared earlier in mixed form, the traditions of the generation of James Joyce manifested in diverse forms in the novels and novellas of that period.

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