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THE INTERTEXTUAL DISTINCTIVENESS OF "YALDO KECHASI" IN THE CONTEXT OF UZBEK HISTORICAL NOVEL-WRITING (A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS)

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Abstract. The article presents a comparative analysis of Xayriddin Sulton's novel "Yaldo kechasi" (2025) in the context of the tradition of Uzbek historical novel-writing, from the standpoint of the types of intertextual relations. On the basis of comparison with Abdulla Qodiriy's "O'tkan kunlar" and "Mehrobdan chayon", Oybek's "Navoiy", Odil Yoqubov's "Ulug'bek xazinasi" and Pirimqul Qodirov's "Yulduzli tunlar", the distinctiveness of "Yaldo kechasi" – its hypertextual connection, by means of literary mystification, with a specific artistic text belonging to the pen of another author – is substantiated. As a result, this strategy is assessed as a new, separate stage in the history of Uzbek historical novel-writing.

Key words: historical novel, intertextuality, hypertextuality, architext, literary mystification, tradition and renewal, comparative analysis, "Yaldo kechasi".

INTRODUCTION

Uzbek historical novel-writing began with Abdulla Qodiriy's "O'tkan kunlar" (1925) and has covered a century-long path. After this first novel the writer himself created the novel "Mehrobdan chayon", and after that works such as Oybek's "Navoiy", Odil Yoqubov's "Ulug'bek xazinasi" and Pirimqul Qodirov's "Yulduzli tunlar" marked different stages of national historical prose [13]. Each period developed its own distinctive form of relation to the past in keeping with its historical consciousness and artistic task. Exactly one century after the publication of "O'tkan kunlar", on 21 December 2025, Xayriddin Sulton's novel "Yaldo kechasi" was presented, and it emerged as the next stage of this long tradition [14].

However, the distinctiveness of "Yaldo kechasi" lies not only in the choice of theme or period. Relying on the brief note "Yozg'uvchidan" ("From the Writer") at the end of "O'tkan kunlar", the novel turns the continuation of Otabek's line – the fates of Yodgorbek, Ozodbek and Odilbek – into an independent, full plot, and, moreover, the author does this by means of literary mystification, that is, under the mask of a supposed "second book" belonging to Qodiriy's pen [11; 15]. Such a strategy – masking oneself with another author's name and style and directly continuing his artistic world – is not found in any of the predecessors listed above. It is precisely this difference that determines the relevance of this study: only by studying "Yaldo kechasi" not in isolation from the chain of Uzbek historical novel-writing but within this chain, from a comparative standpoint, can its true intertextual distinctiveness be shown.

The aim of the study is to substantiate theoretically the distinctiveness of "Yaldo kechasi" by comparing the type of intertextual relation employed in it with the intertextual strategies employed in other leading examples of Uzbek historical novel-writing. This aim calls for three tasks: first, to

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identify the types of relation to the historical source in the selected novels; second, to classify them on the basis of J. Genette's typology of intertextual relations; third, to determine the place and distinctiveness of "Yaldo kechasi" within this classification. The object of the study is selected examples of Uzbek historical novel-writing, and its subject is their mechanisms of intertextual relation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical foundation of the theory of intertextuality was developed by J. Kristeva, according to whom any text is built as a mosaic of earlier texts and is a product of the absorption and reworking of another text [2]. Developing this idea, G. Genette clearly distinguishes several types of relations between texts – intertext (direct quotation), paratext (title, epigraph), metatext (commentary), architext (belonging to a genre and tradition) and hypertextuality (the continuation of one text by another through transformation or imitation) [1]. G. Lukács, in his theory of the historical novel, regards the writer's relation to the historical fact and to the spirit of the age as the central issue [3]. In Uzbek literary studies, the concepts of image, text and genre have been explained in the works of T. Boboyev and of D. Quronov, Z. Mamajonov and M. Sheraliyeva [4; 5].

In the scholarly and critical literature that has formed around the novel "Yaldo kechasi", its hypertextual link with "O'tkan kunlar", the strategy of literary mystification and the inclusion of documents and poetic texts have been singled out; in particular, intertextuality has been assessed as the leading means of turning historical truth into artistic reality [12]. At the same time, in the existing sources "Yaldo kechasi" has been analysed mainly as a single work, in relation to "O'tkan kunlar"; the question of comparing it with the intertextual strategies of other major historical novelists such as Oybek, Yoqubov and Qodirov and of placing it within the overall picture of Uzbek historical novel-writing has not been a separate subject of research. It is precisely this gap that determines the scholarly novelty of this article.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Six novels were selected for comparative analysis in the study: A. Qodiriy's "O'tkan kunlar" and "Mehrobdan chayon", Oybek's "Navoiy", O. Yoqubov's "Ulug'bek xazinasi", P. Qodirov's "Yulduzli tunlar", and X. Sulton's "Yaldo kechasi". The selection criterion is that each represents a distinct stage of national historical novel-writing and demonstrates a different approach to the historical source.

The comparison was carried out according to the following parameters: 1) type of source – the main material on which the author relied (historical document, tazkira [biographical anthology], memoir or an earlier artistic text); 2) type of intertextual relation – according to Genette's classification (architext, hypertext, etc.) [1]; 3) authorial strategy – whether the author writes in his own voice or speaks through a mask (persona); 4) relation of characters – whether the images are independent fiction or inherited from another work. The comparative-typological, intertextual and structural-semantic methods of analysis were used in the study. The novels themselves, as well as scholarly-critical and popular publications about them, were drawn on as material [11–15].

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The comparative analysis revealed five different models of relation to the historical source in Uzbek historical novel-writing; they are presented below in turn.

The first model is the architextual relation observed in "O'tkan kunlar" and "Mehrobdan chayon". In these two novels, depicting the reality of Kokand and Tashkent at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, the khanate system and the struggle of Jadidism, Qodiriy relies not on a specific earlier artistic text but on documents of the period, memoirs and the oral tradition, that is,

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on the general "architext" of genre and era. Although the two novels are akin in terms of period and milieu, they are independent at the level of plot: "Mehrobdan chayon" is not a continuation of the events of "O'tkan kunlar" but another cross-section of the same historical space. This corresponds to the model of the classical historical novel described by Lukács: the writer embodies the contradictions of the age through fictional characters but does not directly continue an earlier artistic text [3].

The second model is seen in Oybek's novel "Navoiy". Here a real historical figure – Alisher Navoiy – stands at the centre, and the author relies on tazkiras, historical chronicles and the poet's legacy. The source is historical-documentary and poetic heritage, which also falls into the architextual type of relation, but it acquires a more "biographical" character than "O'tkan kunlar": the characters largely correspond directly to historical prototypes, and the author's voice is not hidden but narrates openly.

The third model manifests itself in Odil Yoqubov's "Ulug'bek xazinasi". The novel is built on the intersection of two times – the age of Ulugh Beg and the time in which the novel is being written – and here, through allusions to historical documents and legends and through the motif of scholarly and archaeological search, metatextual elements are strengthened: the author not only narrates the event but also shows the process of searching for and interpreting it. However, here too what leads is not a connection to a specific earlier artistic text but a dialogue with historical and scholarly sources.

The fourth model is observed in Pirimqul Qodirov's novel "Yulduzli tunlar". This work relies directly on the memoir text "Boburnoma", which belongs to the pen of Zahiriddin Muhammad Bobur (Babur) himself. This is a stronger intertextual relation, close to transposition in Genette's sense: the author turns the historical figure's own words into artistic speech. However, the source is not artistic fiction but a genuine historical document written by the author himself; therefore it is more accurate to describe this relation not as "an artistic text continuing an artistic text" but as "the artistic rendering of a document".

The fifth model is the case observed in "Yaldo kechasi", which differs fundamentally from the four above. Here the source is neither a historical document nor a memoir but the specific artistic text of another author – Qodiriy – a one-sentence note at its end. By turning this note into a full plot, Sulton realises the most consistent form of hypertextuality described by Genette: the new text (hypertext) transforms the old text (hypotext) and continues its characters and world [1]. In addition, the author conceals his own voice and speaks as if in Qodiriy's name – this author-persona strategy is not found in any of the four novels considered above [12]. At the same time, the novel also preserves the effect of documentariness through texts in the form of documents, letters and a poetic epigraph; that is, it absorbs certain elements of the second and fourth models but unites them within a single, more complex strategy – hypertextual mystification.

Thus, if we compare the six novels in a single table, the following picture emerges: "O'tkan kunlar" and "Mehrobdan chayon" – architext (the tradition of period and genre); "Navoiy" – architext + biographical documentariness; "Ulug'bek xazinasi" – architext + metatext (two times, the motif of search); "Yulduzli tunlar" – document-transposition (on the basis of the "Boburnoma"); "Yaldo kechasi" – hypertext + author-persona mystification + imitation of documents. It is evident that the strengthening of intertextual relation is not accidental: each subsequent model, while retaining some elements of the previous one, increases the degree of closeness to the source, and "Yaldo kechasi" constitutes the highest, qualitatively new point of this line.

DISCUSSION

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Summarising the results obtained, the intertextual distinctiveness of "Yaldo kechasi" is explained by two factors. First, as the only Uzbek historical novel to do so, it consciously enters into a hypertextual relation with the specific artistic text of another author, as a result of which the novel, while being an independent work, also serves as a "second storey" extending the artistic world of "O'tkan kunlar". Second, this relation is realised not at the level of overt quotation or imitation but through mystification – that is, the author's mask and the imitation of documents – which deliberately blurs for the reader the boundary between the two texts [12; 15].

The historical and literary ground of such a strategy should also be explained: the fact that the novel was presented on a date exactly one century after the publication of "O'tkan kunlar" is not accidental but stems from the intention to activate national literary memory in the context of the anniversary [14]. At the same time, such a close hypertextual connection could also give rise to a potential risk: the new work could remain in the shadow of its predecessor and lose its independent value. However, as the analysis has shown, the author gives the work its own independent artistic weight through prototype-based and fictional images, independent plot lines and a new historical period (the reality of the Soviet era) – which is why literary scholars assess it not as imitation but as "an entirely new artistic phenomenon" [15].

CONCLUSION

The results of the study show the following. First, the relation to the historical source in Uzbek historical novel-writing is not homogeneous: it has architextual ("O'tkan kunlar", "Mehrobdan chayon", "Navoiy"), architextual enriched with metatextual elements ("Ulug'bek xazinasi"), document-transpositional ("Yulduzli tunlar") and hypertextual-mystificatory ("Yaldo kechasi") models.

Second, "Yaldo kechasi" stands out as the work that, for the first time in the history of Uzbek historical novel-writing, turned the specific artistic text of another author into a full-plot continuation by means of literary mystification; this constitutes the essence of its intertextual distinctiveness.

Third, this strategy is not a break with tradition but its elevation to a qualitatively new stage: while retaining certain elements of the earlier models (documentariness, biographical character, the motif of two times), the novel subordinates them to a hypertextual basis.

Fourth, in future research, testing this comparative model on other contemporary Uzbek historical novels (including works by Isajon Sulton and other authors), as well as deepening the quantitative and qualitative analysis of hypertextual transformations on the basis of the full text of "Yaldo kechasi", remains an urgent direction.

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