

**STYLISTIC DEVICES AS A VEHICLE OF EXISTENTIAL MEANING IN  
ISAJON SULTON'S BOQIY DARBADAR (ETERNAL WANDERER)**

**Rahmonova Gulhayo Khalilovna**

*Teacher of Tashkent University of Information Technologies named  
after Muhammad al-Kwarazmi*

**Abstract:** *This article presents a comprehensive stylistic and semantic analysis of figurative language in Isajon Sulton's novel Boqiy darbadar (Eternal Wanderer). The study focuses on four major literary devices—metaphor, allusion, antithesis, and personification—and examines how they function as core mechanisms for expressing existential displacement, spiritual search, and historical memory in the text. Employing a qualitative literary-analytical methodology, the article situates Sulton's artistic practice within broader traditions of Eastern philosophical prose and modern Uzbek literature. The findings demonstrate that figurative language in Boqiy darbadar is not ornamental but structural: it organizes narrative logic, shapes character consciousness, and mediates between individual fate and collective history.*

**Keywords:** *Isajon Sulton, Boqiy darbadar, Eternal Wanderer, metaphor, allusion, antithesis, personification, Uzbek literature*

### **Introduction**

In contemporary Uzbek prose, Isajon Sulton stands out as a writer whose artistic vision is deeply rooted in philosophical reflection and symbolic narration. His novel *Eternal Wanderer* represents a culmination of these tendencies, presenting a narrative in which the external journey of the protagonist mirrors an internal, existential quest. The work does not rely on conventional plot development; instead, it constructs meaning through layered imagery and figurative expression.

The concept of “eternal wandering” functions not merely as a narrative motif but as a metaphorical framework for understanding human existence in a fragmented modern world. Displacement, uncertainty, and the loss of stable identity are articulated through a carefully constructed system of figurative language. This system allows the novel to engage with universal philosophical concerns while remaining grounded in Uzbek cultural and historical experience.

Despite the novel's critical importance, scholarly attention has tended to focus on its thematic content rather than its stylistic mechanisms. This article argues that the philosophical depth of *Eternal Wanderer* cannot be fully understood without a close examination of its figurative language. By analyzing metaphor, allusion, antithesis, and personification, the study reveals how meaning is generated not through direct statement but through symbolic and linguistic mediation.

### **Methodology**

The study employs a qualitative literary-stylistic methodology, emphasizing close reading and interpretive analysis. Figurative expressions were selected based on their thematic relevance and recurrence across the novel. Rather than cataloguing every instance, the analysis prioritizes representative examples that illustrate broader stylistic patterns. The analysis draws on:

- Classical rhetoric and metaphor theory,
- Modern stylistics and discourse analysis,
- Uzbek literary criticism on symbolism and philosophical prose.

Each figurative device is examined according to its semantic role, narrative function, and philosophical implication.

**Metaphor as Ontological Structure.** Metaphor is the dominant figurative strategy in *Eternal Wanderer*. It operates not only at the level of individual sentences but as an organizing principle for the entire narrative. The central metaphor of wandering transcends physical movement and becomes an ontological condition. A brief metaphorical description of life as “a road without direction” encapsulates the protagonist’s existential state. The road metaphor suggests continuity without progress, movement without arrival. This aligns with existential philosophy, where human existence is characterized by uncertainty and the absence of predetermined meaning. Another recurrent metaphor equates memory with weight or burden. Memory is not portrayed as a source of comfort but as something carried with difficulty. This metaphor reflects the historical consciousness of post-Soviet society, where the past is simultaneously preserved and suffered. Thus, metaphor in *Eternal Wanderer* functions as a conceptual lens through which reality is perceived and interpreted.

**Allusion and Intertextual Consciousness.** Allusion in *Eternal Wanderer* serves to embed the protagonist’s experience within a broader cultural and spiritual tradition. Sulton frequently draws on religious, historical, and literary references without explicit identification. For example, indirect references to prophetic exile and trial evoke Qur’anic narratives of testing and endurance. These allusions position the protagonist as a symbolic figure whose suffering reflects a universal spiritual pattern. In addition, subtle allusions to Sufi wanderers and dervish imagery reinforce the theme of spiritual searching. The wanderer is not merely lost but engaged in an unconscious quest for meaning. These allusions function as cultural memory triggers, requiring interpretive effort from the reader and reinforcing the novel’s intellectual depth.

**Antithesis and Existential Duality.** Antithesis plays a crucial role in structuring the philosophical tension of *Eternal Wanderer*. The narrative repeatedly juxtaposes opposing concepts such as movement and stagnation, belonging and alienation, hope and despair. A concise antithetical construction contrasts physical crowds with internal emptiness. This opposition reveals the paradox of modern life: social proximity does not eliminate existential isolation. On a psychological level, the protagonist embodies contradiction. He seeks stability yet resists attachment, desires meaning yet doubts its existence. These

unresolved oppositions drive the narrative and reflect a worldview in which contradiction is permanent rather than temporary.

**Personification and Emotional Projection.** Personification allows abstract forces to participate actively in the narrative. Time, fate, loneliness, and silence are frequently endowed with human qualities. Time is portrayed as an observing presence, suggesting inevitability and judgment. Loneliness is depicted as something that follows or accompanies the protagonist, transforming an internal emotion into an external force. This technique externalizes inner experience, enabling readers to perceive psychological states as tangible realities. Personification thus serves as a bridge between inner consciousness and the surrounding world.

**Uzbek–English Comparative Figurative Analysis.** One of the most significant aspects of *Eternal Wanderer* is the way its figurative language reflects Uzbek linguistic and cultural patterns that do not always transfer fully into English without interpretive mediation.

In Uzbek literary tradition, metaphors frequently arise from images of travel, nature, and spiritual movement. For instance, in *Boqiy darbadar*, the protagonist's life is metaphorically described through an image equivalent to “a road with no final destination” («oxiri ko‘rinmas yo‘l»). This metaphor simultaneously implies physical movement and spiritual trial.

In the English translation, this image appears as “an endless road”. While the semantic core is preserved, the mystical and ethical undertone associated with wandering in Uzbek culture—often linked to destiny and moral testing—is partially neutralized. In English, the metaphor primarily evokes existential movement rather than spiritual endurance.

A similar shift can be observed in the use of personification. In the Uzbek text, abstract concepts frequently function as moral agents. For example, time is implicitly portrayed as something that “waits and judges” («vaqt sukutda hukm qiladi»). This framing presents time as an ethical presence rather than a neutral dimension.

In *Eternal Wanderer*, the corresponding expression renders time as “silent and observing”. Although personification is retained, its moral authority is softened. In English literary convention, such personification tends to function symbolically, whereas in Uzbek prose it often carries ethical and philosophical weight.

Antithesis also reveals important stylistic differences. In *Boqiy darbadar*, a brief contrast between external crowds and inner emptiness («atrof gavjum, ich esa bo‘sh») emphasizes existential imbalance rather than logical opposition. The English version mirrors this structure as “surrounded by people, yet inwardly empty”. While formally accurate, the rhythmic compactness and emotional sharpness of the Uzbek antithesis are slightly diluted due to syntactic expansion.

These examples demonstrate that while the English translation of *Eternal Wanderer* remains largely faithful to the original, certain figurative nuances rooted in Uzbek worldview inevitably undergo semantic and cultural transformation.

Understanding these differences is essential for interpreting *Eternal Wanderer* in a cross-cultural context. The novel's figurative language operates within a worldview shaped by Eastern philosophy, Islamic thought, and historical experience, which cannot always be fully replicated through direct lexical equivalence.

#### Discussion

The interaction of figurative devices in *Eternal Wanderer* reveals a coherent philosophical system in both the Uzbek original and its English translation. Metaphor constructs the existential framework, as seen in recurring road and journey imagery. Allusion provides cultural and spiritual depth through indirect references to exile and endurance. Antithesis sustains philosophical tension by juxtaposing hope and despair, movement and stasis. Personification animates abstraction, allowing inner psychological states to appear as external forces.

For example, loneliness in *Boqiy darbadar* is depicted as something that “walks beside the man” («yolg‘izlik yonma-yon yuradi»). In the English version, this becomes “loneliness followed him”. While both versions externalize emotion, the Uzbek phrasing implies companionship and inevitability, whereas the English emphasizes persistence.

Together, these devices transform the novel into a symbolic space where meaning is constantly questioned rather than asserted. The reader is not offered definitive answers but is invited into an interpretive process shaped by figurative complexity.

#### Conclusion

This study has shown that figurative language in Isajon Sulton's *Eternal Wanderer* is central to its artistic and philosophical impact in both the Uzbek original and the English translation. Metaphor articulates existential wandering through images of endless roads and burdensome memory. Allusion connects individual fate with collective cultural and spiritual history. Antithesis reflects permanent existential contradiction, while personification gives emotional and moral form to abstraction.

Although the English translation successfully preserves the structural role of these devices, certain culturally embedded meanings—particularly those related to spirituality and moral agency—undergo partial transformation. Nevertheless, the novel remains a significant achievement in contemporary Uzbek literature, demonstrating how stylistic devices can function as a mode of philosophical inquiry across languages.

#### REFERENCES

1. Leech, G. (1981). *Semantics*. London: Penguin.
2. Ricoeur, P. (1977). *The Rule of Metaphor*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
3. Simpson, P. (2004). *Stylistics*. London: Routledge.
4. Sulton, I. (2011). *Boqiy darbadar*. Toshkent: G‘afur G‘ulom nomidagi nashriyot.
5. Sulton, I. *Eternal Wanderer*. Tashkent.
6. Karimov, N. (2018). *Modern Uzbek Prose and Symbolism*. Tashkent.
7. Rahmonov, S. (2020). “Existential Motifs in Contemporary Uzbek Literature.”