

HAMID ISMAILOV AND HIS CONTRIBUTION TO THE LITERATURE

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21461706>

Abstract. *This work explores literary works of Hamid Ismailov and deeply rooted themes of cultural memory and identity, demonstrating how storytelling preserves Central Asian heritage while addressing the universal human struggle for belonging in the face of political and historical disruption.*

Key words: *political and historical disruption, heritage, transnational writer, The Devil’s Dance, multilingualism, literary resistance*

Introduction. In contemporary world literature, voices from historically underrepresented regions have gained increasing recognition for their ability to reshape global narratives. Among these, Hamid Ismailov stands out as a significant literary figure whose works bring Central Asian experiences into an international context.

Born in Tashkent and later living in exile, Ismailov draws upon his personal and cultural background to explore complex themes of identity, memory, and displacement. His writing reflects the historical transformations of the post-Soviet world while preserving the rich oral traditions and cultural heritage of the region.

Ismailov’s fiction, including works such as *The Railway*, is characterized by its blending of folklore, history, and modern narrative techniques. Through interconnected stories and diverse voices, he captures the everyday lives of individuals shaped by political change and cultural continuity. His work not only documents the realities of Central Asia but also engages with universal human concerns, making it relevant to a global readership.

Main topic. Ismailov is known for documenting the diverse, multicultural reality of Central Asia during the Soviet era, often featuring varied ethnic voices (Uzbeks, Russians, Koreans, Jews, Chechens) in works like *The Railway*.

Much of his writing focuses on the complexities of displacement, the "stranger at home" experience, and the intersection of different cultural identities. He frequently delves into Uzbek history and classical literature, honoring persecuted authors like Abdulla Qodiriy and exploring the legacy of Avicenna.

His work combines Sufi parables, Post-modernism, and Russian literary traditions. His novel *We Computers* explores AI and authorship, while his work often incorporates structures from the *1001 Nights*. Though forced to write in exile, he writes in Uzbek, Russian, and English, and has translated classics between these languages, enhancing cross-cultural understanding.

In addition to journalism, Ismailov is a prolific writer of poetry and prose, and his books have been published in Uzbek, Russian, French, German, Turkish, English and other languages.

His work is still banned in Uzbekistan. He is the author of many novels, including *Sobranie Utonchyonnyh*, *Le Vagabond Flamboyant*, *Two Lost to Life*, *The Railway*, *Hostage to Celestial Turks*, *Googling for Soul*, *The Underground*, *A Poet and Bin-Laden*, and *The Dead Lake*, poetry collections including *Sad (Garden)* and *Pustynya (Desert)*, and books of visual poetry including *Post Faustum* and *Kniga Otsutstvi*.

He has translated Russian and Western classics into Uzbek, and Uzbek and Persian classics into Russian and several Western languages. Several of his Russian-original novels have been published in English translation, including *The Railway*, *The Dead Lake*, which was long listed for the 2015 Independent Foreign Fiction Prize, and *The Underground*.

The Devils' Dance is the first of his Uzbek novels to appear in English, and the translation by Donald Rayfield and John Farndon won the 2019 ERBD Literature Prize. *The Devils' Dance* forms a trilogy alongside *Of Strangers and Bees* and Ismailov's new novel, *Manaschi*.

Coclusion. Ismailov's work transcends regional boundaries, offering insights into universal human experiences while maintaining a strong sense of cultural specificity. His contribution lies not only in enriching world literature with new perspectives but also in safeguarding the narratives, histories, and identities of a region that has often been overlooked.

Therefore, Hamid Ismailov can be regarded as a vital literary voice who bridges cultures and preserves the enduring significance of storytelling in shaping human understanding.

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