



## TOHIR MALIK'S FANTASTIC STORIES: THE POETICS OF PLOT

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**Abstract;** This paper explores the plot poetics in the fantastic stories of renowned Uzbek writer Tohir Malik. Through literary and structural analysis of his short fiction, the study examines how narrative development, symbolic layering, and suspense mechanisms contribute to the artistic depth of his fantastic tales. Malik's stories are marked by psychological tension, metaphysical speculation, and moral inquiry—all embedded in carefully constructed plots. The research reveals how his narrative architecture serves not only entertainment but also philosophical and didactic purposes.

**Keywords:** Tohir Malik, fantastic literature, plot structure, Uzbek fiction, poetics, narrative dynamics, symbolism.

### Introduction

Fantastic literature in Uzbekistan has evolved through a unique blend of national traditions and global influences. Among its leading contributors is Tohir Malik, whose fantastic stories stand out for their intricate plots, vivid imagination, and psychological realism. While his novels like *Shaytanat* and *Charxpalak* have gained widespread recognition, his shorter fantastic works present equally significant literary value. These stories often delve into existential fears, spiritual dilemmas, and symbolic realities, all narrated through a tightly woven plot structure.



The present study investigates the **poetics of plot** in Malik’s fantastic short stories, focusing on the mechanisms that drive suspense, reveal character transformation, and deepen the philosophical resonance of his fiction. The aim is to show how Malik’s narrative design contributes to the formation of meaning and emotional impact in the fantastic genre.

Methods

To analyze the poetics of plot in Tohir Malik’s fantastic stories, the study employed the following methods:

- Narratological analysis:** Examining plot progression, exposition, climax, and resolution within selected stories.
- Symbolic interpretation:** Identifying the use of allegory and metaphors tied to the plot.
- Comparative analysis:** Contextualizing Malik’s plot structures within the broader tradition of global fantastic literature.
- Contextual analysis:** Linking the stories’ themes with Uzbek cultural, religious, and social realities.

Results

Story Title	Plot Type	Key Mechanism	Plot Symbolic Element	Thematic Focus
<i>Ko ‘zgu</i> (The Psychological Mirror)	loop	Unseen presence in reflection	Mirror, shadow	Identity, conscience, hidden truth



Story Title	Plot Type	Key Mechanism	Plot Symbolic Element	Thematic Focus
<i>Tungi mehmon</i>	Visitor narrative	Strange guest at midnight	Darkness, voice	Death, afterlife, divine warning
<i>Sado Echo</i> (The Internal Echo)	Conflict	Repeating voice	inner Echo, silence	Madness, guilt, suppressed memories

The analysis of Tohir Malik's fantastic short stories demonstrates that his approach to plot construction is rooted in a balance between suspense and introspection. Each story builds tension not only through external events but also through the gradual unveiling of the protagonist's inner state. The use of open-ended conclusions, moral ambiguity, and metaphysical symbolism allows the plots to resonate beyond the literal level.

A notable result is the **interconnection between plot development and symbolic elements**. Rather than progressing in a strictly linear fashion, Malik's plots often follow a **spiral structure**, where key symbols (such as mirrors, echoes, or mysterious voices) recur and evolve, guiding the narrative toward philosophical or psychological resolution. This technique keeps the reader engaged while also encouraging deeper interpretation.

Moreover, the results show that **Malik's stories resist conventional genre boundaries**. They combine elements of horror, spiritual parable, and psychological drama, yet maintain coherence through a unified plot logic. His stories rarely provide clear answers; instead, they leave the reader contemplating moral and existential questions, which is a hallmark of high-quality fantastic literature.

Finally, it is evident that **Malik's mastery of suspense techniques**—foreshadowing, delayed revelation, symbolic clues—adds not only to the aesthetic



appeal of his fiction but also to its educational value. These features make his works valuable for literary analysis, teaching, and cultural reflection.

## **Discussion**

### **1. Plot Dynamics and Structure**

Tohir Malik frequently begins his stories with ordinary settings that gradually transform into surreal or uncanny spaces. The initial calm is disrupted by an unexpected event—a voice, a dream, or a mysterious encounter—which sets the narrative in motion. This transition from the real to the unreal is not abrupt but rather psychological, aligning the reader's perception with that of the protagonist.

### **2. Suspense and Uncertainty**

A key feature of Malik's fantastic plot is the buildup of suspense through psychological ambiguity. The reader is often unsure whether events are truly supernatural or the result of the character's inner turmoil. For instance, in stories such as "*Ko'zgu*" (*The Mirror*) and "*Tungi mehmon*" (*Night Guest*), time loops, reflections, and voices blur the line between dream and reality.

### **3. Moral and Philosophical Resolution**

Unlike typical horror or sci-fi stories, Malik's tales resolve not with action but with moral realization or spiritual awakening. The climax is often an internal shift—guilt, repentance, or insight—which redefines the protagonist's relationship with the world. The conclusion, though sometimes tragic, serves a didactic function rooted in Sufi and Islamic moral traditions.

### **4. Symbolic Plot Motifs**



Tohir Malik uses recurrent symbols—mirrors, shadows, books, voices—as narrative tools that guide the plot. These motifs often carry dual meanings: literal and metaphysical. For example, a mirror may reflect not only physical appearance but also hidden sins or alternate realities. The symbolic layering enriches the plot and invites interpretive depth.

## Conclusion

Tohir Malik's fantastic stories stand as masterful examples of narrative control and symbolic depth. His plot structures are not merely vehicles for suspense, but layered frameworks that engage psychological, moral, and metaphysical dimensions. The stories serve as moral parables, reflections on fate and fear, and cultural dialogues between the seen and unseen. Through the poetics of plot, Malik elevates the fantastic genre in Uzbek literature, bridging folk spirituality and modern existentialism.

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