

THE USE OF PROVERBS AND FOLK EXPRESSIONS IN THE FANTASTIC WORKS OF TOHIR MALIK

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Abstract: This article explores the integration and interpretation of Uzbek proverbs, idioms, and other elements of oral folklore in the fantastic fiction of renowned Uzbek writer Tohir Malik. His use of folk expressions enriches the narrative, adds layers of cultural meaning, and enhances the symbolic depth of his plots. Through textual analysis, the study reveals how these traditional linguistic units serve not only decorative purposes but function as carriers of moral philosophy, cultural memory, and thematic reinforcement.

Keywords: Tohir Malik, Uzbek folklore, proverbs, idioms, fantastic literature, cultural symbols, narrative functions.

Introduction

Uzbek literature is deeply rooted in a rich tradition of oral folklore—proverbs, idioms, legends, and spiritual sayings—that reflect the values, beliefs, and worldview of the people. In modern Uzbek prose, especially in the genre of fantastic fiction, these folkloric elements are often reinterpreted and embedded in narrative structures to create a connection between past and present, realism and the supernatural.

Tohir Malik, a master of fantastic and psychological fiction, utilizes proverbs and folk expressions not merely as stylistic tools but as cultural codes. In his works such as *Ko'zgu*, *Falak*, *Sado*, and *Tungi mehmon*, these elements become active parts of the narrative—triggering memory, foreshadowing events, or reflecting the protagonist's internal struggle. This article investigates how Malik incorporates oral folk elements and idiomatic expressions in his fantastic works and how they contribute to the philosophical and emotional resonance of his storytelling.

Methods

This study employs the following methods:

- **Textual and linguistic analysis:** Identifying and interpreting the proverbs and idiomatic expressions in selected fantastic stories.
- **Folkloristic approach:** Comparing the literary use of folk elements with their traditional meanings and functions in oral culture.
- **Symbolic reading:** Exploring the metaphorical and philosophical layers added by folk expressions.

• **Contextual interpretation:** Situating the usage within the sociocultural and spiritual framework of Uzbek literature.

To effectively analyze the integration of proverbs and folk expressions in Tohir Malik's fantastic stories, this study employed a multi-layered methodological framework:

1. **Qualitative Content Analysis**

Selected stories such as *Ko'zgu*, *Falak*, *Tungi mehmon*, and *Sado* were examined line-by-line to extract and categorize proverbs, idiomatic phrases, and folkloric references. Their placement in the narrative, frequency, and context were all considered to determine their role in plot development and character formation.

2. **Comparative Literary Approach**

Folk elements found in Malik's texts were compared with their traditional use in Uzbek oral literature—collected from proverb dictionaries, ethnographic records, and previous folklore studies. This allowed for a better understanding of how Malik adapted these expressions to a modern, fictional context.

3. **Linguistic and Semantic Analysis**

Particular focus was placed on the figurative and symbolic meanings of idiomatic expressions. Attention was given to connotative shifts, cultural implications, and the emotional undertones these phrases created within the narrative voice.

4. **Narratological Tools**

The function of folk expressions was also analyzed through narrative theory—examining how they operated within exposition, conflict, climax, and resolution. This provided insight into how traditional sayings act as structural devices in modern fantastic fiction.

5. **Cultural-Hermeneutic Interpretation**

Since many folk expressions are culturally encoded, a hermeneutic reading was used to uncover deeper layers of meaning—especially in relation to national identity, collective memory, and spiritual thought embedded in Uzbek oral heritage.

This methodological combination ensured that both the **form and function** of folk expressions in Malik's writing were explored—yielding a nuanced view of how tradition enhances literary modernity in Uzbek fantastic fiction.

Results

The analysis reveals the following key results:

• Tohir Malik uses **folk expressions not as embellishment**, but as narrative devices that **advance plot, define character psychology, and deepen thematic impact**.

• Proverbs often function as **ethical commentary**, while idioms reflect **emotional tension or hidden truth**.

- The inclusion of folkloric elements in a fantastic setting allows a **symbolic blending of myth and modernity**, enhancing the **cultural identity** of the work.
- Readers familiar with Uzbek oral traditions can access a **second layer of meaning**, making Malik's fiction deeply **intertextual and culturally rich**.

Literary Element	Example Used in Text	Narrative Function	Traditional Origin
Proverb	"Yaxshilik yomonlikdan kuchli."	Moral resolution in <i>Tungi mehmon</i>	Oral wisdom
Idiomatic Expression	"Ichida o't yonardi."	Character's internal fear	Common folk usage
Folkloric Motif	Visiting spirit	Supernatural plot trigger	Sufi-Islamic belief

Discussion

1. Function of Proverbs in Narrative Structure

Tohir Malik often begins or ends his stories with a proverb that encapsulates the moral or philosophical essence of the tale. For example, the proverb "*Har kim o'z falakini o'zi yasaydi*" (Everyone shapes their own fate) is echoed throughout the story *Falak*, guiding the reader to interpret events not just literally, but ethically.

2. Idiomatic Language as a Psychological Mirror

In Malik's fantastic stories, idioms such as "*Ko'zlarida gunoh soyasi bor*" (There is a shadow of sin in his eyes) are not just colorful expressions—they symbolize internal moral decay or subconscious fears. This usage creates psychological depth and enhances character portrayal in a culturally resonant way.

3. Folkloric Elements as Narrative Catalysts

Malik occasionally weaves in folkloric motifs—such as the belief in jinn, ancestral voices, or sacred dreams—which often appear alongside traditional sayings. These elements not only contribute to the atmosphere of the fantastic but also link the supernatural events to national mythologies and collective memory.

4. Tension Between Tradition and Modernity

One of the remarkable aspects of Malik's writing is the coexistence of traditional wisdom and modern existential anxiety. Folk expressions serve as anchors of inherited truth in stories where characters are otherwise lost in the complexities of a modern, unstable world. Through this, Malik positions folklore as both a spiritual compass and a narrative bridge.

Conclusion

Tohir Malik's integration of proverbs and folk expressions into his fantastic stories reveals a sophisticated literary technique that unites form, culture, and philosophy. These expressions serve as narrative markers, spiritual signposts, and cultural resonators. By doing so, Malik not only preserves and revitalizes the oral tradition but also elevates it into the realm of literary art.

His ability to fuse modern storytelling with ancient wisdom makes his work uniquely powerful in the Uzbek literary landscape. The study concludes that Malik's fantastic fiction stands as a bridge between the mystical past and the uncertain present—guided by the enduring truths found in the voices of the people.

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