

FANTASY AND HISTORICISM IN TOHIR MALIK'S "FALAK" AND "KHIZR'S WATER"

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Abstract: This article analyzes the intersection of fantasy and historical elements in two notable works by Tohir Malik—*Falak* (The Cosmos) and *Khizr's Water*. Both texts display a synthesis of mythical motifs, fantastical narration, and references to historical-cultural memory. Through this fusion, Malik creates a unique narrative space that questions time, morality, and national identity. The paper examines how elements of Uzbek folklore and historical myth are transformed within the structure of modern fantasy, forming a hybrid genre that resonates with both traditional and contemporary readers.

Keywords: Tohir Malik, fantasy, historicism, myth, national memory, Uzbek literature, Khizr, *Falak*.

Introduction

Uzbek literature has long maintained a dialogue between past and present, reality and imagination. In the works of Tohir Malik, this tension reaches a creative climax through a blending of fantastical storytelling and historical symbolism. His narratives often draw from deep-rooted Islamic myths, ancient legends, and socio-cultural realities, fusing them with psychological and metaphysical themes.

In particular, *Falak* and *Khizr's Water* serve as prime examples of this narrative hybridity. *Falak* presents a metaphysical journey shaped by fate and existential reflection, while *Khizr's Water* introduces a timeless figure from Islamic folklore—Khizr, the immortal guide—and embeds him into a modern context marked by moral decay and spiritual thirst. These stories not only explore fantastic themes but also evoke a historical-cultural consciousness that engages with questions of destiny, morality, and the survival of tradition.

This study aims to explore how Tohir Malik merges fantasy with historical thought, and how this interplay shapes the philosophical and moral dimensions of his stories.

Methods

To investigate the convergence of fantasy and history in the selected works, the following methodologies were used:

1. **Textual Analysis:** A close reading of *Falak* and *Khizr's Water* to identify elements of fantasy, myth, and historical allusion.

2. **Comparative Literary Analysis:** Comparing Malik's use of historical motifs with classical Islamic and Central Asian myths (such as the Khizr legend).
3. **Thematic Interpretation:** Analyzing how the integration of history and fantasy serves philosophical and moral purposes.
4. **Narratological Approach:** Studying the narrative structure, character development, and symbolic motifs.

Results

1. Time and Fate in Falak

The story uses cosmic imagery and metaphysical time to create a surrealistic setting. The absence of chronological order reflects spiritual disorientation and moral paralysis. References to pre-modern beliefs about destiny (taqdir) frame the protagonist's internal crisis, linking personal tragedy to collective fate.

2. The Myth of Khizr in Khizr's Water

Khizr, a figure rooted in Islamic eschatology and Turkic oral tradition, is reimagined in a post-Soviet, morally eroded world. Malik's version is not merely a folklore adaptation but a symbolic act of cultural reawakening. The "water" becomes a metaphor for lost spirituality and forgotten wisdom.

3. Historical Memory and Narrative Hybridity

Both stories evoke national and spiritual history through symbols—cosmic laws in Falak, sacred water and prophetic encounters in Khizr's Water. Malik blends fantasy with historical archetypes to create timeless moral tales.

Work	Fantasy Element	Historical/Cultural Reference	Symbolic Meaning
Falak	Cosmic disruption, nonlinear time	Destiny, metaphysics	Sufism, Uzbek Spiritual trial, existential fate
Khizr's Water	Immortal guide, magical spring	Khizr legend, mysticism	Islamic Wisdom, moral awakening

Discussion

Tohir Malik's fiction stands out for its subtle intertwining of the metaphysical with the historical. In Falak, the protagonist's crisis mirrors a cosmic disorder that is steeped in cultural fatalism. In Khizr's Water, Malik retrieves a religious-mythical figure and places him within a decaying modern environment, thus reviving cultural heritage through literary fantasy.

These works do not merely reflect an escape from reality; rather, they use fantasy as a lens to confront the trauma of history and the disillusionment of modernity. Malik's narratives

suggest that historical consciousness, when combined with mythic imagination, can serve as a vehicle for moral and cultural revival.

Conclusion

Tohir Malik's Falak and Khizr's Water illustrate the potential of fantastic literature to transcend entertainment and engage with profound historical and ethical questions. By weaving together ancient myths, Islamic symbols, and contemporary themes, Malik constructs a uniquely Uzbek literary universe—one that honors the past while challenging the present.

The fusion of fantastical and historical elements is not incidental but essential to Malik's moral philosophy. These works encourage readers to reflect on forgotten wisdom, question temporal assumptions, and rediscover the spiritual roots of identity. In doing so, Malik affirms the relevance of cultural memory in navigating the uncertainties of the modern world.

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