

FOLKLORISM IN THE WORKS OF O‘TKIR HOSHIMOV

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Abstract: This article examines the presence, forms, and artistic functions of folklorism in the prose of the distinguished Uzbek writer O‘tkir Hoshimov (1941–2013). Focusing on representative texts—notably *Ikki eshik orasi* (Between Two Doors), *Dunyoning ishlari* (Earthly Things / linked stories), and selected short stories—this study traces how Hoshimov draws on ritual motifs, oral traditions, proverbs, and everyday folklore to build character, localize narrative voice, and negotiate social memory. The analysis demonstrates that folklorism in Hoshimov’s oeuvre is not mere ornament; it is a structuring principle that articulates intergenerational values, mediates between rural and urban milieus, and reconfigures Soviet/ post-Soviet cultural identity.

Keywords: Folklorism; O‘tkir Hoshimov; Uzbek prose; ritual motifs; oral tradition; cultural memory; intertextuality.

Introduction

O‘tkir Hoshimov remains one of the most influential Uzbek prose writers of the late twentieth century. His fiction—spanning short stories, novellas, and novels—often foregrounds family life, rural customs, and the everyday speech of ordinary people, which positions him as a writer deeply attentive to local cultural resources. Hoshimov’s works were widely read in Soviet and post-Soviet Uzbekistan and have been the subject of criticism concerned with realism, moral pedagogy, and the representation of Uzbek social life.

Folklorism—here defined as the conscious incorporation, adaptation, and aesthetic reworking of folkloric material within literary texts—is a productive lens for reading Hoshimov. Rather than treating folklore elements as nostalgic or incidental, this article explores how they shape narrative perspective, ethical concerns, and the textual negotiation of cultural continuity and change.

Literature Review / Analysis of Sources.

Critical scholarship on Hoshimov has addressed his narrative strategies, thematic concerns (education, motherhood, memory), and his role in Uzbek literary life. Several recent studies explicitly examine folkloric motifs in his fiction, identifying ritual materials (wedding, cradle songs, ceremonial speech), proverbs, and other oral traditions as integral to his compositional method. For example, studies of ritual folklore in Hoshimov’s stories document how motifs associated with *alla* (lullabies) and other ceremonies are artistically reworked into plot and character (see analyses of *Alla* and *Cradle* motifs).

Scholars have also emphasized the autobiographical and mnemonic dimensions of works such as *Dunyoning ishlari* (Earthly Things); critics argue that Hoshimov’s childhood recollections

and domestic portraiture rely heavily on folkloric memory to reconstruct vanished urban and rural landscapes. This interweaving of memory and folklore contributes to the affective realism that makes his prose resonate with readers.

Methodological approaches in the secondary literature combine close textual reading with ethnographic description: they locate folkloric elements, categorize their functions (ritual, proverbial, lexical, melodic), and interpret their role in narrative cohesion and cultural commentary. Recent overviews of folklorism in Uzbek literature place Hoshimov among authors who creatively mobilize oral tradition to articulate local identity within broader sociohistorical changes.

Discussion

1. Types of Folklorism in Hoshimov's Prose

Hoshimov's folklorism can be typologized into several overlapping categories:

-Ritual motifs and ceremonial texts: references to wedding rituals, lullabies, mourning formulas, and other ceremonial utterances (e.g., *alla*). These elements often appear as embedded scenes or quoted speech that ground the narrative in communal practice.

-Proverbs and proverbialized speech: characters frequently use proverbs and aphoristic sayings; these function both as characterization (revealing world-views) and as structural markers that comment on plot developments.

-Oral narrative patterns and song fragments: the cadence, repetition, and formulaic openings of oral genres shape Hoshimov's prose rhythm, producing a style that feels at once literate and oral.

-Toponymy and ethnographic detail: vivid place-names, household objects, and descriptions of folk craft or foodways serve as ethnographic anchors that create a localized cultural texture.

2. Functions of Folklorism

Folkloric material in Hoshimov's work performs multiple functions:

-Authenticity and voice: Folkloric registers lend authenticity to dialogues and narrative voice, fostering reader immersion in Uzbek social worlds.

-Moral and pedagogical framing: Traditional maxims and ritual norms often shape ethical judgments in the text; Hoshimov repurposes folklore as a moral language that negotiates individual desire and communal expectation.

-Memory and loss: In texts that reconstruct pre-earthquake Tashkent or rural pasts, folklorism is the vehicle of cultural memory—it both preserves and mourns transformations brought by modernity and state policy.

-Aesthetic hybridity: By blending folkloric forms with Soviet-realist narrative conventions, Hoshimov creates hybrid aesthetics that complicate simple binaries between the “folk” and the “modern.”

3. Case studies

Short readings of *Ikki eshik orasi* and selected stories show ritual scenes functioning as turning points—for example, a wedding episode whose ceremonial language exposes latent tensions between individual wants and family honor; or a lullaby that frames a child's perspective and becomes a motif of both consolation and fate. These concrete textual functions demonstrate how folklorism can be central to plot logic and thematic resolution rather than decorative.

Results & Conclusion.

This study finds that folklorism in O'tkir Hoshimov's prose is multifaceted and essential: ritual motifs, proverbs, oral cadences, and ethnographic detail are woven into narrative structure to produce an aesthetics of cultural intimacy and moral reflexivity. Hoshimov neither romanticizes the past nor reduces folklore to nostalgia; instead, he adapts folkloric materials to render nuanced characters and social dilemmas. The result is prose that sustains local linguistic and cultural memory while engaging broader historical transformations in Soviet and post-Soviet Uzbekistan.

Implications for Uzbek literary studies include: (1) Folklorism should be treated as a central analytic category when reading Hoshimov (and comparable writers), (2) further comparative work can explore parallels between Hoshimov and other Central Asian authors who mobilize ritual text, and (3) interdisciplinary approaches (literary + ethnographic) remain especially fruitful for uncovering how literature mediates communal knowledge.

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