ARTISTIC INTERPRETATION OF HISTORICAL REALITY IN UZBEK AND ENGLISH HISTORICAL NOVELS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PIRIMQUL QODIROV AND HILARY MANTEL

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Abstract

Historical fiction occupies a distinctive position in literary studies because it combines documented historical events with artistic imagination, allowing writers to reconstruct the past through the perspectives of individual characters and contemporary cultural values. This thesis examines the artistic interpretation of historical reality in Uzbek and English historical novels through the works of Uzbek writer Pirimqul Qodirov and British novelist Hilary Mantel. Particular attention is given to Qodirov's historical novels Starry Nights (Yulduzli tunlar) and Avlodlar dovoni, as well as Mantel's Wolf Hall and Bring Up the Bodies. Although the authors represent different literary traditions and historical periods, both employ fiction as a means of transforming historical facts into psychologically convincing and aesthetically meaningful narratives. The comparative analysis demonstrates that historical reality in their novels is not presented as a simple reproduction of archival facts. Instead, it is reconstructed through characterization, narrative perspective, dialogue, psychological interpretation, and selective fictionalization. Qodirov primarily emphasizes national historical memory, cultural identity, moral responsibility, and the tragic dimensions of political power, whereas Mantel focuses strongly on psychological interiority, political pragmatism, social hierarchy, and the mechanisms of power. The study argues that both writers demonstrate how historical fiction can establish a productive dialogue between documented history and artistic imagination.

Keywords: historical novel, historical reality, artistic interpretation, Pirimqul Qodirov, Hilary Mantel, historical memory, literary representation, narrative perspective, comparative literature, historical fiction.

Introduction

Historical fiction is one of the most complex forms of literary representation because it operates simultaneously within two spheres: the factual world of history and the imaginative world of literature. Unlike historical scholarship, which seeks to reconstruct the past through evidence and methodological verification, historical fiction interprets historical events through narrative structures, characters, emotions, conflicts, and artistic imagination. Consequently, the historical novel does not merely answer the question of "what happened"; it also explores how historical events might have been experienced, understood, and remembered by individuals.

The relationship between history and literature becomes particularly significant when writers deal with personalities and events that occupy an important position in national historical consciousness. In Uzbek literature, Pirimqul Qodirov made a substantial contribution to the development of historical fiction by portraying major figures and political transformations of the Timurid period. His novel Starry Nights, devoted largely to Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur, presents history not simply as a sequence of political events but as a human experience involving exile, political struggle, personal loss, cultural identity, and moral choice. A comparable literary strategy can be observed in the historical novels of Hilary Mantel. Her Wolf Hall and Bring Up the Bodies reconstruct sixteenth-century England through the figure of Thomas Cromwell and the political environment surrounding Henry

VIII. Mantel does not simply reproduce the known historical record. Instead, she reconstructs the psychological and political atmosphere of the Tudor court and gives literary substance to historical figures whose private motivations are often inaccessible to historians.

MAIN PART

1. Artistic Representation of Historical Reality in Pirimqul Qodirov's Novels

Pirimqul Qodirov's historical novels, particularly Starry Nights (Yulduzli tunlar), demonstrate a close interaction between historical facts and artistic imagination. The author reconstructs the historical period of Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur by combining political events with the protagonist's personal experiences, psychological conflicts, and moral choices. Babur is portrayed not only as a ruler and military leader but also as a poet, thinker, and emotionally complex individual. This approach transforms historical information into a vivid human narrative. Qodirov also emphasizes the themes of homeland, cultural identity, historical memory, and responsibility. Therefore, historical reality in his works is presented not as a simple chronology of events but as a complex human experience shaped by political circumstances and personal destiny.

2. Artistic Interpretation of History in Hilary Mantel's Novels

Hilary Mantel applies a different narrative strategy in Wolf Hall and Bring Up the Bodies, which portray sixteenth-century England through the figure of Thomas Cromwell. The author focuses particularly on political power, social mobility, personal ambition, and psychological motivation. Historical events are presented through Cromwell's perceptions, thoughts, conversations, and political calculations. As a result, well-known historical personalities become psychologically complex characters rather than static figures from the past. Mantel combines documented historical circumstances with fictional reconstruction of private conversations and inner experiences. Her novels demonstrate that historical reality can be understood through individual consciousness and competing interpretations of political events.

3. Comparative Analysis of Qodirov and Mantel

Despite differences in literary tradition and historical context, Qodirov and Mantel share several important principles of historical representation. Both authors combine historical evidence with artistic imagination and focus on the relationship between individual destiny and political power. However, Qodirov places greater emphasis on national historical memory, cultural identity, homeland, and the moral dimensions of historical personality, while Mantel concentrates more strongly on political psychology, social hierarchy, and mechanisms of power. Qodirov reconstructs the past largely through the cultural and emotional significance of Babur's life, whereas Mantel presents Tudor history through Cromwell's subjective perception. Thus, both writers demonstrate that historical fiction does not merely reproduce the past; it reinterprets historical reality and makes it psychologically, culturally, and aesthetically meaningful for contemporary readers.

CONCLUSION

The comparative analysis shows that Pirimqul Qodirov and Hilary Mantel interpret historical reality through a combination of factual material and artistic imagination. Qodirov emphasizes national historical memory, cultural identity, homeland, and the moral dimensions of Babur's personality, while Mantel focuses on political power, psychological complexity, and individual ambition through the character of Thomas Cromwell. Despite their different literary and cultural contexts, both writers transform historical events into meaningful human experiences. Their works demonstrate that historical fiction not only reconstructs the past but also encourages readers to reconsider history from psychological, cultural, and moral perspectives. Thus, the novels of Qodirov and Mantel illustrate the significant role of artistic interpretation in preserving, rethinking, and transmitting historical memory to contemporary readers.

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