

THE INFLUENCE OF H.G. WELLS'S THE INVISIBLE MAN ON TOHIR MALIK'S HIKMAT AFANDINING O'LIMI

Hamdamova Shamshoda Saidakhmad kizi
PhD Candidate,

Tashkent State University of Uzbek Language and Literature
Email: shamshoda1996@gmail.com

Abstract: This article investigates the intertextual relationship between H.G. Wells's seminal science fiction novel *The Invisible Man* and Tohir Malik's short novel *Hikmat Afandining O'limi* (*The Death of Hikmat Afandi*). Through comparative literary analysis, the study reveals narrative, thematic, and philosophical parallels between the two works. Malik, writing within the Uzbek literary tradition, adapts the concept of invisibility not merely as a physical condition but as a metaphor for moral decline, social invisibility, and alienation. While Wells uses invisibility to explore unchecked ambition and scientific ego, Malik transforms it into a vehicle for psychological and cultural commentary.

Keywords: Tohir Malik, H.G. Wells, invisibility, science fiction, Uzbek literature, intertextuality, moral philosophy, postcolonial influence.

Introduction

H.G. Wells's *The Invisible Man* (1897) is one of the most influential works of early science fiction. It not only introduced the motif of physical invisibility through scientific means but also examined the psychological consequences of power unbound by social responsibility. Nearly a century later, Uzbek author Tohir Malik's *Hikmat Afandining O'limi* appears to engage with similar concepts, presenting a protagonist who gradually "disappears" from social consciousness and moral order.

Malik's narrative, though culturally and historically distinct, bears striking resemblances to Wells's novel in terms of plot mechanics and symbolic construction. This study explores whether Malik's work can be read as a localized reinterpretation of *The Invisible Man*, and if so, how the themes of visibility, ethics, and social alienation are transformed in the post-Soviet Central Asian context.

Methods

This paper applies the following methods:

1. **Comparative Literary Analysis** – Examining narrative parallels, character development, and thematic echoes between the two works.
2. **Intertextual Study** – Tracing potential literary borrowings, conceptual influences, or narrative inspiration.
3. **Symbolic Interpretation** – Analyzing the motif of invisibility in both texts as a metaphor for broader philosophical or cultural ideas.

4. **Contextual Analysis** – Situating Malik’s work within postcolonial Uzbek literature and the broader legacy of global science fiction.

Results

1. Narrative Parallels

Both works center on intellectually gifted but socially isolated protagonists whose pursuit of power leads to destruction. Wells’s Griffin uses scientific knowledge to make himself physically invisible, while Malik’s Hikmat Afandi becomes morally and socially “invisible” as his actions distance him from his ethical self and his community.

2. Thematic Overlap

Invisibility in both texts symbolizes the loss of human accountability. Wells focuses on the psychological descent into madness due to power, while Malik portrays a more ethical crisis—Hikmat Afandi’s detachment from social norms and spirituality leads to metaphorical erasure.

3. Philosophical Divergence

Whereas Wells’s novel critiques Enlightenment-era rationalism and unchecked science, Malik’s story adds layers of Sufi philosophy and postcolonial disillusionment. The narrative critiques the Soviet-era intellectual who loses touch with national and moral identity.

4. Cultural Adaptation

Malik localizes the concept of invisibility by grounding it in an Uzbek cultural setting, involving family, neighborhood, and spiritual ties. The character’s “disappearance” is not literal, but is perceived in terms of his emotional, ethical, and relational decline.

Comparison Area	H.G. Wells (<i>The Invisible Man</i>)	Tohir Malik (<i>Hikmat Afandining O‘limi</i>)
Main Character	Griffin – a scientist	Hikmat Afandi – an intellectual figure
Form of Invisibility	Physical/scientific	Moral/spiritual/social
Cause of Decline	Scientific hubris	Ethical apathy, cultural detachment
Outcome	Madness, death	Alienation, symbolic death, loss of identity

Discussion

Tohir Malik’s *Hikmat Afandining O‘limi* demonstrates how global science fiction themes can be adapted to reflect local cultural and moral dilemmas. While H.G. Wells’s Griffin becomes invisible due to experimental science, Malik’s Hikmat Afandi becomes “invisible” in the eyes of society due to moral corruption and spiritual decline.

This reinterpretation reflects a shift from materialist to metaphysical concerns. In the postcolonial Uzbek setting, invisibility is no longer about physical evasion but about loss of spiritual direction in a modernizing world. Malik may have drawn from Wells consciously or unconsciously, but his narrative transcends imitation—it offers a culturally embedded critique of intellectualism devoid of ethical grounding.

Conclusion

The intertextual echoes between *The Invisible Man* and *Hikmat Afandining O'limi* suggest that Tohir Malik creatively engages with global literary ideas while reframing them within his own cultural and philosophical context. His narrative stands as both a homage to and a departure from Wells's classic, substituting scientific spectacle with moral depth.

Malik's adaptation shows how universal literary motifs—like invisibility—can be reimagined to explore the human condition in culturally resonant ways. The story ultimately raises enduring questions about the cost of intellectual detachment, the fragility of moral visibility, and the dangers of internal disappearance.

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