

**THE FUNCTION OF THE «MIRACULOUS» AND THE «REAL» IN RUSSIAN AND
UZBEK MAGICAL REALIST PROSE: A TYPOLOGY OF TECHNIQUES**

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Abstract. This research investigates the structural and functional interplay between "miraculous" and "real" components in contemporary Russian and Uzbek prose. By synthesizing the theoretical frameworks of magical realism with the cultural specificities of the post-Soviet space, the study develops a typology of narrative techniques. The analysis focuses on how these modes process historical trauma, ecological crises, and national identity. The findings reveal that while Russian authors (Pelevin, Vodolazkin) often use the miraculous to deconstruct linear history and materialist dogmas, Uzbek authors (Dustmuhammad, Fitrat's tradition) utilize it to revitalize spiritual archetypes and integrate national heritage into a global existential context.

Keywords: magical realism, contemporary Russian prose, contemporary Uzbek prose, typology, the miraculous, the real, Viktor Pelevin, Evgeniy Vodolazkin, Khurshid Dustmuhammad, Abdurauf Fitrat.

Аннотация. Данное исследование посвящено изучению структурного и функционального взаимодействия «чудесного» и «реального» компонентов в современной русской и узбекской прозе. Путем синтеза теоретических основ магического реализма с культурной спецификой постсоветского пространства в работе разрабатывается типология повествовательных техник. Основное внимание уделяется тому, как данные художественные модусы переосмысливают исторические травмы, экологические кризисы и национальную идентичность.

Результаты исследования показывают, что в то время как русские авторы (В. Пелевин, Е. Водолазкин) зачастую используют категорию «чудесного» для деконструкции линейной истории и материалистических догм, узбекские авторы (Х. Дустмухаммад, продолжатели традиций А. Фитрата) обращаются к ней для ревитализации духовных архетипов и интеграции национального наследия в глобальный экзистенциальный контекст.

Ключевые слова: магический реализм, современная русская проза, современная узбекская проза, типология, «чудесное», «реальное», Виктор Пелевин, Евгений Водолазкин, Хуршид Дустмухаммад, Абдурауф Фират.

Introduction

In the landscape of contemporary global literature, magical realism is fundamentally defined not merely by the presence of fantastic elements, but by what Wendy Faris terms the "prosaic acceptance of the supernatural" (Faris, 2004: 7). This narrative mode creates a unique and complex heterotopic space where the "miraculous"—comprising the irrational, the mythic, and the spiritual—and the "real"—encompassing the historical, the social, and the mundane—exist on the same ontological plane without hierarchical distinction. Unlike traditional fantasy, which often separates worlds, magical realism insists on their absolute integration, forcing a re-evaluation of what constitutes "truth" in a postmodern world.

For the Russian and Uzbek literary traditions, this ontological synthesis carries profound socio-political and metaphysical significance. As Ben Holgate suggests, magical realism serves as a "post-rationalist" response to the Anthropocene and the recurring ideological crises of the 21st century, offering new expressive languages to confront global challenges that traditional

realism is ill-equipped to describe (Holgate, 2019: 12). In Russian prose, the "miraculous" frequently operates as a mechanism for "magical historicism," a tool that allows writers to navigate and re-read the ruins of the Soviet project and the trauma of its collapse. By contrast, in Uzbek prose, the miraculous is deeply anchored in the Jadid intellectual tradition. This tradition, pioneered by figures such as Abdurauf Fitrat, sought to harmonize national enlightenment and Islamic ethics with universal humanistic values, using symbol and metaphor to bypass censorship and address the "metaphysics of the soul." This paper aims to establish a rigorous typology of these narrative techniques to understand their functional role in modern fiction and their capacity to model a multi-layered reality.

Methods

The research employs a qualitative comparative analysis situated at the intersection of philology, cognitive linguistics, and cultural studies. The methodology is structured around the following framework:

The study draws on primary texts that represent the pinnacle of intellectual prose in their respective cultures: *The Wise Sisyphus* (Donishmand Sizif) by Khurshid Dustmuhammad (Uzbekistan), chosen for its deconstruction of classical myth through the lens of national spiritual inquiry; *Laurus* (Lavr) by Evgeniy Vodolazkin (Russia), selected for its unique "non-linear hagiography" and temporal experimentation; *The Sacred Book of the Werewolf* by Viktor Pelevin (Russia), included for its use of zoomorphic metamorphosis as a critique of the global extractive economy.

The study is grounded in the concept of "research mastery" (*tadqiqotchilik mahorati*) and "aesthetic individualization," as developed in the seminal works of Uzoq Joraqulov, which emphasize the role of the author's personality in shaping new literary canons (Joraqulov, 2003: 14-23). Furthermore, the research integrates the educational and pedagogical models of the "National Renaissance" studied by Begali Qosimov, particularly the focus on *ma'rifat* (enlightenment) as a transformative category in prose (Qosimov et al., 2004).

To categorize the functional application of the miraculous, the texts are analyzed through a specialized three-tier typology:

Chronotopic Distortion. Examining the manipulation of time and space, where linear history is replaced by "circular" or "hagiographic" time, allowing for the coexistence of past and present.

Metamorphic Symbolism. Analyzing the use of hybrid, shifting, or zoomorphic identities (e.g., were-creatures or mythic heroes) to explore the boundaries of the human and the non-human.

Ontological Synthesis. Investigating the seamless integration of sacral (sacred) and profane (mundane) spheres, where miracles are treated as everyday occurrences, thereby dismantling the rationalist binary of modern thought.

By applying this framework, the study seeks to reveal how these techniques allow authors to bridge the gap between specific national historical traumas and universal existential questions.

Results

The analytical phase of this research identifies three distinct primary functions of the "miraculous" within the selected corpus, establishing a clear typology of how supernatural elements interact with the "real" to produce new meanings.

In contemporary Uzbek prose, the "miraculous" is a direct aesthetic descendant of the Jadid *prosvetitel'skaya* (enlightenment) model. The legacy of Abdurauf Fitrat is evident in the way modern literature serves as a rigorous platform for "intellectual courage" and philosophical inquiry (Joraqulov, 2003: 14).

In Khurshid Dustmuhammad's *The Wise Sisyphus*, the "miraculous" resides in the bold deconstruction of a classical Greek archetype. Sisyphus is radically transformed from a tragic,

mythic figure doomed to futility into a conscious "intellectual laborer." This transformation draws a direct correlation to the Jadid concept of *inson-i kamil* (the perfect man), who achieves spiritual and intellectual sovereignty through persistent effort. By reframing the myth, the "real" social and historical struggles of the nation are elevated to a "miraculous" existential quest. This technique allows the specific national experience to be integrated into a shared global heritage, moving beyond local history into universal ontology (Buranova, 2026: 2.1).

Evgeniy Vodolazkin's *Laurus* introduces a sophisticated technique known as "non-linear hagiography." In this model, the "miraculous"—manifesting as healing, levitation, and prophecy—is treated with a dry, matter-of-fact hagiographic realism that denies the reader a sense of "wonder," rendering the supernatural mundane.

The "real" is represented by the brutal, visceral physical world of the 15th century, yet this historical layer is constantly and intentionally interrupted by modern linguistic artifacts and anachronisms. This "miraculous" collapse of time suggests that the human spirit exists in a "circular temporality" or an "eternal present." This concept echoes Fitrat's earlier views on cultural continuity, where the past is not a distant era but a living foundation for the present (Joraqulov, 2003: 18).

In the works of Viktor Pelevin, the "miraculous" often takes the form of zoomorphic metamorphosis. In *The Sacred Book of the Werewolf*, the "real"—represented by the oil-dependent, extractive economy of modern Russia—is examined through the "miraculous" perspective of a were-fox protagonist.

This hybridity serves as a sharp ecocritical lens, effectively dismantling the binary between human consumers and the exploited planet. The "miraculous" here functions as a satirical and diagnostic tool to reveal the "vampiric nature" of modern civilization, where resource extraction is metaphorically linked to the draining of life force (Pelevin, 2004: 152).

Discussion

The findings confirm that the "miraculous" in both Russian and Uzbek traditions functions as a powerful metaphor for a "hidden reality" that eludes traditional realistic description. While their primary sources and immediate goals differ, their rejection of a purely materialist worldview creates a profound convergence.

Feature	Uzbek Magical Realism	Russian Magical Realism
Primary Source	Jadidism, Sufi Aesthetics, National Folklore	Postmodernism, Orthodox Hagiography, Grotesque
The "Real"	National self-awakening and spiritual identity	Historical trauma, hyper-consumerism, extraction
The "Miraculous"	Intellectual stoicism, revitalized archetypes	Temporal loops, zoomorphic metamorphosis
Authorial Goal	Building a "spiritual vertical" and national self	Deconstructing ideological myths and materialism

Authors in both cultures utilize magical realism to address what Rob Nixon characterizes as "slow violence"—the gradual, incremental environmental and spiritual decay that remains invisible to the rationalist eye. While the Uzbek tradition (*Dustmuhammad*) employs the miraculous to construct a "spiritual vertical" rooted in cultural heritage, the Russian tradition (Pelevin, Vodolazkin) often uses it to ironize, deconstruct, or transcend the "profane" material

world. Both, however, ultimately converge in their rejection of an anthropocentric perspective, portraying the environment and the spirit as active, sentient participants in the human drama.

Conclusion

The interplay between the "miraculous" and the "real" in contemporary Russian and Uzbek prose provides a necessary "cognitive foundation" for understanding the socio-cultural and ecological complexities of the 21st century. By seamlessly integrating folklore, history, and spiritual archetypes, these authors create what has been termed a "multi-layered perception of reality" (Holgate, 2019: 3).

This typology demonstrates that magical realism is not merely a stylistic or aesthetic choice; it is a mechanical and philosophical necessity for modern literature. It allows writers to process the invisible dimensions of national existence and environmental crisis, ensuring that the "miraculous" remains a vital tool for expressing the deepest truths of the "real" world. As this study suggests, the synthesis of these elements ensures that literature remains a primary site for the preservation of human spirit against the pressures of a purely materialist age.

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