

PAPER

SUPERNATURAL ELEMENTS IN UZBEK AND ENGLISH NARRATIVES: A COMPARATIVE TYPOLOGICAL STUDY

O'sarova Nilufar Yakubovna^{1,*}

¹Assistant teacher at the faculty of Foreign languages Kokand State University

*nilufarusarova@gmail.com

Abstract

Supernatural elements constitute an essential component of traditional narratives, serving as a bridge between the material and spiritual dimensions of human experience. This article explores supernatural motifs in Uzbek narratives and English folk narratives from a comparative typological perspective. The study aims to identify universal narrative patterns and culture-specific features reflected in supernatural representations. By analyzing narrative structure, symbolic meaning, and cultural function, the research demonstrates how supernatural elements shape moral values, collective memory, and worldview in both traditions. The findings contribute to comparative folklore studies by highlighting the typological significance of supernatural motifs in oral narratives.

Key words: supernatural elements, Uzbek narrative, English folk narrative, folklore typology, comparative analysis, oral tradition

Introduction

Traditional narratives occupy a significant place in the cultural heritage of every nation, functioning as repositories of historical memory, ethical norms, and collective beliefs. Among the most distinctive features of such narratives are supernatural elements, which reflect humanity's attempt to interpret the unknown, the sacred, and the extraordinary. These elements not only enhance the artistic value of narratives but also reveal

deep-rooted cultural and spiritual concepts. Uzbek narratives represent a unique genre within Central Asian folklore. They are closely associated with real historical locations, figures, and events, and often include supernatural components presented in a believable and morally meaningful manner. English folk narratives, shaped by both pre-Christian traditions and Christian ideology, offer a rich variety of supernatural images, including ghosts, fairies, witches, and enchanted spaces. Despite differences in cultural background,

Compiled on: February 2, 2026.

Copyright: ©2026 by the authors. Submitted to *Advances in Science and Humanities* for possible open access publication under the terms and conditions of the [Creative Commons Attribution \(CC BY\) 4.0 license](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

both traditions employ supernatural elements as narrative tools to explain moral order, social norms, and historical continuity. This study seeks to examine how these elements function within Uzbek and English narratives and to identify their typological similarities and differences through a comparative analysis.

Materials and Methods

In Uzbek folklore studies, the genre of rivoyat has been examined in considerable depth from the perspective of its nature and certain thematic aspects. In particular, while studying the genre features of Uzbek folk narratives, Komiljon Imomov expressed his views on their genre characteristics, artistic qualities, and plot types. In addition, important scholarly insights concerning the image system of narratives, their relationship with history and religion, their specific epic features, connections with mythology, thematic orientations, nature and genesis, as well as their classification and description, have been advanced in the studies of such scholars as V.Ya. Propp, V.N. Putilov, V.K. Smirnova, E.V. Pomerantseva, V.P. Anikin, V.K. Sokolova, B. Sarimsoqov, O. Safarov, S. Umarov, and M. Jo'rayev. Drawing upon the theoretical views of these folklorists, the present study focuses on a detailed examination of the artistic composition of narratives, their distinctive features, the role and scope of imaginative fiction within them, its nature and aesthetic function, the thematic types and genesis of leading motifs, as well as the structure and composition of the system of characters.

Within the framework of this research, it is essential to emphasize that the investigation of the artistic and compositional features of narratives, the specific ways in which reality is artistically interpreted, the thematic types and genesis of dominant motifs, and the structure and composition of character systems constitutes one of the key scholarly issues requiring in-depth analysis. As examples of oral prose, narratives occupy an important place in the development of artistic thinking. Similar to legends, their origin has been significantly influenced by mythological concepts and perceptions. Uzbek folk narratives reflect, to a certain extent, the artistic skill and worldview of

our ancient ancestors. Narratives attract particular scholarly attention due to their distinctive genre features, themes, traditional epic motifs, system of characters, and expressive style. The research is grounded in folklore theory and comparative typology.

Typological analysis allows for the comparison of narrative elements across cultures without presuming direct historical contact. Scholars of folklore emphasize that motifs, symbols, and narrative functions often develop independently yet demonstrate structural similarities due to shared human experiences. Supernatural elements are examined as narrative motifs that fulfill specific functions: moral instruction, symbolic representation, and cultural identification. This approach enables a deeper understanding of how narratives operate within their respective cultural systems. The study employs a qualitative comparative method. The material includes selected Uzbek narratives connected with historical figures and sacred places, as well as English folk narratives preserved in oral tradition and literary collections. The narratives are analyzed according to:

- the type of supernatural element,
- its role in narrative development,
- its symbolic and cultural significance.

This method ensures an objective comparison while respecting the uniqueness of each tradition. In Uzbek narratives, supernatural elements are typically linked to religious belief and moral authority. Miracles, divine intervention, sacred dreams, and holy individuals play a central role in reinforcing ethical values. These supernatural occurrences often serve as confirmation of justice, faith, or divine will.

A distinctive feature of Uzbek narratives is the restrained use of supernatural motifs. They do not overshadow the narrative but rather support its historical and moral foundation. The supernatural is presented as a natural extension of spiritual belief, which strengthens the credibility of the narrative and deepens its didactic purpose. English folk narratives display a broader and more imaginative range of supernatural elements.

Ghosts haunting old castles, fairies inhabiting forests, witches possessing magical powers, and

Таблица 1. Typological Comparison of Supernatural Elements in Uzbek and English Folk Narratives

Analytical Aspect	Uzbek Narratives	English Folk Narratives	Discussion (Typological Interpretation)
Type of Supernatural Elements	Miracles, sacred places, saints, prophetic dreams, divine intervention	Ghosts, fairies, witches, magical objects, cursed places	Both traditions employ supernatural elements, but Uzbek narratives emphasize religious-spiritual phenomena, while English narratives favor imaginative and fantastical beings
Narrative Function	Supports moral instruction and historical credibility	Drives plot conflict and creates suspense	Typologically, supernatural elements serve ethical purposes in both traditions, though narrative dominance differs
Degree of Realism	Supernatural elements presented as believable and spiritually grounded	Supernatural often foregrounded as extraordinary and mysterious	Uzbek narratives integrate supernatural elements into realistic frameworks; English narratives highlight otherworldliness
Relation to Religion	Closely connected with Islamic beliefs and sacred values	Influenced by Christian morality and pre-Christian traditions	Religious worldview shapes the nature and symbolism of supernatural motifs
Role of Mythological Thinking	Mythological elements are subdued and adapted to historical context	Mythological motifs remain vivid and autonomous	Indicates different stages of mythological transformation in narrative traditions
Image System (Characters)	Saints, righteous individuals, historical figures	Supernatural beings, enchanted humans, spirits	Character systems reflect cultural perceptions of moral authority and fear
Moral and Ethical Message	Emphasis on justice, faith, humility, and social harmony	Focus on punishment, redemption, temptation, and moral trials	Both traditions use supernatural motifs as moral evaluators
Connection with Space	Sacred sites, historical locations, natural landmarks	Castles, forests, crossroads, haunted places	Spatial symbolism reinforces cultural memory and worldview
Typological Similarities	Moral didacticism, symbolic use of supernatural	Moral didacticism, symbolic use of supernatural	Demonstrates universal narrative mechanisms across cultures
Typological Differences	Restrained, realistic supernatural integration	Dominant, imaginative supernatural presence	Differences arise from cultural, historical, and religious contexts

cursed objects are common motifs. These elements often function as central narrative forces, creating conflict and suspense. In many cases, supernatural beings act as moral agents, rewarding virtue and punishing wrongdoing. The influence of Christian ideology is evident in narratives involving divine punishment or redemption, while pre-Christian elements survive in stories centered on magical creatures and enchanted landscapes.

From a functional perspective, supernatural elements in both traditions serve several purposes:

- explaining unexplained phenomena,
- reinforcing moral and social norms,
- preserving cultural and historical memory.

Results and discussion

In Uzbek narratives, the supernatural emphasizes spiritual harmony and moral order. In English narratives, it often introduces dramatic tension and explores the boundary between the natural and the otherworldly. Typological comparison reveals both convergence and divergence. Both Uzbek and English narratives utilize supernatural elements to

connect human experience with higher powers or unseen worlds. However, the narrative emphasis differs.

Uzbek narratives integrate supernatural motifs within a realistic and ethical framework, while English narratives frequently foreground the supernatural as an independent and dominant force. Despite these differences, the shared presence of supernatural motifs demonstrates universal narrative strategies shaped by cultural context. These strategies highlight humanity's collective need to explain the unknown and reinforce moral values.

Conclusion

This comparative typological study demonstrates that supernatural elements play a crucial role in both Uzbek and English narratives, despite differences in cultural expression and narrative emphasis. Uzbek narratives employ supernatural motifs to reinforce spiritual belief, moral instruction, and historical continuity. English folk narratives, in contrast, emphasize imaginative

diversity, dramatic conflict, and moral judgment through supernatural imagery. The analysis confirms that supernatural elements function as universal narrative tools adapted to specific cultural and historical contexts. Further research may expand this comparative framework by including additional narrative traditions or by focusing on specific motifs in greater detail.

References

1. Blake, W. (1789). 'Songs of Innocence and of Experience'. London: Tate Publishing.
2. Chulpan. (1936). 'Kecha va Kunduz' ('Night and Day').
3. Dickens, C. (1859). 'A Tale of Two Cities'. London: Chapman & Hall.
4. Fitzgerald, F. S. (1925). 'The Great Gatsby'. New York: Scribner.
5. Frye, N. (1957). 'Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays'. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
6. Golding, W. (1954). 'Lord of the Flies'. London: Faber & Faber.
7. Kövecses, Z. (2002). 'Metaphor: A Practical Introduction'. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
8. Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). 'Metaphors We Live By'. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
9. Leech, G. N. (1969). 'A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry'. London: Longman.