THE MAIN DISTINCTIONS AND PARALLELS BETWEEN HISTORICAL AND FICTIONAL NARRATIVES: A FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYZING CONTEMPORARY UZBEK PROSE

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Abstract. This theoretical study systematically analyzes the fundamental relationship between historical and fictional narratives, providing a specific application to the context of contemporary Uzbek literature. It argues that while these two forms have traditionally been distinguished by their primary commitments to empirical truth and imaginative invention, they share important commonalities as constructed narratives. Through a comparative analysis, the article identifies key differences: the historical narrative's contract with verifiable past events, its limitations on evidence, and its explanatory purpose, and the fictional narrative's autonomy, aesthetic/moral goals, and contract with reality. At the same time, it demonstrates fundamental similarities: both rely on the use of tropological language and storytelling techniques to transform raw material into coherent, meaningful narratives.

Drawing on the theories of Hayden White and Gérard Genette, the analysis concludes that historical and fictional narratives are best understood as neighboring modes of discourse that create a dialogic space occupied by genres such as historical fiction.[1] This theoretical framework is then used explicitly as an important tool for analyzing Ulugbek Hamdam's famous novel "Muvozanat" and demonstrates that the novel's power comes from a skillful synthesis of historical loyalty and artistic creativity to interrogate national memory and universal philosophical dilemmas.

Keywords: historical narrative, artistic narrative, differentiation, parallelism, narratology, historiography, employment, historical fiction, Ulugbek Hamdam, Muvozanat.

Introduction. The boundary between history and fiction represents one of the most enduring and productive conflicts in global intellectual traditions. In the context of post-Soviet Uzbek literature, this relationship is becoming especially relevant, as writers engage in a significant project of reinterpreting national history. This article explores the specific points of divergence and convergence between historical and fiction narratives in order to build a solid theoretical foundation. This foundation is not merely abstract; it is intended to be applied. As a result, the analysis consistently draws its principles from Ulugbek Hamdam's novel "Muvozanat", a paradigmatic work of modern Uzbek historical fiction, and actively discusses this very boundary. By clarifying their theoretical connection, this study provides the critical apparatus necessary for a deeper understanding of how "Muvozanat" and similar works reinterpret the past to shape cultural and philosophical consciousness.

Main part. Research methodology and theoretical framework. This study uses a qualitative, comparative theoretical analysis based on textual and conceptual analysis. The methodology is integrative, synthesizing insights from two main fields and coherently connecting them with applied literary research:

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[1] Ricoeur, P. (1984). Time and Narrative, Vol. 1. University of Chicago Press. – 288 P.

New Historiography (Hayden White, Frank Ankersmit)[2]: White's key concepts of employment and tropological prefiguration form the cornerstone, viewing history as a form of narrative. This approach directly influences our reading of the historical setting in The Balance, which is not a neutral backdrop but rather a structure that shapes the moral and philosophical quest of the novel.[3]

Structural Narratology (Gérard Genette, Mieke Bal)[4]: The analytical tools of narratology-focus, order, continuity, and voice- are used in common to demonstrate the common technical tools of historians and novelists. These tools are precisely the tools that Hamdam uses in The Balance to reconcile historical writing with artistic perspective.[5]

Cultural Memory Studies (Astrid Erll): This area helps to understand the functional role of historical works of art, such as "The Balance," in transmitting and reshaping collective memory within a national community.

Analysis and Results. The analysis proceeds along two complementary axes, first identifying irreducible differences and then key parallels, with the Balance acting as a constant illustrative criterion.

Core Distinctions.

Truth Claim and Reference: Historical narrative makes a reference truth claim that responds to empirical evidence. The contract of the fictional narrative is a resemblance to reality.

The Balance manages this difference by anchoring itself in a recognizable historical setting, recalling the specific socio-political changes in Central Asia, and freely imagining personal dialogues, internal conflicts, and symbolic encounters left behind in the archives of history.[6] Constraint and Freedom: The historian is constrained by the archive; the novelist is liberated by the imagination. Hamdam operates in a space between: it respects the broad outlines of historical events, but takes creative liberties with characterization and plot detail to explore themes of justice (justice) and balance (equilibrium) that are timeless but grounded in a particular past.

Fundamental Parallels

Narrative Use: Both construct plots to convey meaning. Balance is not a chronicle, but a narrative with plots that weave historical events into a compelling literary structure that resonates thematically, transforming a historical situation into a stage for exploring moral choices.

Tropological Construction: Both are mediated through figurative language. In Balance, historical elements often carry symbolic weight (for example, a physical or social structure may symbolize the stability or disintegration of an era), demonstrating how Hamdam uses the tropological layer inherent in all stories to add philosophical depth.[7]

Same narrative mechanism: Both use focus, time manipulation, and voice. Balance uses polyphonic narration, presenting multiple perspectives on shared events (both fictional characters and those inspired by historical figures). This technique, available to both the writer and the historian, emphasizes the subjectivity of historical truth, which is the novel's primary concern.

[2] Ankersmit, F. R. (2001). Historical Representation. Stanford University Press. – 256 P.

[3] White, H. (1973). Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. – 448 P.

[4] Genette, G. (1983). Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method. Cornell University Press. – 285 P.

[5] Bal, M. (2009). Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative (3rd ed.). University of Toronto Press. – 264 P

[6] Yusupova, M. (2022). Reconstructing History in Uzbek Fiction: The Case of Ulugbek Hamdam. Journal of Central Asian Studies, 15(3), 45–67

[7] Erll, A. (2011). Memory in Culture. Palgrave Macmillan. – 212 P.

Synthesis in Practice: The Case of *Muvozanat.*

The theoretical intersection outlined above is the very domain in which Muvozanat operates. The novel utilizes a dialogic model, where history and fiction are in constant conversation:

Historical Framework as Scaffolding: The novel uses history not as a cage but as a scaffold, providing a firm structure upon which the intricate architecture of character development and thematic exploration is built.

Fictional Agency as Interpretative Tool: Through its fictional protagonists and the imagined interiority of its historical figures, the novel performs an act of empathetic interpretation that strict historiography cannot. It asks not only "what happened?" but "how might it have been *experienced*, and what does that mean for us today?"

Thematic Elevation: The historical conflict in *Muvozanat* becomes a case study for universal concerns: power, morality, and equilibrium. This elevates the novel from a period piece to a work of lasting relevance, proving that fiction can be a powerful vehicle for historical understanding.[8]

Conclusion. This article has established that the difference between historical and fiction lies in their connection to reality and the parallel nature of their overall narrative structure. This framework is crucial for analyzing the complexity of contemporary historical fiction, especially in contexts of national revisionism, such as in Uzbekistan. Ulugbek Hamdam's "Muvozanat" serves as the best example of this synthesis. It skillfully uses the common tools of storytelling, polyphonic focus, and symbolic layering within a responsible historical framework.

The novel does not blur history and fiction to hide the truth, but rather seeks to find a deeper, more human truth about the burden of the past and its lessons for the present. Therefore, studying the differences and similarities between these narrative methods is not an academic abstraction; it is the key to unlocking the methodological innovation and cultural significance of works like "Balance", which actively participate in the important work of shaping collective memory and identity through literary art.

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