

## GENRE FEATURES OF FOLK BOOKS

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**ANNOTATION:** This scientific article is devoted to the theoretical study of the genre features of “folk books,” which represent the written and printed forms of samples of oral folk art (folklore) — an integral part of national culture. It analyzes the concept and theoretical foundations of folk books, highlighting their main characteristics such as traditionality, orality, popularity, and variability. The article classifies the genre system of folk books, focusing mainly on the artistic and structural features of epic genres (epic poems, fairy tales, legends, narratives), in particular, the syncretism (unity of prose and poetry) in epics and the plot functions in fairy tales. In addition, it examines issues such as inter-genre interaction, synthesis, and transformation (influence on written literature). The article contributes to the development of folklore theory and a deeper understanding of genre poetics.

**Keywords:** Folk books, folklore studies, genre features, epic genres, epic poem, fairy tale, syncretism, traditionality, variability, transformation.

**АННОТАЦИЯ:** Данная научная статья посвящена теоретическому исследованию жанровых особенностей «народных книг», представляющих собой письменные и печатные формы образцов устного народного творчества (фольклора), являющегося неотъемлемой частью национальной культуры. В работе анализируется понятие «народные книги» и его научно-теоретические основы, раскрываются такие характерные черты, как традиционность, устность, массовость и вариативность. В статье классифицируется жанровая система народных книг, особое внимание уделяется художественно-структурным особенностям эпических жанров (дастан, сказка, легенда, предание), в частности, синкретизму (единству прозы и поэзии) в дастанах и сюжетным функциям в сказках. Кроме того, рассматриваются вопросы межжанрового взаимодействия, их синтеза и трансформации (влияния на письменную литературу). Статья способствует развитию теории фольклористики и более глубокому пониманию поэтики жанра.

**Ключевые слова:** народные книги, фольклористика, жанровые особенности, эпические жанры, дастан, сказка, синкретизм, традиционность, вариативность, трансформация.

Oral folk art (folklore) is an integral part of national culture that has artistically reflected the social, political, moral, and ethical values of the people over the centuries. Due to their traditional, popular, and syncretic nature, these creative works became known as “folk books.” They were passed down orally from generation to generation and later disseminated through manuscripts and lithographic publications. In Uzbek folklore studies, folk books encompass numerous genres belonging to the epic, lyric, and dramatic categories. An in-depth analysis of their genre features and defining the specific poetics of each genre are among the most pressing theoretical and practical issues in folklore studies.

The main purpose of this article is to classify the genre features of folk books from a scientific and theoretical perspective and to analyze their leading characteristics — such as traditionality, variability, orality, and collectivity. The research is based on fundamental scholarly sources and modern scientific approaches relevant to the topic.

### **Semantic Aspects and Genre Classification of the Term “Folk Books”**

In folklore studies, the term “folk books” generally refers to large-scale epic works — such as epics, fairy tales, narratives, and legends. Unlike the concept of “book” in written literature, this term denotes orally transmitted works of unknown authorship that later gained widespread circulation in written form. As academician H. Zarifov pointed out, all examples of folk books preserve key folkloric features such as orality, traditionality, popularity, and the multiplicity of plot variants [1].

The genre system of folk books has a complex structure, and they can be divided into groups corresponding to literary types. However, among folk books, epic genres hold a dominant position:

**Epic Genres:** Epic poems (heroic and romantic), fairy tales (magical-fantastic, animal, domestic), legends, narratives, anecdotes.

**Lyric Genres:** Songs, wedding chants (yor-yor), lullabies, ritual songs (mostly appearing within epic poems).

**Dramatic Genres:** Folk plays, performances, and clowning acts (some of their texts are preserved in written versions of folk books).

### **Leading Features of Epic Genres**

The epic poem represents the richest and most complex genre among folk books. Its fundamental characteristics include:

**Syncretism (Unity of Prose and Poetry):** In epic poems, narrative sections (prose) and character dialogues or lyrical digressions (poetry) alternate continuously. T. Qorayev considers this harmony the main factor enhancing the artistic power of the epic [2].

**Epic Formulas (Patterns).** The presence of traditional formulas such as introductions, conclusions, descriptions of nature, and battle scenes creates favorable conditions for the oral performance of epic works. B. Imomov analyzed these formulas as the fundamental elements of epic poetics [3].

**Heroic Imagery:** In heroic epics, idealized heroes and brave warriors occupy the central position, while in romantic epics, devoted lovers become the main characters.

### **Fairy Tales – The Most Widespread and Stable Prose Genre**

Among folk books, the fairy tale (ertak) is the most common and stable prose genre. Its structural and genre characteristics are profoundly supported by V. Ya. Propp’s theory of plot functions:

**Compositional Stability of the Plot:** Fairy tales are based on a fixed sequence of functions — the hero’s loss, the task or quest, the trial, and the reward. Regardless of their types (magical, domestic, animal tales), this internal structure remains consistent [4].

**Artistic Conventionality (Fantasy):** Especially in magical tales, supernatural forces, miraculous objects, and fantastical spaces (for example, the realm of giants) serve as key artistic criteria.

### **Features of Minor Genres: Legend, Narrative, and Anecdote**

Legends and narratives are genres that explain the origins of certain historical or geographical objects, personalities, or events through the lens of popular imagination. Their distinguishing features include:

**Fusion of Reality and Fiction:** Although these genres are connected with real historical figures (for instance, Amir Temur, Jami) or places, the events are enriched with supernatural, divine, or mythological interpretations [5].

**Etiological Function:** They often serve to explain the origin (etymology) of a particular name, custom, or natural phenomenon.

**Anecdotes (Latifa):** Anecdotes are short, humorous, and satirical narratives — the sharpest form within folk books that expose social or political flaws through irony and laughter.

### **Inter-Genre Relations and Artistic Transformation of Folk Books**

Another important theoretical feature of folk books is their inter-genre interaction. This process manifests itself in the blending, synthesis, and transformation of genres, leading to new artistic qualities.

**Transformation Process:** The most commonly observed transformation is the influence of folklore genres on written literary forms. According to O. Safarov, romantic epics (for example, Farkhod and Shirin in folk versions) and fairy tales directly influenced the formation of prose narratives and novels in written literature [6]. This transformation is reflected in the adaptation of folkloric genre patterns into literary works.

**Genre Synthesis:** In epics, not only prose and poetry coexist, but also minor genres such as legends, riddles, and proverbs are integrated. For instance, a hero's speech in an epic may contain didactic proverbs. This phenomenon demonstrates the flexibility and absorptive capacity of folk books in utilizing diverse artistic material.

**Impact of Variability on Genre:** The abundance of variants (produced by different storytellers, regions, or eras) can alter genre characteristics. One version of an epic might emphasize heroism, while another might focus on romance. This proves that genre boundaries in folklore are relative and fluid.

To conclude, the genre characteristics of folk books stem from their social and collective nature, exhibiting several fundamental features — traditionality, orality, formulaic poetics, multi-functionality of the plot, and inter-genre syncretism. While epic genres are relatively stable in terms of artistic structure, legends and narratives stand out for their proximity to historical reality. The genre analysis of folk books not only deepens the understanding of folklore itself but also helps uncover the genetic foundations of national written literature. In the future, the application of modern technologies — such as digitization and computational linguistics — to the study of folk books will expand the theoretical and methodological base of folklore studies.

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