

NUMBERS IN ENGLISH LITERATURE AS SYMBOLIC, STRUCTURAL, AND CULTURAL**Matluba Sadullaeva Akhrorovna**

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email: msadullaeva1985@gmail.com**Abstract.**

Numbers have held symbolic significance across cultures, serving as more than mere tools for counting. They resonate deeply in literature, folklore, and mythology, often representing universal concepts such as unity, duality, growth, and cosmic order. From ancient civilizations to modern storytelling, numbers communicate themes of balance, transformation, spiritual awakening, and completion. This article explores the symbolic meanings of numbers from 1 to 13, illustrating their narrative function through examples from literature, film, and mythology. Numbers such as three, seven, and twelve recur across cultures, highlighting human fascination with cycles, harmony, and divine order. By examining the interplay between numbers and narrative, this study emphasizes how numbers enrich storytelling, guiding readers' understanding both consciously and subconsciously, and shaping the cultural and moral frameworks within which stories unfold.

Keywords:

Numerology, symbolism, folklore, literature, mythology, sacred numbers, narrative structure, cosmic order, spiritual symbolism, cultural significance.

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email: msadullaeva1985@gmail.com**Annotatsiya.**

Raqamlar madaniyatlar bo'ylab ramziy ahamiyatga ega bo'lib, shunchaki sanash vositasi bo'lib xizmat qilgan. Ular adabiyotda, folklorda va mifologiyada chuqur aks-sado beradi, ko'pincha birlik, ikkilik, o'sish va kosmik tartib kabi universal tushunchalarni ifodalaydi. Qadimgi tsivilizatsiyalardan tortib zamonaviy hikoya qilishgacha, raqamlar muvozanat, o'zgarish, ma'naviy uyg'onish va yakunlash mavzularini ifodalaydi. Ushbu maqolada 1 dan 13 gacha bo'lgan raqamlarning ramziy ma'nolari o'rganiladi, ularning rivoyat funksiyasini adabiyot, film va mifologiyadan misollar orqali ko'rsatib beradi. Uch, yetti va o'n ikki kabi raqamlar madaniyatlar bo'ylab takrorlanadi, bu insonning sikllar, uyg'unlik va ilohiy tartib bilan qiziqishini ta'kidlaydi. Raqamlar va rivoyat o'rtasidagi o'zaro ta'sirni o'rganish orqali ushbu tadqiqot raqamlarning hikoya qilishni qanday boyitishi, o'quvchilarning ongli va ongsiz ravishda tushunchasini boshqarishi va hikoyalar rivojlanadigan madaniy va axloqiy asoslarni shakllantirishini ta'kidlaydi.

Kalit so‘zlar:

Numerologiya, simvolizm, folklor, adabiyot, mifologiya, muqaddas raqamlar, rivoyat tuzilishi, kosmik tartib, ma'naviy simvolizm, madaniy ahamiyatga ega.

ЧИСЛА В АНГЛИЙСКОЙ ЛИТЕРАТУРЕ**Матлюба Садуллаева Ахроровна**

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email: msadullaeva1985@gmail.com**Аннотация.**

Числа имеют символическое значение в разных культурах, выступая не просто инструментами для счета. Они глубоко резонируют в литературе, фольклоре и мифологии, часто представляя универсальные понятия, такие как единство, двойственность, рост и космический порядок. От древних цивилизаций до современного повествования числа передают темы баланса, трансформации, духовного пробуждения и завершенности. В этой статье исследуются символические значения чисел от 1 до 13, иллюстрируя их повествовательную функцию на примерах из литературы, кино и мифологии. Такие числа, как три, семь и двенадцать, встречаются в разных культурах, подчеркивая человеческое увлечение циклами, гармонией и божественным порядком. В данном исследовании, изучающем взаимодействие чисел и повествования, подчеркивается, как числа обогащают рассказывание историй, направляя понимание читателей как на сознательном, так и на подсознательном уровне, и формируя культурные и моральные рамки, в которых разворачиваются сюжеты.

Ключевые слова:

нумерология, символизм, фольклор, литература, мифология, священные числа, структура повествования, космический порядок, духовный символизм, культурное значение.

Introduction. Numbers have always carried meaning beyond simple counting, especially in literature, folklore, and mythology. Writers often use them quietly, almost invisibly, to reinforce ideas about character, society, and human experience. In *The Great Gatsby*, this symbolic use of numbers can be seen most clearly in the contrast between **one** and **five**.

The number **one** traditionally represents individuality, unity, and isolation. In Fitzgerald's novel, this meaning is closely tied to Nick Carraway. Nick stands apart from the glittering world he describes, acting as a single, reflective observer moving through a landscape of wealth, excess, and moral confusion. He is present everywhere, yet belongs nowhere, and this sense of being "one" underscores his role as both participant and judge.

The number **five**, however, carries a very different kind of energy. Throughout the novel, it appears again and again in moments that shape the story: the five central characters (Daisy, Gatsby, Tom, Nick, and Jordan); Daisy and Gatsby's reunion in Chapter Five; Daisy's name shouted five times before Myrtle is struck; the five crates of fruit delivered to Gatsby's house every week; the five-piece orchestra, cars parked "five deep," social groups of five, the

reference to five executions, the five years Daisy and Gatsby spent apart, and even Nick's memory involving five years of unpaid taxes. Individually, these details may seem trivial, but together they create a noticeable pattern[21].

In symbolism and numerology, **five** is linked to movement, freedom, curiosity, and change. It is not a stable or settled number; instead, it suggests restlessness and the desire to push boundaries. This meaning fits perfectly with the world of *The Great Gatsby*, where characters are constantly chasing something—wealth, love, status, or the illusion of a perfect past. Gatsby himself embodies this energy: always reaching forward, always reinventing, never at rest.

Five also has a strong connection to human experience. We understand the world through five senses, and Fitzgerald's novel is rich with sensory detail—music, color, taste, sound, and light. Gatsby's parties overwhelm the senses, creating an atmosphere of excitement and possibility. Yet beneath this sensory richness lies a moral emptiness. The characters feel everything intensely, but they reflect very little.

When we read **one and five** together, a deeper contrast emerges. One suggests isolation, moral awareness, and individuality. Five suggests excess, motion, and social excitement. Nick's quiet, singular perspective stands against the noisy, shifting world of Gatsby's parties and dreams. Through this contrast, Fitzgerald highlights a central tension of the novel: the gap between inner moral clarity and outward social spectacle. In this way, numbers become more than background details. They subtly support Fitzgerald's critique of the American Dream—a dream that promises freedom and endless possibility, but often leads to loneliness, illusion, and loss.

The number **three** functions as a significant symbolic motif in several literary works, most notably in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, where characters and structural elements frequently appear in triads. For instance, the royal family of King Hamlet is composed of three figures: King Hamlet, Queen Gertrude, and their son Hamlet. Similarly, Polonius's family also forms a triad, consisting of Polonius, his son Laertes, and his daughter Ophelia. Even the play's opening scene reinforces this pattern through the presence of three sentinels—Francisco, Bernardo, and Marcellus—whose watch sets the dramatic action in motion[12].

Commenting on the symbolic importance of the number three, Wilson (qtd. in Bhatia 34) describes it as “the number of versatility and plenty; traditionally lucky (‘three times lucky’).” He further notes that individuals associated with this number are often perceived as cheerful, charming, adaptable, and talented, though they may also be inclined to seek validation and approval from others. This symbolic richness extends beyond drama into Shakespeare's poetry as well. In the *Sonnets*, such as Sonnet 94, the number three carries both literary and religious significance, echoing ideas of moral balance, restraint, and the Christian concept of the Trinity, thereby deepening the thematic complexity of the text.

*They that have pow'r to hurt, and will do none,
That do not do the thing they most do show,
Who moving others are themselves as stone,
Unmovèd, cold, and to temptation slow,
They rightly do inherit heaven's graces, 5
And husband nature's riches from expense.
They are the lords and owners of their faces;
Others but stewards of their excellence.
The summer's flow'r is to the summer sweet,*

*Though to itself it only live and die. 10
But if that flow'r with base infection meet,
The basest weed outbraves his dignity.
For sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds;
Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds [4].*

The writer repeats the pronoun "they" thrice and talks about basic truths concerning the character of man to deepening the spiritual importance of virtues contrasting virtue with look. This sonnet runs in three quatrains, and "they" is used three times. The "they" in the first line sums up the youth's characteristics in three: he is detached, impersonal, and authoritative.

Shakespeare uses the number three as a symbol closely associated with paganism and the supernatural. In *Macbeth*, this symbolism is most clearly embodied by the three witches, whose very number reinforces their otherworldly and unchristian nature. From their first appearance, the witches operate outside the moral and religious order of the play, drawing on pre-Christian beliefs, magic, and prophecy. In Act I, Scene V, they greet Macbeth with a triple salutation—*"All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, Thane of Glamis!*

All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor!

All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be King hereafter!"[12]—a ritualistic use of three that mirrors pagan incantations and emphasizes the seductive power of their prophecies. This triple greeting not only heightens the sense of mysticism but also symbolically traps Macbeth within a cycle of ambition, fate, and moral corruption, suggesting that the number three functions as a key structural and symbolic device linking pagan belief, prophecy, and disorder in the play.

The number seven appears prominently throughout the seven books of *The Chronicles of Narnia*, a fact that is widely acknowledged. What has remained less obvious, however, is C. S. Lewis's deeper intention in employing this number. According to Rev. Dr. Michael Ward, writing for *Church Life Today*, the key to understanding the structure and symbolism of *The Chronicles* lies in the concept of the seven heavens of the medieval cosmos[19].

In his analysis of C. S. Lewis's work, Ward challenges the common assumption that the number seven refers primarily to the seven deadly sins or the seven sacraments. Instead, he argues that the seven Narnian books correspond to the seven planets of medieval cosmology, which Lewis regarded as "spiritual symbols of permanent value." Ward arrived at this insight while reading one of Lewis's poems containing the line, "Jupiter brings about winter past and guilt forgiven." He interprets this verse as a concise thematic summary of *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. Following this discovery, Ward spent over a year rereading *The Chronicles of Narnia*, during which he identified numerous allusions to medieval cosmology embedded throughout the series, thereby revealing a carefully constructed cosmological atmosphere underpinning Lewis's imaginative world [19].

In "*The Adventure of the Six Napoleons*" (1904), Arthur Conan Doyle employs the number **six** as a narrative and symbolic device that reflects the epistemological foundations of detective fiction—namely, the reduction of apparent multiplicity to a single rational truth. The story revolves around the destruction of six plaster busts of Napoleon Bonaparte, an act that initially appears irrational and politically motivated. Inspector Lestrade describes the case as "one of the most meaningless outrages which have ever come under my notice," thereby foregrounding the confusion produced by repetitive violence [8].

Symbolically, the number six represents false patterning and deceptive repetition. The existence of six identical busts creates the illusion of ideological intent, encouraging both the authorities and the reader to search for symbolic or political meaning. Sherlock Holmes, however, rejects such speculation, insisting on material logic: “The bust which contained the pearl must have been one of those which were first made” [8]. This statement reveals that the multiplicity of six is merely a practical necessity rather than a meaningful totality.

In Shakespeare’s *As You Like It*, representing the natural progression and completeness of life. Eight represents cycles, power, and the balance between material and spiritual realms, a theme evident in Orwell’s *1984* [14], which depicts the cyclical struggle for control and resistance, and in Nine signifies completion, the end of cycles, and higher understanding, exemplified in Dorothy L. Sayers’ *The Nine Tailors* [7], where the recurring imagery of bells symbolizes closure, and in *Macbeth*, the nine visions in the witches’ apparitions foreshadow the inevitable conclusion of human ambition. Ten embodies wholeness and the culmination of journeys, as in Homer’s *The Odyssey* [11], where Odysseus’s ten-year voyage represents literal and symbolic completion, and in Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*, where the ten significant conspirators shape the political and moral resolution of the play. Eleven, often considered a master number, symbolizes insight, intuition, and spiritual awakening, and in Doyle’s *The Adventure of the Eleven Men* [8], where the number organizes the plot’s resolution of mystery and justice. Twelve represents cosmic order, cycles, and completeness, such as in the twelve labors of Hercules in Greek mythology, and in Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*, where twelve key characters’ actions interweave to resolve confusion and restore harmony. Thirteen, while often seen as unlucky, symbolizes transformation, rebellion, and radical change, as in Suzanne Collins’ *The Hunger Games* [6], where District 13 embodies revolutionary defiance.

Conclusion. In literature, numbers often operate beneath the surface of the text, shaping meaning in ways that are felt rather than immediately noticed. They help writers organize narratives, reinforce themes, and connect individual stories to broader cultural, philosophical, and symbolic traditions. Whether suggesting unity or isolation, movement or completion, order or disruption, numbers provide a shared symbolic language that guides readers’ interpretation of characters and events. Across different genres and historical periods, this numerical symbolism deepens literary expression by linking human experience to patterns of belief, morality, and imagination. As a result, numbers become more than simple markers of quantity; they serve as quiet structural and thematic forces that enrich storytelling and expand its interpretive depth.

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