

SYMBOLS IN LYRICAL SONGS

Abdunazarova Nazira Dilshod qizi

Termiz University of Economics and Service
Faculty of Pedagogy and Social-Humanitarian Sciences
Department of Philology and Language Teaching (Uzbek Language)
3rd-year Student

Annotation: This article analyzes the semantic and poetic characteristics of symbols used in Uzbek folk lyrical songs. The study explores the concept of the symbol within lyrical poetics and distinguishes it from metaphor and simile. Based on examples of key symbolic images — such as birds, plants, natural phenomena, and color symbolism — the paper reveals their artistic and functional significance. The research also examines the main types of symbols — “core” (constant) and “contextual” (situational) — as well as their variability and polysemy perceived by the listener. The article aims to identify the symbolic system of Uzbek folk lyrics and to uncover its aesthetic and spiritual foundations.

Keywords: lyrical songs, symbol, semantics, poetics, core symbol, contextual symbol, folk lyrics, bird symbolism, nature imagery, color symbolism, folklore studies, aesthetic analysis.

Аннотация: В данной статье анализируются семантические и поэтические особенности символов, используемых в узбекских народных лирических песнях. В ходе исследования рассматривается место и роль символа в поэтике лирики, его отличие от метафоры и сравнения. На основе примеров основных символических образов — птиц, растений, природных явлений и цветовой системы — раскрывается их художественно-функциональное значение. Также анализируются основные типы символов — «ядровой» (постоянный) и «ситуативный» (контекстуальный), их изменчивость и многозначность, формирующаяся в сознании слушателя. Статья направлена на выявление символической системы узбекской народной лирики, а также на раскрытие её эстетических и духовных основ.

Ключевые слова: лирические песни, символ, семантика, поэтика, ядровой символ, ситуативный символ, народная лирика, символ птиц, природные образы, символика цвета, фольклористика, эстетический анализ.

Lyric songs are among the oldest and most delicate forms of art that express a person's inner emotions, feelings, and spiritual world. The unity of poetic text, melody, and performance creates a unique aesthetic impact. One of the main characteristics of lyrical art is the extensive use of figurative means — particularly symbols.

A symbol is a way of expressing an idea, concept, or emotional state through another image or object, thereby revealing deep semantic layers in lyrical songs. Symbols expand the scope of meaning, endow the text with polysemy, and give it a universal character. This article focuses on analyzing the system of symbols in Uzbek lyrical songs, their origins, and their semantic-poetic functions.

The Role of Symbols in Lyric Poetry

In literary studies, the concept of a symbol differs from simile and metaphor in that it does not confine meaning to a single framework but rather leaves room for the reader's (or listener's) imagination to interpret it. A symbol combines both conventional and hidden meanings, allowing for multiple layers of interpretation.

As folklorist Sh. Turdimov notes, the symbols in folk lyrical songs were shaped by mythological worldviews, customs, and observations of daily life. They can be classified into core symbols (those that maintain consistent meaning across songs) and contextual symbols (those that acquire new meanings depending on the situation) [1].

In Uzbek lyrical traditions — particularly in folk songs — human emotions such as love, separation, longing, loyalty, and sorrow are expressed through the imagery of nature, objects, colors, and even numbers. Symbols make lyrical texts concise yet emotionally rich and meaningful.

Analysis of the Most Common Symbolic Images in Lyrical Songs

A distinct system of symbolic images has been formed in Uzbek lyrical songs. Among them, the most prominent groups include the following:

Bird Symbolism. Birds are among the most common symbols in lyrical songs. They often symbolize the beloved, a messenger, or freedom itself.

Crane, duck, goose: These birds may represent the beloved's grace and beauty but also symbolize separation and distance — for instance, the crane's long flight often conveys longing and parting.

Nightingale: Frequently symbolizes the lover himself, expressing the pain, lament, and passion of love.

Plant and Fruit Symbolism. This group of symbols conveys beauty, purity, continuity of life, and fertility.

Flower: Represents the beloved's face, beauty, and youth. A red flower symbolizes love and passion; a white flower stands for purity and innocence.

Plane tree, poplar: Symbolize stature, faithfulness, and steadfastness.

Apple: In early folklore, it was a symbol of fertility and childbirth, but later came to represent love and the choice of a beloved [4].

Natural Elements. Symbols drawn from nature reflect the emotional state and inner experiences of the lyrical subject.

River, water: Represent life, purity, and the passage of time; sometimes, they signify distance or an impassable barrier.

Mountain, stone: Stand for obstacles, endurance, and inner strength. The "mountain of love" often symbolizes the hardships on the path toward the beloved.

The Variability and Contextual Meaning of Symbols

The power of symbols in lyrical songs lies in their ability to transcend traditional meanings and acquire new interpretations depending on context. For example, tears traditionally symbolize sorrow or grief, while red apple in certain lyrical quatrains may represent a child or the choice of a partner [4].

The polysemy of symbols allows listeners to interpret deeper layers of meaning independently. For instance, the black color in a lyrical text not only denotes the color itself but also symbolizes grief, mourning, or hopelessness.

Color symbolism, in general, plays an important role in lyrical poetics:

Red: Love, passion, beauty of the beloved.

White: Purity, innocence, simplicity.

Black/Grey: Sadness, grief, longing.

Through symbols, similes, and metaphors, the emotional experiences of the lyrical hero are conveyed in a generalized form, which contributes to the song's popularity and its accessibility to a broad audience [3].

In Conclusion, symbols in lyrical songs are not merely decorative poetic devices but fundamental elements that carry the work's ideological and aesthetic weight. They are rooted in the long-standing cultural and mythological beliefs of the Uzbek people. The symbolic imagery of birds, plants, natural phenomena, and colors gives lyrical songs depth, emotional resonance, and universal meaning. The study of these symbols helps to better understand the poetics of Uzbek folk lyrics, their artistic style, and their ability to portray the human spirit. Thus, the analysis of the symbolic system in lyrical songs remains one of the significant and relevant tasks of Uzbek folklore and literary studies.

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