

**SEMANTICS AND CULTURAL SYMBOLISM OF ANTHROPNOMS IN RUSSIAN  
AND UZBEK FICTION**

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**Abstract:** The article examines the semantic and cultural-symbolic features of anthroponyms in Russian and Uzbek literary works. It analyzes how personal names reflect the national worldview, aesthetic ideals, and mental stereotypes of both nations. The comparative analysis shows that anthroponyms serve not only as a means of identification but also as an important component of artistic poetics, carrying ethnocultural information and emotional-evaluative meaning.

**Keywords:** anthroponym, semantics, symbolism, cultural code, fiction, national identity.

In modern linguistics, anthroponyms — personal names — are increasingly viewed not merely as linguistic signs but as cultural and semiotic constructs that encapsulate national memory, worldview, and artistic consciousness. Both Russian and Uzbek literatures possess rich anthroponymic traditions that reveal historical, religious, and aesthetic layers of their respective cultures. The study of anthroponyms in fiction, therefore, offers a valuable perspective on the interaction between language, culture, and literature.

The semantics of anthroponyms in both Russian and Uzbek literary traditions reflects the historical and cultural evolution of their respective societies. Names in fiction are never accidental: they encode social, ethical, and symbolic meanings that contribute to the creation of multi-dimensional characters.

In Russian literature, the semantics of personal names often reveals psychological depth and moral ambiguity. Classical authors such as Fyodor Dostoevsky, Leo Tolstoy, and Nikolai Gogol intentionally chose names to embody character traits, ethical struggles, and philosophical ideas.

For example, in *Crime and Punishment*, the surname Raskolnikov derives from the Russian word *raskol* (“split” or “schism”), symbolizing the protagonist’s internal conflict between reason and conscience. Similarly, Sofya Marmeladova, whose first name means “wisdom,” represents moral purity and spiritual redemption.

In Tolstoy’s *Anna Karenina*, the eponymous heroine’s name carries universal, emotional connotations. The name Anna, being common and traditional, emphasizes her humanity, while the surname Karenina connects her to a cold and formal patriarchal society. These subtle semantic contrasts reflect the duality of freedom and constraint in her life.

Meanwhile, in Gogol’s satirical world, “speaking names” (говорящие имена) such as Manilov (from *manit*, “to lure”) and Sobakevich (from *sobaka*, “dog”) function as semantic caricatures, expressing the moral decay and hypocrisy of provincial society.

Thus, in Russian fiction, anthroponyms often serve as semantic mirrors of character psychology and social dynamics, functioning as both artistic and ideological tools.

In Uzbek fiction, the semantics of names reflects a synthesis of Islamic, Turkic, and Persian influences, where each anthroponym embodies layers of moral, spiritual, and poetic meaning. For example, in Abdulla Qodiriy’s novel *O’tkan kunlar* (*Bygone Days*), the main character Otabek combines the morphemes *ota* (father) and *bek* (nobleman), symbolizing responsibility,

honor, and moral leadership. The female protagonist Kumush (literally “silver”) represents purity, delicacy, and fidelity — traditional feminine virtues deeply rooted in Uzbek cultural aesthetics. Similarly, in Alisher Navoi’s *Layli va Majnun*, the names themselves have become universal symbols: Layli (“night”) suggests mystery and longing, while Majnun (“madman”) expresses the ultimate form of love and spiritual devotion. These names transcend linguistic boundaries and acquire archetypal significance in world literature.

Contemporary Uzbek literature also demonstrates the evolution of naming semantics. Writers such as Erkin A’zam and Ulug’bek Hamdam often use anthroponyms like Dilshod (“happy-hearted”) or Umid (“hope”) to emphasize psychological realism and the modern search for meaning, while still preserving national poetics.

Despite belonging to different linguistic and cultural traditions, Russian and Uzbek anthroponyms share several semantic parallels:

- Both literatures employ moral and emotional semantics in names (e.g., Sofya — “wisdom”, Saodat — “happiness”).
- Both reflect social hierarchy through suffixes or titles (Karenina, Otabek).
- Both use symbolic color and nature imagery (Kumush — “silver”, Zarema — “golden”, Rozaliya — “rose”).

These similarities demonstrate that anthroponyms serve as cross-cultural semiotic bridges, uniting linguistic expression with cultural consciousness.

The cultural and ethnic dimensions of anthroponyms in Russian and Uzbek literature play a crucial role in shaping the artistic and ideological frameworks of both literary traditions. Names in fiction act as linguistic symbols that preserve national identity, encode social values, and reflect collective memory. Through their etymology, structure, and use in literary contexts, anthroponyms reveal how authors interpret and transmit their cultural heritage.

In Russian fiction, personal names are deeply embedded in the country’s religious and social history. Many traditional names stem from the Orthodox Christian tradition and the Slavic lexicon, functioning as markers of spirituality and moral values. For instance, names such as Alexei, Nikolai, Maria, and Sofya carry associations with saintly purity, humility, and faith.

Writers like Fyodor Dostoevsky and Leo Tolstoy used these cultural codes consciously. Dostoevsky’s characters — Alexei Karamazov, Ivan, and Dmitri — embody the tension between faith and reason, where the names themselves act as moral signifiers. Similarly, Tolstoy’s Natasha Rostova and Andrei Bolkonsky represent noble ideals of family, patriotism, and compassion deeply rooted in Russian culture.

Beyond the Orthodox layer, Russian anthroponyms also reveal social and class distinctions. Nobility is often reflected through surnames ending in -sky, -ov, -in, symbolizing lineage and status (e.g., Bolkonsky, Raskolnikov, Oblonsky). These morphological markers serve as cultural codes that immediately orient the reader in the hierarchical structure of Russian society.

## 2. Anthroponyms as Carriers of National Identity in Uzbek Literature

In Uzbek fiction, anthroponyms serve as powerful indicators of national and ethnic identity. The names used by writers such as Alisher Navoi, Abdulla Qodiriy, and Erkin A’zam encode deep cultural and spiritual meanings. Rooted in Turkic, Arabic, and Persian linguistic traditions, they reflect the syncretic nature of Uzbek civilization.

For example, in Qodiriy’s *O’tkan kunlar* (*Bygone Days*), the name Otabek signifies both nobility (bek) and patriarchal responsibility (ota), while Kumush (“silver”) reflects beauty and moral purity. These anthroponyms function as cultural mirrors, representing the values of honor, faithfulness, and moral integrity — the essence of Uzbek national identity.

Names of Persian origin, such as Shirin (“sweet”), Dilorom (“peaceful heart”), and Dilshod (“happy-hearted”), emphasize the lyrical and emotional dimension of Uzbek poetics. They serve

as a bridge between everyday life and spiritual ideals, illustrating how the Uzbek naming tradition preserves both aesthetic refinement and ethical orientation.

In modern Uzbek literature, authors increasingly blend traditional and globalized naming patterns. This reflects a society negotiating between cultural preservation and modern transformation. Names like Umid (“hope”) or Saodat (“happiness”) coexist with borrowed forms such as Amina or Kamila, symbolizing the coexistence of national and cosmopolitan identities.

**Table 1. Comparative analysis. Cultural reflection through naming**

| Aspect                        | Russian Literature   | Uzbek Literature                                   |
|-------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Religious Layer</b>        | Orthodox Christian, biblical names (Maria, Nikolai, Sofya) | Islamic and Arabic roots (Abdulla, Fatima, Zukhra) |
| <b>Ethnic Identity</b>        | Slavic and aristocratic naming forms (-ov, -sky)           | Turkic, Persian, and Arabic morphological bases    |
| <b>Cultural Symbolism</b>     | Morality, faith, family honor                              | Purity, loyalty, spirituality, harmony with nature |
| <b>Modern Trends</b>          | Psychological individualization, social realism            | Fusion of traditional and modern identities        |
| <b>Function in Literature</b> | Ethical and ideological markers of character               | Ethnopoetic reflection of national mentality       |

Both literary systems demonstrate that anthroponyms are semiotic condensations of culture — they crystallize collective values, worldviews, and memory. In Russian fiction, names often serve to moralize and universalize the human condition, while in Uzbek literature they tend to idealize and nationalize the artistic image.

The persistence of traditional names (Sofya, Otabek, Saodat) alongside modern ones (Alex, Amina, Dilshodbek) demonstrates the dynamic relationship between tradition and modernity. Each name becomes a cultural microcosm, preserving the ethnic code of its people while adapting to global linguistic trends.

Cultural identity in Russian and Uzbek anthroponyms is expressed through the interplay of historical, religious, and aesthetic codes. While Russian names often reflect the moral and philosophical essence of Orthodox and humanistic traditions, Uzbek names embody the harmony of faith, beauty, and moral dignity. Both systems illustrate that anthroponyms are not merely linguistic units, but living symbols of national consciousness, capable of bridging time, culture, and language through the power of the artistic word.

The comparative analysis of anthroponyms in Russian and Uzbek fiction reveals that names in both linguistic and literary systems function as complex cultural, semantic, and aesthetic markers. In Russian literature, anthroponyms are deeply connected with the Orthodox-Christian worldview, social hierarchy, and moral reflection. They serve as ethical indicators and reveal the philosophical nature of human existence. In contrast, Uzbek anthroponyms embody national consciousness, aesthetic refinement, and spiritual symbolism rooted in Islamic and Turkic-Persian traditions.

Both literatures demonstrate that personal names are not only identifiers but also cultural texts that encode the moral, emotional, and ideological dimensions of a nation’s worldview. The artistic use of anthroponyms thus represents a linguistic bridge between language, culture, and identity, uniting the creative traditions of different peoples within the universal space of world literature.

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