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SYMBOLISM AND POETIC IMAGERY IN THE WORKS OF ABDULHAMID CHO'LPON AND SHAVKAT RAHMON

Nozimaxon Olimjonova Erkin qizi

Second-year Master's student,

Namangan State Institute of Foreign Languages, Uzbekistan.

nozima.olimjonova02@gmail.com

Abstract

This article is devoted to the literary analysis of symbols in the works of two prominent figures of Uzbek literature — Abdulhamid Cho'lpon and Shavkat Rakhmon. The article explores various symbols in their poetry through selected examples. It highlights the artistic function, semantic meaning, and the role of symbols in conveying the poets' ideas in an imaginative way poetry. The research findings show that Cho'lpon used symbolic imagery to express ideas of national awakening and freedom, while Shavkat Rahmon employed symbolism to explore inner emotional turmoil and philosophical reflections on existence.

Key words: Cho`lpon, Sh.Rahmon, symbols, national awakening, inner emotions.

Introduction

Symbolism has long played an essential role in the development of world poetry, serving as a powerful artistic means for expressing complex emotional, philosophical, and social ideas. Through symbolic imagery, poets are able to convey meanings that go beyond literal expression, creating multilayered semantic structures within poetic texts. In this regard, symbols function not only as stylistic devices but also as important instruments for representing the inner world of the poet and the socio-cultural realities of a particular historical period.

In literary studies, the concepts of symbol and symbolism are closely interconnected, although they differ in their scope and meaning. Symbolism refers primarily to a literary movement based on specific aesthetic principles, whereas a symbol functions as a poetic device within a literary text. As noted in Merriam-Webster, the term symbol originates from the Greek word "symbolon", which denotes a sign or mark of identification. According to the English researcher Tochukwu Ezebunine, "Symbolism in poetry is a literary technique used by poets to convey deeper meanings and evoke emotions through symbols—objects, actions, or ideas that carry significance beyond their literal meaning."[1] In poetry, symbols allow authors to convey deeper meanings and evoke emotional responses through objects, images, or events that carry significance beyond their literal sense. Thus, symbols often serve to express abstract ideas, inner experiences, and conceptual themes, expanding the interpretative possibilities of poetic works.

In the history of Uzbek literature, symbolism occupies a significant place, particularly in the works of poets who sought to express national aspirations and social concerns under restrictive political circumstances. Among such poets, Abdulhamid Cho'lpon and Shavkat Rahmon hold a distinctive position. Their poetry is characterized by deep symbolic meaning, aesthetic richness,

[1] https://poemcollections.com. Symbolism in poetry

and philosophical reflection. Through symbolic imagery, both poets were able to articulate the spiritual state of their people, as well as their own personal experiences and aspirations.

In Cho'lpon's poetry, symbols function as an important means of expressing ideas related to freedom, national awakening, and the suffering of the people during the colonial period. Natural phenomena such as the sun, stars, and seasonal changes are often used as symbolic images that convey deeper social and political meanings. Similarly, in the poetry of Shavkat Rahmon, symbolic imagery derived from nature—such as mountains, trees, and other natural elements—plays a crucial role in revealing the inner world of the lyrical hero and reflecting broader philosophical and social themes.

Although the works of these poets have been widely studied in Uzbek literary scholarship, the symbolic system of imagery in their poetry still deserves deeper comparative analysis. Therefore, the aim of this study is to examine the role and artistic function of symbolic imagery in the poetry of Cho'lpon and Shavkat Rahmon, with particular attention to the aesthetic, philosophical, and socio-cultural meanings conveyed through symbols.

Methods.

This study employs qualitative research methods in order to analyze the symbolic imagery in the poetry of Abdulhamid Cho'lpon and Shavkat Rahmon. The research is primarily based on a close textual analysis of selected poems in which symbolic images play a significant role in conveying aesthetic, philosophical, and socio-cultural meanings

Several methodological approaches are applied in the course of the study. First, the textual analysis method is used to examine the poetic texts and identify symbolic images within them. Particular attention is paid to the semantic structure of these symbols and their role in expressing the poets' ideas and emotional experiences.

Second, the comparative method is employed to analyze similarities and differences in the use of symbolic imagery in the works of the two poets. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of how symbols function within different historical and cultural contexts.

In addition, the interpretative and contextual analysis methods are used to reveal the philosophical and social meanings embedded in the symbolic images. These methods help to explore how natural elements such as the sun, stars, mountains, and trees function as artistic devices for expressing broader themes related to national identity, spiritual struggle, and human experience.

The research is also supported by the analysis of scholarly literature on Uzbek poetry and symbolism, including studies devoted to the works of Cho'lpon and Shavkat Rahmon. Through these methodological approaches, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the symbolic system in their poetry.

Results

The analysis of selected poems demonstrates that symbolic imagery functions as a central artistic device in the poetry of Abdulhamid Cho'lpon and Shavkat Rahmon. In both poets' works, symbols are not merely decorative elements but key components of poetic structure that convey deeper social, philosophical, and emotional meanings. The results of the textual analysis reveal

that symbolic images in their poetry are closely connected with historical context, national identity, and the poets' personal worldview.

First, in Cho'lpon's poetry, symbols derived from natural phenomena frequently express ideas related to freedom, national awakening, and social oppression. Images such as the sun, star, winter, and spring carry symbolic meanings that extend beyond their literal sense. For instance, in the poem "Go'zal" (beauty), the female figure functions as a symbolic representation of the homeland and freedom. Similarly, in the poem "Bahorni sog'indim" (I miss the spring), the contrast between winter and spring symbolizes the opposition between oppression and renewal. Winter represents despair and stagnation, whereas spring symbolizes hope, revival, and the aspiration for a free future:

"I longed for the spring, for the spring…

When the earth and the whole world are filled with snow.

Snow… snow…

Like poisonous needles,

It flows toward the eyes…

Where are you, where are you,

O spring that has sunk into hearts

Like gentle bosoms?"[2]

Another significant example appears in the poem "Qalandar ishqi" (The love of a Qalandar), where the symbolic images of the sun and the star acquire multilayered meanings:

"In the sky of love I was a beautiful star, Cho'lpon, my friends,

Unable to endure the light of the sun, I sank down to the earth."[3]

The image of the sun in this couplet has been interpreted in different ways by literary scholars. For instance, the literary critic Ozod Sharafiddinov adheres to a traditional interpretation, suggesting that the lover compares his beloved to the sun. Similarly, the scholar Dilmurod Quronov analyzes the same couplet in his academic studies. According to his interpretation, "the literal meaning of the poet's pen name in the first line, carries a symbolic implication: the star in the sky of love is forced to fade with the rising of the sun, thereby alluding to the way the October Revolution cut short the struggle for independence."[4] Thus, Cho'lpon's symbolic imagery allows the poet to express complex ideas indirectly while maintaining a rich poetic structure.

[2] A.Cho`lpon. She`rlar, hikoyalar, she`riy va nasriy tarjimalar. -Toshkent:"Zabarjad Media",2022.B-116.

[3] A.Cho`lpon. She`rlar, hikoyalar, she`riy va nasriy tarjimalar. -Toshkent:"Zabarjad Media",2022.B-33

[4] D.Quronov. "Cho`lpon hayoti va ijodiy merosi" T.,O`qituvchi. 1997.-B36

The analysis of Shavkat Rahmon's poetry also demonstrates a consistent use of symbolic imagery, particularly through natural elements such as mountains, trees, stones, and hearts. In many of his poems, the mountain serves as a symbol of spiritual strength, dignity, and the proud character of the Uzbek nation. At the same time, mountain landscapes often reflect the inner state of the lyrical hero, expressing both emotional tension and philosophical contemplation.

Another important symbolic image in Shavkat Rahmon's poetry is the tree, which represents life, growth, and hope. In the poem "Mavzu" (Theme), the expression "a heart whose roots have been cut" transforms the image of the heart into a metaphorical tree, emphasizing spiritual pain and the destructive influence of oppressive forces. The symbolic image of the axe in the poem further intensifies this meaning, representing the political system that threatens the vitality and freedom of the individual:

"The enemy does not fade from my memory,

As if every blow sparks again.

In my chest it flutters like a bird—

A heart whose roots have been cut…"[5]

In another poem by Shavkat Rahmon, the image of the mountain is endowed with symbolic and emotional meaning. The mountain is personified and becomes a reflection of the lyrical hero's inner state, conveying spiritual awakening and deep emotional tension.

The researcher D. Mingboyeva also discusses the semantic significance of the mountain image in literary texts, noting that "the mountain embodies the idea of elevation," that "the spiritual roots of reverence for mountains lie in their closeness to the sky," and that "in poetry, the mountain sometimes represents the image of a proud and steadfast human being."

Overall, the results of the analysis indicate that symbolic imagery plays a fundamental role in the poetic systems of both Cho'lpon and Shavkat Rahmon. While Cho'lpon frequently employs cosmic and seasonal symbols to express themes of freedom and national identity, Shavkat Rahmon often turns to natural landscapes and organic imagery to convey philosophical reflection and inner emotional struggle. In both cases, symbolism becomes an effective means of expressing complex social and spiritual ideas within the framework of poetic language.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that symbolic imagery plays a crucial role in shaping the poetic systems of Abdulhamid Cho'lpon and Shavkat Rahmon. In the works of both poets, symbols function not only as aesthetic elements but also as a means of expressing complex social, philosophical, and emotional meanings. Their symbolic language allows them to convey ideas that could not always be expressed directly, particularly in periods characterized by political and ideological restrictions.

The analysis of Cho'lpon's poetry reveals that symbolic images derived from natural and cosmic phenomena frequently serve to represent broader social and national themes. Images such as the sun, star, winter, and spring carry multilayered meanings and reflect the poet's response to

[5] Sh.Rahmon. Zulfiqor ruh. – Toshkent:'Anorbuks" , 2022.

the historical realities of his time. Through such symbols, Cho‘lpon was able to express ideas related to national awakening, freedom, and the spiritual condition of society. In this context, symbolic imagery becomes a subtle artistic strategy that enables the poet to address political and social issues without direct statement.

In contrast, the symbolic system in the poetry of Shavkat Rahmon is often closely connected with images drawn from nature and landscape. Mountains, trees, stones, and other natural elements function as important poetic symbols through which the poet expresses philosophical reflections and emotional experiences. These images frequently reveal the inner world of the lyrical hero and reflect broader cultural and national values. In particular, the mountain image in his poetry embodies ideas of strength, dignity, and spiritual elevation, while the tree and heart images often symbolize life, hope, and human existence.

Despite differences in imagery and stylistic expression, the symbolic strategies employed by both poets reveal a common tendency: the transformation of natural phenomena into carriers of deeper meaning. Through this process, ordinary images become powerful symbolic structures that convey social realities, national identity, and philosophical reflection. Such symbolic richness allows their poetry to remain open to multiple interpretations and encourages readers to engage actively in the process of meaning-making.

Thus, the discussion highlights that symbolism in the poetry of Cho‘lpon and Shavkat Rahmon functions as a key component of their poetic thinking. By transforming natural and cosmic imagery into symbolic forms, both poets create a complex artistic system in which aesthetic beauty, emotional depth, and socio-cultural meaning are closely interconnected.

Conclusion

The present study has demonstrated that symbolic imagery occupies a central place in the poetic systems of Abdulhamid Cho‘lpon and Shavkat Rahmon. Through the analysis of selected poems, it becomes evident that both poets employ symbols not merely as stylistic ornaments but as meaningful artistic tools for conveying complex social, philosophical, and emotional ideas. Overall, the comparative analysis indicates that although the two poets employ different types of imagery, symbolism serves as a unifying artistic principle in their poetry. Their symbolic language enables them to transform natural and everyday images into powerful vehicles for expressing national identity, human experience, and deeper philosophical meanings. Thus, the poetry of Cho‘lpon and Shavkat Rahmon illustrates the significant role of symbolism in enriching the aesthetic and semantic depth of Uzbek poetic tradition.

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