

Characteristics Of Fables And Their Symbols In Eastern And Western Literature

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Abstract. Symbolism serves as a foundation in literature and offers a subtle lens through which to explore the complexities of life. In this study, the multifaceted role of symbolism in literary works is studied, and special attention is paid to its manifestation in Uzbek literature. Based on the opinions of scientists such as Dilmurod Kuronov, M. Yoldoshev, L. Reznikov, the definition and interpretation of the symbol is deeply studied in the research, and its moral, social and psychological aspects are studied through a comprehensive analysis, the study reveals the widespread use of symbols in various literary genres, illuminating its evolution from ancient folklore to modern expressions.

Key words: symbol, fable, literary character, system, Gulkhani "Zarbulmasal", Krilov, Esop.

Introduction

Literature serves as a profound artistic reflection of the human experience. Within artistic works, life is encapsulated through vivid imagery. These representations frequently embody archetypal figures drawn from reality, yet they may also encompass a diverse array of beings, including animals, insects, and avian species, all of which manifest in literature to elucidate truths about existence. In this context, creatures—be they animals, birds, or insects—play a pivotal role in amplifying artistic expression, simultaneously functioning as metaphors that richly illustrate the complexities of life. The deployment of symbols, particularly metaphors, is widespread in this narrative tradition, and these symbols can be perceived as fundamental elements within fables and tales.

Analysis of Relevant Literature

This study adopts a methodological framework that meticulously scrutinizes literary symbols, placing particular emphasis on their utilization within Uzbek literature. The analysis draws upon definitions and interpretations from notable scholars, including Dilmurod Kuronov, M. Yo'ldoshev, and L. Reznikov, to elucidate the essence and multifaceted roles of symbols in literary works.

The Uzbekistan National Encyclopedia characterizes a symbol as "a conventional method of artistically reflecting reality; it is one of the forms of artistic conventionality" (translated from Arabic meaning "to indicate"). Unlike metaphors, symbols are intrinsically tied to figurative structures and are distinguished by their capacity for multiple interpretations. Historically, symbols have pervaded the folklore and literature of diverse cultures since antiquity, forming a coherent system of imagery that often conveys shared significances across various cultural contexts. For instance, the lion signifies bravery, the fox embodies cunning, and the wolf represents greed.

Dilmurod Kuronov defines a symbol as "a type of metaphor, a phrase that acquires a figurative meaning conditionally and within the context of the text" [1, pp. 245-246]. Meanwhile, linguist M. Yo'ldoshev describes it as "the use of words in a metaphorical sense to articulate life events, concepts, and objects in artistic discourse" [7, p. 130]. L. Reznikov, a Russian scholar, emphasizes that "a symbol is a specific type of sign with distinctive properties. It is an external phenomenon, conditional in nature, yet serves to express an alternative meaning through its clear image. While the symbol itself is explicit, the concept it conveys may remain elusive" [4, p. 304].

Symbols are pervasive across all literary genres—lyric, epic, and dramatic—but they particularly assume a central role within fables and tales. The genre of fables dates back to the 1st century BC, tracing its lineage to the works of Aesop. The fable genre flourished in the 2nd century through the contributions of Babrius in Rome, and subsequently by Fiodor (1st century AD) and Avian (4th century AD). Noteworthy advancements in fable literature were made by French fabulist La Fontaine (17th century), Russian fabulist I.A. Krylov, Danish fabulist Goldberg (18th century), and German fabulist Lessing (19th century) [6, p. 304].

The fable genre has proliferated extensively not only in the West but also in the East, with prominent examples including Navoi's "Hayrat ul-abror" and Gulkhani's "Zarbulmasal." This underscores the fable genre's significant educational value and its formidable influence as a literary form.

Research Methodology

The analysis demonstrates that symbols, particularly those derived from fauna and avifauna, are widely utilized across an array of literary genres, including lyric, epic, and dramatic works. The study illuminates the evolution of symbolism in literature, tracing its lineage from ancient folklore to modern literary expressions. Specific examples from Uzbek literature, especially the works of Gulkhani, exemplify how symbolic representations elucidate societal issues, moral quandaries, and facets of human nature.

Analysis and Findings

This discussion enhances our comprehension of the critical role of symbolism in literature, underscoring its capacity to convey moral teachings, social critiques, and psychological themes. By juxtaposing Eastern and Western literary traditions, we can discern both similarities and divergences in the employment of symbols. The analysis probes how symbols, particularly those emblematic of animals and birds, function to critique societal norms, human behaviors, and moral values through a close examination of selected literary works by Gulkhani and Ivan Krylov.

The essence of fables is inherently constituted by their symbols. Through these narratives, various societal maladies, dilemmas, deficiencies, and flaws are mirrored, leading to pertinent conclusions. Although the symbolic images in Eastern and Western fables may differ in their implications, focused analysis reveals that Eastern fables, particularly Gulkhani's "Zarbulmasal," portray human behavior and lifestyles, whereas Western fables, exemplified by those of Aesop and Ivan Krylov, illustrate human shortcomings and vices through their symbolic representations.

In Gulkhani's "Zarbulmasal," all fables are constructed upon systematic plots and intricate compositions. Gulkhani adeptly articulates the pressing issues of his era, portraying the deterioration of the feudal system, the decline in moral character, and the ravaging of the land through symbolic imagery. Although the principal characters are avian, other animals such as camels, monkeys, foxes, and donkeys, alongside insects like scorpions, also feature prominently. Each of these images encapsulates specific characteristics and lifestyles of individuals. Characters—be they birds, animals, or insects—serve to expose the vices of ill-intentioned individuals. The symbols of the rooster, the kordon (a specific type of bird), and the yapaloq (another avian species) encapsulate the negative traits of greed, boastfulness, and ostentation prevalent among the feudal lords of society, while other animals symbolize laziness, arrogance, and self-importance. These traits are unveiled either through character descriptions or through the moral conclusions drawn by the reader.

For instance, in the fable "The Camel and the Calf," the camel symbolizes individuals deprived of autonomy and beholden to feudal lords, imploring them to exhibit mercy and generosity towards the impoverished. Gulkhani poignantly illustrates the plight of the serf by revealing that "he has a large family but nothing but food in his hut." Likewise, the imagery of the calf trailing behind its mother symbolizes those lacking autonomy and unable to provide for their young. The poet depicts how "the black folk, who cannot change their lives, are like a camel led along by the flow of society" [2, pp. 17-18].

Gulkhani employs the symbols of the herdsman, the camel, and the calf to portray social inequality and the arduous labor characteristic of his societal milieu. Here, the herdsman represents officials preoccupied solely with their own predicaments, while the camel, burdened with heavy loads, and the calf, deprived of its mother's milk, symbolize the struggle of individuals navigating through life without attaining their aspirations.

In the fable "The Monkey and the Carpenter," the writer critiques individuals attempting to perform tasks without a fundamental understanding of their essence, ultimately leading to their ridicule. Similarly, in "The Tortoise and the Scorpion," two antithetical images are juxtaposed: the tortoise—wise, contemplative, and experienced—and the scorpion, which revels in causing harm, embodying those devoid of kindness.

An examination of the symbolic imagery within Gulkhani's "Zarbulmasal" reveals that these narratives address educational and moral issues, reflecting societal challenges through concise narratives and a limited array of symbols.

In contrast, fables in Western literature markedly differ from those of Gulkhani in terms of structure. Aesop's fables are characterized by their brevity and directness, often culminating in explicit moral

conclusions. Krylov's fables, predominantly composed in poetic form, similarly draw from real-life observations. Krylov studied the works of Aesop and other Western fabulists, repurposing their plots to resonate with Russian realities. His fables elevate the tradition of fable writing, depicting characters that embody hypocrisy, ignorance, and avarice.

For example, in "The Turtledove and the Snake," Krylov reveals the perils of flattery, demonstrating that even a snake can be swayed by sycophants. The snake symbolizes malevolent individuals, contrasting with the wise character, who remains vigilant against such pitfalls.

The fox, as a recurring symbol in Krylov's fables, epitomizes deceitful individuals striving to achieve their objectives through trickery. In "The Fox and the Crow," the fox represents those who resort to cunning, while the crow symbolizes individuals prone to flattery, ultimately ensnared by a sly trickster. Similarly, in "The Fox and the Grapes," the fox illustrates a character unable to attain their desires, perpetually attributing their failures to external circumstances instead of acknowledging their own shortcomings.

Krylov's renowned fable "Quartet" accentuates the critical significance of an individual's abilities, knowledge, and experience in any undertaking. It posits that without the requisite skill and musical understanding, even a bear (alongside a donkey, goat, and monkey) cannot become a proficient musician, irrespective of their capacity to arrange notes and instruments in myriad styles. His contemporaries, however, interpreted this fable as a critique of the leaders of the four divisions of the State Council, lamenting their inability to collaborate effectively. Some even speculated that Krylov was deriding the chairpersons of the literary circle "Lovers of the Russian Word," since they too numbered four, paralleling the animals in the fable. In sum, Krylov's fables are imbued with a palpable realism that resonates with the zeitgeist of his era.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, this research underscores the enduring significance of symbolism in literature as a formidable instrument for artistic expression and social commentary. Symbolic imagery continues to enrich literary narratives, granting readers profound insights into the human condition and the intricate tapestry of existence. Future inquiries in this domain could further illuminate the cultural, philosophical, and psychological dimensions of literary symbolism across diverse cultures and epochs.

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