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SYMBOLS AND ALLEGORIES IN THE WORKS OF NAZAR ESHONQUL

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Abstract: In this study, the aesthetic and poetic features of symbols and allegories in the works of Nazar Eshonqul, one of the prominent figures of contemporary Uzbek literature, are thoroughly examined. The symbolic meaning and content of natural phenomena, color palettes, flora and fauna, spatial dimensions, and specific objects used in the author's works are analyzed. In particular, the significance of symbolic tools in revealing the psychology and inner world of characters, as well as the conceptual and ideological essence of the text, is highlighted. It is substantiated that in Nazar Eshonqul's creative artistic thinking, a symbol is not merely a descriptive tool, but a primary poetic component reflecting philosophical reflections on humanity and society. The article discusses the writer's skill in creating symbolic images, their profound meaning, and their role in the aesthetic development of modern Uzbek prose.

Keywords: symbol, allegory, symbolic image, poetics, artistic thinking, metaphor, modernism, philosophical meaning.

INTRODUCTION

In recent periods of the Uzbek literary process, the renewal of artistic thinking, the striving for a deeper comprehension of the human inner world, and the symbolic-philosophical interpretation of worldly phenomena have intensified significantly. Especially in modern Uzbek prose, rather than simply narrating reality, revealing its underlying essence through metaphors, symbols, and allegories has become one of the leading artistic principles. Such creative pursuits invite the reader to understand not just the surface meaning of the text, but its hidden and multi-layered dimensions.

Nazar Eshonqul, one of the bright and unique representatives of modern Uzbek literature, stands out with his distinctive artistic explorations. In the author's works, issues such as the human psychological world, inner experiences and suffering, loneliness, memory, time, society, and individual relationships are often reflected through symbolic images. In his prose, natural phenomena, colors, time and space, and various objects cease to be simple descriptive elements and transform into specific ideological and philosophical content.

The application of symbols in Nazar Eshonqul's creative work is one of the main factors determining the writer's artistic worldview and individual stylistic direction. With the help of symbolic images, the mental state, inner conflicts, and worldview of characters are expressed in a more impactful form. Therefore, studying the symbols and allegories in the author's works is of special importance not only for understanding the internal logic of an individual text, but also for illuminating the poetic features of contemporary Uzbek prose.

The main objective of this article is to determine the artistic and poetic function of symbols and allegories in Nazar Eshonqul's prose, analyze their role in unfolding the concept of the work and character psychology, and demonstrate the writer's skill in creating symbolic depictions.

Nazar Eshonqul is one of the creators who brought unique innovations and new artistic perspectives to the development of today's Uzbek literature. As an author who contributed significantly to the flourish of independence-period literature, his creative activities are highly acknowledged by literary scholars. Nazar Eshonqul's short stories differ from traditional short

stories read so far through their artistic thinking, descriptive style, and uniqueness of content. His creative world, on the whole, differs significantly from traditional views in 20th-century literature. A fresh breath, a unique spirit, and modern artistic thinking are clearly manifested in his works.

Regarding Nazar Eshonqul's work, Hero of Uzbekistan Ibrohim G'ofurov expressed the following thoughts:

> "In my view, Nazar Eshonqul is a writer in our Uzbek literature who deeply studied the most advanced trends and methods of world literature and promoted them in his works."

Evaluating the author's creative output, Professor Bahodir Kholiqov stated:

> "Through the works of Nazar Eshonqul, we gain the opportunity to correctly understand, grasp, and feel the works of European as well as Latin American writers."

These reflections demonstrate how extensive the writer's creative potential, artistic inquiries, and views related to world literature truly are.

Indeed, Nazar Eshonqul's short stories emerge as the product of creative searches featuring novel content and artistic forms that embody the spirit of the modern era. In the author's short stories such as "The Hand" ("Qo'l"), "The Man Led by a Monkey" ("Maymun yetaklagan odam"), "The Coffin" ("Tobut"), "Art" ("San'at"), "The Wind Cannot Be Caught" ("Shamolni tutib bo'lmaydi"), and "Free Birds" ("Ozod qushlar"), the creator's unique artistic thinking, original worldview, and skillful utilization of symbolic imagery possibilities are clearly visible. In these works, symbols and allegories serve not as simple descriptive tools, but as essential artistic elements revealing the philosophical and socio-ideological content put forward by the author.

MAIN TEXT AND DISCUSSION

What is a symbol? A symbol—a concept of Greek origin—signifies expressing a specific image, phenomenon, or idea through another emblem. In artistic literature, a symbol is one of the important poetic means serving the creator to convey hidden or deeply meaningful ideas through imagery. Speaking of symbolic expressions in Nazar Eshonqul's short stories, a unique symbolic layer can be observed in almost every work of the author. In particular, in the short story "The Hand" ("Qo'l"), greed—one of humanity's eternal problems—and its negative consequences are artistically illuminated.

The central image of "The Hand" acquires a multi-faceted symbolic meaning. First and foremost, it is interpreted as a tool serving human labor, constructive activity, and defining one's life path. At the same time, the character's inability to control his own hand signifies the loss of control over his actions. This situation symbolically expresses the influence exerted by the social environment on human psychology and behavior.

In the story, the character's hand is depicted as disobeying him, almost as if fighting against him. This process brings not only mental and physical suffering to the hero, but also negatively affects his family life. This event acts as an artistic metaphor expressing a person falling into the abyss of his own passions/desires (nafs) and the resulting tragedy. Nazar Eshonqul deepens the content of this idea through the character of Salom the Miller.

The situation where Salom the Miller cannot adequately provide for his family due to a hand injury sustained at the mill, and is forced to make and sell clay ovens (tandir) to maintain his household, is portrayed with special emphasis. Consequently, some people mockingly refer to him as "Salom the Tandir-maker". Even children call him by that name and laugh at him. Some elders

express a mixture of pity and reproach, saying: "If the mill stops turning, bread stops coming out of the oven. If not for him, who would make the tandir?"

In the persona of Salom the Miller, the writer creates the image of a knowledgeable, hard-working, patient, and courageous person. However, at the same time, he considers himself guilty. The main reason is that he tied his father's childhood death to himself and could not forget this event until the end of his life. This psychological experience leaves a deep mark on his personality and character.

Salom is an ordinary man who provides for his family through honest labor. He manages his household by running a mill and crafting clay ovens. However, just as his life settles into a routine and stabilizes, an alien, strange hand appears in his household. At first performing unusual movements, it gradually takes on an increasingly dangerous nature. No matter how hard Salom the Miller tries to get rid of it, he fails. Consequently, this hand becomes a force that disrupts the peace and tranquility not only of himself, but of his entire family.

The character of Elder Azim in the story also possesses distinct traits. Negative aspects such as arrogance, ambition for fame, and rough behavior toward children are embodied in him. Although he worked in a school for many years, he does not emerge as a spiritually mature individual. Through this character, the author seeks to uncover the inner world of a person succumbed to greed and self-interest.

The character of Mulla Keldiyor is portrayed as an observant and sharp, yet hypocritical and opportunistic person. He prioritizes personal interests over the problems and concerns of others. The character of Teacher Panji is depicted as marked by cowardice, obstinacy, and a peculiar disposition.

Overall, the symbol of "The Hand" in the story serves to reveal the mental state, inner experiences, and character facets of all personages. Through this symbolic image, the writer has portrayed human entanglement in desire/greed, inequality and injustice in society, as well as suffering in human psychology with high artistic skill. Throughout the story, an alien hand appearing out of nowhere is discussed, but no definite answer is found regarding whom this hand belongs to. The mysterious occurrence expands, and the oven-maker's home is turned into an "inspection room" within a short time.

As a result of events tied to the alien hand, the ordinary oven-maker faces various expenses, troubles, and losses. This situation in the work is not merely a description of a simple event, but expresses a specific social meaning. In this respect, focusing on the symbolic essence of "The Hand", it can be interpreted as an emblem of officials who seize the property and belongings of ordinary people under various pretexts, causing turmoil using their positions.

In fact, isn't this a symbolic expression of an era and time that placed even the living conditions of a household barely surviving on simple tandir-making under inspection and surveillance? Indeed, by requiring an accounting for even a single morsel of bread earned through honest labor, the story symbolically reflects excessive surveillance, interference in human life, and social injustice inherent in that era's environment. Taking the example of an ordinary oven-maker's household, the writer depicts an environment where human freedom in society is restricted, and even their honest work and earned sustenance are called into question. From this perspective, the events in "The Hand" appear not merely as troubles experienced by a single family, but as a symbolic phenomenon depicting the socio-psychological landscape of an entire epoch.

In Nazar Eshonqul's stories, the system of symbols holds special significance as an important artistic device. In the writer's works, historical events are rarely presented directly; instead, they

acquire symbolic meaning and appear as artistic emblems representing general processes of the nation's destiny.

The system of symbols is particularly prominent in the short story "The Man Led by a Monkey". Historical dates presented in the work, such as 1921, 1926, 1928, 1937, 1947, and 1957, symbolically reflect the contradictory and tragic periods of Turkestan's history. Behind these dates lie not merely specific historical events, but the suffering, tragedies, and footprints left in historical memory experienced by the nation.

At the same time, the image of the monkey carries deep symbolic content, interpreted as an emblem of dependency, loss of freedom, and the deprivation of one's identity. The man leading the monkey represents an individual whose independent thinking and willpower have weakened, who has submitted to external control, and who has become spiritually dependent. These symbols serve to illuminate socio-philosophical ideas that lose no relevance across different eras.

Nazar Eshonqul imparts a unique, modern meaning to traditional symbols and allegories. Images formed anciently are reinterpreted in his works, acquiring deeper, complex, and multi-layered meanings. In this way, the author achieves an artistic expression of the contradictory, complex, and diverse facets of modern life. The system of symbols appears on the basis of an integrated and logical harmony in the stories. Separate emblems enter into organic connection, complement each other in content, and serve to bring about the general artistic concept and aesthetic integrity of the work.

Through the effective use of folklore traditions and symbolic images, Nazar Eshonqul creates a unique balance between national identity and universal values. The national spirit, values, and artistic traits reflected in the works turn into effective and impactful means for expressing noble ideas and universal human values common to all mankind.

The symbolic and philosophical depth characteristic of Nazar Eshonqul's work defines the uniqueness and individual qualities of his style. As Khurshid Dostmuhammad noted, in most of the writer's works, a "foul odor" acts as an important artistic detail serving to express the character's psychological state even more powerfully. Although the predominance of dark and near-gloomy colors is felt in certain descriptions, such an approach is not accidental. For in Nazar Eshonqul's work, one rarely encounters excessive or inappropriate similes and figurative devices. Delicately perceiving the semantic layer and tone of words, the author uses every artistic detail thoughtfully and with great responsibility.

Speaking of the unique artistic features of Nazar Eshonqul's stories, literary scholar Umarali Normatov places special emphasis on characters often not being given explicit names. According to the researcher, personages in the works are mostly designated through generalizing titles such as "He", "The Secretary", "The Guard", "The Architect". At first glance, this method might convey the impression that the author paid insufficient attention to individualizing character traits. However, in reality, this approach serves a specific artistic-aesthetic purpose. By employing general names, the writer strives to expose the psychological state of individuals who have lost their identity and distanced themselves from society under the influence of a cruel, meaningless, and alienating environment.

According to the writer, striving for freedom alone is not enough. Man does not become free simply by condemning oppression and evil or complaining about darkness. On the contrary, if a person cannot find the courage to fight against the forces enslaving him, his dreamed-of liberty remains an unachievable mirage.

As observed in the story "The Wind Cannot Be Caught", the experiment regarding the study and inner discovery of human nature is noteworthy. In creating the psychology of Grandma Bayna's mental states, drawing pictures of her thoughts and inner reflections stands out distinctly.

It is evident that discovering Grandma Bayna's mental states substantiates both the uniqueness of N. Eshonqul's style and the nature of his artistic thinking. Although changes in nature—greening, blooming, flourishing, turning into vivid green—are transient moments, they do not denote fleeting emotions in Grandma Bayna's heart. She cannot be intimately acquainted with the deepest feelings of her heart. Although the states of nature are restless due to their transient moments, Grandma's heart is neither indifferent nor anxious. For the connection between natural states and the woman's psychological mood is a temporary, fleeting phenomenon. The author's skill lies in the fact that nature's colors reflect the meaning of hidden shades in Grandma's life and soul, thereby bestowing eternalness and constancy upon its transient moments. The sad, grieving feelings Grandma accumulated from real life, combined with her thought-infused experiences, impart eternity to transient natural occurrences. With her willpower and determination, she bestows a calm-surfaced yet deeply turbulent, multi-layered, and painful tranquility upon natural states. These are the states of a grieving heart discovered by the writer.

Nazar Eshonqul explains this situation through his own views as follows:

> “True, literature is a world of imagination. If a builder constructs a building using bricks, a writer creates a unique world using imagination. Pain, ache, tragedy, suffering, and knowledge are the solid pillars of this imagination. If any of these disappear, the artistic integrity of literature is also disrupted. Talent, in essence, is the skill of harmonizing imagination with life, bringing them closer to each other, and creating a new world based on both.”

For Grandma Bayna, a single and true life exists. This is memory—that is, the world of recollections associated with her husband and son. It is precisely the artistic interpretation of this memory and imagination that emerges as one of the unique and valuable examples of the new direction in subsequent Uzbek prose.

Changes in societal life and renewals in nature do not bring significant changes to Grandma Bayna's life and the meaning of her existence. Grandma firmly rejects the social system established by the Bolsheviks, does not adapt to it, and does not accept it as a part of her life. For this reason, neither a material nor a spiritual strong connection or closeness arises between Grandma Bayna and this society.

In portraying the image of the Mother in the story, the author extensively and deeply utilizes realistic expression possibilities. In particular, illuminating the psychological experiences occurring in Grandma Bayna's soul and creating a complex picture of her inner world based on her thoughts and observations represent specific manifestations of realistic depiction.

Grandma Bayna in N. Eshonqul's story does not belong to the category of active heroes frequently found in Soviet-era prose. She does not appear as a socially active individual who actively reacts to changes in society or renewals in people's lives, or who strives to enrich her life with meaning and beauty through practical actions. The image of a passionate woman seeking to eternalize her life through constructive and creative activity is not characteristic of her. Nor does she manifest in the guise of a spiritually and intellectually mature protagonist found in many literary works.

Grandma Bayna has no firm connection, either spiritual or physical, with societal life, the fate of the people, or the events occurring around her. Phenomena in the external environment do not

penetrate her inner world; there seems to be no space for them in her soul. Her entire attention and mental world are directed toward a unique realm of memories and personal experiences.

A unique aspect of realistic depiction in the story is that the changes occurring in Grandma Bayna's psyche, the movement of feelings, and the step-by-step development of experiences are expressed through descriptions of specific mental states. The evolution of feelings taking shape in the character's spiritual world and consciousness—in particular, hatred and suffering developing as a feeling of revenge—are embedded within various artistic details. Thus, rather than directly narrating the character's inner experiences, the writer reveals them through artistic details and psychological states.

CONCLUSION

In Nazar Eshonqul's short stories, a number of general and specific artistic features are observed:

- Harmony of realism and symbolism. In Nazar Eshonqul's work, traditions of realism and modernistic elements harmonize to create a unique artistic synthesis. While preserving the core principles of realism, the author effectively utilizes modern artistic methods and means alongside expressing symbolic truth, illuminating the spirit of the era, and reflecting national characteristics. In particular, interior monologue, stream of consciousness, symbolic images, and non-traditional depictions of time and space occupy an important place in his stories.
- Complex structure of time and space. In Nazar Eshonqul's prose, the concepts of time and space are interpreted in an original and unconventional manner. Objective time, subjective-psychological time, and symbolic time blend organically. Space consists of several layers where geographical, socio-cultural, mental, and spiritual aspects manifest as a single whole. Such a complex method of depiction allows for illuminating reality more broadly, deeply, and comprehensively.

In today's literary process, metaphorical images hold a special position as an important component of lyrical storytelling. Such artistic images can also be clearly observed in Nazar Eshonqul's work. Indeed, any creator's talent is determined not merely by the number of created works or the scale of creative activity, but by what innovations they brought to the development of artistic thinking and to what extent they influenced the progress of the literary process.

All of Nazar Eshonqul's short stories analyzed above acquire special significance by being created on the basis of instructive and realistic events. In the process of studying, analyzing, and describing these works, definite conclusions can be reached regarding the writer's skill in artistically embodying the character psychology and deeply uncovering their inner experiences.

Undoubtedly, Nazar Eshonqul is an active participant in the new creative processes taking place in our literature. With his unique artistic views, novel style of depiction, and deep conceptual approach, he is among the creators making a worthy contribution to the development of contemporary Uzbek literature.

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