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METAPHOR AS A MEANS OF EXPRESSING NATIONAL WORLDVIEW: A COMPARISON OF UZBEK AND RUSSIAN LITERATURE

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Abstract

The article examines metaphor as a key instrument of artistic thinking and a means of expressing the national worldview. Based on examples from Uzbek and Russian literature, it analyzes the peculiarities of metaphorical models that reflect the mentality, values, and cultural dominants of the two peoples. A comparative analysis is conducted of metaphors found in the works of classical Uzbek writers such as Alisher Navoi and Abdulla Qadiri, and Russian authors including Alexander Pushkin and Leo Tolstoy. The study concludes that metaphor is not only a literary device but also a cultural code that makes it possible to reconstruct the spiritual experience of a people.

Keywords: metaphor, national worldview, Uzbek literature, Russian literature, comparative literature, artistic thinking, cultural identity, metaphorical models, ethnocultural worldview, symbolism, Sufi philosophy, Russian literary tradition.

Introduction

Metaphor is one of the oldest forms of understanding the world, enabling a person to transfer meaning from one sphere of experience to another and thereby construct new semantic fields. Its significance increases substantially in the analysis of national literature, where metaphor becomes not merely an artistic tool but also a mirror of the ethnocultural worldview.

For both Uzbek and Russian literature, metaphorical expression is a key stylistic element; however, each tradition develops its own stable metaphorical dominants:

In Uzbek culture — images of the garden, light, water, harmony, and divine love;

In Russian culture — images of the road, nature, inner search, and spiritual struggle.

Such differences are determined by historical conditions, religious beliefs, types of civilizational development, and systems of values. In literary texts, metaphor reflects the peculiarities of a people's historical memory, spiritual values, and perceptions of nature, time, humanity, and society. Through a system of metaphors, the uniqueness of a national worldview is revealed, and a cultural image of the world is formed. Therefore, the study of metaphor in literature allows for a deeper understanding not only of an author's artistic thinking but also of the mental foundations of an entire nation.

A comparison of Uzbek and Russian literary traditions is especially interesting in this regard. Despite differences in historical development and cultural contexts, both literatures possess rich systems of images and symbols reflecting universal human values: love, freedom,

spiritual quest, and the connection between humans and nature. However, the artistic means of expressing these values are largely shaped by the national specificity of worldview.

In Uzbek literature, metaphor is closely connected with the Eastern poetic tradition, Sufi philosophy, and the symbolism of nature. Images of the garden, desert, water, light, birds, and roads often acquire spiritual and moral meanings, expressing ideas of inner purification, the search for truth, and harmony between humanity and the world. Uzbek artistic culture is characterized by emotional richness, philosophical depth, and semantic multiplicity in metaphor. For example, in the poetry of Alisher Navoi, the image of the heart often becomes a symbol of the human spiritual world, while the motif of the path reflects moral self-perfection.

Russian literature, in turn, forms its own system of metaphorical images based on the historical experience of the people, Orthodox spiritual tradition, and features of the Russian national character. In the works of Russian writers, nature often acts as a mirror of a person's inner state, while metaphors of the road, home, steppe, forest, and winter acquire broad philosophical meanings. Russian metaphor is distinguished by psychological depth and a focus on revealing the inner conflicts, spiritual quests, and contradictions of the individual.

A comparative analysis of metaphorical systems in Uzbek and Russian literature reveals both universal features of artistic thinking and specific characteristics of national worldview. Through metaphor, literature not only describes reality but also forms cultural memory and transmits spiritual experience to future generations. Therefore, the study of metaphor in an intercultural context is especially relevant in modern humanities, which are oriented toward intercultural dialogue and the understanding of national identity.

Theoretical Foundations of Metaphor as a Model of Worldview

In the humanities, metaphor is interpreted in different ways:

Aristotle understood it as the transfer of a name based on similarity.

In linguoculturology, metaphor is viewed as a form of preserving a people's cultural representations.

Modern cognitive theory developed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson defines metaphor as a model of thinking that shapes our perception of the world.

Metaphor is not only a stylistic device but also a cognitive-cultural mechanism expressing the worldview of a people. Through metaphorical images, individuals comprehend surrounding reality, transfer familiar concepts to new phenomena, and thus create a unique picture of the world. In literature, metaphor becomes a means of preserving collective experience, historical memory, and spiritual values of the nation. Each culture forms its own stable system of images connected with nature, religion, everyday life, and history. In Uzbek literature, metaphors of light, gardens, roads, and water occupy an important place. These images stem from Eastern poetic tradition and Sufi worldview, where the material world is regarded as a reflection of spiritual truth.

For example, in the poetry of Alisher Navoi, the image of the garden often symbolizes harmony and spiritual perfection. A blooming garden in his poetry is not merely a description of nature but a metaphor for the inner world of a person striving for beauty and moral purity. Equally significant is the image of the road. In Eastern literary tradition, the path is associated with spiritual search and self-knowledge. When a hero "walks along the road," it signifies not only physical movement but also moral испытание and the overcoming of life's difficulties. This metaphor reflects the concept of life as a continuous spiritual journey.

In Russian literature, the metaphorical system is constructed somewhat differently. It is characterized by images of the home, steppe, forest, winter, and road, closely connected with the historical experience of the people and the peculiarities of the Russian national character. For example, in the poem Dead Souls, Nikolai Gogol uses the image of the road as a metaphor for the destiny of Russia and its historical movement. The endless Russian roads symbolize freedom, uncertainty, and the spiritual search of the nation simultaneously.

Nature as a reflection of human inner life occupies a special place in Russian literature. In the lyric poetry of Fyodor Tyutchev, storms, tempests, and autumn landscapes convey complex emotional experiences. A storm may symbolize inner conflict, anxiety, and emotional tension. Thus, natural phenomena become a means of psychological analysis. Interestingly, some metaphors are universal and appear across cultures, though their semantic content differs. For instance, the image of the heart in Uzbek poetry is more often connected with spiritual love and mystical feeling, whereas in Russian literature it frequently symbolizes suffering, inner drama, and moral choice. This demonstrates that the same metaphor can reflect different aspects of national consciousness.

In the works of Alisher Navoi, the image of the heart is closely related to the Sufi understanding of love as a path toward spiritual perfection. In his lyric poetry, the heart becomes the vessel of divine light and inner truth. In one ghazal, the poet speaks of a "burning heart" suffering not only because of earthly love but also because of the soul's desire to approach the ideal. Here, the heart becomes a metaphor for spiritual quest, purification, and mystical unity with higher truth.

A different semantic meaning emerges in Russian literature. In the novel Crime and Punishment, Fyodor Dostoevsky repeatedly uses the metaphor of Raskolnikov's "sick" and "tormented" heart. The hero's heart symbolizes severe moral conflict, inner division, and the painful choice between good and evil. After committing a crime, the character experiences spiritual suffering, and his "heart" reflects conscience and moral responsibility. Here, the metaphor is not connected with mystical cognition, as in Navoi, but rather with psychological drama.

Thus, the same image—the heart—acquires different cultural meanings in different literary traditions. In Uzbek poetry, it more often symbolizes spiritual elevation and mystical love, while in Russian literature it represents inner struggle, moral suffering, and the search for truth through personal drama. Consequently, metaphor performs not only an aesthetic function, embellishing the literary text, but also becomes a crucial means of expressing cultural identity. Through systems of metaphors, literature conveys modes of thinking, values, and spiritual experience, forming a unique worldview for each culture.

Uzbek literature, rooted in Eastern poetics, relies on a special symbolic world. It is dominated by metaphors connected with:

Gardens and blooming as symbols of spiritual flourishing;

Light as a symbol of wisdom, truth, and divine presence;

The heart as the center of spirituality;

Water as a reflection of purity, generosity of nature, and renewal.

In the poetry of Alisher Navoi, the metaphor of light is central. He writes of "the beloved's face like the sun," "a gaze like a ray of truth," and "love as a garden where the soul blossoms." "Your love is a spring garden in the desert of my heart."

Here, the garden metaphorically represents spiritual awakening.

In the novel Bygone Days by Abdulla Qadiri, images of time and destiny are conveyed through metaphors of roads and water: "Ahmad's fate is like a river seeking its course among stones." The river metaphor expresses the hero's life path and the necessity of overcoming obstacles. Uzbek metaphor is consistently associated with harmony and inner purity and is more often directed toward emotional and sensual perception of the world.

For Russian culture, metaphor functions as a means of philosophical reflection and moral search. Central images include: the road (destiny, human path), sky and snowstorm (trial, purification), birch and forest (homeland, nature), fire (passion, purification). In the works of Alexander Pushkin, national metaphor appears both in lyric poetry and epic works:

"My path is gloomy." "Inspiration is a free wind."

For Pushkin, roads and wind symbolize freedom and destiny.

In the novel War and Peace, Leo Tolstoy interprets life as "a continuous stream" and history as "the movement of a great organism."

"The meaning of life is the fire burning in the human heart."

Fire becomes a metaphor for spiritual power and moral choice.

Common Features of Metaphors in Uzbek and Russian Literature

Anthropocentrism: Human beings are at the center of the world in both traditions.

Natural symbolism: Both literatures actively use images of nature.

Spiritual orientation: Metaphors reflect questions of love, faith, and the meaning of life.

Uzbek Literature	Russian Literature
Harmony, beauty, light	Struggle, search, inner conflict
Metaphors of gardens, flowers, water	Metaphors of roads, fire, snowstorms
Poetics of contemplation	Poetics of tension
Influence of Sufism	Influence of Orthodoxy and humanism

Reasons for the Differences

Climate and nature: Central Asia is the land of gardens and sun, while Russia is a country of sharply expressed seasons, forming different symbolic images.

Religious traditions: Eastern mysticism and Sufi love versus Christian spiritual struggle.

Historical experience: Stable cultural centers of the East versus periods of historical turbulence in Russia.

Metaphor makes it possible to perceive the deep layers of national culture.

In Uzbek literature, metaphor emphasizes: the unity of humans and nature, the importance of spiritual purity, the ideal of harmony. Uzbek literature is rich in profound metaphors reflecting the spirit of the people, their connection with land, history, and Sufi philosophy. In the works of Uzbek classics and modern authors, metaphor often becomes the key to understanding national identity.

Examples of Cultural Codes in Uzbek Literature

The caravan and the desert symbolize the journey of life, continuity of generations, and patience (sabr). In the novel Bygone Days by Abdulla Qadiri, the movement of the caravan metaphorically reflects the course of history itself.

The plane tree (chinor) symbolizes lineage, wisdom, longevity, and connection with roots. In the novel Chinor by Asqad Mukhtar, the century-old tree with deep roots and a

powerful crown serves as a metaphor for the Uzbek family, mahalla, and resilience of the national spirit.

The garden (bog‘) as a model of paradise and the soul originates in the classical poetry of Alisher Navoi. In his poems, the blooming garden symbolizes spiritual purification, while the nightingale seeking the rose metaphorically represents the human soul striving for divine truth and love.

The tandoor and bread (non) in the prose of Said Ahmad metaphorically convey Uzbek hospitality, the warmth of the family hearth, and the strengthening of character through life’s hardships.

The steppe wind (shamol) in the modernist prose of Cholpon often symbolizes freedom, social change, and the awakening of national consciousness.

In Russian literature, metaphor emphasizes: the complexity of the human inner world, the search for moral ideals, spiritual trials. Thus, metaphor becomes a cultural matrix in which the worldview of a nation is preserved.

Conclusion. The analysis demonstrates that metaphor is not merely an ornament of literary text but also a means of preserving national modes of thinking. Uzbek literature presents metaphor as an expression of spiritual peace, harmony, and beauty, whereas Russian literature uses it as an instrument of philosophical search and moral experience. The comparison shows that despite their differences, both literatures strive through metaphor to convey the profound meanings of human existence. Metaphor serves as a bridge between the individual and the national, between personal experience and the collective memory of culture.

Metaphor truly functions as a means of expressing national worldview, allowing us to perceive both the uniqueness and the commonality of the artistic traditions of the Uzbek and Russian peoples.

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