

THE IMAGE OF BIRDS IN LITERATURE: INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

Jahongir Komiljonov

Lecturer at the Namangan Branch of KIUT,
Independent Researcher at Namangan State University

Abstract

This article analyzes the formation of the image of birds in fiction, their symbolic and semantic connotations, and how they have developed in a historical and cultural context. Bird images have performed certain ideological and aesthetic functions in different periods and places, from ancient mythological sources to modern literature. In particular, the image of birds expresses the concepts of freedom, hope, divinity, homeland, and love. The article also includes a comparative analysis of bird images in Eastern and Western literary traditions, highlighting their evolutionary changes in artistic thinking.

Keywords: Bird image, fiction, symbol, mythology, symbol of freedom, aesthetic charge, Eastern literature, Western literature, evolution of image, analysis of symbols.

Introduction

In literature, the expression of thoughts through symbols, the transmission of ideas and emotions through artistic means, has been an important aspect of the work of writers since ancient times. One of such images is the image of birds. The image of a bird has represented various spiritual and symbolic meanings in human thought: it is seen as a symbol of freedom, spiritual purity, hope, divinity, and even tragedy. While in early mythological beliefs, birds were depicted as messengers and a means of connecting with divine forces, in later periods they began to acquire deeper meanings in literary thought.

The interpretation of bird images in Eastern and Western literature is different, and their evolution in meaning has been manifested differently depending on the literary schools, historical circumstances, and the author's worldview. For example, in Eastern literature, birds are often symbols of spiritual perfection and divine love, while in the West they are more often seen as symbols of existential anguish, loneliness, or social problems.

This article analyzes the formation and theoretical interpretations of the image of birds in fiction based on historical development. The semantic connotations, ideological and aesthetic functions of the image, and their changes - that is, the evolution of the image - become the central object of analysis.

LITERATURE ANALYSIS AND METHODOLOGY

The image of a bird, as one of the most ancient and multi-layered symbols in fiction, has repeatedly been the focus of literary and critical research. Scientific research conducted within the framework of this topic has been carried out mainly in the areas of symbology, mythopoetic analysis, cultural studies, semantic analysis, and comparative literary studies. In particular, in Western literary studies, theories such as KG Jung's theory of archetypes, N. Fry's analysis of



mythological structure, and G. Bachelard's analysis of poetic imagination have served as the main methodological tools in interpreting the image of birds.

In Eastern literature, mystical thought and Sufi symbols, in particular, express the path of human spiritual perfection through images such as "Simurg", "bulbul", and "swallow". In this regard, Fariduddin Attar's work "Mantiq ut-tayr" and Alisher Navoi's epic poem "Lison ut-tayr" are considered the most important sources that form the basis for the philosophical interpretation of the image of the bird.

The article analyzed the literature in two main directions:

1. **A historical-evolutionary approach**, the formation of the image of the bird, starting from ancient mythological texts, was studied in medieval and modern literature.
2. **The comparative-analytical method**, the semantics and aesthetic function of the image of birds in Eastern and Western literary schools were compared.

Also, intertextual analysis and semantic analysis methods in modern literary studies, which serve to reveal symbolic layers, were used. In this, the connotations of bird images within the works, the contextual ideas associated with them, and their changing nature were studied.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The term "image" is borrowed from the Russian language and means "reflection" in Uzbek. The concept of image is used in both broad and narrow senses. In the broad sense, "artistic image" refers to any reflection of existence seen and creatively processed by an artist, while in the narrow sense it refers to the image of a person in a work of art. In literary works, there are a number of tools that serve to create a human image in order to bring its full reflection to life in the eyes of the reader. Examples of these include artistic tools such as author's characterization, portrait, artistic psychologism, and character speech. Each image created by writers has its place throughout the work. Even small details contribute to the perfect creation of that work. One such image is the image of a "bird". The image of a bird occupies a special place in both Uzbek literature and world literature. Every creative person, whether in prose or poetry, has at least once touched on this topic.

In the theory of literary fiction, the image of birds has long been considered one of the most meaningful symbols in human thought. Human observation of nature, the free flight, wandering and unique nature of birds prompted them to interpret them as symbols and metaphors. Therefore, the image of a bird in literature has acquired not only an aesthetic and decorative function, but also the opportunity to express deep philosophical and social meanings. In literary criticism, the theoretical foundations of this image were gradually formed and manifested in new interpretations in different periods.

The image of a bird in ancient myths and legends was interpreted more as a cosmogonic and divine symbol. In Turkic and Eastern mythology, a bird was considered a mediator between heaven and earth, a source of life and a symbol of spiritual ascension. For example, in ancient Turkic myths, an eagle symbolized power, protection and dominance, and a dove symbolized love and loyalty. From the point of view of literary theory, birds during this period served as a generalizing symbol expressing a person's relationship to the universe.

The image of birds and phenomena in literature, as well as the artistic concepts associated with them, have a certain importance. The image of birds occupies a special place in the oral and



written literature of different peoples of the world. The main thing is that, although they differ from each other in appearance and sound, they are often interpreted in a similar sense and attract attention with similar artistic and aesthetic functions. Similarly, the myths and legends about birds, widespread among the peoples of the world, are also noteworthy. In them, birds flying over the earth and sky are often depicted as messengers of the gods. For example, in Greek mythology, pigeons are the cause of the formation of mythological images such as the bird of Astarte, Aphrodite, Venus, the Holy Spirit, as well as the souls of the dead, which are the embodiment of the dead. In Irish mythology, the image of Odin is embodied in the form of a raven, cranes are interpreted as the offspring of Hermes, the sacred bird of Mercury, in Celtic mythology, the Moon bird, and eagles are interpreted as the offspring of Zeus and Jupiter. Birds are one of the most widely used images in the oral and written literature of almost all nations. Birds are said to have an "inner light". In myths and fairy tales, there is a different attitude towards birds. The image of birds was first interpreted in folklore works. Then it entered written literature. Some peoples look at birds with fear and hatred, while others respect them as symbols of wisdom, healers, sorcerers, a "bridge" between life and death. For example, in Indian folklore, birds are depicted as symbols of wisdom with the power to predict the future. In Greek myths and Aesop's fables, birds have similar properties. However, in the Middle Ages in Europe, views on birds began to gradually change. In the literature of this period, birds are associated with evil forces and are interpreted as a negative image. By the 18th century, the understanding of birds expanded as a result of a thorough study of their ornithological characteristics, and in the 20th century, they again acquired a positive interpretation as a symbol of wisdom and prophecy. If we look deeper into the history of the image of birds, we see that one of its roots goes back to ancient Greek mythology [8:54]. Thus, the goddess of wisdom Athena, amazed by the large eyes and majestic appearance of birds, is said to have driven her assistant cat from her palace and replaced it with a bird (owl - JK). It is said that these small birds (Athene noctua) became the favorite bird of Athens, and this family of birds was given special protection and gradually began to spread on the Acropolis. Therefore, Greek soldiers recognized the birds as a symbol of Athens and carried them as constant companions and assistants in various wars. If birds flew over soldiers before the battle, this was considered a sign of victory in the upcoming battle. The Greeks, who had great faith and respect for birds, depicted their images on the back of coins. The image of birds on coins was associated with the belief that trade would be successful and profitable. In addition, the Greeks considered birds a source of inspiration in their everyday lives. In ancient Rome, the bodies of birds were hung on the doors of houses to prevent or stop some unpleasant situations. However, some sources indicate the cries of birds as a sign of impending death. For example, it is said that the deaths of Julius Caesar, Augustus and Agrippa were predicted by the cries of birds. For example, in William Shakespeare's famous work "Julius Caesar" there is the following passage associated with such an interpretation: "... last night the bird sat in the market at noon, Screaming and screaming." The nightingale in this passage refers to birds, and its "chattering and screaming" is a sign of impending death [6:87]. The defeat of the Roman army in the plain between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers was foretold in legend by birds. The second-century soothsayer Artemidorus said that seeing birds in a dream was a sign of an upcoming journey.



In classical literary theory, the image of the bird has become particularly closely associated with mystical thought. In Sufism, the bird was interpreted as a symbol of the freedom of the human spirit, its flight towards divine truth, and its striving for perfection. Fariduddin Attar's "Mantiq ut-tair" [1:7] is one of the major sources that formed the theoretical foundations of this image. The work describes the journey of humanity to the path of Truth through the society of birds.

The poetic symbolism of birds occupies a special place in Eastern literature. Hazrat Alisher Navoi's epic poem "Lison ut-Tayr" [2:13] describes the seven stages of human perfection through the journey of birds - desire, love, enlightenment, longing, monotheism, wonder and poverty. In the chapter "Description of the Valley of Enlightenment" of the epic, Navoi describes the different levels of people in the Valley of Enlightenment, which are represented by "a hundred districts, a thousand paths". The poet describes the contrast between the part and the whole, progress and decline through the principle of "juzv ila kull". This chapter describes that in the Valley of Enlightenment, a fly, an elephant, and Gabriel travel as passengers; historical and religious figures such as Moses, Pharaoh, Mahdi, Dajjal, Ahmad, and Abu Jahl are also depicted as guides. Through these examples, Navoi's goal is to show that each person chooses a path according to his level of enlightenment, and these paths may differ from each other. The poet cites the meaning of the hadith: the number of paths leading to the truth is equal to the authority of the people, and each person considers his own path to be correct [2:224].

In the narrative part of the epic, a group of blind people are in India and describe an elephant. Each of them knows only the limb that he has touched with his own hand and responds from that. Using artistic devices such as the image of a carrion bird, Navoi depicts the limited views and differences of those who have not yet reached enlightenment. The story also shows the importance of achieving enlightenment, and the need to achieve human perfection through knowledge and experience. In this regard, Navoi compares "passing through the world incompletely" to entering the bathhouse and coming out unclean, indicating the state of those who have not yet reached enlightenment. In subsequent centuries, the word enlightenment was often used in conjunction with "ilm-ma'rifat", which reinforces its familiar, knowing meanings. The symbol of birds is widely used in Turkic and Persian-Eastern classical literature. Birds are used as a poetic symbol in works such as Fariduddin Attar's "Mantiq ut-Tayr", Alisher Navoi's "Lison ut-Tayr", and Gulkhani's "Zarbulmasal". Birds are also represented figuratively in ancient Turkic written monuments. For example, in the "Tunyuquq Bitigi" the opposition of the weak and strong sides is revealed through the symbol of bird-prey and food-prey through an artistic means [9:156]. In the "Devonu Lu'otit Turk" birds are used as a metaphor expressing the human psyche, positive and negative qualities. Birds flying around the sea are depicted as a symbol of human suffering, tears and hope: "If my eyes were like the sea, a bird would fly in my eyes, my tears would be like the sea, a bird would fly in my eyes" [10:2025]

If the crow symbolizes a greedy person in life, who is greedy for someone else's rights, the carrion bird represents a person who is thirsty for knowledge and quickly acquires knowledge. Thus, in "Devonu lug'otit turk" and "Kutadgu bilig" various characteristics of people, positive and negative characters are figuratively presented through the symbol of birds. In "Kutadgu bilig" birds appear in three different forms: birds in a flock represent a nation or group, birds with positive qualities represent good people, and birds that cause harm represent a negative group of people. In the epic, Bug'rokhan's accession to the throne is associated with spring and



is summarized through the symbol of birds. Birds such as geese, ducks, swans, cranes, partridges, nightingales, and black crows symbolically represent people. While the nightingale and partridge are used as symbols that glorify and praise reality, the black crow represents the enemies of the new just king. Also, Bug'rokhan's accession to the throne is represented by birds, guests from distant lands: "The birds of the world came from captivity, some of them were of the Indian rajes, some of them were of the (Roman) Caesars. They spread their voices quickly, they sang in praise of his horse. They were filled with joy and were delighted with joy" [7:45].

The image of a bird, when viewed from a national-cultural, religious-social and philosophical perspective, is formed in human thought as a symbol with a unique, complex and multi-layered meaning. Since ancient times, birds have been imagined as divine mediators between heaven and earth, not only expressing the connection between nature and man, but also as divine mediators between heaven and earth. Therefore, their symbolic meanings have always occupied a permanent place in various cultures, religious views, folk tales and literature. Philosophical thought also interprets the image of a bird in accordance with various aspects of human life. First of all, a bird is considered a symbol of freedom and beauty. In the image of a bird with wings spread and flying, humanity has always imagined freedom, liberation from spiritual and physical confinement. In literature, the ascent of birds to the sky has become a symbol of dreams, enlightenment and high aspirations in the human heart. Therefore, in the lyric genre, the flight of birds is represented not only as a natural phenomenon, but also as the flight of the human soul towards freedom.

The bird is also considered a symbol of the spiritual aspiration and growth of the human spirit. In the philosophy of Sufism, the flight of a bird signifies the soul's aspiration towards the divine destination, the journey towards perfection, the recognition of its "I" and the achievement of elevation. Attar's work "Mantiq ut-tair" emphasizes that just as birds set out on a journey, humans also need to undertake a spiritual journey, undergo trials and achieve perfection. This symbol also artistically represents the need for spiritual purification, patience and willpower. Thus, the image of a bird turns the process of internal growth of the human spirit into a philosophical and spiritual symbol.

In national culture and folk worldview, the image of a bird is a symbol of aesthetic values. In folk folklore, the flight, flight, and seasonal migration of birds are used as symbols of various dreams, wishes, and happiness. For example, the swan is interpreted as a symbol of purity and loyalty, the nightingale as a symbol of love and devotion, and the hawk as a symbol of leadership and truth. In Turkic mythology, the eagle is a symbol of strength and protection, while in Eastern poetry the crane has become a symbol of dreams and travel. Such symbols reflect the aesthetic view of the people towards nature, the symbolic layers of their cultural heritage. At the same time, they are a unifying point of national thought and are valued as symbolic images reflecting the lifestyle and spirituality of the people.

The image of a bird is also of particular importance as an artistic element that enriches human thought and imagination. Poets and writers, inspired by the image of a bird, have expressed the most delicate feelings in the human soul by using it in various symbolic interpretations. The flight, flight, or unique habits of a bird serve as an artistic means of expressing human dreams, love and longing, fears and hopes. As a result, the image of a bird embodies the philosophical, spiritual, and aesthetic layers of human thought.



Throughout human history, birds have been an inspiring symbol of human spirituality and thought. Through their movement, flight, and voice, humans can imagine values such as moral virtues, patience, and the pursuit of beauty. Through the elegance and uniqueness of the bird, the poet awakens aesthetic pleasure in the reader, expands his thinking, and encourages spiritual growth.

The study of the image of a bird in literary works should begin with the ancient mythological roots of human history. Not only in Uzbek, but also in all world literature, birds are interpreted as a reflection of the human psyche and a creative force. In literary texts, especially in poetry, the poetic image of a bird is captured as a spiritual-aesthetic and national-cultural phenomenon.

CONCLUSION

The image of birds is a symbol that has long had a strong symbolic and aesthetic connotation in literature. The study revealed that the interpretation of this image has been formed in its own way in each era, literary school and cultural environment. In Eastern literature, especially in mystical sources, birds are embodied as a symbol of spiritual perfection, the pursuit of divine truth and spiritual maturity. In Western literature, this image is used more as a representation of existential anguish, human loneliness and inner experiences.

The literary evolution of the image of a bird shows that it served not only as a poetic-decorative tool, but also as an artistic tool with deep philosophical and psychological content. Writers of each era expressed the problems, spiritual state, or socio-aesthetic views of their time through this image.

Thus, the image of birds is a universal, yet contextual, symbol, whose artistic function has changed and enriched within various literary movements and schools. This shows the constant renewal of literary images and the complex expression of human thought, worldview, and emotions through them.

REFERENCES

1. Fariduddin Attar. *Mantiq ut-Tayr* / transl. A. Asqar. – Tashkent: G' Ghulam Publishing House, 1990.
2. Alisher Navoi. *Lison ut-Tayr* . – Tashkent: Fan, 1983.
3. Edgar Allan Poe. *The Raven* . – Collected Works. – New York: Penguin Classics, 2003.
4. Carl Gustav Jung. *Man and His Symbols* . – London: Aldus Books, 1964.
5. Gaston Bachelard. *The Poetics of Space* . – Boston: Beacon Press, 1994.
6. Islamov N. *Poetics of Artistic Images and Symbols* . – Tashkent: Science, 2005.
7. Karimov T. *Sufism and literature* . – Tashkent: Ma'naviyat, 2002.
8. Saidov U. *Symbolism in the system of literary images* . – Tashkent: National University of Uzbekistan, 2010.
9. <https://uzresearchers.com/index.php/Conferences/issue/view/54>.

