



## SPECIFIC FEATURES OF SYMBOLS IN LITERATURE

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### ABSTRACT

*The article under discussion depicts the types of symbols, i.e. symbols in literature, their specific features. The authors of the article consider that symbols have a special, defining place in the whole variety of sign-language means. Symbols are the most capacious and significant, productive and concentrated form of expression of cultural values and meanings.*

**KEY WORDS:** *symbols, literature, specific features, interpretation, objective analysis, productive, concentrated form, expression of cultural values and meanings, philosophical, methodological, aesthetic.*

### DISCUSSION

The concept of symbol in philosophy, literature and art is one of the most controversial concepts.

For a long time the term "symbol" was not used in domestic scientific literature in its adequate meaning. It was replaced by the words "image", "sign", "allegory", and "metaphor".

Such neglect of the term caused by its subjective-idealistic interpretation looked strange. In refusing to use this term, we would also have to refuse to use a number of other terms. For example, the term "idea". It has a clearly idealistic origin and is used by various philosophical currents, including idealism.

Objective analysis shows that when posing philosophical, methodological, aesthetic and cultural problems, it is impossible to do without the term "symbol" in its adequate meaning. "Without its study many aesthetic theories, and even whole philosophical systems of the past cannot be grasped or sufficiently expounded" [3, 4]. Defining the importance and necessity of the term "symbol", A. F. Losev wrote that "... cognitive and vital functioning

of infinitely different symbols and the whole functioning dialectics of the symbol in the most acute way are very great and inadequate, even hardly describable" [3]. Therefore "the doctrine of the symbol is one of the most urgent problems"[3] of cultural philosophy, literary studies and other frontier sciences.

Symbols have a special, defining place in the whole variety of sign-language means. It is the most capacious and significant, productive and concentrated form of expression of cultural values and meanings. It is the most powerful of all "tools" available in culture for the realization of its spiritual possibilities.

A symbol is a concrete and visible embodiment of those or other ideas and ideals as the highest values and meanings by which we live, and by which the development and functioning of culture is conditioned. A symbol embodies the highest spiritual ideals of culture and therefore becomes the central defining formation of the entire complex of its sign-language expressions. At the same time, the symbol embraces all cultural phenomena and elements.



A symbol, in the aspect of its structuring and regulating principle, an idea, is a concentratedly expressed cultural and personal meaning or value of human existence as the deepest essence of the world [4].

The way an idea is realized in a symbol, or the question of its form, one of the central questions in understanding the nature of a symbol, is the dialectical unity of opposites - the material and the sensually perceived "body", in other words, a certain concrete object and the meaning or idea. A symbol, a speculative reality, is the result of the relationship between the material and the ideal: the ideal is expressed in the sensually perceived form of the material "body" of the symbol, and the material is expressed in the ideal form, in individual or social consciousness.

Naturally the question arises about the form of symbolic expression. It manifests itself both in the materiality of the symbol's "body" and in the ideality of its individual or social perceptions. It is this moment of union that allows the idea that structures a symbol to exist in its full dimension and to penetrate into the most profound depths of being. The relation of the notions of sign and image, and the study of their basic characteristics gives an idea of the form and method of symbolic expression, because signification and imagery are the most general ways of representation and substitution of phenomena, properties and relations of both the material and spiritual worlds. Their main features allow us to solve the question of what form or mode of symbolic expression is.

A symbol in literature is first and foremost a connection. It combines the physical picture and its transcendent, metaphysical meaning, which suddenly, suddenly begins to "shine through" the everyday real, giving it the features of another, ideal being. In other words, a symbol in literature is a sign or object that substitutes for some other object, expressing its hidden essence and simultaneously being a conductor of the system of ideas or perceptions of the world peculiar to the one who uses the symbol; a conventional expression of the essence of a phenomenon through the appearance, form of another object or even its inner qualities, in this case also becoming a "form". By losing its independent essence, the object-symbol or word-symbol begins to "represent" something else entirely. Thus, "voluptuousness" for Bryusov is a symbol of communication in the highest sense of the word, of fusion, of interpenetration of two people until they dissolve into each other. In everyday usage, the word has another, substantially less "high" meaning.

Symbols in literature may be objects, animals, known phenomena, such as natural phenomena (Ostrovsky's "Thunderstorm"), signs of

objects, actions, etc. Here are examples of symbols steady in the history of culture: scale - justice, power and scepter - monarchy, power, the dove - peace, goat - lust, mirror - another world, lion - strength, courage, dog - loyalty, donkey - stubbornness, rose - female beauty, lily - purity, innocence (in France lily is a symbol of royalty).

Culture attaches a sign character to all the named objects, creatures and phenomena. Due to this they are also the basis for such an artistic technique as allegory.

The lotus is a symbol of deity and the universe among the Hindus. Bread and salt is a symbol of hospitality and friendship among the Slavs. Serpent - wisdom on the one hand and sin (Old Testament) - on the other. Cross - crucifixion, Christianity. Parabola - infinity. Morning symbolizes youth, the color blue - hope (in the object system, its symbol is an anchor). There are a variety of rows of symbols (object, color, geometric, etc.). In different cultural systems different signs may receive different meanings. For example, in the Evangelical system, fish is a symbol of Christ, in the New Age they take on a sensual, erotic meaning. Artistic images of the heroes of literary works, thanks to their valuable existence in culture, also acquire the character of a symbol in literature (for instance, Prometheus, Odysseus, Orpheus, Hamlet, Don Juan, Casanova, Don Quixote, Munchausen, etc.).

Structurally, a symbol is close to an allegory, also consisting of two parts, but both of its components (both what is symbolized and what is symbolized) exist in real reality, whereas in an allegory one component is usually a figment of fantasy. A symbol always conceals a hidden comparison, a connection of the transformed phenomenon with the everyday situation (object), a historical event (phenomenon).

In fiction, it can be considered one of the varieties of the artistic image, but it is usually perceived independently. It can be an individual creation of this or that author (for example, the "bird-troika" in Gogol) or common to two or more authors (in Balmont and Brodsky the poet's speech is a symbol of his personality as a whole), or a universal cultural unit. Thus, a symbol of the connection between life and death is the journey to the underworld and the return from it, which appears in the works of folklore of ancient peoples and appears in the works of authors of the New times. This symbol was used, for example, by Virgil, Dante, J. Joyce, Brusov and other poets. In addition to the connection between the two polar worlds, it means the initiation of the soul thanks to the receipt of a complex spiritual experience, its immersion into darkness and further purification, awakening [3].



The symbol in general most often draws its material from the life of nature, this inexhaustible source of parallels and similarities. But this, by the way, makes the way to the symbolic meaning much easier for us. It makes it much easier for us because the archetypes of folklore and, first of all, its inclination for the juxtaposition of the two worlds which is so popular in all national forms, live in our aesthetic memory [2].

If a Russian folk song depicts the sadness of a girl, she certainly recalls a similar state of nature:

*Что затуманилась, зоренька ясная.*

*Пала на землю росой?*

*Что призадумалась, девица красная.*

*Очи блеснули слезой?..*

*(What has fogged up, the bright zorenka.*

*Fallen dewy on the ground?*

*What's on your mind, red maiden?*

*What tears have glistened in your eyes?)*

Let these lines in their individual poetic refraction (A.F. Veltman) pick up that characteristic folklore principle of landscape-psychological parallelism, which was exhaustively studied by Academician A.N. Veselovsky. The folklore aesthetics of correspondence between the soul and nature, firmly imprinted in our cultural memory, is revived in the perception of the symbol, urging us to restore, as it were, moving in the habitual line of associations, the severed link (image of the soul) where the image of nature is designed for such restoration. Of course, the symbol is not at all a truncated form of landscape-psychological parallelism. But so far we are talking about nothing else but the preconditions of perception rooted in cultural memory.

We need to understand another, perhaps the most important quality of the symbol: it is designed to comprehend the higher meaning lurking behind the image, but it is as if it does not insist on the necessity of such comprehension. What is an allegory worth whose allegorical meaning we are unable to penetrate? Meanwhile, the full-fledged artistic symbol in literature does not lose its aesthetic charm even when in its perception we remain only in the circle of the depicted, without crossing the line beyond which there arises a presentiment of symbolic depth.

In poetic pictures of the world that gravitate toward symbolism, stable symbolic series are usually born, which are a kind of associative "trajectories" of such a worldview. This is clearly seen in Lermontov's example. In Lermontov's lyrics, a chain of poetic symbols emerges, embodying the tragedy of the separation of souls and the vain attempt to bridge the abyss through the power of the gust of the soul. The depth of the tragedy lies in the fact that in Lermontov's poems these souls are souls who are

marked by the sign of kinship, but who are either separated by impassable space ("On the Wild North") or separated from one another ("The Oak Leaf", "A Branch of Palestine", etc.) by the winds of fate. This whole symbolic chain begins to resonate as soon as one link is touched, and this resonance has enormous clarifying power [1].

Like allegory, symbolism is sometimes rooted in tradition, in the aesthetic and philosophical leanings of literary movements. This non-individual symbolism concentrates primarily on their ideas of values. It is not difficult to understand why, for example, the Romantics were so attracted to the symbolism of the sea, night and plants. They (Byron, Pushkin, Tyutchev) were attracted to the sea as a symbol of unexplored depths of the soul, its eternal movement and impulse, romantic immensity and spontaneity. In the minds of romantics (Novalis, Hoffmann, Zhukovsky, Tyutchev and others) night was associated with the idea of the beyond, of irrational mysteries of the world and soul, of the dark essence of existence, covered by the motley fabric of day, finally of the rise and triumph of the human spirit, freed from the fetters of daily vanity [4].

## CONCLUSION

The experience of world literature convinces us that the symbol has truly inexhaustible aesthetic possibilities and potentials. That is why no literary epoch could do without it. The symbol as the most important form of embodiment of the writer's worldview is yet to live a long life in literature as well.

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