

The significance of the symbols of Mirror and Portrait in teaching Symbolism

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Abstract— The article analyses the issue of using symbols of Mirror and Portrait in teaching Symbolism. The ideological-aesthetic unity and peculiarities of the symbol of Mirror present in O.Mukhtor's "The Man at the Mirror", symbol of Portrait in O.Wilde's "The Picture of Dorian Gray" where the main message is greed where the devil's play that would ruin a man's moral character and finally his whole life are investigated in the article.

Keyword— symbol, symbolism, portrait, mirror, reflection, inner-self, Aestheticism, The Picture of Dorian Gray, The Man at the Mirror, O.Wilde, O. Mukhtor.

Learning the factors of defining poetics of literary works on the assumption of the power of emotional-aesthetic impact of the art of a word on the spiritual life of a man has become one of the important problems of the world critical literature studies. That is why the nature of the phenomenon of artistry in the art of a word, spiritual-life basis, the question of learning them comparatively are considered as important tasks of the theory of literature and critical literature studies. From this point of view, the branch of comparative literature study, which has become an objective necessity of the contemporary science, is of great importance.

The place of symbols in social, political, spiritual life of the humanity is analyzed based on the idea of the great Chinese Philosopher Confucius who said, «Signs and symbols rule the world, neither words nor laws». *Symbol* is important for depicting the relations of complex inner world of a man with the world. Such features as *allegory* and *symbol* of figurative use of the word which are considered to be an art of using the word in figurative meaning are used widely as a means of strengthening descriptiveness and expressiveness. Though *symbol* and *allegory* are close from the point of view of expressiveness, the main difference between them is that a *symbol* is used in the text in its primary and figurative meanings when *allegory* shows what the writer intends to describe not the thing being described.

It is known that symbols are subdivided into scientific, philosophic, literary and mythological types. When speaking about literary and mythological symbols it is necessary to remind once again that literature, which is the art of using words, consists of symbols and signs. Symbols used in literary works are different according to their character and tasks. A.Sharopov makes a special

analysis of relations of a symbol-character and a symbol sign [1, p. 22].

«Divine Comedy» by Dante is inexhaustible source of using symbols and figurativeness. Namely, Dante regards the dark forest described in the beginning of the work («Hell 1, 2-60 p) as the symbol of human life. He meets a leopard – a symbol of treachery and lust, a lion – a symbol of pride and violence and a she wolf – a symbol of vanity and cunningness.

It is believed that in the novel «Plague» by A. Camus created after the World War II (1947) a figurative image of fascism is depicted through the symbol of «plague». A literary critic D.Kuronov says that it would be a mistake to understand a literary work only in connection with one historical period though it is a product of a certain period. As «...a real man of art stays beyond the reality in the moments of creative activity, time borders do not exist for him in these divine time – he lives in the realm of a greater time which unifies the past, the present and the future» [2, p. 283]. According to this point of view, we become sure that A.Camus depicted not only the figurative image of fascism, but also a mysterious power, which never retreats in full, appears and stuns people at times. We can conclude that such kind of a situation may appear in every society where indifference and apathy flare up.

Using symbolic images take important place in the creative activity of the modern Uzbek writers as well. We must mention such works as «The Plane Tree » written by Askad Mukhtor, «The Tulip Field» by Murod Mukhammad Dost, and «The bird in the Fano Desert» by Asad Dilmurod. Namely, a number of works of Omon Mukhtor created in the years of independence are rich in symbolic components and images, which have deep subvalue.

One of the writers, who has his own peculiar style of depiction N.Eshonkulov could create the symbol of the period of Soviets in his story «Coffin» through the image of a dwelling place build in the form of a coffin, and the symbol of that ideology through the image of a disgusting smell staying in the town. The work «Jajman» created by Khurshid Dostmukhammad is also noteworthy in this respect.

We can consider symbolism as an appearance of a literary text relying on figurative meanings conditionally which includes eternal problems of the humanity and society. Symbolic images which are the products of the author's associative thinking play an important role in increasing the ideological-aesthetic influence of a literary work.

As *mirror* has been taking a special place in the lives of people since ancient times, as its reflecting function has been fascinating our ancestors, it has been valued as a mystical device fulfilling ideological-aesthetic task of different periods, religions and nations.

According to Uzbek national traditions putting a knife, a mirror and pepper under the pillow of a newborn baby's cradle is connected with the ideas of magical protecting ability of a mirror from damages of evil ghosts [3, p. 32]. Due to the imagination of our historical ancestors a man's reflection in the mirror does not show the breaking of rays coming off his shape and going back but it is his spirit reflected in the mirror.

The Japanese strongly believe that the spirit of a man, looking at a mirror for the first time is transmitted in the mirror [4]. Imagination and philosophical content connected with a mirror is masterly implemented into fictions in the work «The Moon on the Water» by Yasunari Kawabata.

Besides, a mirror is also regarded as a magical means of giving faithfulness, light and joy. D.S.Rayevskiy gives information that brides and grooms of such nations as Indians, Tajiks and Persians have a tradition of looking at a mirror together [5, p. 15-17]. This tradition is connected with the wish of having a happy life, living together for a long time, having good children and having warm feelings towards each other [6, p. 81].

A mirror has a general symbolical sense in the Eastern and Western literature, and has been regarded as a cosmogony object connecting man's life and the other world.

In the middle ages, a mirror was regarded as an object of a luxurious life, vanity, on the one hand, and going mad and having a deep thought, finding one's level and the symbol of the truth, on the other. *Mirror* was compared to eyes in this meaning. During this period a

special type of didactic works «Mirror stories» came into being (for example: («Triple Mirror» of Vincent of Beauvais, «Okagama» of the Japanese, «Kalila and Dimna» of the Indian, «Mirror» of the German, the French and the Italian literatures), the Nature is depicted as the mirror of divine wish.

In religious imagination of people, a mirror fulfilled the task of telling about future and warning about future events. Religious imagination of our people connected with a mirror found its reflection in folklore.

Appearance of a mirror with water can be especially clearly seen in fairy tales.

Namely, the fairy tale of «Jamila» when the witch chases the young man and almost catches up with him, the hero drops the mirror. Then it turns into a large river making the very great distance between the witch and the young man. The hero escapes from an evil force very easily.

Here we can mention the four poetic tasks of a mirror in literary construction of a fairy tale (informing, warning, transforming an object from far away to a closer distance, revealing lies) [7, p. 11].

A widely spread in Uzbek and Eastern literature motif of getting informed about future events by looking at a mirror had been recycled again and again, took the form of independent stable epic motif and penetrated into written literature and became solid. That is why, the motif of Farhod's looking at a mirror of Iscandar and getting informed about Shirin in the classical literature serves the people's imagination about a mirror for aesthetic tasks.

Alisher Navoi, in his turn, relies on literary traditions existing before him on the one hand and on the religious imagination of the people on the other. Namely, he used with literary skill the motif of getting informed with the help of a mirror in the Dastan «Farhod and Shirin»; tells the story of Farhod's conquering Shirin mainly using this symbol.

The mirror – the cup of Jamshid (magical seven-ringed cup) depicted in the work is found in a house built in the middle of the fortress which was constructed by Iskandar. This cup is a magic mirror of Iskandar's reflecting the events taking place throughout the world.

The component of a mirror is also used in such dastans by Alisher Navoi as «Saddi Iskandariy», «Sabbai Sayyor». Again a mirror serves as a symbol of honesty and uprightness.

Writers of the XIX c. alongside with continuing the traditions of the classical literature in using the motif of a mirror got a peculiar interpretation and imposed a new meaning and task on this component. Given above, the works of the genre of literary tales of the writers who

lived and created in the XIX century are of a special importance. In the story «A little Sahes Named Cinnober» by Ernest Teodor Vihelm Hofman a mirror – a miraculous thing is used as a component of revealing a lie.

The idea of «The Snow Queen» written by Hans Christian Andersen is similar to the idea of Sufistic Ideology, which says that Almighty God created a mirror in order to watch his beauty and perfection, and in this work a mirror alike is created by the devil. In Tasavvuf teaching a mirror is the material world surrounding us and in the center of it there is a man's soul. The eye is the symbol of the soul. In «The Snow Queen» a little piece of a mirror goes into the body of Kay through his eye, freezes his heart and leads him to evil deeds.

A mirror in the fairy tale by A.S.Pushkin «The Tale of the Dead Princess» created on the basis of the motif of evil forces' getting informed about their enemies with the help of a mirror, it becomes a symbol of unity of beauty and upbringing.

In the story «Alice in Wonderland» by L.Carroll purely mathematic thought and literary philosophical means get unified in order to describe mysteries of a mirror. Here the country of the mirror can be seen as a means of understanding oneself and the higher truth.

The theme of a mirror is being widely used in modern literary genre of fantasy. In the novel «The Lord of the Rings» created by English writer John Tolkin on the basis of Scandinavian legends, the magic mirror of Lord Lorien is a tab filled with water. Here we come across the motif of imposing the task of a mirror on water.

Nobel Prize laureate Najib Mahfuz's (1911-2006) novel «Mirrors» presents some ideas about the problems of an Egyptian society, its future and destiny. Each chapter of the work discusses a certain character's destiny. As G.Toshmuhammedova says, «... the main mirror which reflects their destiny is the author's patriot and simple citizen's noble, generous and clear consciousness»[8, p. 6]. Fifty-five chapters of the novel are fifty-five mirrors. These mirrors reflect the Egyptian reality, and constitute together one unified big mirror – description of the novel, that is the description of the period, epoch.

Nodir Normatov used the symbol of a mirror in the novel «The Two in the Mirror». The fate of a young family living in the village of «Pana» in Surkhandaryo, complicated opposition in the lives of Umar and Malika and the history of a golden mirror of the period of Baburids is depicted through epic descriptions. At the end of the story Malika asks for the mirror in her dower, and this means her wish to return her period of unadulterated happiness of being a bride and love of Umar. In this

respect the component of a mirror in Nodir Normatov's «The Two in the Mirror» and Kawabata Yasunari's «The Moon on the Water» is directed to fulfill common ideological-aesthetic tasks, and it is interpreted as the symbol of woman's happiness.

In the literature of the XX century, which was colorful, complicated and contradictory, a mirror and a picture were widely used as a component, *symbol* or *motif*. So a number of stories – little genre of prose were created. The mirror in «The Moon on the Water» by Japanese writer Kawabata Yasunari (1899-1972) deserves a special attention as an important symbolic image. Here we have to consider the essence and meaning of the mirror as a symbolic image. It is known that a mirror is a symbol connected with the complex of water-moon-woman [9, p. 145]. As water mirror has a reflecting surface, that is one can see the symbol of an unknown thing in it. A mirror does not have its own form and only reflects the image of other things. That is why it is compared to the moon, which does not have its own light and reflects the sun's rays. The moon's nature is changeable; it can be «crowded» or deserted. This feature leads us to the symbol of the moon and a woman.

Learning literary works, we became witnesses of writers' using photos or portraits of people as important literary components giving information about the past or future of personages, helping to disclose their spiritual world. The components of a portrait and a photo have symbolic meaning and play important role in achieving a writer's ideological-aesthetic aim connected with the work. Namely, in N.Gogol's story «Portrait» the European motif of selling a man's soul for the sake of eternal life is used through sealing the image of a usurer, disgusting old man's spirit to a portrait. O.Wilde continued the style and traditions formed in this respect in his creative activity.

In the XX century Uzbek story writing traditions, namely in «The Woman in the Picture» by Shodikul Hamro photographic portrait is used as an important literary component. Whereas in «The Man with a Monkey», «Art», «The Picture of a Ruined City» by Nazar Eshonkulov in whose creative activity symbolism occupies a conspicuous place, are presented pictures having a mysterious impact on people's spiritual condition [10, p. 7].

The creative activity of two writers who lived in different geographic places, social-political system and literary-aesthetic environments is similar in using symbols, which represent characters inner world. One of them is a well-known English writer O.Wilde, who lived and created mainly in the last quarter of the XIX and was

one of the founders of Aestheticism. The other one is O. Mukhtor, whose literary activity falls upon the last quarter of the XIX century and the beginning of the XX century and who takes a deserved place in the modern Uzbek literature. The main reason of choosing these writers for investigation under the single research is their works «The Picture of Dorian Gray» and «The Man at the Mirror».

Firstly, the portrait in Oscar Wilde's novel (Dorian Gray's portrait painted when he was young), the mirror in Omon Mukhtor's novel (the reflection of Siroj Muallim) are formed as the main symbolic images. Both works are the results of changes in spiritual world of the writers, new knowledge and imagination about learning the life and a man.

The ideas of such theoreticians of the art John Ruskin and Walter Pater played an important role in the formation of the creative-aesthetic world of Oscar Wilde. «The Picture of Dorian Gray» appeared as a literary reflection of the theory of aestheticism worked out by the writer.

Omon Mukhtor's works «One Thousand and One Appearances», «The Man at the Mirror», «The Country and Realm of Women», «Ffu» and «Plato» created in the 90s were novelty in the literary process of those days. Motifs of people's legends and tales, oriental philosophy and literature, namely Alisher Navoi's creative heritage together with description of the forms of spiritual life of Western literature in the period of Modernism got generalized.

Peculiarities of Omon Mukhtor personages can be seen in not dividing them into positive and negative ones. The writer describes features of vice and virtue in one personage in unity.

The symbol of a mirror brought to the title of the book, masterly used symbols help to understand deeper, to analyze the leading idea of the eternal struggle between the God and the Devil. Vice and virtue based on traditional oral and written examples of our heritage by revealing the inner world of the main personages, hidden features of their spiritual world, God's and Devil's aspects of their souls.

There is a concrete mirror in the work «The Man at the Mirror». It is Valijon himself. All other personages see their reflection in that mirror. We can see that Vali is the symbol of the truth; if the truth breaks down the man gets destroyed.

O. Mukhtor continued the tradition of using the symbol of a mirror in a peculiar way, which first used in Avesta, later in Alisher Navoi's works. We can see that

the writer used as a basis national folktales, people's tales and mainly Navoi's creative activity.

The component of a mirror in Omon Mukhtor's «The Man at the Mirror» and that of a picture in Oscar Wilde's «The Picture of Dorian Gray» is depicted as a symbol of mirror showing the characters changes in the souls. These works tell us that greed is the devil's play, power dragging to lowness, messenger of lust, corrupt practice, conceit, ignorance, adultery.

In these two works which are very close to each other from the point of view of analysis of ideas and images the characters of Siroj Muallim and Lord Henry are depicted in the image of the devil. In fact, the plot of «Faust» selling one's soul to the devil for eternal youth was taken as a basis for the both works. In this respect, the writers used effectively the images of a demon and a devil in order to reveal the ideological-aesthetic purpose of the works. If we have a look at the history of literature, the devil in a human appearance «helps» the man to achieve his worldly wishes thus strays him from the straight and narrow in such works as «Faust» by Goethe, «Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde» by Stevenson, «The Magic Skin» by Balzac, «Master and Margarita» by M. Bulgakov. The motifs of a mirror and a picture of «The Picture of Dorian Gray» and «The Man at the Mirror» are used to show the real face, spiritual world of the characters. Siroj Muallim sees the devil's mug in the mirror instead of a human face whereas Vali lives with fear of seeing such an appearance instead of his own face some day.

The symbol of a mirror in O. Mukhtor's novel «The Man at the Mirror» and the symbol of painting a portrait in Oscar Wilde's «The Picture of Dorian Gray» are used as evidences proving the concrete result of a sin and the possibility of a man's destroying his own soul.

There is a belief among people that a broken mirror may make the spirit of a departed weaker and based on this belief O. Mukhtor and O. Wilde used the image of a broken mirror as the symbol meaning the end of the characters' lives.

The analysis was carried out based on the thought that the symbol of a portrait of the work is the symbol of a character's soul. Besides, the literary-ideological essence of the work is revealed on the basis of notions of traditional and innovative in symbolic description.

The feature of mysterious symbolism of «The Picture of Dorian Gray» is close to the style of Romanticism. Symbolism is formed based on becoming Dorian's portrait his second self, and it is receiving

Dorian's sins and murders, the character's experiencing spiritual crisis.

We think that Oscar Wilde's novel «The Picture of Dorian Gray» puts forward a literary idea that because of misbalance between a man's material and spiritual basis and inner and external beauty the tragedy of spiritual poorness comes into being. That is, the story of Dorian Gray is a resolution made upon spiritual-moral as well as spiritual meanness [11, p. 178]. The main idea of the novel, objective essence is a meaningful question – «is there any good if the man buys the world but loses his heart? ».

O.Wilde's creative activity is noteworthy for its none-traditional, innovative ideas on the role of art, namely of literature not only in the English literature of the second half of the XIX century, but also in the whole European literature.

As we mentioned above, the writer used traditions and styles of Romanticism and Realism in creating his novel «The Picture of Dorian Gray». Themes, ideas and problems put forward in such works as «Melmoth the Wanderer» by Ch. Maturin, «Sydonia the Sorceress» by Mainhold, «Vivian Grey» by Benjamin Disraeli, «The Magic Skin» by Balzac, «Against Nature» by J.K.Huysmans had an impact on the appearance of the novel.

O.Wilde used a portrait as the primary motif of the work and created a symbolic image of changes in the soul, spiritual world of the man through the portrait and changes in it.

The integrity of ideas put forward in «The man at the Mirror» and «The Picture of Dorian Gray» can be seen in the attempt of the authors to «describe the same process on the way of a man's perfection»[12, p. 420]. Though these works were created with the difference of 100 years, they are united by the idea of struggle of vice and virtue, the struggle of a man to understand his «self», inner conflict, the process of spiritual-moral contradictions [13, p. 183].

However, the two writers used different basis in reflecting symbols in their creative activity. This can be explained by the fact that one of the writers was brought up based on oriental and the second one on the basis of western philosophies. Omon Mukhtor relies on solid oriental roots. After getting rid of the system, it became possible to speak openly about oriental philosophy and national values, relying on the motifs of national legends and tales, traditions of our national literature, forming the main peculiarity of the writer. During that period, when social matters were of primary importance, mysteriousness and enigma peculiar to literature began to

be forgotten. During that period, Omon Mukhtor really learned the western literature. Nevertheless, he described the western experience in synthesis, enriching it with oriental philosophy, system of colorful symbolic images. O. Wilde based on European folklore, Ancient Greek cultural heritage and the traditions of literary fairy tales of the XIX century.

In conclusion, we can emphasize that appearance of every symbolic sign or image has a long history; the essence of symbolic content has not been changed in the course of many centuries. However, new symbols may appear in new historical periods; the existing ones may change their essence. Symbol and symbolism are first of all means of reflecting the man and complicated and mysterious world surrounding him, his relations with the world; understanding it demands from a reader to have information about a writer's way of life, dreams and thoughts, ideological-aesthetic purpose and the spiritual condition in the period of writing a book.

Such features of a mirror are to reflect the ray, to reflect forms of objects as they are, so the ancient people thought about it specifically. Those thought first appeared in folklore as stable epic motifs. Motifs and symbolic images connected with a mirror were based on ancient thoughts about the mutual connections of a mirror and water. In religious imagination of people, it was regarded as the door of entrance to another world, herald-giving information about the future, happiness and faithfulness, light, holder of a divine power of giving joy. And in Uzbek national fairy tales a mirror was interpreted as one of the wonderful things as a magic ring, sword, boiling pot, beating stick, open table cloth, lightning stones, magic stick apple, and helped personages of tales. *Mirror* was regarded as the symbol of thinking, understanding oneself and the truth in so many nations. That is why it was compared to eyes. Later the results of those views found their reflection in written literature.

Different ideological-aesthetic tasks, symbolic contents were imposed on the component of a mirror in different periods. In classical Uzbek literature, namely, in Alisher Navoi's creative activity, the symbol of a mirror and an eye was used to reflect a man's spiritual perfection. The motif of getting information with the help of a mirror is effectively used in Alisher Navoi's «Farhod and Shirin». Here the author based on existing traditions and religious imagination of the people and gave a specific symbolic meaning to a mirror.

In the literature of the XIX-XX centuries, in the works of the representatives of Romanticism and fairy tales a portrait or a picture were used not only as a part of interior but also as a means of disclosing spiritual inner

world, and the past life of characters. Customs, traditions and thoughts, optic possibilities, elements of mysticism and fantasy connected with a mirror unified in the modern literature; it serves as an important symbolic image in depicting the fight of vice and virtue and revealing the spiritual world of a man. *Picture* in literature is not only a specific symbol of the soul and memory of a man, it has also been used in figurative description of a completely social-political system and period.

The image of eyes in pictures in Gogol's «Portrait», O. Wilde's «The Picture of Dorian Gray», Sh.Hamroyev's «The Woman in the Picture» have special place. These works say that the eyes become the symbol of a soul. The more the man wants to hide his inner world and feelings the more the eyes disclose them.

However, «The Picture of Dorian Gray» by O.Wilde and «The Man at the Mirror» by O.Mukhtor were created with a difference of 100 years and in different social-political societies. The struggle of vice and virtue in a man's nature, the theme of freedom and slavery of spirit and symbolic images that have important role in the works unify them. The characters of Valijon depict the integrity of ideas in the works and Dorian in the description of a man's striving for perfection.

O.Wilde used the traditions of Romanticism and Realism, people's views connected a mirror and themes and ideas put forward in Maturin's, Mainhold's, Disraeli's, Balzac's, Huysmans' novels in his work «The Picture of Dorian Gray». In O.Mukhtor's novel «The Man at the Mirror» appeared as the synthesis of «One Thousand and One Appearances», «The Country and Realm of Women», «Ffu» and «Plato» created in the 90s of the XX century based on the motifs of people's legends and tales. Oriental philosophy and literature, namely A.Navoi's creative heritage together with the spiritual world peculiar to Western literature of the trend Modernism got generalized.

The novels by O.Wilde and O.Mukhtor were created in response to social-political problems of their times; the work of the Uzbek writer described the literary-symbolic picture the Soviet period; the English writer described the conditions during the period of Queen Victoria.

The component of a mirror in O.Mukhtor's «The Man at the Mirror» and the component of a picture in O.Wilde's «The Picture of Dorian Gray» are described as a mirror reflecting changes in the characters' souls. Alongside with this, the characters described in a portrait and a mirror appear as symbols of rotting, clear result of a sin and as a hint that a man can destroy himself. There is a belief among people that a broken mirror may make the

spirit of a departed weaker. Based on this belief O.Mukhtor and O.Wilde used the image of a broken mirror as the symbol meaning the end of the characters' lives.

The image of the devil provides disclose of ideological-aesthetic purpose of the works. The images of Siroj Muallim and Lord Henry the main characters Vali and Dorian are depicted in the image of the devil leading them to sin and to astray them.

An important scientific conclusion may be made in defining the ideological-aesthetic tasks imposed on symbolic images, namely the components of a mirror and a picture (portrait) the personality of the writer, factors induced to create the works by approaching from the point of view of influence of national-spiritual outlook. Existing of specific and unified features in using the symbols of a mirror and a portrait in Uzbek and Western literature can be explained by the difference of the periods of creation, by the difference of environment and national mentality.

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