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# Symbolic Images and Color Symbolism in Fairy Tales

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**Annotation:** This article analyzes the artistic and semantic functions of symbolic images and color symbolism in Uzbek folk tales, using the fairy tales “Uch O’gayni Botirlar” and “Zumrad and Qimmat” as examples. The study examines the mythopoetic roots and semantic layers of object and color images found in the structure of the tales, as well as their role in shaping moral and spiritual values. In the tale “Zumrad and Qimmat,” the white chest is interpreted as a symbol of abundance, purity, and reward, while the black chest represents darkness, misfortune, and punishment. The image of the dragon is evaluated as a “liminal trial” and a “shadow archetype” rooted in archaic mythological concepts. In “Uch O’gayni Botirlar” the presence of structural markers such as the dual opposition between light and dark forces, good and evil, and reward and punishment is identified. The results of the study emphasize that symbolic images and the color system in folk tales serve not only as artistic devices but also as integral components of national mentality and mythopoetic worldview.

**Keywords:** folklore, folk poetics, symbolism, color symbolism, image, functional analysis, semantic layer, Uzbek folk tales.

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**Introduction.** Fairy tale is the oldest epic genre as a phenomenon of general folklore. Mahmud Kashgari's "Devonu Lug'otit Turk" mentions it as the term "mature" among Turkic peoples. The word fairy tale is formed from the addition of the suffix "tak", which is similar to the word "ir" (yir), and means similar to a song. Telling fairy tales was like a tradition. Fairy tale evenings lasted from dusk to dawn. The interesting thing about fairy tales is that despite reaching the climax, they were stopped as soon as dawn broke [1].

Uzbek folk tales are one of the examples of oral creativity that embodies the worldview, moral and aesthetic taste of the people. In these tales, symbolic images, color symbolism and mythopoetic layers serve as important artistic means. This article scientifically analyzes the semantic interpretation of symbolic images in the tales "Three Uncles–Batirlar" and "Zumrad and Qimmat", their mythological roots and structural–functional functions.

**MAIN PART.** The system of symbolic images in Uzbek folk tales is a complex moral model, which performs a powerful semantic function through color symbolism. The symbolization of colors in folk oral art is associated with certain reasons[2]. For example: in the tale "Zumrad and Qimmat" the white and black chest symbolizes the consequences of honest labor and evil intent, while in the tale "Three Uncles–Batirlar" the dragon and various trials embody the stages of the hero's achievement of perfection. In folklore texts, symbolic images are not just an aesthetic tool, but also appear as an information system carrying a semantic load.

In folklore, this phenomenon is called "functional semantics of images"[3]. Propp, in the process of

analyzing the structure of fairy tales, proved that images act as morphological units in such texts, and characters and objects have more roles and tasks[4]. For example, “auxiliary image”, “testing image”, “anti-hero”, “reward”, “punishing force”.

Such functions are often implemented in national fairy tale texts through a system of symbols. In particular, colors (white, black, red), objects (chest, ribbon, house, tree), animal images (snake, bird, dragon) and heroes (hero, old woman, stepmother) denote certain moral oppositions.

Moral semantic symbols that are widespread in folklore poetics are:

honest – evil;

white – black;

provision – trouble;

reward – punishment;

test – perfection.

The tale "Zumrad and Qimmat" belongs to the moral–social fairy tale genre in Uzbek folklore, and the symbolic layer is particularly strong in it. The main conflict is built on the opposition between an honest and pure girl (Zumrad) and a proud, lazy and malicious girl (Qimmat). The images of the tale are formed against the background of parental relationships, work culture and moral values. The image of the emerald is a symbol of honesty and purity. Therefore, entering a house with a white door and being given a white chest by the old witch is interpreted as a symbol of reward. In the folklore mentality, the emerald is a symbol of purity, honesty, patience and work. All her actions have a morally positive direction.

Through this image, the people's spiritual model, honest work, sustenance, and blessing are given. The image of Qimmat is a symbol of lust and evil. Since the image of Qimmat is the opposite of laziness, lust and arrogance, the old witch gives her a black chest and she takes it from it. The dragon's appearance is subject to such situations as "punishment". In the fairy tale, each of its actions is not a reward, but a consequence.

The symbolism of the image of the white chest is one of the most important subject images of the fairy tale – the white chest.

The symbolic semantics: purity, blessing, provision, the fulfillment of prayer, the result of labor, etc. are the only manifestations of such actions.

This chest is given to Zumrad by a magical old woman. When the chest is opened:

"Gold, silver, ornaments, and fine clothes poured out of the white chest"

This clearly indicates that the provision comes from a lawful source.

In folklore, the ancient function of the white color is luck and light. In Turkic mythology, the white color symbolizes khanate, blessing, and happiness[5].

The symbolism of the image of the black chest – Qimmat is given a black chest. When this chest is opened: "Snakes, scorpions, and worms came out of the black chest" [3].

This image is manifested as the result of lust and the punishment of evil intentions.

The color black is associated in the popular consciousness with: trouble, sorrow, sorrow, darkness, disaster. Therefore, the black chest is an image of black fate. We witness the above thoughts when the black chest is given to Qimmat by the witch old woman. The opposition of these two chests is a symbol of moral dualism: white provision and black disaster.

Dragon motif: The dragon, which appears in some versions of “Zumrad and Qimmat”, is a testing image. The dragon tests Zumrad’s patience and courage. This is considered the “hero’s testing stage” in

Propp's system[3].

The dragon symbol: a symbol of lust, worldly trials, obstacles, and inner struggle.

In Turkic mythology, the dragon is often seen as a guardian of wealth and happiness.

Therefore, Zumrad's passage through the dragon is his achievement of perfection.

In the tale of "Three Uncles Heroes" – symbolic images and poetics of color:

This tale is a traditional model of heroic plots in Uzbek folklore, and the system of images in it is very rich. The image of the hero is a symbol of perfection.

The three heroes are also symbolic: the trinity is a model of perfection in Turkic mythology[4]. They represent the stages of the hero's achievement of perfection and goodness through passing trials.

The image of the fruit – has a symbolic meaning, possessing divine power such as rejuvenation and beauty. For example: There is a fruit tree. Whoever eats one fruit from this tree, if he is an old man, he will return to his youth, and if he is an old woman, he will return to his youth like a girl[6].

The dragon is an "anti-hero" and a testing force. In "The Three Heroes," the dragon is not an evil force, but an obstacle. Its task is not to kill the hero, but to test him. This is different from the dragon model in traditional European fairy tales. The image of a bird is a symbolic image of a celestial helper. The image of a bird saving the hero in the popular consciousness performs the functions of a guide, a helping magical image, and a symbolic image of salvation. It has a single mythological root and is interpreted as "a bird is a divine helper."

Color symbolism:

Colors in fairy tales have the following semantic meaning: Semantic meaning.

White color – power and purity; red color – blood, courage; black color – test, danger and mystery.

**SUMMARY.** Uzbek folk tales are manifested as artistic images that express the moral, aesthetic and social views of the people through symbols. In the fairy tales "Zumrad va Qimmat" and "Uch o'gayni batirlar" the system of symbolic images and colors is carefully constructed, which reflects a clear moral system through the activities of the characters, the function of objects and the semantic nature of colors. The main contradictions that occur theoretically in these fairy tales are the dualisms of honest and evil, white and black, reward and punishment, test and salvation.

In the fairy tale "Zumrad and Qimmat", the images of the white chest and the black chest represent the socio-moral consequences of honest labor and evil intent. While Zumrad's labor becomes a blessing through the white chest, Qimmat's laziness and indulgence become a punishment through the black chest. These two objects are an artistic model of the origin and distribution of sustenance in the folklore layer. The dragon, as a testing force, checks the inner perfection of the hero.

In the fairy tale "The Three Uncles Are Slain", the dragon is not an anti-hero, but a testing and hindering force. The auxiliary function of the image of the bird is manifested in the folk imagination as a symbol of divine or celestial help. The color system serves to artisticize the hero's testing process. In particular, the semantic function of colors – white (light), red (courage), black (danger) – strengthens the internal logic of the poetics of the fairy tale.

Thus, these tales shape the ancient moral character of the Uzbek people through symbolic images such as honest labor, sustenance and blessing, and evil intentions: lust, calamity. This shows that the educational, social, and aesthetic function of folk tales is still preserved.

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