



Linguocultural Study of Signs and Symbols

Sumaira Nawaz

PhD of McGill University, Canada

Sharipova Dilnoza Shavkatovna, Kutlieva Mukhayyo Gulomovna

Teachers of ESP for Natural Sciences Department Bukhara State University

Abstract: *The article deals with signs and symbols in the historical and cultural trend from the standpoint of linguistics and semiotics.*

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I. Introduction

The foundations of the linguistic and semiotic theory of the symbol were laid by C. Pierce, who singled out 3 types of signs: indices, iconic signs and symbols. Signs play a crucial role in the formation and development of human consciousness. "Human civilization is impossible without signs and sign systems, the human mind is inseparable from the functioning of signs, and perhaps, in general, the intellect should be identified precisely with the functioning of signs," notes C. Morris, one of the founders of modern semiotics, in his works. Objects of various types can act as a sign: objects, phenomena, properties, relationships, actions, etc. Signs are used to acquire, store, process and transmit information.

Signs are the object of study of many disciplines: linguistics, philosophy, cultural studies, psychology, anthropology, etc., but they have become the central object of study in a special science of signs - semiotics. In this article we will consider the problem of studying the sign in linguistics and semiotics.

The word "symbol" comes from the ancient Greek "symbolon", which literally means "mixed in a heap." "Symbolons" the Greeks called fragments of broken tiles; people, putting together such fragments, and finding that the traces of the split coincide, could identify each other as participants in a certain deal, agreement, community.

II. Literature review

The symbol, in its original meaning, is, firstly, a secret sign, the meaning of which is clear only to the initiates, and thereby linking the initiates into a single multitude; secondly, a symbol is a conditional sign, that is, a sign, the meaning of which has been specially agreed upon. C. Pierce, giving his definition of a symbol, relies on the second meaning of the ancient Greek term. In the historical and cultural tradition, the term "symbol" is ambiguous.

A.F. Losev notes that the term "symbol" is one of those words that are widely used, seem to be generally understood and therefore are not analyzed specifically. But "on closer examination, it turns out that the symbol ... is one of the central concepts of philosophy and aesthetics and requires

extremely painstaking research. On Russian soil, the foundations for the study of the symbol were laid by A. A. Potebnya, who said, in particular, that "a symbol of a language ... can be called its poetry." At the same time, poetry can be different: in a broad sense, "each time a poetic image is perceived and animated by the understanding, it tells him something more than what is directly contained in it," in a narrow sense, poetry is equal to transfer (metaphorical).

III. Analysis

In modern lexical semantics, the understanding of a symbol as a linguistic category is interpreted by different researchers in different ways: the difference most often concerns two problems:

- 1) the relationship of a symbol to a sign, image, notion, concept;
- 2) the relationship of the symbol to the expressive and visual means of the language, tropes. Let's look at these categories in more detail:

1. Some researchers interpret the symbol through the concepts of image and sign, and define it as "an image taken in the aspect of its symbolism", and as "a sign endowed with all the organicity and inexhaustible ambiguity of the image" (Averintsev, Vinogradov, Losev, Arutyunova, Shelestyuk).

According to another point of view, "the time has come to put the symbol next to the concept" (Markov), however, symbolic meanings are not identified with conceptual ones. The synthesis of these approaches can be traced in the works of V. V. Kolesov, who considers the relationship of a symbol to a concept, image and concept in dynamics. The semantic syncretism of the concept, according to V. V. Kolesov, takes shape in the image, is analyzed in the concept, and in the symbol it already appears as "the unity of "thought-feeling"", and therefore can simultaneously replace both the concept and the image; a symbol is a conceptual image; or figurative concept.

2. The relationship of the symbol to the expressive and visual means of the language, tropes, is also determined ambiguously. From the point of view of V. V. Kolesov, "a symbol is the main figurative means; presented as the ultimate degree of development of a metaphor or, on the contrary, as an unrevealed metaphoricity of a semantically syncretic word. Metaphor and metonymy are understood by many as transfer mechanisms underlying the formation of a symbol, hence the separation of metaphorical and metonymic types of a symbol. Literary text researchers often identify a symbol with any element of an artistic system.

The "real symbol" cannot be borrowed, because it "sprouts out of natural language in its development". Metaphor, on the contrary, is created artificially, often arising from a symbol.

The internal structure of the symbol, its relation to the denotation and referent are also understood ambiguously. From one point of view, a symbol has a denotation and "represents a referent", and from another point of view, a symbol has only a referent: a symbol does not have its own denotation, objective meaning (it appears only in relation to an object - to a thing).

IV. Discussion

According to V. V. Kolesov, the denotation has only an image: "According to the signs of the denotation and the referent, the symbol is in an additional distribution in relation to the image ... together they make up a whole that is functionally equal to the concept."

V. V. Kolesov develops the ideas of A. A. Potebnya, see, however, with regard to the Christian symbol, there are doubts that any word goes around and round from the germ of meaning to a new concept in the sequence image - concept - symbol. The impossibility of fully translating the experience of faith into the language of concepts has been affirmed by many theologians. Today, a similar position can be found in the writings of researchers of the preaching genre.

“Symbolism is a sign of the human need to expand the hydrophilization of the world ad infinitum, finding duplicates, substitutes and ways to participate in the received hierophant, and further, the tendency to identify it with the entire universe as a whole,” such a saying can be found in the writings of M. Eliade. P. A. Florensky has a similar statement: “Being, which is greater than itself, is the main definition of a symbol. A symbol is something that is something that is not itself, more than it, and, however, essentially manifests itself through it. As a result, the symbol turns out to be a sign not of a separate thing or phenomenon, but of the whole and whole world that stands behind this symbol.

The sacred symbol is always a manifestation of the sacred, the supernatural, and, as M. Eliade writes, “most hierophant (hierophant is a manifestation of the sacred; the term was introduced by M. Eliade) have the ability to become symbols. The symbol is important not only because it continues or replaces the hierophant, but primarily because it is able to support the process of hydrophilization and, in particular, due to the fact that in cases where the symbol acts as hierophant, it itself reveals the sacred or cosmological reality, which no other manifestation can do.

The Christian symbol is not identified by many with the figurative means of language and with tropes (“Orthodox mysticism is ugly, and so is the path to it, that is, prayer”). According to S. S. Averintsev, “the language of images and metaphors ... has nothing to do with Christianity.” The imagery of the early Byzantine sermon, according to S. S. Averintsev, was stimulated by a purely utilitarian, and not aesthetic moment - to help remember more from the voice. A Christian symbol can be distinguished from a metaphor based on the following features of the symbol: the complexity of the content of the symbol and the equality of its meanings, the “immanent” polysemy and vagueness of the boundaries of meanings in the symbol, its function of infinity, the “participation of the Christian symbol in the designated object”, in which dual relations arise between the sign and the signified: the identity of the signified and the designation of something else, not transformation (as in a metaphor), but actualization of the meaning of the word, while modeling new interpretations of the meanings of the symbol, preserving the direct meaning (as opposed to allegory), archetypically and universality of the symbol in a particular culture.

The difference from metaphor is also due to the special status of the word in the preaching style. Even in the ancient concept of logos, the word was perceived as something substantial. Holy Scripture “turned into a sign system that required knowledge of symbolism, primarily verbal, formed in the works of the Church Fathers, interpreting the sacred text”. Symbolism, as the leading principle of comprehending and explaining the world in the Russian Middle Ages, was already inherent in the Slavic alphabet, and borrowed a lot from the translations of the works of the Church Fathers. The word, like an icon, represented an image that marked the prototype, but was not identical to it.

Thus, a symbol is usually understood as a complex linguistic sign, consisting of two equal elements:

- 1) from a specific meaning, representing either the figurative side of the symbol, or expressing a specific concept (abstract meaning), the agent of the symbol;
- 2) from an abstract meaning that has a primary archetypal (reflecting the poetics of syncretism), cultural stereotype (traditional, reflecting eidetic poetics) or subjective-authorial (reflecting the poetics of artistic modality) character, a symbol referent.

The agent of the symbol is based on a lexical concept that expresses not only the signification, but also represents the denotative basis of the symbol in the image, thereby providing the nomination and fragmentation of the surrounding reality. The referent of a symbol is based on the lexical background, which is a set of non-conceptual (that is, not directly related to the nomination) semantic elements (shares) that provide the cumulation of the known. Both the image and the

concept, in the narrow sense, constitute the lexical concept of the word, opposed to the lexical background as the basis of the symbolic focus.

Speaking about the nature of symbols, one cannot but touch upon another approach considered and developed, in particular, by C. G. Jung: "A symbol is, on the one hand, the primary expression of the Unconscious, and on the other, an idea corresponding to the highest premonition of the conscious mind. Such things, like archetypal symbols, should not be thought out, they should rise again from the dark depths of oblivion to express the outer premonition of the conscious mind and the highest intuition of the spirit for the purpose of integrating the uniqueness of consciousness, fully aware of the present, with the original past of life".

You can accept or not accept Jung's doctrine of archetypal symbols, but when analyzing symbols, an appeal to the human psyche and psychology is still necessary, because only psychology can help to understand the answer to the question why some signs become symbols, and others are not.

V. Conclusion

Summarizing the above, it can be noted that:

- 1) some symbols are close to canonical signs, since they have a certain similarity with the signified object or phenomenon;
- 2) some symbols are close to indices, since they can be considered or considered a manifestation, a product of the signified;
- 3) some symbols become such due to the fact that they have a common nature with the signified;
- 4) Some symbols become such due to "contact" - real presence in a situation (accidental or natural) where the designated object or phenomenon took place; for sacred symbols, such "contact" is never considered accidental;
- 5) such "contact" may not be a fact of the real world, but of an imaginary one, in particular, described in some text that has entered the culture; in other words, some symbols become such by virtue of cultural and historical associations;
- 6) some signs become symbols of the corresponding objects or phenomena due to the fact that they cause similar experiences and emotions in the human soul;
- 7) some signs become symbols due to the fact that they are an expression of archetypes from the subconscious of a person or society, being an expression of the collective unconscious, in the words of Jung.

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