

ARTISTIC DEVICES IN THE REPRESENTATION OF THE MOTHER IMAGE IN CONTEMPORARY UZBEK POETRY

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Abstract

The image of the mother occupies a central place in Uzbek poetic thinking as a symbol of national identity, spirituality, kindness, and continuity of cultural values. Although numerous studies have examined the image of the mother in Uzbek literature, the functional role of artistic devices in shaping this image has not been comprehensively investigated through a comparative analysis of Muhammad Yusuf and Ibodat Rajabova. This study aims to identify and compare the poetic functions of artistic devices employed in representing the mother image in the poetry of these two contemporary Uzbek poets. The research is based on a qualitative literary analysis using comparative, structural-poetic, hermeneutic, and contextual methods. The corpus includes selected poems devoted to the mother from both authors. The findings demonstrate that Muhammad Yusuf predominantly employs metaphor, repetition, antithesis, and emotional symbolism to elevate the mother to the level of national and spiritual ideals. In contrast, Ibodat Rajabova constructs the mother image through landscape descriptions, ethnographic details, symbolic objects, and psychological imagery, emphasizing memory, domestic space, and cultural continuity. The comparative analysis reveals both common national values and distinctive individual poetic styles. The study contributes to contemporary Uzbek literary criticism by systematizing the artistic mechanisms through which the mother image is created and interpreted in modern poetry.

Keywords: Mother image, Uzbek poetry, artistic devices, metaphor, symbolism, landscape, Muhammad Yusuf, Ibodat Rajabova.

Introduction

The image of the mother has remained one of the most enduring artistic symbols in world literature, representing not only biological motherhood but also spiritual purity, cultural continuity, national identity, and moral values. In Uzbek literature, particularly in contemporary poetry, the mother functions as a multidimensional poetic image that reflects the ethical, historical, and emotional consciousness of society. Consequently, the artistic representation of motherhood occupies an important position in modern literary studies.

The poetry of Muhammad Yusuf and Ibodat Rajabova presents two distinctive approaches to portraying the mother image. Muhammad Yusuf emphasizes national identity, patriotism, and universal human values through emotionally expressive poetic language. Ibodat Rajabova, on the other hand, develops the mother image by integrating ethnographic details, domestic space, natural landscapes, and symbolic imagery into her poetic discourse. Although both poets share similar thematic concerns, their artistic techniques reveal different aesthetic strategies.

Previous studies have primarily focused on the ideological significance of the mother image or on the general characteristics of these poets' works. However, insufficient attention has been devoted to a systematic comparative investigation of the artistic devices that construct the mother image. This gap limits a comprehensive understanding of how poetic language shapes cultural meanings. Therefore, this research seeks to analyze the artistic devices used in portraying the mother image in the selected poems of Muhammad Yusuf and Ibodat Rajabova. Particular attention is given to metaphor, simile, epithet, symbolism, antithesis, repetition, landscape imagery, and artistic detail.

The study addresses the following research questions:

Which artistic devices are most frequently employed in representing the mother image?

How do Muhammad Yusuf and Ibodat Rajabova differ in their poetic techniques?

What aesthetic and ideological functions do these artistic devices perform in contemporary Uzbek poetry?

The findings are expected to contribute to Uzbek literary criticism by offering a systematic classification of artistic devices used in depicting the mother image and by revealing the individual stylistic characteristics of the two poets.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employs a qualitative comparative literary analysis to investigate the artistic devices used in representing the image of the mother in contemporary Uzbek poetry. The research is grounded in the principles of modern literary criticism, which regard poetic imagery as a complex interaction between linguistic expression, cultural symbolism, and aesthetic function. A comparative design was selected because it enables the identification of both shared and distinctive stylistic features in the poetic works of Muhammad Yusuf and Ibodat Rajabova.

Rather than focusing solely on thematic interpretation, the study examines how artistic devices function as structural elements that contribute to the construction of poetic meaning and emotional impact.

The corpus consists of selected poems by Muhammad Yusuf and Ibodat Rajabova in which the mother image occupies a central artistic position.

The analysis includes the following poems by Muhammad Yusuf:

- O‘zbekning ayollari
- Onamga xat
- Onamdan xat
- O‘zbek onasi

The following poems by Ibodat Rajabova were selected:

- Hayrat
- Onam
- Onam vafoti kuni
- Onam g‘ilmon dunyoga ketdi
- Qush qichqirig‘i

These poems were selected according to three criteria:

1. the mother image constitutes the central poetic subject;
2. the poems contain diverse artistic devices suitable for comparative analysis;
3. the selected texts represent different emotional, philosophical, and symbolic aspects of motherhood.

Several complementary research methods were employed to ensure a comprehensive literary analysis.

RESULTS

The analysis identified eight major categories of artistic devices employed in the representation of the mother image: metaphor, simile, epithet, symbolism, repetition, antithesis, landscape imagery, and artistic detail. Although both poets employ these devices, their frequency and artistic functions differ considerably. Muhammad Yusuf predominantly relies on metaphorical expression and emotional repetition to construct an idealized image of the mother associated with national identity, patriotism, and moral values. In contrast, Ibodat Rajabova[8.65] frequently employs landscape imagery, symbolic objects, and ethnographic details to depict motherhood through memories, everyday life, and cultural traditions.

Table 1. Dominant artistic devices identified in the selected poems

Artistic device	Muhammad Yusuf	Ibodat Rajabova	Dominant function
Metaphor	High	Moderate	Spiritual idealization
Simile	Moderate	High	Emotional visualization
Epithet	High	Moderate	Character description
Symbolism	Moderate	High	Cultural representation
Repetition	High	Moderate	Emotional emphasis
Antithesis	Moderate	Low	Ideological contrast
Landscape imagery	Low	High	Psychological reflection
Artistic detail	Moderate	Very High	National and ethnographic characterization

The findings indicate that the two poets share a common thematic orientation but employ different artistic mechanisms to construct poetic meaning.

The analysis demonstrates that metaphor constitutes the principal artistic mechanism in Muhammad Yusuf's representation of the mother image.

Expressions such as «Farzand uchun yaralgan,» «Mehnat uchun yaralgan,» and «Qo'llari oltinlari»[5.123] elevate the mother from an individual family member to a symbolic embodiment of national morality and human dignity.

Repetition also plays a significant role. The repeated phrase «O'zbekning ayollari» functions as both a rhythmic element and a semantic center that reinforces the poem's ideological message.

Antithesis is another characteristic feature. Contrasts between suffering and endurance, weakness and spiritual strength, or individual destiny and national identity intensify the emotional impact of the poems.

Unlike Muhammad Yusuf [5.93], Ibodat Rajabova constructs the mother image through visual, cultural, and symbolic representation.

Landscape imagery frequently accompanies emotional transitions. Natural elements such as gardens, flowers, wind, rain, birds, and changing seasons mirror the psychological condition of the lyrical speaker.

Ethnographic details-including traditional clothing, household objects, village customs, and domestic space-serve as artistic signs of national identity.

Symbolic objects such as the courtyard, grave, swallow, wind, and spring extend the meaning of motherhood beyond individual experience toward collective cultural memory.

The comparative analysis reveals two different poetic models of representing motherhood.

Muhammad Yusuf [5.44] creates an emotionally expressive and nationally symbolic mother image characterized by elevated metaphorical language.

Ibodat Rajabova [7.98], in contrast, constructs motherhood through memory, psychological depth, and cultural symbolism embedded in everyday life.

Table 2. Comparative characteristics of the mother image

Analytical category	Muhammad Yusuf	Ibodat Rajabova
Central poetic strategy	Emotional idealization	Symbolic memory
Dominant imagery	Metaphor	Landscape and detail
Emotional tone	Patriotic and lyrical	Reflective and nostalgic
Cultural representation	National identity	Domestic culture
Artistic focus	Universal motherhood	Individual motherhood
Stylistic feature	Emotional intensity	Symbolic complexity

The artistic devices identified in the selected poems perform several interconnected functions.

First, they deepen the emotional intensity of the poetic text by transforming personal experience into universal human values.

Second, they establish symbolic relationships between motherhood and concepts such as homeland, family, spirituality, memory, and cultural continuity.

Third, they strengthen the aesthetic structure of the poems by integrating figurative language with thematic development.

Finally, the artistic devices contribute to the formation of the individual poetic styles of both authors while simultaneously reflecting broader tendencies in contemporary Uzbek poetry [3.142].

The results demonstrate that the mother image functions not merely as a literary character but as a multidimensional cultural symbol whose artistic realization depends largely on the systematic use of figurative language.

DISCUSSION

The present study demonstrates that the artistic representation of the mother image in contemporary Uzbek poetry extends beyond emotional expression and serves as a complex aesthetic mechanism for conveying national identity, cultural memory, and spiritual values. Although both Muhammad Yusuf and Ibodat Rajabova portray motherhood as the highest moral ideal, they employ fundamentally different artistic strategies.

The predominance of metaphor in Muhammad Yusuf's poetry confirms the observations of Uzbek literary scholars who argue that metaphor functions as one of the principal mechanisms for creating generalized poetic images. Rather than depicting the mother solely as an individual character, Muhammad Yusuf elevates her to the symbolic level of the homeland, national dignity, and moral perfection. This finding supports Quronov's concept that poetic imagery transforms concrete experience into universal artistic meaning.

By contrast, the findings reveal that Ibodat Rajabova constructs the mother image through symbolic objects, ethnographic details, and landscape imagery. These artistic devices establish close connections between the lyrical subject and cultural memory. Natural phenomena such as gardens, wind, flowers, birds, and seasonal changes do not merely provide descriptive background; they become active participants in expressing grief, remembrance, and maternal affection. Such observations correspond with contemporary theories of symbolic poetics, which interpret landscape as an extension of human psychological experience.

The comparative analysis also reveals stylistic differences between the two poets. Muhammad Yusuf's poetic language is characterized by emotional intensity, rhetorical repetition, and nationally oriented symbolism. Ibodat Rajabova's style,

however, demonstrates greater reliance on visual imagery, domestic space, and ethnographic details. Consequently, the mother image appears as both a personal memory and a collective cultural symbol.

An important finding of this research is that artistic devices perform multiple simultaneous functions. Besides enhancing aesthetic expressiveness, they organize the internal structure of poetic discourse, strengthen emotional communication between poet and reader, and preserve national cultural values within literary texts. Therefore, figurative language should not be regarded merely as decorative expression but as a central mechanism of poetic cognition. Compared with previous studies, which have primarily concentrated on thematic or ideological aspects of motherhood in Uzbek poetry, the present research offers a systematic functional classification of artistic devices employed by two representative contemporary poets. This approach broadens existing literary scholarship by integrating structural-poetic analysis with comparative interpretation.

The results also indicate that the image of the mother in contemporary Uzbek poetry continues to evolve while maintaining strong connections with traditional cultural values. The interaction between national traditions and individual poetic innovation creates diverse artistic models of motherhood that enrich modern Uzbek poetic discourse.

Although the present research focuses exclusively on the poetry of Muhammad Yusuf and Ibodat Rajabova, the analytical framework developed in this study may also be applied to other contemporary Uzbek poets. Future research could compare representations of motherhood across different literary generations or investigate the cognitive and cultural mechanisms underlying symbolic imagery in Uzbek poetry.

CONCLUSION

The present study examined the artistic devices employed in constructing the image of the mother in the poetry of Muhammad Yusuf and Ibodat Rajabova. The findings demonstrate that although both poets share a common thematic focus on motherhood as a symbol of moral purity, national identity, and spiritual continuity, they employ different artistic strategies to achieve their poetic objectives.

Muhammad Yusuf primarily relies on metaphor, repetition, epithet, and antithesis to create an emotionally elevated and nationally symbolic representation of the mother. His poetic language transforms maternal affection into a universal expression of patriotism, sacrifice, and human dignity. In contrast, Ibodat Rajabova constructs the mother image through landscape imagery, symbolic objects, artistic detail, and ethnographic elements that emphasize memory, family traditions, and psychological experience.

The comparative analysis confirms that artistic devices perform not only decorative but also structural, cognitive, and ideological functions within contemporary Uzbek poetry. Figurative language shapes readers' emotional perception while simultaneously preserving cultural values and strengthening national literary identity.

The study also contributes to Uzbek literary scholarship by proposing a functional classification of artistic devices used in the representation of the mother image. This analytical model may serve as a methodological framework for future studies devoted to poetic imagery in modern Uzbek literature.

From a practical perspective, the findings may be utilized in university courses on Uzbek literature, literary criticism, poetics, stylistics, and comparative literary studies. They may also support the development of teaching materials for secondary and higher education institutions.

Future research may expand the comparative corpus by including additional contemporary poets or by applying cognitive-poetic and corpus-based approaches to the investigation of poetic imagery in Uzbek literature.

Overall, the mother image remains one of the most productive artistic symbols in contemporary Uzbek poetry, reflecting both national traditions and the individual creative vision of each poet.

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