

Cultural Codes in Uzbek Literature

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Abstract: In contemporary world literature, issues of cultural encoding/decoding, heritage, mythopoetic modeling, and ultimately the creation of a new aesthetic paradigm are being reactualized. This problematic is objectively correlated with the theoretical and critical understanding of the content and functional orientation of cultural codes inherent to any national literature to varying degrees. The significance of developing the theory of cultural code in the context of literature and art on a national and international scale, beyond its scientific value and novelty, is determined by several interdisciplinary and social factors.

Keywords: cultural code, contemporary Uzbek literature, literary (artistic) work, tradition.

The concept of "cultural code" encompasses a wide range of scholarly connotations, from traditional structuralist, semiotic perspectives to modern philosophical-cultural and even futurological interpretations. It is interesting to note that the total number of references on the Internet for the search term "cultural code" exceeds three million results. This signifies a pervasive interest in the issue of cultural coding from various discursive practices, reflecting researchers' desire to delineate and interpret numerous variations (facts) of encoding/decoding cultural, historical, ethnological, philosophical, and other information. The cultural code is part of the interdisciplinary cross-cultural conceptual field of scientific inquiry.

The significance of developing the theory of cultural code in the context of literature and art on a national and international scale, beyond its scientific value and novelty, is determined by several interdisciplinary and social factors:

- The systematic classification and typology of cultural codes in contemporary Uzbek literature reflecting the mentality and specificity of the national worldview, contribute to the enhancement of national self-awareness, ethnic identification and the establishment of close intercultural dialogue based on tolerance and mutual respect.
- The development of ethno-cultural codification, the uniqueness of the historical-cultural discourse of contemporary Uzbek literature, makes a tangible contribution to the fundamental humanitarian direction - the revival of national culture and spirituality, the reactualization of the rich cultural heritage and history.
- The exploration of the issue of cultural encoding/decoding in contemporary Uzbek literature is closely related to questions of finding optimal paths for cultural-civilizational development of the country, preserving the authenticity and uniqueness of its multicultural landscape in the context of cultural and civilizational dialogue.

In the field of cultural studies, O.A. Sviripo offers the following formulation: "A code is a unified system for recording, storing, and transmitting information. Cultural codes are intended for encoding cultural meanings - ideational constructs that constitute the informational, emotional, and expressive content of cultural objects. A cultural code is a set of basic concepts, norms, attitudes, etc., necessary for interpreting cultural texts."

The models of interaction between cultural tradition and artistic practice, the establishment of their spiritual connections, are both invariant and dynamic, reflecting the creative individuality of the writer and their conception of the world and humanity. Within the literary process of Uzbek literature, at least two significant tendencies interact: the utilization of traditional folklore, mythopoetic complexes foundational to any national literature, and the active pursuit by authors of new possibilities for artistic synthesis and expression of the evolving complexities of the world. Hence, it is meaningful to discuss cultural, particularly ethnocultural and historical-cultural codes in literature as conceptually crucial, ethnically oriented, mentally rich, and sign-based stable structures, encompassing mythological themes, plots, imagery, motifs, and other elements of a work's poetics.

Cultural codes align in functional direction with concepts possessing a similar "dialogical, communicative nature." Cultural heritage, by its nature, is endowed with broad corresponding functions for the transmissive conveyance of information encoded within the monuments of material and immaterial national culture. The process of reflecting national-cultural specificity within Uzbek literature may encompass historical-cultural discourse, adaptations of renowned folklore, mythological, and lyrical-epic narratives, neo-mythological constructions, and others.

The phenomenological status of the cultural code is largely determined by its predominant informative-communicative nature. Being a phenomenon of artistic and societal consciousness, it entails the formation of broad cognitive-associative connotations and narrative models. Taking into account that "narrative texts (stories, histories, etc.) are structured based on the principle of temporal ordering" [7, p. 42], the pursuit of depth in generalizations, the search for comprehensive universal means and techniques in the development of plot, character, motif, time, and space in literary discourse logically leads artists to the idea of encoding, "conceptualizing data" capable of establishing "connections between specific fragments of the text (units of analysis) and more abstract categories" [7, p. 333].

Previously presented by us are the following formulations of the term cultural code, namely: "The cultural code in a literary (artistic) work has an ambivalent nature: semantic and functional content. In terms of referentiality and functionality, we understand the cultural code as a specific mechanism for preserving and subsequently transmitting important information about the history, philosophy, spiritual, and material culture of the individual, ethnicity, group of ethnicities in a specific region, a certain civilization.

From a semiotic-semantic point of view, the cultural code in literary discourse is the artistic reproduction of one or another cultural information about tradition, philosophy, worldview, and world arrangement in a specific textual space. Like any linguistic sign (in the understanding of Saussure), the cultural code in the text has two inseparable aspects - external and internal, signifier and signified. Hence - the implicit and explicit embedding of the cultural code in the narrative, plot, and the manifestation of a multitude of associative and meaningful connections of the cultural code with other concepts, plots, ideas, images, motifs for the reader (listener, viewer).

The most frequent occurrence in the Uzbek literary discourse shows cultural codes such as historical-cultural, ethnocultural, spatial, religious-cultural, regional, civilizational, intercultural, and universal world codes. Each of the mentioned groups of cultural codes is differentiated into more specific segments. Analysis of sources and factual material shows that among the most frequent ethnocultural codes, zoocodes [10], phytocodes [11], personifications, mythologems, and others can also be included. Mythonyms (mythical proper names) can also be realized in various types.

Another important quality of the cultural code is its extensive potential in constructing the background discourse of the text, signifying its deep associative-mental determinants. If we assume that an artistic or media text is a specific matrix, then the cultural code, especially myth or neomyth, marks its fundamental plot, spatial, and temporal characteristics. In connection with this, one can mention the words of Yu.M. Lotman that "the mythological code of the plot in the

historical destinies of narrative genres proves to be only primary, subject to further transformation as a result of translation into systems of more complex subsequent cultural codes."

The grand artistic reconstruction of national history and culture, the process of understanding and reinterpreting well-known historical plots, images, myths, legends, and tales emerges as a mainstream direction in contemporary Uzbek prose. In a broad sense, interdisciplinary issues of cultural encoding in literature are correlated with the fundamental problem of tradition. In the literary dictionary of terms, the most comprehensive definition of this concept is given: "Tradition (Latin *traditio* - handing down, tradition) is a universal concept characterizing cultural memory and continuity. By connecting the values of historical past with the present, transmitting cultural heritage from generation to generation, tradition carries out selective and proactive mastery of heritage for the sake of enrichment and solving emerging tasks (including artistic ones)." At the center of tradition lies cultural memory, realized through the inclusion of specific cultural codes in the text: *historiosophem*, *ritual*, *philosophem*, *florem*, *mythologem*, and so on.

Contemporary literature, serving as a unique platform for the dialogue of diverse artistic methods, styles, and approaches, is characterized by a corresponding unique polyethnic literary-cultural landscape. The diversity of its ethnocultural, civilizational, international, and multicultural discourses justifies the necessity of a comprehensive, interdisciplinary examination involving data from related humanities disciplines, for the systematic exploration of the interactions among specifically artistic and cultural (ethno- and historico-cultural, religious-cultural, spatial, regional, international) codes, their invariants, literary concepts, universals, stereotypes, including ethnostereotypes. Decoding ethnocultural information, "determined by a specific era and national specificity," directly linked to the formation of a national worldview, is the subject of numerous studies in global scholarly and artistic practice.

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