

Intertextual Texts and Their Associative Function in Isajon Sulton's Story "Hazrati Majoz"

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Abstract: This article analyzes, from a scientific-theoretical perspective, the interpretation of a literary text as a multi-layered semantic system in modern literary studies, in particular the issues of intertextual relations and associative mechanisms. The study substantiates that a text is not a closed system, but an open structure organically connected with other texts, cultural codes, and historical experience. On this basis, associative connections arising in the reader's consciousness are considered as an important mechanism for understanding the text. In the applied analytical section, using the example of Isajon Sulton's story "Hazrati Majoz," Sufi, classical, and folkloric intertexts, as well as semantic layers related to contemporary literary processes, are revealed. As a result of the study, it is determined that intertextual relations are one of the main factors defining the ideological and philosophical depth of a literary text.

Keywords: Intertextuality, association, literary text, semantic layer, Sufism, metapoetics, contemporary literature.

Introduction: In modern literary studies, the examination of a literary text as a multi-layered semantic system, especially the analysis of its intertextual relations and associative mechanisms, is considered one of the important scientific directions. Any literary text is not a closed system in itself, but exists in organic connection with other texts, cultural layers, and historical experiences. Therefore, the process of understanding a text is also realized through associative connections that arise in the reader's consciousness. The issue of associative relatedness and interaction in literature was initially studied in depth by representatives of the Russian Formal School and later by scholars of the structural-semiotic approach. In particular, scholars such as A. Veselovsky, V. Zhirmunsky, V. Vinogradov, Yu. Tynyanov, M. Bakhtin, Yu. Lotman, M. Gasparov, Yu. Kristeva, I. Ilyin, and I. Kartashova have put forward important theoretical views on intertextual relations, dialogism, and the interaction of semantic systems. In their studies, along with the internal structure of the text, its relations with other texts also become the main object of analysis. The comparative-historical study of literature allows this process to be examined in a broader context. In

particular, V. M. Zhirmunsky defines the main tasks of comparative literary studies in three directions: first — cultural interaction, in which the influence of the literature or art of one nation on another is studied; second — historical-genetic comparison, in which similar phenomena are explained through their origin and historical development; and third — historical-typological comparison, in which phenomena not genetically related but formed under the influence of similar socio-cultural conditions are analyzed. These approaches serve as an important methodological basis for identifying intertextual relations and revealing their functional essence.

The complexities in studying literary associations are manifested in the following: when similar motifs and parallel ideas are found in the works of writers separated by several centuries, it is necessary not only to record them but also to explain the reasons for such similarities; in order not to lose creative individuality, it is not possible to mechanically transfer the features of an earlier author to a later one; it is necessary to correctly evaluate clear traces of imitation—if this is merely a mechanical quotation, it is not correct to interpret it as an example of high art.

Another researcher who considered association as a means of understanding the text is the well-known structuralist scholar Roland Barthes. He considers the aim of text analysis not only to describe the external structure of the work, but also to enter its semantic scope, that is, to understand how meanings arise within the text. Barthes writes: "Our task is not to determine all the meanings of the text, but to identify the forms and codes that generate them."¹ Analyzing the process of meaning formation in the text, R. Barthes pays attention to connotative meanings, that is, hidden, additional layers of meaning. These meanings are expressed through associations, systems of signs, communicative codes, and symbolic indications. He emphasizes: "The essence of the text lies not in its closed internal structure, but in its interaction with other texts, codes, and meanings."² Therefore, every work is in fact an intertext—within it, texts, quotations, and symbols related to the culture of past periods exist at different levels. Every literary work, Barthes notes, is "a new tissue woven from previous texts, a new harmony of meanings."³

At the present stage, the study of cultural relations, as well as genetic and typological similarities within both individual national cultures and world culture, is becoming an extremely relevant issue. In every literary work, alongside internal textual structures, intertextual relations are also present. In fact, every work of art can be considered as part of a general cultural context, as well as a form of expression of the author's thinking and as "a specific form of writerly criticism." Such criticism is "(consciously or unconsciously) embedded in the literary text and, on the one hand, reflects the genuine attitude of one writer toward the work of another writer, free from any external influences (whether praise, favor, or, conversely, polemical, critical influence)"⁴, "...and, on the other hand, makes it possible to understand more deeply the author's aesthetic taste and artistic views."⁵ Literary scholar Bakhtin emphasizes that speech in literature is always dialogic. That is, every text exists in "conversation" with other texts. The term "чужое слово" ("the other's word") used by Bakhtin refers to a form of speech that enters the text, carrying meaning and tone that do not belong to the author but to someone else. The author does not "invent" it; it may represent another person's thought, a social position, tradition, or ideology.

The statement of literary scholar Dilmurod Quronov that "an important innate characteristic of an artist is the ability to revive impressions stored in the subconscious layers and memory and to involve them in creative imagination... the impressions of an artist possess vitality: they frequently disturb the artist, and the artist can repeatedly relive them internally"⁶ serves

as an important theoretical basis for explaining the internal mechanism of intertextuality. This is because intertextual connections often manifest not in the form of direct quotation or explicit reference, but through artistic memory and associative representations preserved in the creator's consciousness. The active memory of the artist makes it possible to transfer previous texts, images, and models of meaning into a new context. As a result, a hidden intertextual layer is formed in the text, which evokes certain associations in the reader's consciousness.

In modern Uzbek prose, the activation of intertextual layers is also observed, especially through обращения to Sufi, classical, and folkloric sources, giving rise to new artistic interpretations. In this regard, the work of Isajon Sulton deserves particular attention. In the writer's works, traditional spiritual values are harmonized with modern artistic thinking, forming a multi-layered semantic space. In particular, the story "Hazrati Majoz" is a vivid example of intertextual relations and mechanisms of associative meaning formation.

In this story, elements of classical Sufi literature, religious-philosophical views, folklore, and modern literary experience are synthesized, forming a complex artistic system. These intertexts often appear not in the form of explicit quotations, but through hidden semantic indications, symbols, and images. As a result, the text generates a system of associative connections in the reader's consciousness, ensuring a multi-stage process of perception. In Isajon Sulton's story "Hazrati Majoz," the classical Sufi intertextual layer performs an important semantic function. In particular, the poetic model expressed in Mashrab's line "The world, adorned, came before me displaying its charm..." is reactivated in the work not at the level of direct quotation, but as an internal semantic structure. Through this intertext, the image of the world is interpreted in a specific Sufi sense—as an attractive yet deceptive phenomenon that distracts a person from the true goal. The caravanserai episode in the story and the image of the mysterious girl represent an artistic transformation of this Sufi model. Although the girl appears outwardly attractive, in essence she is interpreted as a force that blocks the protagonist's path and distracts him from his main purpose. In this sense, she becomes a functional continuation of the image of the alluring world in Mashrab's poetry. As a result, the сюжет is perceived not as an ordinary event, but as a stage of испытание on the spiritual path of a human being. The distinctive feature of this intertext is that it functions not as an explicit quotation, but through an associative-semantic mechanism. That is, the Sufi knowledge and poetic experience already present in

the reader's consciousness are activated, giving rise to conceptual associations such as world → trial, beauty → temptation, path → movement toward the goal. Thus, the intertext performs not only an aesthetic function, but also becomes a key semantic mechanism that deepens the ideological and philosophical layer of the work. In interpreting Sufi love in the story, the intertextual layer based on the classical tradition of Layla and Majnun appears as an important artistic device: "After all, Layla is said to be very ugly," they said. "Look at her with my eyes." The associative function of this intertext is primarily revealed in the multi-layered meaning of the image of the beloved. In the story, the beloved rises beyond the level of a real person and becomes a symbolic expression of divine beauty and absolute truth. Thus, in the reader's consciousness, the association beloved → divine beauty is formed, activating the Sufi idea of "perceiving the Truth through the beloved."

The second important aspect is the interpretation of the phenomenon of love. In the text, love is conceptualized not as human passion, but as a path leading to spiritual perfection. This recalls the process characteristic of the image of Majnun—"transition from metaphorical love to true love"—and creates in the reader's consciousness the association love → spiritual enlightenment. Within the intertext of Yunus Emre, the expression "We were thirsty, but there was no water..." reveals the associative layer of intertextuality in the literary text. Here, the images of water and thirst carry not a simple бытовое meaning, but a symbolic-spiritual one. Associatively, the image of water expresses the fundamental need of the human soul—spiritual fulfillment, striving for truth, and closeness to divine knowledge. "Thirst," in turn, signifies not merely a physical condition, but an inner emptiness, spiritual deficiency, and a state of quest. In this sense, the text resonates with the Sufi spirit characteristic of Yunus Emre's poetry, expressing metaphorically the human need for the Divine. In the context of the story, the image of water in the cart acquires an even deeper meaning, interpreted as a source of divine blessing, faith, and spiritual significance. The presence of water represents spiritual possibility and the gateway to salvation, while its consumption signifies the loss of this possibility—that is, the failure to fulfill a spiritual duty or the devaluation of a divine trust.

"The philosopher denied this spirituality. One day he fell ill and lost the use of his limbs," says Rumi. "Finally, a spiritual healer visited him and asked, 'What do you want?' The philosopher replied, 'Health.' The healer said, 'Describe the form and qualities of health so that I may find and bring it.' The philosopher answered, 'It

has no attributes or form.' Then the healer insisted, 'If it has no qualities, how can you demand it? Better explain to me what health is.' The patient replied: 'All I know is that when health comes, I gain strength, I become full, my face becomes rosy, and I become young and joyful.' When the healer said, 'I am asking about health itself, its essence,' he replied, 'I do not know, it is without qualities.'" This story attributed to Jalal al-Din Rumi (the motif of the philosopher and health) forms the philosophical-Sufi layer of intertextuality in the text. Through this intertext, the concept of health is elevated from a simple biological condition to the level of an immaterial, spiritual truth. Associatively, the image of "health" transcends the physical state of the body and expresses the inner harmony, spiritual stability, and integrity of a person. The impossibility of fully defining health reveals its irrational nature, emphasizing that spiritual concepts cannot be contained within logical formulas. Thus, the principle characteristic of Rumi's philosophy—"feeling rather than knowing"—becomes the main semantic direction of the text.

The reference to "Muhokamat al-lughatayn" introduces comparative reflection between two languages (and, more broadly, two systems of expression), raising a philosophical question about the possibilities and limits of the word. This elevates the story to a metapoetic level, where the text begins to reflect on itself as a literary phenomenon. As a result, the story becomes not merely a sequence of events, but an artistic-reflective system that contemplates literature itself—its language, expressive means, and mechanisms of meaning production. Through this intertext, the principle of "literature about literature" is formed, with Navoi's poetics serving as one of its theoretical foundations.

The image of the bird (an intertext of folklore and classical literature) appears in the structure of the story as an artistic sign activating archetypal and collective memory. Through the intertextual expression "Where are my birds that flew in rows..." the bird motif becomes a multi-layered symbolic-spiritual system. Associatively, the image of the bird is interpreted as an artistic symbol of the soul, time, and transience. It expresses the instability of human existence and the temporary nature of life. The flight of the bird signifies the transition from a static state to dynamic movement, acquiring a metaphorical meaning as the path of life itself. This flight represents not only physical movement, but also inner experiences, striving toward a goal, and a destined direction.

The caravanserai motif, in Eastern literary and philosophical traditions, functions as a central allegorical model representing human life. From the

perspective of intertextuality, the triad caravanserai – road – journey creates a symbolic system of space and movement in the story and elevates the entire plot to the level of philosophical generalization.

The intertext of contemporary literature is formed through the author's references to other writers—particularly Ulugbek Hamdam, Nazar Eshonqul, and Chingiz Aitmatov. This process intensifies intertextual dialogue and unites individual literary works within a single semantic field. Associatively, although each author's творчество represents an independent aesthetic system, through intertextual connections they become integrated into a common field of ideas. Thus, individual works move beyond their independent meanings and become components of a broader cultural-philosophical discourse. As a result, a hidden dialogue emerges between texts, and each work reveals new layers of meaning in the context of others. From this perspective, the individual text is no longer a closed aesthetic unit, but appears as an open intertextual system. Meaning is formed not only through internal structure, but also in interaction with the external literary space—the artistic worlds created by other authors. Consequently, the intertext of contemporary literature strengthens the dialogic nature of artistic thinking and makes it possible to interpret literature not as a collection of isolated texts, but as an interconnected and continuously developing system of ideas.

The above analyses demonstrate that in modern literary studies, interpreting a literary text as a multi-layered semantic system, especially identifying its intertextual connections and associative mechanisms, has important methodological significance. The study substantiates that a literary text is not a closed structure, but an open system organically connected with various cultural codes, historical experiences, and other texts. Therefore, the process of understanding the text is scientifically confirmed to occur through associative connections arising in the reader's consciousness.

CONCLUSION

The analysis conducted on the example of Isajon Sulton's story "Hazrati Majoz" clearly demonstrates the diversity and functional richness of intertextual layers. In the work, Sufi, classical, folkloric, and contemporary literary intertexts interact harmoniously, forming a complex semantic system. These intertexts often appear not as explicit quotations, but through hidden symbolic indications, images, and associative connections, engaging the reader in an active process of perception.

The results of the analysis show that intertextual units

do not merely serve as aesthetic decoration in the work, but function as the main semantic mechanism deepening its ideological and philosophical content. In particular, through Sufi intertexts, concepts such as "path," "trial," and "spiritual perfection" are activated; elements of classical poetics elevate the text to a metapoetic level; and folkloric images awaken collective memory and archetypal thinking. Contemporary literary intertexts expand intertextual dialogue and transform the work into an open system connected to the broader literary-cultural space.

Thus, it can be concluded that in Isajon Sulton's prose, intertextuality and associative thinking function in close interconnection and emerge as one of the leading factors in the formation of artistic meaning. As a result, the text becomes not a single-layered expression, but a multi-level, dynamic semantic space formed in cooperation with the reader. This indicates the activation of intertextual thinking in modern Uzbek prose and the elevation of artistic consciousness to a new stage.

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