

Style, Imagery, and Symbolism in Details: The Works of Nazar Eshonkul and Jorge Luis Borges

DAVLETOVA SHALOLA

*Alisher Navoi Tashkent State University of the
Uzbek Language and Literature, Uzbekistan*

ABSTRACT

This article explores the symbolism within style, imagery, and detail in the literary works of the Uzbek writer Nazar Eshonkul and the Argentine author Jorge Luis Borges. Both writers, through their distinctive artistic visions, employ symbols as a bridge between the visible and the invisible, transforming ordinary objects and events into metaphors of philosophical inquiry. Through their use of language, structure, and narrative form, Nazar Eshonkul and Borges delve into the complexities of human consciousness, time, truth, and existence, revealing how literature can transcend empirical reality to express the deepest layers of thought and emotion.

The study examines how Borges's metaphysical aesthetics – characterized by labyrinths, mirrors, and the infinite – intersects with Nazar Eshonkul's mythopoetic worldview, which draws from Central Asian mythology, Sufism, and national consciousness. While Borges often approaches reality through intellectual paradoxes and abstract patterns, Nazar Eshonkul interprets it through mythic imagination and spiritual allegory. Despite their cultural and geographical distance, both writers share an understanding that art is not merely a reflection of life but a form of philosophical exploration.

By comparing their symbolic systems, this paper highlights how Borges's postmodern perception of reality resonates with Nazar Eshonkul's metaphysical interpretation of the human soul. The research concludes that both authors, through their stylistic symbolism, succeed in creating a universal literary dialogue that unites Eastern mysticism and

Western rationalism, offering readers new perspectives on existence and the nature of truth.

Keywords: Style, symbolism, imagery, detail, mythopoetics, metaphysics, postmodernism, Nazar Eshonkul, Borges.

INTRODUCTION

This comparative study employs an interdisciplinary hermeneutic and structural-symbolic method to analyze the works of Jorge Luis Borges and Nazar Eshonkul. The hermeneutic approach enables an interpretation of literary texts not only as aesthetic artifacts but also as carriers of philosophical, spiritual, and cultural meanings. Through this method, the research deciphers the symbolic language in each author's style and imagery, revealing how metaphysical and mythopoetic dimensions emerge from narrative form. The analysis follows a qualitative textual methodology, focusing on close reading, intertextual comparison, and semiotic interpretation of recurring motifs such as Borges's "labyrinths, mirrors, and libraries" and Nazar Eshonkul's "wind, desert, and monkey." These symbols are examined within their respective philosophical frameworks – Borges's rooted in Western rational metaphysics and Nazar Eshonkul's grounded in Eastern mystical tradition. In addition, structural and stylistic analysis is applied to explore how linguistic precision and rhythm contribute to the formation of symbolic meaning. The study integrates theoretical insights from mythopoetics, existential philosophy, and comparative literature theory, particularly drawing from Umberto Eco's concept of the "open work" and archetypal criticism. This comprehensive method allows for identifying the points of convergence and divergence between Borges's intellectual aesthetics and Nazar Eshonkul's spiritual expressiveness, thereby illuminating how both writers use literary form as a medium for metaphysical inquiry.

Literature, in its most profound sense, serves as a medium through which the ineffable dimensions of human existence are articulated. It is not merely the imitation of life, but a symbolic mirror that reflects invisible spiritual realities. Every word, every

image, and every stylistic gesture in literature can become a sign pointing toward what lies beyond rational understanding. Among those who have transformed the art of fiction into a field of philosophical reflection, Jorge Luis Borges, the Argentine master of metaphysical prose, and Nazar Eshonkul, the Uzbek author whose mythopoetic imagination bridges East and West, occupy distinct yet spiritually convergent positions.

Both writers perceive reality not as a static entity but as a web of meanings shaped by language, memory, and time. Their works rely on symbolism as the essence of artistic expression – where images act as vessels of metaphysical ideas, and narrative form becomes a method of thinking. In Borges, the labyrinth, the library, and the mirror symbolize the eternal return of thought and the infinity of interpretation. In NazarEshonkul, the desert, the wind, and the monkey embody the moral and spiritual struggles of the modern human being trapped between tradition and alienation.

This paper seeks to explore how style, imagery, and symbolic detail operate as vehicles of meaning in the works of these two writers. The comparative analysis will highlight:

1. How style becomes a philosophical tool;
2. How imagery transforms abstract thought into sensory experience;
3. How symbolism reveals the deeper unity between myth and metaphysics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Borges's prose is celebrated for its conceptual precision and intellectual minimalism. His stories are brief yet dense with philosophical paradoxes. In *The Garden of Forking Paths*, time is depicted as a labyrinth of infinite possibilities where every decision creates a new universe [3: 47]. This metaphor, simple in form but infinite in implication, captures Borges's unique stylistic vision: clarity as the mask of complexity

His language avoids emotional ornamentation. Instead, Borges's style resembles a mathematical equation – cold,

symmetrical, and rigorous. Yet beneath this precision lies a deep metaphysical tension: the fear of infinity, the instability of identity, and the limits of human knowledge. Every sentence opens a new philosophical dimension, turning fiction into ontology.

Nazar Eshonkul's style, by contrast, is mythopoetic and intuitive. His prose flows like an ancient oral chant, rich in rhythm and allegory. In his story 'Maymun Yetaklagan Odam' (The man leading monkey), the narrative voice merges with the symbolic imagery to depict the moral blindness of modern humanity [6: 91]. His sentences are long, musical, and filled with metaphoric layers. The reader feels the pulse of Sufi poetry within his prose – the movement from ignorance to enlightenment, from material illusion to divine awareness.

While Borges reduces the world into symbols to dissect its meaning, Nazar Eshonkul expands meaning through poetic intuition. Borges's intellectualism stems from Western rational metaphysics; Nazar Eshonkul's expressiveness reflects Eastern mystical aesthetics. Yet both arrive at the same philosophical conclusion: the world is a text of divine origin, readable only through symbols.

For Borges, imagery is not decorative – it is the architecture of thought. The labyrinth, one of his recurring images, signifies the human attempt to impose order upon chaos, only to discover that order itself is illusory. In *The Library of Babel*, the universe is an infinite library containing every possible book, yet no one can find the truth within it [2: 90]. The library thus becomes a cosmic symbol of human ignorance – a paradoxical paradise of infinite knowledge and infinite confusion.

Similarly, the mirror in Borges's works symbolizes the anxiety of identity and the problem of duplication. To see oneself infinitely reflected is to confront the terror of existence without essence. Borges's mirrors, labyrinths, and libraries are intellectual constructs that express the metaphysical loneliness of the human condition.

In Nazar Eshonkul's imagery, the emphasis shifts from intellect to spirit. His recurrent images – the desert, the wind, the shadow, and the fire – carry layers of mythological and Sufi

meanings. In *Shamolni Tutib Bo'lmaydi* (You Cannot Catch the Wind), the wind symbolizes divine truth – unseen, untouchable, yet omnipresent [7: 64]. The protagonist's attempt to capture the wind mirrors humanity's futile effort to grasp the absolute.

The desert in his stories functions as both geographical and metaphysical space: a realm of purification where the soul confronts its own void. Through these symbols, Nazar Eshonkul creates a poetic vision in which external nature becomes a reflection of inner consciousness [7: 67]. The shadow, another recurring image, represents the hidden part of the self – the unacknowledged moral corruption of society.

Both Borges and Nazar Eshonkul use imagery as transformation. In Borges, the transformation is intellectual: the reader's mind moves from the literal to the abstract. In Eshonkul, it is spiritual: the heart moves from illusion to revelation.

Symbolism, in both authors, is not secondary but structural. A single detail often carries the entire philosophical weight of the narrative. In Borges's *On Exactitude in Science*, a map identical in scale to the empire it depicts symbolizes humanity's obsession with perfect representation – and the absurdity of that desire. The map, meant to mirror reality, ultimately replaces it. Borges suggests that language and art, too, can never fully represent the truth; they only multiply illusions [1: 78]. Nazar Eshonkul's symbolic details emerge from cultural archetypes. In *Maymun Yetaklagan Odam*, the monkey is a grotesque symbol of regression – the image of a man enslaved by his own animal nature [6: 95]. The detail of the man led by a monkey reverses the biblical hierarchy of creation: the animal now guides the human, representing moral decay and spiritual blindness.

Another significant detail in Nazar Eshonkul's works is the color black – a recurring motif that symbolizes both sin and potential rebirth. In the Sufi cosmology, darkness precedes illumination; it is within darkness that divine light becomes visible [8: 68]. Thus, Nazar Eshonkul's symbolic details often embody paradox – each shadow conceals a spark of truth.

Both Borges and Nazar Eshonkul treat details as metaphysical microcosms. For Borges, the mirror or the library condenses the universe; for Nazar Eshonkul, the wind or the

desert carries divine essence. Each writer turns the fragment into the whole, affirming the mystical principle that “the part reflects the infinite.”

Borges’s concept of time is circular and illusory. In *A New Refutation of Time*, he argues that chronological time does not exist; only the eternal present of consciousness does [3: 58]. His stories are structured around this paradox: characters relive moments, merge with their own doubles, or exist simultaneously in multiple realities. Time becomes a labyrinth of perception.

Nazar Eshonkul’s sense of time, though equally complex, is rooted in Eastern cyclicity. In his narratives, time moves like the rhythm of the seasons – death leading to rebirth, forgetting leading to remembrance. His characters are haunted by collective memory, the remembrance of ancestral truth. Memory, for Nazar Eshonkul, is not nostalgia but spiritual continuity – a bridge between human and divine consciousness.

Both writers thus reject linear temporality. Borges dissolves time through philosophical abstraction; Nazar Eshonkul sanctifies it through mythic rhythm. Each transforms time into a symbolic language that expresses the eternal within the transient.

Nazar Eshonkul’s art is deeply mythopoetic. He weaves ancient Uzbek myths, Qur’anic allusions, and Sufi allegories into modern philosophical narratives. The cosmic struggle between light and darkness in his works echoes not only Islamic mysticism but also global archetypes of spiritual duality. His mythic imagination allows him to universalize national experience, turning Uzbek identity into a symbolic reflection of humanity’s inner drama.

Borges, on the other hand, uses metaphysical myth-making. He invents imaginary religions, books, and worlds that function as metaphors for human intellect’s creative power. In *Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius*, an invented encyclopedia begins to reshape the real world, demonstrating that language itself creates reality [1: 83]. Borges’s intertextual method – mixing real and fictitious sources – turns literature into a reflection of its own process.

Both authors see creation as revelation. Borges intellectualizes the divine act – transforming it into an epistemological puzzle – while Nazar Eshonkul spiritualizes it,

interpreting writing as a sacred act of remembrance (*dhikr*). Their intertextuality thus reflects different but complementary worldviews: Western rationalism and Eastern mysticism intertwined in the universal search for meaning.

At the heart of both Borges and Nazar Eshonkul lies a concern with the nature of human consciousness. Borges's protagonists often lose themselves within infinite systems of thought – symbols of intellectual despair. They seek meaning through knowledge but find only mirrors of themselves [10: 25]. His fiction anticipates existentialism, portraying the mind as both the creator and prisoner of its own universe.

Nazar Eshonkul's characters, meanwhile, suffer from spiritual exile. They inhabit a post-Soviet reality stripped of sacred meaning, where the divine voice is silent and man is left to wander through moral deserts. Yet Nazar Eshonkul's existentialism differs from the Western type – it is hopeful and redemptive. Through suffering, his characters often rediscover the lost harmony between self and cosmos.

In both writers, consciousness is the battlefield of revelation: Borges intellectualizes salvation; Nazar Eshonkul spiritualizes it. The path to truth leads through paradox – through the maze or through the storm.

CONCLUSION

The comparative study of Nazar Eshonkul and Jorge Luis Borges reveals that, despite their differing historical and cultural contexts, they share a universal metaphysical vision. Both writers see literature as a sacred language of symbols—a means of revealing truth beyond the limits of logic and experience.

For Borges, style is the geometry of thought; for Nazar Eshonkul, it is the melody of spirit. Borges's imagery invites the reader into intellectual infinity, while Nazar Eshonkul's imagery draws the soul into moral contemplation. Borges's details – mirrors, maps, libraries – reflect the crisis of reason; Nazar Eshonkul's symbols – wind, desert, monkey – expose the crisis of faith. Yet both crises converge in the same realization: the human search for meaning is infinite.

Their symbolism transforms literature into a philosophical and spiritual journey. Borges opens doors to metaphysical labyrinths; Nazar Eshonkul opens windows to the divine. The Western intellect and the Eastern heart, meeting through their works, affirm that truth is not possessed but pursued, not declared but symbolized.

In the end, both authors remind us that the act of storytelling is a form of creation and remembrance – to write is to rediscover the divine essence hidden within the dust of language. As Borges once implied, “Everything touches everything else.” And Nazar Eshonkul, echoing this eternal harmony, teaches that in every gust of wind and every grain of sand, the divine still breathes.

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DAVLETOVA SHALOLA

PHD STUDENT,

ALISHER NAVOI TASHKENT STATE UNIVERSITY

OF THE UZBEK LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE,

TASHKENT, UZBEKISTAN.

E-MAIL: <SHALOLADAVLETOVA96@GMAIL.COM>