

The Poetics and Semantics of the Wolf Image in the Works of Ernest Seton-Thompson and Normurod Norqobilov: A Comparative and Typological Study

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ABSTRACT

This article investigates a comparative and typological study of the wolf image in the works of Ernest Seton-Thompson and Normurod Norqobilov, focusing on semantic and poetic dimensions. In the works, wolf is presented not only as a representative of a wildlife, but also shows the ideas of freedom, survival, instinct, dignity and the relationship between humans and nature. The similarities and differences of the image of wolf is analyzed in the stories of both authors. Although the two authors belong to diverse range of literary traditions and cultural contexts, their works demonstrate shared typological features in representing the wolf as a relevant artistic feature. Comparative literary studies of American and Uzbek literature provide insight into the concept human-animal relationships. The study also provides information about animal imagery comprehension, by expanding its values throughout two diverse proses.

Keywords: Ernest Seton-Thompson, Normurod Norqobilov, wolf image, comparative literature, poetics, semantics, American prose, Uzbek prose.

INTRODUCTION

The wolf plays a significant role in both American and Uzbek literatures. There are plenty of works that show the image of the

wolf from various perspectives. The wolf is explained as an intelligent creature who has feelings, family, and wants to live in the freedom, other than just an animal from the nature. Beyond its biological identity, the wolf functions as a cultural identity through which writers explore philosophical reflections on the natural world. As an artistic image, the wolf extends beyond its biological identity to embody philosophical, ethical, and cultural ideas. Writers from different literary traditions have employed the wolf to explore the relationship between instinct and reason, wilderness and civilization, as well as the boundaries between humans and the natural world [1].

In literary discourse, the wolf is not merely portrayed as a wild predator but as a complex symbolic figure whose image reflects both universal human values and culture-specific beliefs. Its representation varies according to historical, social, and cultural contexts, resulting in diverse semantic and poetic interpretations. Consequently, the wolf has become one of the most productive animal images in comparative literary studies, where its symbolic meanings and artistic functions continue to attract scholarly attention.

Ernest Seton-Thompson and Normurod Norqobilov assign particular artistic importance to the wolf image in their prose. In Seton-Thompson's *Lobo, the King of Currumpaw*, the wolf is portrayed as an intelligent, noble, and independent creature whose life reflects the tragic consequences of human domination over nature [8]. Likewise, in Norqobilov's stories 'Qorabo'ri,' 'Enabo'ri,' and 'Oqbo'yin,' the wolf functions not merely as a wild animal but as a symbol of freedom, dignity, instinct, and the natural order. Through this artistic approach, both authors challenge traditional stereotypes that depict wolves solely as dangerous predators and instead present them as complex living beings with ecological and symbolic significance.

Although Ernest Seton-Thompson and Normurod Norqobilov belong to different literary traditions and cultural environments, their works reveal notable typological similarities in the artistic representation of the wolf. At the same time, their portrayals differ in semantic emphasis, symbolic meaning, and poetic techniques, reflecting the cultural values and aesthetic

principles of American and Uzbek literature. These similarities and differences make their works a valuable subject for comparative literary analysis.

Despite the growing interest in animal studies and ecocriticism, comparative research devoted specifically to the semantic and poetic characteristics of the wolf image in the works of Ernest Seton-Thompson and Normurod Norqobilov remains limited. Therefore, this study aims to examine the wolf image through a comparative-typological approach by identifying its semantic meanings, poetic functions, and symbolic features in selected works of the two authors.

Seton-Thompson presents the wolf as an intelligent, emotionally complex, and morally significant creature. The poetics of the wolf image in his works is constructed through a combination of realistic description, symbolism, psychological characterization, and ecological awareness.

The most remarkable example is *Lobo, the King of Currumpaw* (1898), where the wolf is portrayed as the leader of a pack possessing extraordinary intelligence, courage, and loyalty. Seton-Thompson creates a vivid artistic image by combining accurate observations of animal behavior with literary devices such as symbolism, personification, and dramatic contrast. Lobo is not merely a biological animal but a tragic hero whose struggle for freedom reflects the conflict between the natural world and human civilization [8]. In this story, it is shown how wolf is loyal to his couple. After Blanca's death, Lobo did not want to live and got into the depression. Hunters used this accident and caught him. One of the central poetic features of Seton-Thompson's wolf image is "psychological realism." Instead of attributing exaggerated human qualities to animals, the author carefully interprets the wolf's instincts, emotions, and behavior based on close observation of wildlife. This approach enables readers to perceive the wolf as an independent living being rather than an object of fear or a symbolic villain. Consequently, the narrative creates emotional empathy while maintaining biological credibility [4]. The wolf symbolizes freedom, dignity, endurance, intelligence, and resistance against human domination. Lobo's refusal to surrender, even in the face of inevitable death,

transforms him into a symbol of the untamed spirit of nature. His tragic fate also serves as a criticism of human cruelty and the destruction of wildlife, reinforcing the ecological message of the narrative [2].

The author's narrative perspective also contributes significantly to the poetic construction of the wolf image. Although the narrator initially approaches Lobo as a hunter, the narrative gradually shifts toward admiration and sympathy. This transformation changes the reader's perception of the wolf from a dangerous predator to a noble creature deserving respect and protection. Such a shift reflects Seton-Thompson's broader ecological philosophy, which advocates coexistence rather than domination.

Thus, the poetics of the wolf image in Ernest Seton-Thompson's works is characterized by realistic representation, psychological depth, symbolic richness, and ecological consciousness. Through these artistic techniques, the wolf becomes a multidimensional literary image that embodies universal values of freedom, dignity, and the intrinsic worth of wildlife, establishing Seton-Thompson as one of the pioneers of modern animal literature.

Normurod Norqobilov is one of the contemporary Uzbek writers who has made a significant contribution to the artistic representation of wildlife in modern Uzbek prose. In his stories 'Qorabo'ri' (The Black Wolf), 'Enabo'ri' (The Mother Wolf), and 'Oqbo'yin' (White-Neck), the wolf is not merely depicted as a wild predator but as a multidimensional artistic image reflecting freedom, maternal devotion, endurance, instinct, and the harmony of the natural world. The poetics of the wolf image in Norqobilov's prose is shaped through realistic narration, symbolic expression, psychological insight, and close interaction between landscape and character.

The story 'Oqbo'yin' (White-Neck) is about the half wolf and half dog. He protects his village from wild wolves. This shows how dogs can be protective and helpful. The story 'Enabo'ri' (The Mother Wolf) is about the mother wolf who protects her children from people. She trusted to people. However, there was one by who wanted to hunt her children. In

that period, he showed how mother instinct can be very dangerous.

A distinctive feature of Norqobilov's poetics is the realistic portrayal of animal behavior. The author avoids excessive anthropomorphism while presenting the wolf according to its natural instincts. Hunting, protecting offspring, defending territory, and surviving in harsh conditions are described with careful attention to biological authenticity. This realistic representation strengthens the artistic credibility of the wolf image and highlights its importance within the ecosystem [5]. Another important poetic characteristic is the symbolic function of the wolf. In Norqobilov's narratives, the wolf symbolizes independence, resilience, courage, and loyalty to natural laws. Particularly in 'Enabo'ri', the maternal wolf embodies unconditional devotion and self-sacrifice in protecting her cubs. Through this image, the writer emphasizes universal values such as responsibility, family bonds, and perseverance while preserving the wolf's wild identity. Thus, the symbolic meaning of the wolf extends beyond its zoological existence and becomes a reflection of moral and philosophical ideas. Norqobilov also employs psychological poetics to reveal the inner state of the wolf through actions rather than direct humanization. Fear, vigilance, determination, and the instinct for survival are expressed through movement, silence, and interaction with the surrounding environment. This narrative technique enables readers to understand the wolf's emotional world without attributing purely human consciousness to the animal, thereby maintaining artistic realism. Another significant aspect of Norqobilov's poetics is the incorporation of national cultural symbolism. In Uzbek literary tradition, the wolf has historically represented courage, freedom, vigilance, and endurance. Norqobilov preserves these traditional associations while enriching them with contemporary ecological and ethical meanings. As a result, the wolf becomes both a national cultural symbol and a universal artistic image that conveys the values of coexistence between humans and wildlife.

The poetics of the wolf image in Normurod Norqobilov's works is characterized by realism, symbolic depth, psychological

expressiveness. Through these artistic features, the writer transforms the wolf into a complex literary image that reflects both the spiritual values of Uzbek culture and universal concerns about the preservation of wildlife and the natural environment.

One of the most significant semantic component in the stories of Ernest Seton-Thompson, particularly *Lobo*, the *King of Currumpaw* (1898), is “freedom.” The wolf wants to live freely in his field, without human control. His eager to follow only rules of wild nature makes him one of the most pleasant animals. Another important semantic component is his “intelligence and wisdom.” He escapes from hunters by avoiding traps and protecting his pack. That’s why hunters struggled to take *Lobo* for a long time. Rather than relying on supernatural qualities, Seton-Thompson attributes *Lobo*’s intelligence to the natural adaptation and survival skills developed in the wild. This interpretation challenges anthropocentric assumptions about the intellectual superiority of humans [4]. The wolf also shows “leadership and loyalty.” He carefully approaches to his pack. Shows how good leadership he can be. In terms of loyalty, After *Blanca* is captured and killed, *Lobo*’s grief and eventual capture illustrate the profound emotional capacity of wolves. Through this narrative, Seton-Thompson emphasizes that emotions such as attachment, loss, and devotion are not exclusively human characteristics but essential aspects of animal life as well. the semantics of the wolf image in Ernest Seton-Thompson’s works is built upon interconnected concepts of freedom, intelligence, loyalty, resistance, ecological harmony, and dignity. Through these semantic layers, the author reshapes the traditional image of the wolf, presenting it as a noble and emotionally complex creature that embodies universal values and highlights the ethical relationship between humans and the natural world.

In the works of Normurod Norqobilov, “freedom” is one of the essential semantic components too. Norqobilov shows the wolf as a creature who is inseparable from wilderness. Forests, mountains embody his natural instinct and he even refuses to live in better place. The wolf’s refusal to abandon its natural instincts or submit to human domination symbolizes the universal value of freedom and the right of every living being to exist according to

the laws of nature. Another important semantic component is “responsibility.” In the story ‘Enabo’ri’ (The Mother Wolf), the mother wolf is shown as a caring and loving wolf who always protects her children. Her actions display unconditional love, responsibility and courage, revealing her maternal instinct. By analyzing this, Norqobilov protests the traditional stereotypes about dangerous predator wolf. Instead he presents them as emotionally complex living beings. The wolf also symbolizes “strength,” “endurance” and “survival.” Throughout the Norqobilov’s stories the image of the wolf always endures harsh situations, hunger, climate conditions and constant threats from humans who always want to hunt them. For example, in the story of ‘Oqbo’yin’ (The White Neck) wolf struggles with hunger. Afterwards, he fights with wild wolves in order to protect village citizens and helps population. The semantics of the wolf image in Normurod Norqobilov’s works is constructed through interconnected meanings of freedom, maternal devotion, endurance, ecological harmony, cultural identity, and moral responsibility. These semantic dimensions transform the wolf into a multidimensional artistic image that reflects both the national values of Uzbek literature and the universal principles of coexistence between humans and wildlife. The stories of Normurod Norqobilov give information about the inner world of the wolf image and helps understand wild nature precisely. For example, in the story of ‘Qorabo’ri’ (The Black Wolf) Hunters wanted to take his land, so he struggled mostly. However, because of his natural instinct he could escape from hunters. Overall, all his pack dies and he became isolated.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research design based on the principles of comparative literature. The primary methodological framework combines comparative-typological, semantic, and poetic analysis to examine the artistic representation of the wolf image in the selected works of Ernest Seton-Thompson and Normurod Norqobilov. These methods make it possible to identify both universal and culture-specific characteristics of the

wolf image and to reveal similarities and differences in its literary interpretation across American and Uzbek prose. The corpus of the study consists of Ernest Seton-Thompson's *Lobo, the King of Currumpaw* and Normurod Norqobilov's 'Qorabo'ri,' 'Enabo'ri,' and 'Oqbo'yin.' These texts were selected because the wolf functions as a central artistic image and plays a significant role in the development of the narrative, thematic structure, and ideological message. The comparative-typological method is used to identify common artistic patterns and typological parallels in the representation of the wolf despite differences in the authors' cultural and literary backgrounds [9]. The comparative-historical method examines how historical, cultural, and literary traditions have influenced the semantic development of the wolf image in American and Uzbek literature.

The research further incorporates close reading of selected episodes to analyze textual details that shape the semantic and poetic functions of the wolf image. In addition, the study adopts an ecocritical approach to explore the relationship between the wolf, humans, and the natural environment, emphasizing ecological ethics and the representation of wildlife in literature. Elements of image-based literary analysis are also applied to examine the wolf as a multidimensional artistic image and to determine its symbolic, philosophical, and aesthetic functions within each author's narrative system. The combination of these complementary methods provides a comprehensive basis for interpreting the wolf image and enables a systematic comparison of its semantic and poetic characteristics in the works of Ernest Seton-Thompson and Normurod Norqobilov.

RESULTS

The analysis of Seton-Thompson's *Lobo, the King of Currumpaw* indicates that the wolf is endowed with exceptional intelligence, leadership, loyalty, and dignity. The protagonist, Lobo, emerges as a tragic hero whose resistance to human domination symbolizes the integrity and independence of the wilderness. The narrative emphasizes the ecological significance of the wolf and

criticizes anthropocentric attitudes that justify the destruction of wildlife. Through realistic animal behavior, psychological depth, and symbolic narration, Seton-Thompson redefines the traditional literary image of the wolf as a noble and emotionally complex living being [8; 4].

The examination of Norqobilov's 'Qorabo'ri,' 'Enabo'ri,' and 'Oqbo'yin' reveals a distinct semantic structure shaped by Uzbek cultural traditions and ecological consciousness. In these stories, the wolf symbolizes courage, maternal devotion, independence, endurance, and loyalty to the natural order. The image reflects both national cultural values and universal ethical principles concerning coexistence between humans and wildlife. Unlike conventional representations of the wolf as a threat, Norqobilov portrays it as an integral part of nature whose destruction leads to ecological and moral imbalance.

The comparative-typological analysis identifies several shared semantic features, including freedom, dignity, intelligence, resilience, and the instinct for survival. At the same time, significant differences emerge in the poetic realization of these meanings. Seton-Thompson primarily constructs the wolf through ecological realism, psychological characterization, and tragic conflict between civilization and wilderness, whereas Norqobilov enriches the image with national symbolism, moral philosophy, and traditional cultural associations. These differences demonstrate the influence of distinct literary traditions while confirming the existence of common typological patterns in the artistic interpretation of the wolf.

DISCUSSION

The differences between the two authors reveal the influence of distinct literary traditions and aesthetic principles. Seton-Thompson approaches the wolf primarily from an ecological and realistic perspective, emphasizing its intelligence, social behavior, and intrinsic value within the natural ecosystem. His portrayal reflects the traditions of American nature writing and early environmental thought, encouraging readers to reconsider anthropocentric attitudes toward wildlife [2]. In contrast,

Norqobilov integrates the wolf image with Uzbek cultural symbolism, where it embodies courage, maternal devotion, spiritual endurance, and harmony with nature. This national perspective enriches the semantic and poetic structure of the image while preserving its universal significance. In both authors' works, the conflict between humans and wolves symbolizes the tension between civilization and the natural world, raising questions about environmental responsibility, biodiversity conservation, and the moral consequences of human interference with wildlife. These observations correspond to the central principles of ecocriticism, which interpret literary texts as reflections of ecological consciousness and environmental ethics [3].

Furthermore, the study demonstrates that semantic and poetic analyses complement one another in revealing the complexity of literary animal images. While semantic analysis identifies the symbolic meanings associated with the wolf, poetic analysis explains how narrative structure, symbolism, psychological characterization, and landscape description transform these meanings into an aesthetically significant artistic image. The integration of these approaches provides a more comprehensive understanding of the literary functions of the wolf in both American and Uzbek prose. The wolf image emerges not only as a symbol of wilderness but also as a literary embodiment of ecological values, cultural identity, and ethical reflection.

CONCLUSION

Both authors display comparative analysis of the wolf image. Despite differences in literary traditions and cultural contexts two authors portray the wolf image as a multidimensional artistic image rather than merely a wild predator. The study also confirms that semantic and poetic analyses complement each other in explaining the literary functions of animal imagery. The semantic dimension reveals the symbolic meanings embedded in the wolf image, whereas the poetic dimension demonstrates how narrative structure, characterization, symbolism, and landscape imagery transform these meanings into a coherent artistic system.

Consequently, the wolf functions not only as a narrative character but also as a philosophical and ecological symbol through which both authors express ethical concerns and environmental awareness. The theoretical significance of this research lies in its contribution to comparative literary studies, animal studies, by expanding scholarly understanding of the wolf image in American and Uzbek prose. The findings demonstrate that comparative-typological analysis is an effective methodological framework for identifying universal and culture-specific features of literary animal images across different national literatures. Future research may extend this comparative approach to other animal images, such as the dog, horse, or eagle, or explore broader human–nature–animal relationships in American and Uzbek literature from cultural, or cognitive perspectives. Such studies would further enrich comparative literary scholarship and deepen our understanding of the artistic representation of wildlife in world literature. The stories of Ernest Seton-Thompson and Normurod Norqobilov showcase the wolf mostly in another side, how feelings of wolf are interpreted, how they take care of their pack, children and how loyal to their couples. both Ernest Seton-Thompson and Normurod Norqobilov employ the wolf image to communicate universal human concerns regarding freedom, coexistence, responsibility, and respect for the natural world.

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