

Artículo de investigación

## Semantics of the artistic image of the moon in K. Balmont's poetry

Semântica de la imagen artística de la luna en la poesía de K. Balmont

Semântica da imagem artística da lua na poesia de K. Balmont

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### Abstract

The article dwells upon the analysis of the image of the moon in K. Balmont's works in poetic and functioning aspects. The work aims to reveal the features of the poetic embodiment and the symbolic content of the image of the moon in K. Balmont's works. It considers the artistic and semantic realization of the image under study, describes the features of the objectification of its symbolic and associative attributes. Identification of the leading motives associated with the image of the moon, helps to establish its individual semantic scope K. Balmont's individual style.

In course of the study, the significance of the image of the moon in the poet's artistic view of the world is being proved. The moon is found as one of the central system-forming elements of Balmont's lyric poetry, filled with rich philosophical and symbolic content (the basic element of the cosmogonic worldbuilding, which expresses the involvement of the world in the supernal reality and correlates with the most important attributes of metaphysics (eternity, infinity, silence, universal beauty, etc.). K. Balmont's texts are imbued with pantheistic motives of worshipping this astral image associated with the earthly and noumenal worlds. The image of heavenly body in K. Balmont's lyrics have an intrinsic duality, emphasizing the duality of the picture of the world he creates. With its deep mythopoetic meaning, the image of the moon in Balmont's works is the result of artistic synthesis of various archaic representations refracted through the prism of the author's worldview, and plays a critical part in the philosophical and pantheistic concept of the world created by the poet.

### Resumen

El artículo se detiene en el análisis de la imagen de la luna en las obras de K. Balmont en aspectos poéticos y funcionales. El trabajo pretende revelar las características de la encarnación poética y el contenido simbólico de la imagen de la luna en las obras de K. Balmont. Considera la realización artística y semántica de la imagen en estudio, describe las características de la objetivación de sus atributos simbólicos y asociativos. La identificación de los principales motivos asociados con la imagen de la luna ayuda a establecer su alcance semántico individual, el estilo individual de K. Balmont.

En el transcurso del estudio, se demuestra la importancia de la imagen de la luna en la visión artística del mundo del poeta. La luna se encuentra como uno de los elementos centrales que forman el sistema de la poesía lírica de Balmont, llena de rico contenido filosófico y simbólico (el elemento básico de la construcción cosmogónica del mundo, que expresa la participación del mundo en la realidad excelsa y se correlaciona con la mayoría atributos importantes de la metafísica (eternidad, infinito, silencio, belleza universal, etc.) Los textos de K. Balmont están imbuidos de motivos panteístas para adorar a esta imagen astral asociada con los mundos terrenal y nouménico. La imagen del cuerpo celestial en las letras de K. Balmont tienen una dualidad intrínseca, enfatizando la dualidad de la imagen del mundo que él crea. Con su profundo significado mitopoético, la imagen de la luna en las obras de Balmont es el resultado de la síntesis artística de varias representaciones arcaicas refractadas a través del prisma de la cosmovisión del autor. y juega un papel crítico en el concepto filosófico y

Research methods: contextual analysis of literary text, literary interpretation, continuous sampling, descriptive analysis.

**Keywords:** moon, image, poetic symbol, poetic language, K. Balmont.

panteísta del mundo creado por el poeta. Métodos de investigación: contextual análisis del texto literario, interpretación literaria, muestreo continuo, análisis descriptivo.

**Palabras clave:** Luna, imagen, símbolo poético, lenguaje poético, K. Balmont.

## Resumo

O artigo para na análise da imagem da lua nos trabalhos de K. Balmont em aspectos poéticos e funcionais. O trabalho tem como objetivo revelar as características da encarnação poética e do conteúdo simbólico da imagem da lua nas obras de K. Balmont. Considera a realização artística e semântica da imagem em estudo, descreve as características da objetivação de seus atributos simbólicos e associativos. A identificação dos principais motivos associados à imagem da Lua ajuda a estabelecer seu escopo semântico individual, o estilo individual de K. Balmont.

Durante o curso do estudo, a importância da imagem da lua na visão artística do mundo do poeta é demonstrada. Lua é um dos elementos principais que formam o sistema da poesia lírica de Balmont, cheio de rica (o elemento básico filosófica e simbólica da construção cosmogonia do mundo, expressando a participação do mundo no conteúdo realidade sublime e correlaciona-se com os atributos mais importantes da metafísica (a eternidade, o infinito, silêncio, beleza universal, etc.) os textos de K. Balmont estão imbuídos de motivos panteístas a adoração está associada com a imagem astral terreno e mundos numéricas. a imagem o corpo celeste nas letras de K. Balmont ter uma dualidade intrínseca, enfatizando a dualidade da imagem do mundo que ele criou. com a sua profunda mythopoetical significado, a imagem da lua nas obras de Balmont é o resultado da síntese artística de várias representações arcaicas refratadas através do prisma da cosmovisão do autor e desempenha um papel crítico no conceito filosófico e panteísta do mundo criado pelo poeta. Métodos de pesquisa: contextual para a análise do texto literário, interpretação literária, amostragem contínua, análise descritiva.

**Palavras-chave:** Lua, imagem, símbolo poético, linguagem poética, K. Balmont.

## Introduction

Studying literary texts of outstanding poets is one of the most currently topical areas of modern linguistics. Studying the lexical tissue of the work, identification of conceptually significant linguistic units and their semantic content contribute to disclosure of the specific features of the poet's artistic thinking, his personal view of the world and conceptual system (Patridge A.C. 1976; Widdowson H.G. 1987; Semino, (2002).

The poetry of K. Balmont, the brightest representative of the Silver Age, is imbued with extraordinary lyricism, a deep intuitive instinct, a life-affirming, optimistic spirit. The expressive polysemanticism of the images, the impressionistic manner of conveying reality, appeal to the reader's associative memory constitute the artistic outline of the works of the great author. The "philosophy of the moment", imprinted in his poems, communication of the subjective sensation of life, interest in cosmic and metaphysical questions of being characterize K.

Balmont's creative manner. In this regard, study of the specific nature of the moon poetic embodiment in K. Balmont's works is of particular interest, since it facilitates disclosure of the philosophical and symbolic content of one of the basic cosmological concepts.

## Materials and Methods

The material of the study is the poetic texts by K. Balmont.

In the study, the following practical material analysis methods were used: contextual analysis of literary text, literary interpretation, continuous sampling, descriptive analysis.

## Results

The moon is one of the most important natural symbols, having a rich mythological tradition and playing a special part in national spiritual culture.

The semantics of the word "moon" in K. Balmont's poetry includes both the traditional comprehension of this concept, which includes elements of archaic ideas about the structure of the world, and the author's individual interpretation that reflects the poet's personal vision of the reality.

The image of the moon in K. Balmont's lyrics is semantically multidimensional. Creating a cosmogonic picture of the world in his works, the poet views the celestial bodies (the sun and the moon) as its main elements. Quite often, K. Balmont's texts (the collection "Let's be like the Sun") are imbued with pantheistic motives of worshiping these astral images associated with the earthly and noumenal worlds. The poet always capitalizes the names of these celestial bodies, thus showing the place of these realities in the philosophical and pantheistic concept of the world he creates.

It is known that Balmont's poetry was in many ways aimed at 'reproducing the ancient cosmogonic myths of different peoples, that is, on "sources", "archetypes"' (Molchanova N.A. 2004), therefore, the poet's heavenly bodies images often reflect multiple mythological views. The moon in Balmont's artistic world now and there acts as an object of worship and praise, being named the "Queen of Heaven" (*Да не сочтет за дерзновенье // Царица пышная, Луна, // Что, веря в яркое мгновенье, // В безумном сне самозабвенья, // Поет ей раб свое хваленье* (Oh, don't take it as impudence, // The magnificent tsarina, the Moon, // That, believing in a bright instant, // In a mad dream of self-oblivion, // Her slave sings her the praises) (Balmont K.D, 2017). Such an image of the nocturnal luminary is correlated with the ideas of the moon in many ancient cultures, in which the heavenly body was likened to the female deity: 'The Sun was often endowed with male symbols, and the Moon with female ones; he Moon was usually imagined as a woman with a sad face' (Shaparova N.S, 2001). A similar image of the moon, embodying the the female principle, can be found in Balmont's lyrics: *Я расстался с печальной Луною, - // Удалилась царица небес // Там, в горах, за их черной стеною, // Ее лик омраченный исчез* (I parted with the sad Moon, - // The Queen of Heaven retired // There, in the mountains, behind their black wall, // Her shadowed face disappeared) or *Она меняется опять. // И нам так сладко повторять // Созвучно-стройные напевы. // Она возникла*

*над водой. // Как призрак сказки золотой, // Как бледный лик неверной девы* (She changes again. // And we are so pleased to repeat // The harmonious melodies. // She arose above the water. // Like an illusion of a golden fairy tale, // Like a pale face of an unfaithful maid) (Balmont K.D, 2017). In the last context given, another important feature of the moon is emphasized, i.e. its impermanence: the nocturnal luminary regularly changes its look, appearing now as a decrescent and then as an increscent moon and now as a full moon: *Ветра вечернего вздох замирающий. // Полной Луны переменчивый лик* (The dying sigh of the evening wind. // The full Moon's changeable face) or *В час полночный, в чаще леса, под ущербную Луну* (At midnight, in the depth of the forest, under the decrescent Moon), etc. [ibid.]. Transforming, the moon can even act as the Sun, acquiring its characteristic features and properties: *Когда же закружится по краям, // Она горит как чаша золотая <...>* (When it is rounded off at the edges, // It burns like a golden cup) *Еще, и вот - она, как рдяный щит, // Как полнота пылающего шара* (Again, and now - it is like a rusty shield, // As the fullness of a glowing ball) [ibid.].

The images of heavenly bodies in K.D. Balmont's lyrics have an intrinsic duality, emphasizing the duality of the picture of the world he creates. According to O. Yepisheva, the sun appears in Balmont's works not only as a life-giving force, but also as a destructive fire element, while the moon, on the one hand, is only a traditional romantic reflection of the "solar" symbol, and on the other hand, it shows its self-sufficiency, the ability to replace the main source of light and life, the sun (Yepisheva O.V, 2010). The dualistic nature of astral images created by K. Balmont, from the point of view of V. Lavrukina, is nothing but a kind of manifestation of the idea of unity in multiplicity, favored by the poet: 'Polarities are considered by the author as two aspects of the single, as two paths to wholeness and harmony.' (Lavrukina V.L, 2017). A similar point of view is also found in the work of T. Shitova, who asserts that the two anthems to the sun and the moon (Anthem to Fire and Praise of the Moon) symbolize two paths to one truth, the truth of unity and wholeness: 'If fire is a force that can burn the old in the hope of acquiring a harmonious wholeness, then the moon is a sign of another path, the path of love, in which the two will acquire a cosmic, non-separate, androgynous wholeness' (Shitova T.P, 2003).

The moon in Balmont's works is an inseparable companion of lovers, it becomes the source of awakening the emotional element of man. It is interesting to note that the influence of the sun and the moon on the spiritual state of the narrator is conceptualized in some works of K. Balmont in the categories of antinomy: the moon (night) correlates with the image of fire, while the sun (day) - with images of cold and silence: *Моя душа озарена // И Солнцем и Луной, // Но днем в ней дышит тишина, // А ночью рдеет зной. // И странно так, и странно так, // Что Солнце холодит. // И учит ласкам полумрак, // И страсть во тьме горит* (*My soul is illuminated // Both with the Sun and the Moon, // But in the daytime silence breathes in it, // And at night the heat flushes. // And it's so strange, and it's so strange, // That the Sun makes cold. // And twilight teaches tenderness, // And passion burns in the darkness*) (Balmont K.D, 2017). The change in the associative and figurative relations between the concepts of the "sun" and the "moon", observed in this context, is due to the perception of the moon as a nocturnal luminary giving rise to inner fire in people's souls, a craving for love and passion: *Луна велит слагать ей восхваленья, // Быть нежными, когда мы влюблены, // Любить, желать, ласкать до исступленья, // И так, восхвалим царствие Луны* (*The moon commands to praise her, // To be tender when we are in love, // To love, to desire, to caress to frenzy, // So, let us praise the kingdom of the Moon*) (Balmont K.D, 2017). Manifestation of love in its blissfully sensual, primeval essence allows the narrator to feel his involvement in supernal reality: *В Небе – видения облачной млечности, // Тайное пение – в сердце и в Вечности, // Там, в бесконечности – свет обаяния, // Праздник влияния правды слияния* (*There, in the Sky, are the visions of cloudy milkyness, // Secret singing - in the heart and in the eternity, // There, in infinity is the light of charm, // The feast of the influence of the truth of amalgamation*) [ibid.]. So, on his way to comprehending the secrets of the universe, Balmont's hero is accompanied with the image of the moon, awakening in him the feeling of love laid in the unified nature of human and cosmic being: *Мир отодвинулся. Над нами дышит Вечность. // Морская ширь живет влиянием Луны, // Я твой, моя любовь – бездонность, бесконечность, // Мы от всего с тобой светло отделены* (*The world has moved away. The eternity breathes above us. // The sea vastness lives on the influence of the Moon, // I am yours, my*

*love is the bottomlessness, the infinity, // We are separated from everything with you*) [ibid.].

The image of the moon, in its ontological relation to being, turns out to be connected with the motive of silence. The moon in K. Balmont's works appears in the image of the mistress, tzarina of silence: *Мы подчиняемся, склоняемся // Перед царицей тишины, // И в сны свои светло влюбляемся // По мановению Луны* (*We obey, we bow down // To the tzarina of silence // And lucidly we fall in love in our dreams // By the Moon's will*) or *Восхвалим, братья, царствие Луны, // Ее лучом ниспосланные сны, // Владычество великой тишины* (*Let us praise, brethren, the kingdom of the moon, // The dreams she sends us with her ray, // The mastery of the great silence*) [ibid.]. In the last given context, the word "silence" is used by the poet with the adjective "great"; such a combination of lexemes is not accidental: silence is understood by Balmont as "a common property of the world, its deep, ineffable essence." (Petrova T.S, 1995). The silence emanating from the moon fills the world, uniting it with its own language of silence: *Я шел безбрежными пустынями, // И видел бледную Луну, // Она плыла морями синими, // И опускалася ко дну. // И не ко дну, а к безызмерности, // За кругозорностью земной, // Где нет измен и нет неверности, // Где все объято тишиной* (*I walked along the boundless deserts, // And saw the pale moon, // She was floating the blue seas, // And sinking to the bottom. // No, not to the bottom, but to immensity, // Behind the horizon of the earth, // Where there is no betrayal and no infidelity, // Where everything is enveloped in silence*) (Balmont K.D, 2017).

Another image related to the lunar symbolism in Balmont's the artistic world is water: *Над простором вольным водной глубины // Дымно дышат чары царственной Луны* (*Above the free expanse of water depth // The spells of the queenly Moon breathe in smoke*) [ibid.]. The unity of water and celestial elements is noted in many of his poems, illustrating the union of the two ontological principles: *Но волна в волну плеснула, // И, признав Луну, шепнула: // «Мы теперь сильнее, чем днем»* (*But a wave splashed in a wave, // And, in recognition of the Moon, whispered: // 'We are stronger now than in the daytime'*) [ibid.]. The dominant motive in representing such a relation is the motive of reflection, or mirroring, through which a symbolic picture of the transfiguration of the

ordinary world: *Задремавшая река // Отражает облака <...> В эти воды с вышины // Смотрит бледный серп Луны, // Звёзды тихий свет струят, // Очи ангелов глядят (The slumbering river // Mirrors the clouds <...> In these waters from the height // The pale crescent Moon is looking, // Stars are shedding their quiet light, // Angels' eyes are looking) [ibid.].* It is interesting to note that life itself is defined by Balmont as "reflection of the lunar face in water", life is also boundless and timeless, like the main natural elements, it is the embodiment of the universal beauty and silence as a state of the comprehensive macrocosm: *Жизнь – отражение лунного лика в воде, // Сфера, чей центр – повсюду, окружность – нигде, // Царственный вымысел, пропасть глухая без дна, // Вечность мгновения – миг красоты – тишина (Life is a reflection of the lunar face in the water, // A sphere whose center is everywhere, with no circle, // A regal fiction, a bottomless abyss, // The eternity of the moment - an instance of beauty - silence) [ibid.].*

### Discussion

According to Shitova, "Balmont's poetic cosmos is based on complementary contradictions and dualities" embedded in the artistic images created by the poet (Shitova T.P., 2003). Such a statement can be applied to the image of the moon, too. On the one hand, Balmont sings laudatory songs to the night "queen", glorifying and admiring her (*Как же люблю я тебя, о, прекрасная, // Вечно-нежданная, стройная, властная, // В самом бесстрастии пламенно-страстная, // Тайну познавшая лунных лучей (How much I love you, oh, beautiful, // Always undreamt-of, slender, and masterful // In your dispassionateness flaming and passionate, // You, who has beheld the mystery of the moon's rays) (Balmont K.D., 2017)*), on the other hand, notes her sorcerous nature which completely dominates over people (*Она холодный свет прольет, // И волю чарами убьет, // Она сибилла и колдунья (She will shed her cold light, // And will kill the will with her spells, // She is a sibyl and a sorceress) [ibid.].*) The moon in the poet's lyrics is often referred to as the "dead luminary" (*О, мертвое прекрасное Светило (Oh, the dead, the beautiful Luminary) or И мертвую Луну завороченный, // Раскинулся простор (And, enchanted by the dead Moon, // The vastness stretched out) [ibid.].*), but death in many Balmont's works is understood as a boundary, a "threshold" between the earthly and other

worlds: *Не верь тому, кто говорит тебе, // Что смерть есть смерть: она – начало жизни, // Того существованья неземного, // Перед которым наша жизнь темна (Do not believe the one who tells you, // That death is death: it is the beginning of life, // Of that unearthly existence, // Before which our life is dark) [ibid.].* The moon is the luminary that lifts the veil before another world that comes after death and is associated with an endless ontological principle: *Своим ущербом, смертью двухнедельной, // И новым полновластным воссияньем, // Она твердит о грусти не бесцельной, // О том, что свет нас ждет за умираньем (With its decline, the fortnight's death, // And the new full-glory shine, // She claims that the sadness is not in vain, // That light awaits us after dying) [ibid.].*

### Conclusions

With all that said, the moon is one of the central system-forming elements of Balmont's artistic view of the world, filled with rich philosophical and symbolic content (the basic element of the cosmogonic worldbuilding, which expresses the involvement of the world in the supernal reality and correlates with the most important attributes of metaphysics (eternity, infinity, silence, universal beauty, etc.). The image of the moon in Balmont's works, having a pronounced mythopoetic character, reflects a kind of refraction of various traditional ideas in the aspect of Balmont's own worldview and plays a critical part in the philosophical and pantheistic concept of the world created by the poet.

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