

Research Article

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Flower Representations in the Lyrics of A.A. Fet

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Abstract: Cultural connotation, artistic value, and aesthetic significance contained in the images of plants determine the importance of interpreting the images of flowers within the lyrical works, considering their profound conveyance of internal emotions. In addition to their aesthetic appeal, A.A. Fet's floral imagery employs the "language of flowers," conveying human emotions and social conventions. This article employs the lens of "plant studies" to examine flowers not only as symbols but as active participants in A.A. Fet's narrative. This approach contributes to an epistemological discourse that examines the relationship between nature and human experience. The research aims to analyse the peculiarities and frequency of using floral imagery in the lyrical works of A.A. Fet, considering the plant symbolism of other landscape poets. To achieve the research aims, the following methods were used: descriptive, content analysis, and comparative. The study shows how floral imagery in A.A. Fet's works conveys emotions and experiences alongside landscape elements. The content analysis allowed us to determine that A.A. Fet is the poet who most often uses images of flowers in his poems. The analysis of 806 lyrical works made it possible to identify 15 floral images in Fet's poetry. To convey appropriate emotions through flowers, A.A. Fet uses metaphorical elements and anthropomorphic mechanisms that endow plants with a unique language and life cycle. This analysis explores the symbolic roles of roses, lilies, violets, and other floral imagery in A.A. Fet's works.

Keywords: floral imagery, anthropomorphism, semantic properties, landscape poetry, motif

1 Introduction

A.A. Fet's poetry reflects the European Romanticism movement, which emphasized nature as a source of inspiration, emotion, and contemplation. A.A. Fet, a key figure in Russian Romanticism, aligned with these ideals and is still considered the final stage in the development of the classical traditions of Romantic poetry in Russia, frequently using nature as a symbolic medium in his works. His affinity for flowers as poetic symbols situates him within a tradition that sought to express deep, often ineffable feelings through the natural beauty of flora. A.A. Fet's use of flowers, especially roses and lilies, bridges Russian and European cultural traditions. Roses, associated with love, beauty, and mortality, echo European Romantic themes while adding a distinctly Russian cultural resonance. Lilies, with their associations with purity and innocence, are presented not merely

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as decorative elements but as symbols embodying deeper values in A.A. Fet's cultural context (Zhumsakbaev & Mazhitova, 2019).

In A.A. Fet's poetry, each flower functions as a metaphor within the "language of flowers," representing emotions and social dynamics. This practice is grounded in historical and cultural traditions of floral symbolism. This study employs the concepts of "plant studies" to examine the functions of flowers in A.A. Fet's work, which extend beyond mere decoration. It engages with a discourse that interrogates humanity's connections with nature and knowledge through the lens of floral symbols.

In the late nineteenth century, landscape-focused poetry thrived, with nature central to expressing individual emotions and universal themes. A.A. Fet embraced this movement by situating floral imagery at the core of his lyrical expressions. The works of A.A. Fet is often compared to the lyrics of other poets. A.A. Fet's flower motifs can be contextualized within the broader framework of European Romanticism, a movement in which poets such as Goethe and R. Burns similarly imbued flowers with symbolic significance. In Goethe's "Дикая роза" ("Wild Rose"), the flower symbolizes innocence and untamed beauty, serving as a natural emblem for themes of passion and youthful vigour. In "Красной розе" ("The Red Rose"), R. Burns employs the rose as an emblem of unwavering love, evoking profound sentiment through a straightforward yet evocative floral symbol. Similarly, A.A. Fet's works demonstrate a profound affinity for flowers as vehicles of expression that transcend linguistic boundaries. A comparison of A.A. Fet's use of the rose and lily with the floral motifs in Goethe's and R. Burns' poetry reveals that A.A. Fet not only aligns with this tradition but also contributes a uniquely Russian perspective, infusing his floral images with culturally specific meanings tied to Russian landscapes and seasonal cycles.

A.A. Fet's floral imagery is extremely diverse. They carry a rich heritage of poetry. The interpretation of floral imagery in the works allows the feeling of the life experience and the spiritual path of the poet. The evolution of feelings and symbolism allows us to consider flowers not as simple elements of decoration, but as basic tools of art, which cross the artistic spaces of anthropomorphism. The important metaphorical connotation of flowers explores the common features and differences of the characters in their implicit characteristics. Brickman (2020) and also Shakirova and Ismagilova (2020) study the issues of plant images and motifs in the lyric genre of English, Russian, and Tatar poetry. However, the authors have not considered semantic images of flowers and plants in specific lyrical works. Li and Chi (2021) and also Rui-Rui (2022) consider the universality and diversity of flower metaphors of love in English and Chinese poems. However, the authors have insufficiently studied the comparative aspects of the images of plants and flowers.

Jacobs (2022) and Shkil (2020) in their studies study the phytophagic characteristics of images as ways of displaying the individual author's style. In this regard, the research presents the comparative characteristics of A.A. Fet's flower images with other authors and also reveals the semantic features of rose, poppy, and violet in lyrical works. The images of flowers depicted by different writers are the crystallization of their understanding of society, nature, and life experience. The cyclical state of life and love represent processes represented through plant ontological metaphors. Eternity, permanence, renewal, change, death, and oblivion constitute the semantic content expressed through different poetic floral imagery (Milo, 2024). The themes of flowers contain an expressive richness and versatility that adapt to the aesthetic slogans of each era and permeate all areas of art (Shmarko & Hrechanyk, 2023).

The research aims to consider the trends and frequency of the use of plant imagery in the works of A.A. Fet, given the diversity of symbolic interpretations of lyrical landscape poets.

2 Materials and Methods

To achieve the research aims the following methods were applied: descriptive, content analysis, and comparative. These methods were fundamental to the comprehension of the symbolic, emotional, and semantic functions of flowers in his poetry and their broader literary context.

The descriptive method was crucial for capturing the primary semantic characteristics of plant symbols in A.A. Fet's landscape poetry. By examining the diverse ways in which flowers are used to convey human

experiences and emotions, the descriptive method facilitated a comprehensive investigation into the roles that flowers play in the imagery of his poetry. This approach facilitated the identification of the various forms of flower-related motifs, including those about love relationships and nature, which are present throughout A.A. Fet's oeuvre. By way of illustration, the descriptive method demonstrated how specific floral representations, including the rose, rose hips, and the rose-nightingale metaphor, evoke profound emotional states that are often associated with the human experience of love and longing. In particular, the study concentrated on the utilization of parallelism as a compositional device to emphasize the emotional interconnections between the natural world and the human experience. Furthermore, the descriptive approach facilitated an understanding of how these motifs align with A.A. Fet's use of language to reflect the inner feelings and attitudes of his characters. Additionally, this method played a pivotal role in identifying the symbolic qualities attributed to flowers, such as the association of the rose with purity or the human form. This provided deeper insights into how floral symbols reflect the thematic and emotional essence of the poems.

The choice of content analysis as a core methodological approach is rooted in its ability to systematically quantify and interpret the use of floral imagery in A.A. Fet's lyrical works. This method was selected due to its precision in identifying patterns, themes, and frequencies within large textual corpora, enabling a detailed examination of how flowers are used as symbolic and narrative elements. Content analysis of 806 lyrical pieces revealed the most common flower terms and their thematic roles. A frequency dictionary was constructed to quantify the occurrence of floral lexemes and motifs, which revealed 15 distinct floral types that appeared in A.A. Fet's poetic works. This quantitative approach was complemented by qualitative analysis, which examined the contextual meanings of floral symbols, including their roles in evoking emotional states and cultural connotations. The comparative method further contextualized A.A. Fet's floral imagery within the broader literary traditions of European Romanticism and Eastern poetics, highlighting his unique contributions to this genre.

The comparative method was employed to examine the similarities and differences in the use of floral imagery between A.A. Fet and other landscape poets within the context of world literature. This approach proved particularly valuable in identifying unique aspects of A.A. Fet's stylistic and thematic approach, thereby highlighting the distinctive role of floral imagery in A.A. Fet's poetic universe. The comparative method also demonstrated how A.A. Fet's floral motifs are integrated into a broader literary tradition, including influences from Eastern poetry and Russian romanticism.

The combination of these three methods – descriptive, content analysis, and comparative – provided a comprehensive framework for examining the floral imagery in A.A. Fet's lyrical works. The descriptive method permitted an initial comprehension of the symbols and motifs, the content analysis revealed the frequency and contextual meanings of these symbols, and the comparative method situated A.A. Fet's utilization of flowers within a broader literary context. The aforementioned approaches enabled the study to offer a nuanced interpretation of the role of flowers in A.A. Fet's poetry. In addition to representing natural beauty, flowers function as powerful symbols of human emotion, cultural expression, and philosophical reflection.

3 Results

To identify floriforms in A.A. Fet's lyrics, a content analysis was used, with the help of which it was possible to compile a frequent vocabulary on the use of plant linguistic images (Table 1).

Thus, 806 lyrical works were reviewed, and 15 floral images were identified, considering the generalized floral references, among which the most frequently used were rose, lily of the valley, violet, lily and dahlia, and the least frequently used – hyacinth, poppy, lilac, mignonette, bellflower, forget-me-not, tuberose, carnation and tulip. The flower motif appears most frequently, with 116 uses across 80 texts. Most often a flower is understood as a generalized generic concept – 88 uses. The lexemic use of the word “colour” in the sense of “flower” was also considered as an image of a flower.

In addition to examining the general frequency and symbolic meaning of floral motifs in A.A. Fet's poetry, it is valuable to explore the thematic roles these flowers play within specific emotional or philosophical

Table 1: The most mentioned plant imagery in the lyrics of A.A. Fet

Floroform	Text examples	Number of works	The overall number of form usage
Generalized flower meaning	“Офелия гибла и пела...” (“Ophelia died and sang.”) (Briggs, 1974), “С корзиной, полною цветов на голове” (“With a basket full of flowers on her head”) (Layton, 2007), “Вчера, увенчана душистыми цветами [...]” (“Yesterday, crowned with fragrant flowers.”) (Yuzmukhametova <i>et al.</i> , 2021)	80	116
Rose (Роза)	“Осенняя роза” (“Autumn Rose”) (Dziedzic, 2020), “Сентябрьская роза” (“September Rose”) (Fatilloeyvna, 2022), “Месяц и роза” (“Moon and Rose”) (Frownfelter, 2010)	53	87
Lily of the valley (Ландыш)	“Уж, серпы на плеча изложив, усталые жницы...” (“With sickles on their shoulders, the tired reapers laid down.”) (Seaton, 1989)	4	5
Violet (Фиалка)	“Среди фиалок, в царстве роз” (“Among the violets, in the kingdom of roses”) (Page & Smith, 2011)	4	4
Lily (Лилия)	“Дитя, покорное любви [...]” (“A child obedient to love.”) (Sisakht & Pourlashkary, 2018)	3	3
Dahlias (Георгины)	“Средь георгин я шел твоих, и как живая одалиска [...]” (“Among the dahlias I walked your way, and like a living odalisque.”) (Khitrova, 2019)	1	3

contexts. Table 2 presents a thematic breakdown of each floral motif, illustrating the distinct contributions of different flowers to the overall meaning of A.A. Fet’s work. The table’s organization of motifs into themes, such as love, purity, and melancholy, demonstrates how A.A. Fet employs specific flowers to convey distinct emotional states and philosophical reflections, thereby enhancing the symbolic landscape of his poetry.

The data presented in Table 2 demonstrate that A.A. Fet’s utilization of floral imagery is not merely a decorative or naturalistic device; rather, it functions as a conduit for intricate emotional and philosophical expression. The rose, with the highest frequency, remains a central motif in the context of love, embodying both its beauty and its ephemeral nature. This duality is consistent with the Romantic idealization of love as both transcendent and fragile. The lily of the valley, though less frequently employed, symbolizes purity and youth, capturing moments of innocence in A.A. Fet’s poetry. Its unassuming appearance and subtle aroma evoke themes of purity and gentleness, rendering it an apt symbol for poems celebrating unmarred beauty. In contrast, the violet is linked to feelings of melancholy, symbolizing a tranquil sadness and introspection. The low frequency of this motif contrasts with its deep connotation, suggesting that A.A. Fet reserves its use for particularly introspective or sombre moments. Similarly, the dahlia and poppy, with their connotations of exoticism and the dreamscape, reflect A.A. Fet’s engagement with themes of mystery, sensuality, and the ephemeral.

The poet asserts that flowers possess their own language, intricately weaving the motif of love and floral imagery into a cohesive narrative. In A.A. Fet’s works, the rose transcends mere decoration to embody

Table 2: Thematic and semantic roles of floral motifs in A.A. Fet’s poetry

Flower motif	Theme	Semantic role in poetry	Frequency of usage	Emotional or philosophical connotation
Rose	Love	Represents both passion and transience	87	Love’s beauty and fragility
Lily of the valley	Purity	Symbolizes innocence and modesty	5	Youth, chastity
Violet	Melancholy	Embodies sorrow and longing	4	Quiet reflection and solitude
Dahlia	Exoticism	Associated with admiration and mystery	3	Sensuality, allure
Poppy	Dreamscape	Linked to sleep and forgetfulness	2	Escape, the ephemeral nature of dreams

profound themes. The rose encapsulates a rich tapestry of meanings, representing the exquisite allure and ardour of love, while also evoking the inevitable decay and fleeting nature of life – a reflection of common themes in Romantic poetry. A.A. Fet utilizes the rose not as a static or clichéd element but as a dynamic symbol intertwined with the ephemeral nature of emotions such as love and joy. This approach imbues the motif with a sense of existential depth. In his poetry, the rose serves as a metaphor for human relationships, underscoring the transient yet intense nature of romantic encounters (Streltsova, 2023).

His portrayal of the rose, for instance, evinces an affinity with the Romantic tradition of the nineteenth century, wherein flowers are imbued with dual symbolism, representing both beauty and ephemerality. In A.A. Fet's work, the rose becomes a complex metaphor for unattainable love and the transient nature of joy. This reflects a broader literary-historical trend where poets used flowers to articulate nuanced emotional states. By situating A.A. Fet's rose imagery within the context of similar uses in the works of Western Romantic poets, such as W. Blake's melancholic "Sick Rose," it becomes evident that A.A. Fet's poetry resonates with the period's fascination with the paradoxes of beauty and decay (Sokolova, 2020).

Furthermore, by traditions from both Eastern and Western literary sources, such as Goethe's "Wild Rose" and R. Burns's "Red Rose," the rose motif in A.A. Fet's work reflects the cultural tensions between beauty and decay. In contrast to the conventional use of flowers as mere decorative motifs, A.A. Fet's rose represents specific human qualities, reflecting the idealistic and disillusioning aspects of love. This multifaceted representation eschews facile reiteration, aligning instead with the profound thematic richness characteristic of Romanticism. Consequently, the rose, as depicted in A.A. Fet's oeuvre, resonates as a universally resonant emblem of the human condition, while also evincing culturally specific nuances.

The semantic field with the core image of the flower draws in such juxtapositions as a fountain, a night-ingle in love, leaves in the eyes, wreaths and song, bugs, and stones. An artistic picture is created by the poet through an impressionistic perception of visual, sonic, and plastic imagery. In the poem "Кенкеты, и мрамор, и бронза..." ("Kenkets, and marble, and bronze.") the uniform enumeration of colours paints an image of a pretty girl, decked out in expensive jewellery, and dressed in a flowing light gas dress. The same juxtaposition of diamonds and flowers is observed in the "Горный ключ" ("Mountain Key") poem. "Гордо носил бриллианты..." ("Proudly wore diamonds.") (Fet, 1959). One of the fixed pairs in A.A. Fet's poetry is the bee-flower pair: "Мы две пчелы на жизненном цветке" ("We are two bees on the flower of life"). This set pairing has its origins in Eastern literature, in which the bee was seen as an allegory of royal power, strength, and wisdom, and the tenderness and beauty of the beloved have always been correlated with the beautiful flower (Southerden, 2021). In confirmation that A.A. Fet knew perfectly well the genesis of this paired image, says the title of his poem "Восточный мотив" ("Oriental motif"). The author enriches the Eastern tradition of these types, expanding the floral repertoire (Griffiths, 2021). In his lyrics, the pair bee – the flower is either directly projected onto the pair of lovers, or correlated with them, where pictures from the world of people and nature unfold in parallel to each other.

The subject matter of A.A. Fet's lyrics is narrow: it is nature, love, and art. Among the various forms of art, A.A. Fet is particularly fond of poetry, sculpture, and music. It is no coincidence that poetry as one of the innermost types of artistic creation is close to flowers in A.A. Fet's lyrics. This metaphorical image emphasizes the beauty of the object and the subject, as well as their equal belonging to the highest spheres of divine manifestation. But, of course, most uses of the lexeme "flower" are associated with the image of a girl. As mentioned earlier, the floral image is in direct correlation with the lyrical heroine. The second most frequent image in A.A. Fet's lyrics is the rose: 87 uses in 53 lyrical works. The rose is the poet's favourite flower. He has several poems in which the lexeme "rose" is placed in the title, which is an accentuation of this image: "Роза" ("Rose"), "Осенняя роза" ("Autumn rose"), "Сентябрьская роза" ("September rose"), and "Две розы" ("Two roses"). Thus, in the poem "На смерть юной девы" ("On the Death of a Young Maiden"), the rose refers to a young girl whose life was suddenly cut short. This poem can be read as allegorical, where the garden is an earthly paradise in which only the "beloved rose," as the lyricist calls her, could have appeared. Often, the rose symbolizes love, and if it crumbles, so do the love dreams.

The combination of the month and the rose in A.A. Fet's poetic world is interesting. The poem, which is called "Месяц и роза" ("The Month and the Rose"), is constructed as a dialogue between the two stated images, the semantics of which, one might say, repeats the essence of traditional relationships. Since the rose

symbolizes love, it is never alone. Next to her are those who are in love with her, they can be representatives of both the human and natural worlds. Considering the various paired relationships, it is worth paying attention to the fact that the author has a rose-nightingale pair. This is a tradition, coming from Eastern lyrics and picked up in Russian literature first by Pushkin. In the Nightingale–Rose pair, the latter personifies a windy and capricious beauty who cruelly torments the Nightingale. The Nightingale, hopelessly in love with the frivolous and proud coquette, gives his life for his love, staining the petals of the white rose with his blood. A.A. Fet resorts to the techniques of personification of the image of the rose even in those cases where it appears in its literal meaning. Therefore, it can be stated that in A.A. Fet's poetry, the image of the rose expresses loves, the relationship with the beloved, which changes over time. Shared love evokes pictures of warm summer days or nights, a date with the beloved girl in the garden or park. But gradually the numerous "maiden roses" recede, and motifs of crumbling, fading, and sunset of life's path emerge.

By infusing his floral symbols with layers of cultural and philosophical meaning, A.A. Fet aligns his work with the broader literary movements of his time. The "rose-nightingale" motif is reflective of the Oriental pairing that is frequently observed in Russian and Persian literature. In this context, the rose is regarded as a capricious beauty that, despite its allure, evokes a sense of sorrow. This symbolism is evident in Pushkin's works and also resonates with the motifs that French Symbolism favoured, capturing both allure and melancholy. This duality is evident in A.A. Fet's representation of the rose, which symbolizes both beauty and the inevitable decay of life and love.

In the aspect of comparative floral imagery of lyrical works, it is necessary to highlight the poem "Wild Rose" by Goethe. In this work, the author describes a rose, which symbolizes a girl. The centre of the poem is the tandem rose-briar. It is also worth paying attention to the image of the rose in "The Red Rose" by R. Burns, which symbolizes the singing of female love. In the first stanza of the poem the poet expresses the beauty of his beloved in metaphors: "Красные розы, цветущие в июне, и сладкая музыка, звучащая приятно для слуха" ("Red roses blooming in June, and sweet music sounding pleasing to the ear") (Rahmanyan, 2016). The bright image of the "Red roses" becomes a symbol of the beauty and young strength of the beloved. Through this floral image, the author expresses fiery love for his beloved, it becomes the centre of the artistic world, which absorbs the boundless ocean, the mountains, and the scorching sun: "Любить я буду до времен, пока не высохнут моря" ("I will love till the seas are scorched"), "А горы тают от лучей!" ("And the mountains are scorched from the rays!") (Liu, 2019). Such a concept is also present in the work of A.A. Fet. Then R. Burns expresses his unwavering stance on love, saying that the whole universe may change or even collapse, but love will remain the same. In 16 lines of the poem, the poet expresses the sincere, simple, and uncomplicated emotion of love. Comparing the floral image of the rose, it can be noted that in the lyrical works under consideration this image symbolizes relationships and love.

It is also worth paying attention to the image of the rose in the poetry of W. Blake, the English poet. For example, W. Blake's poem "Болезнь роза" ("The Sick Rose") addressed to the rose: "О, роза, ты больна" ("Oh, rose, you are sick"), defines the dark and destructive mystery of love, except when suppressed by a restrictive social and religious order (Adudu & Husain, 2019). The rose symbol here serves as a tool to convey beauty destroyed by evil, where the flight of women in pursuit of a man is a depiction of puritanical and misogynistic behaviour. But suddenly W. Blake modifies his thoughts and experiences in poetry, emphasizing that he does not have an unambiguous trajectory between man and woman. W. Blake himself seems to have been convinced that the source of the illness was social and religious structures that prevented fantasies from turning into action: "Тот, кто желает и действует, не питает болезни" ("He who desires and acts does not nourish sickness") (Alkayid & Al Kayed, 2022). Surprisingly, the energy of the poetic invocation creates a sense of prophetic revelation and marks this speech act as poetic speech. The appeal to the rose, which personifies it as an intelligent being with a life of its own, creates an "I-You" relationship between the poetic subject and the natural object. By appealing to the flower, the poet becomes one who asserts himself as the author in the tradition of lyric poetry. When analysing W. Blake's image of the rose, it is worth highlighting the differences and opposites that appear in the description of female love as a phenomenon of Puritan morality compared to the purity and tranquillity of A.A. Fet's plant appearance.

With a large gap from the image of the rose the lily of the valley is located: only five uses of the word in four lyrical works of A.A. Fet. It can be stated that the author highlights in the lily of the valley its fragrant

fragrance: “ландышем пахнет в лесу” (“the lily of the valley smells in the woods”), “душистый ландыш” (“fragrant lily of the valley”), “девственная нега” (“pristine beauty”), and “душистая чистота” (“fragrant purity”) (Kozubovskaya, 1994). For the first time in Russian literature, the poet devoted a separate poem of landscape orientation to the lily of the valley “Первый ландыш” (“The first lily of the Valley”). Then, there are images of violet (four uses of the word in four works) and lily (three uses of the word in three poems). Interestingly, the violet and the lily embody in their symbolism all those attributive properties that are characteristic of the lily of the valley: thus, the violet accentuates its smell, and the lily its purity and innocence.

A.A. Fet continues the symbolic comprehension of the lily, comparing it with the beautiful bather in the poem “Купальщица” (“The Bather”) of the same name. The lily is also the embodiment of an innocent young girl in the poem “Alter Ego.” In both works, there is a convergence of images of the “bashful” lily and the beautiful girl. A.A. Fet’s lily grows near bodies of water, so the girl is described as either sitting near a stream or bathing in a river. Here, the floor image is emphasized by the artistic technique of parallelism, where the main elements are the purity and chastity of the lyrical heroine. An example is a line from the poem “Alter ego”: “Как лилея глядится в нагорный ручей, ты стояла над первою песней моею” (“Like a lily looking into a highland brook, you stood over my first song”) (Fet, 1971). The poet resorts to an extended comparison, which is characterized by a complex interweaving of images of the natural and human worlds, and a modest chaste lily is chosen as the object of comparison.

A whole “bouquet” of flowers in A.A. Fet’s poetic system has three uses – dahlia, hyacinth, poppy, and Reseda. In the poem with the same name “Георгины” (“Dahlias”), the flowers are personified by the poet by comparing them with odalisques – oriental girls of the harem. Thus, it is possible to say that A.A. Fet first “discovered” for the Russian reader the image of dahlias, since previously they were not honoured to be a separate subject of a landscape poem. Hyacinth appears in A.A. Fet’s poem “Спор” (“Dispute”), which tells of a rivalry between three Greek goddesses: Athena, Hera, and Aphrodite. The image of the poppy is always associated by the author with dreams: “На ложе, свежими цветами испещренном...” (“On a bed of fresh flowers.”) (Fet, 1971). In turn, lily of the valley, violet, and reseda are united by a fragrant fragrance, but each is different: “девственный ландыш” (“pristine lily of the valley”), “ночная фиалка” (“night violet”), and “дневная резеда” (“day mignonette”) (Klenin, 1985). In the lexeme bell, A.A. Fet plays with its two meanings a small bell, the ringing of which warns that a horse-drawn carriage is coming, and as a blue flower, the shape of which resembles a bell. The poet is attracted to the forget-me-not by its heavenly colour, which in the poem “Она” (“She”) allegorizes blue eyes. In the poem “Одинокый дуб” (“The Lonely Oak”), the forget-me-not is painted as a flower nesting in the roots of a mighty tree. Tuberose occurs only once in A.A. Fet’s poem “Б. С. Хомутовой при получении цветущих клубероз” (“To B. S. Khomutova on receiving tuberose blossoms”). Tulip and lovage also occur only once in A.A. Fet’s lyrics. In the poems “Сильфы” (“Sylphs”) and “Целый заставила день меня промечтать ты сегодня...” (“The whole day you made me dream today.”) both flowers are mentioned as plants.

Thus, given the diverse use of floral imagery in the comparative context of lyrical works, it is worth highlighting the poet R. Char, one of the greatest lyricists of the twentieth century. No symbol better reflects the contradictory nature of R. Char and his poetry than the poppy growing in the fields, roadsides, and embankments. The poppy in R. Char’s poetry is distinguished by its scarlet colour and soporific properties, combining rebellion with sleep and rage with mystery. The top of the poppy is the red banner, which the poet never fails to wave, even though he is not a member of any party. The decoction of its seeds makes one sleep and perhaps dream. In the poem “Компания школьницы” (“Schoolgirl Company”), the author uses linguistic signs of compatibility, where the little girl and the stranger fit together “как мак и пшеница” (“like the poppy and the wheat”) (Peyre, 1977). Thus, it is possible to emphasize the similarities between the images of the poppy by A.A. Fet and R. Char, which describe the soporific properties. In turn, the famous English writer Shelley in his work “Об увядшей фиалке” (“About the Faded Violet”) symbolizes the image of the violet his late wife. Through this image, the author describes his desire to be faithful to love and remain pure before his conscience, describing the violet as a meaningful and sacred symbol. Through the flower, Shelley was able to convey the sense of grief that overwhelmed him: “Я плачу – она не оживет, вздыхаю – гаснет вздох напрасный...” (“I cry – she won’t come to life, I sigh – the sigh goes out in vain.”) (Stroup, 2000). The poet sighed and wept with feelings of powerlessness and emptiness because he could not revive the bouquet of violets, which withered on his chest.

This interpretation of the floro-image is the opposite of A.A. Fet's violet symbolizes through its vegetal appearance a delicate scent, and purity.

Thus, the analysis of floral imagery in lyrical works allowed us to determine that flowers are some of the favourite symbols of beauty, harmony, nature, and sensitivity that they represent. Flowers have many meanings and symbolic connotations in lyrical works. The most used plant in A.A. Fet's lyrics is the rose, not considering the generalized concepts of flowers. Plant images of flowers in A.A. Fet's lyrics are rich and polysemantic. They help the poet to express complex emotions and experiences and add colour and beauty to his poems. Writer's resort to the use of metaphorical language techniques and symbols to be able to express feelings, experiences, emotions, and moods. It is the rich symbolic meaning of plants that has attracted countless poets to use such tools of expression within landscape poetry. In the process of imagination and creativity, writers continue to discover new possibilities for floral imagery to achieve the lyrical effect.

4 Discussion

In the nineteenth century, flowers were profoundly embedded in cultural symbolism, with each bloom conveying specific meanings within the "language of flowers." To illustrate, roses in A.A. Fet's poetry are emblematic of both love and mortality, reflecting Romantic ideals of beauty and transience (Shashkina & Mazhitova, 2023). The study of plants provides further insight into this analysis by considering flowers as active participants in the production of knowledge. This challenges the traditional view of flowers as mere passive symbols and emphasizes their role in conveying complex human experiences.

Poetry is the highest form of human expression and the most powerful instrument of aesthetic creativity, the main function of which is the transformation of the poetic worldview (Brait *et al.*, 2023). Thus, from the point of view of Aburgayeq (2020), poets see an "image," feel it with their heart, and then fix and express it, materializing inner emotions through a specific form of lyrical expression. Consequently, this selected, purified, and even reworked "image" is knowingly not objective and mundane, but acts as a connotative sense of the subject. The combination of meaning and image forms the symbolism of colours, where the transcendent attribute of objective endows it with a certain spiritual connotation, and the context performs an aesthetic function (Gonçalves, 2024). Since the aesthetic image has an intention of the spiritual value of the subject, the interpretation of colours has, to a certain extent, a symbolic meaning. Imagery and symbolic spirit are inseparable (Maltsev *et al.*, 2022). Meaning is materialized through images, and symbolism is expressed through concrete concepts, thoughts, and feelings through a concrete floral image. As an important literary phenomenon, imagery embodies people's unique life representations, emotions, and ways of reflecting thought. The external social environment forces lyric poets to pay attention to individual lives and emotions by expressing specific reflections through plant imagery. Thus, the analysis of the data emphasizes the special literary connection of plant imagery and spiritual symbolism, which provide the basis for conveying the emotions, feelings, and experiences of the author in the lyrical works.

Pietrzak (2022) believes that many abstract concepts in landscape poetry, such as mannerisms and feelings, can be objectified through concrete floral imagery in poets' lyrics. Interpretations of floral symbols vary with each writer's temperament, education, philosophy, and beliefs. In turn, landscape, as a representation of nature, is a construction of the imagination that gradually shapes memory and is a system of continuous change. Thus, the landscape of lyrical works allows to reflect a picture of the author's world and to convey its deep emotional content. The literary landscape is a human creation and, of sorts, a construction that the author creates through choices and filters that activate the attitudes and behaviour of the characters within a framework of floral symbolism. This symbolic vision of nature is expressed for the most part in models reproduced from the Greco-Latin, biblical, and sacred literary traditions. The semantic basis of the lyrical works is formed not only by the realistic description of the landscape but also by the use of semantic and lexical linguistic units (Pavlykivska, 2023). The gradual incorporation of the landscape into the lyric genre integrates all elements of the living world, including inanimate beings and man-made objects, bringing a bucolic sense of open and free nature into poetry. The results of an analysis by the researcher coincide with

the findings of this study, characterizing the landscape component as an aspect of spatial structure, where the author's vision, as a fulcrum of personal projection and collective identification, acts as the main mechanism of formation and transmission of plant images and symbols in lyrical works.

As Griffiths (2021) suggests, floral imagery acts as a protagonist, mirror, and spotlight, reflecting human nature and spirit. The power of metaphor characterizes the constant figurative reconstruction of the symbolism of flowers, which causes poetic movements that lead from being to nothingness, from realization to completion. Plant and floral elements in lyrical works are highlighted using appropriate poetic tools to best express the feelings that writers embody in lyrical works. One of the most striking and recognizable images associated with plant life is that of the garden (Shershova & Chaika, 2024). Lyric poets often describe gardens, creating an image of a secluded place where one can enjoy the beauty of nature and rest the soul. In turn, lyrical abstraction, within the framework of poetics, allows the art to expand and liberate the imitation of nature. The technique of abstraction is based on the compositional freedom and harmonic meanings of flowers and plants, making the poet's plastic language the primary mechanism of interpretation. The artistic image of poetry, born from perception, has a coherence that reflects the overall picture and the external relations of object scenery or things. These hypotheses resonate with the results obtained in this study, which condition the special role of linguistic metaphor, without which the poet cannot convey human characteristics and express feelings, as well as give an emotional basis for the experience of relevant phenomena within the interpretation of floral and plant images in landscape lyrics.

Therefore, when viewed within the context of European literature, it becomes evident that A.A. Fet's floral motifs are not merely descriptive; they act as conduits for a multitude of ideas and emotions. These motifs reflect the poet's intricate vision and the evocative potential of nature as a conduit for human contemplation, encompassing Romantic ideals, Symbolist themes, and allegories of the human experience.

Leadbetter (2021) believes that descriptions of living flowers and landscapes in lyric poems are full of literary colour and poetic characteristics of personality. Natural images such as flowers, mountains, and rivers are semantic elements of enlightenment, symbols of prosperity or decline of life, which is reflected in such aspects: true nature, naturalness, and impermanence (Shynkaruk, 2023). The lyrical characteristics of plant connotations are reproduced through anthropomorphisms, within which the author's ideological character and spiritual essence are comprehended. Whatever the images of flowers, they are the outward expression of the poet's tenacious life consciousness, unwavering, aloof, fearless, cold, and unyielding. Imagery is the most important element of lyricism, which allows the poet to create vivid and colourful appearances that are used to increase the emotional load of the work, create a certain atmosphere, and convey his individuality (Hasanov, 2016). In lyrical works, imagery can appear in a variety of forms. These can be images of nature, animals, objects, or people. It is important to note that the transmission of emotion is not limited to visual images, it can also be sonic, tactile, and gustatory. They can all make an impression on the reader or listener and convey moods, emotions, and ideas. Plant imagery in lyrical works can have different interpretations depending on each reader's experience and perception. In this regard, images in lyrics are not just visual and sound pictures, but hidden meanings that can be interpreted in different ways. When considering the data, it is noticed that the images of colours in the poems allow to convey human characteristics through imagery, which forms the corresponding atmosphere and semantic properties.

To enhance the examination of floral symbolism in A.A. Fet's oeuvre, a phenomenological and hermeneutical lens offers a more nuanced comprehension of flowers as conduits of emotion. A phenomenological approach interprets flowers as experiential symbols that evoke immediate, subjective responses. To illustrate, A.A. Fet's repeated use of roses enables readers to directly experience emotions such as love, loss, and yearning, thereby transcending the boundaries of traditional symbolism. Furthermore, a hermeneutical perspective interprets floral symbols within their cultural and poetic context. This suggests that each floral motif in A.A. Fet's work serves as a bridge connecting individual and universal experiences. The hermeneutic approach demonstrates how symbols such as the rose and nightingale, while traditionally emblematic of romantic love, also reflect more profound philosophical inquiries into the transience of existence, the nature of beauty, and the experience of sorrow. Adopting these perspectives enables the uncovering of layers of meaning that enhance the symbolic richness of A.A. Fet's floral imagery, facilitating engagement with these symbols as expressions of both personal and collective sentiment.

As such, the analysis of the lyrical works of A.A. Fet, as well as other landscape poets, allowed us to determine that floral imagery is one of the main lyrical mechanisms for describing feelings, emotions, and experiences that the author tries to convey through plant symbols, giving them a human appearance. The image of flowers acts as a kind of key to the understanding of literary works. The most frequent floral image in the works of A.A. Fet is the rose, which symbolizes the feelings of beautiful love. Just as love is the most common subject in lyrical works, “rose” has naturally become a timeless theme that various writers reveal. The rich connotation contained in the word “rose” is reflected in countless literary works. The images of “rose” captured by different poets are crystallizations of their understanding of the society and nature in which they live, as well as their life experiences. Through the analysis of the poems, it was highlighted that the image of the rose usually symbolizes beautiful love in the same way as R. Burns’s “Красная роза” (“Red Rose”) and W. Blake’s antitraditional image of the “sick rose.” All in all, A.A. Fet reveals in his lyrical works 15 floral images. They are rose, lily of the valley, violet, lily, dahlias, hyacinth, poppy, lilac, mignonette, bellflower, forget-me-not, tuberose, carnation, tulip, as well as generalized references to “colour” and “flower,” which determine the author’s conveyance of feelings and emotions.

5 Conclusions

As a result of the study, it was found that the symbolism of plant images, especially flowers, is quite often used by landscape poets in the lyrical genre. However, A.A. Fet is the landscape poet of the Russian literature of the nineteenth century, who revealed his picture of the world through the images of flowers. Thus, after analysing 806 lyrical works, 15 floro-images were revealed, considering the generalized reference to flowers, among them: rose, lily of the valley, violet, lily, dahlias, hyacinth, poppy, lion-cote, reseda, bellflower, forget-me-not, tuberose, carnation, and tulip. The most frequent floral image was the image of a flower – 116 uses in 80 lyrical works. The favourite flower of the poet was the rose – 87 used in 53 lyrical works, which is associated with the image of the lyrical heroine, where parallel pictures of the world of people and nature unfold. A.A. Fet adheres to the traditional “hierarchy” of flower images, considering the rose the “queen.” From a diachronic perspective, the image of the rose in A.A. Fet’s lyrics changes: in his early works, the perception of the rose is only positive, and in his later works, it’s minor. Repeatedly, the rose is paired primarily with the nightingale, but there are also “substitutes” for the bird, such as the bee, the moth, and the month. Similar pairs can also be traced in the floral images of various poets.

This analysis, which draws on the dual perspectives of the “language of flowers” and “plant studies,” has demonstrated that A.A. Fet’s use of floral imagery is not merely an aesthetic device; rather, it engages with a discourse on the interconnections between humans and the natural world. In A.A. Fet’s poetry, flowers act as epistemological agents, embodying cultural meanings and enriching his lyrical reflections.

It has also been determined that the author resorts to the techniques of personification of flower images even when they appear in their direct meaning. A.A. Fet is one of the few poets who have an entire “garden of flowers. The poet was the first to dedicate landscape poems to the lily of the valley and dahlia. Most often the flowers accentuate the scent, which is especially distinguished by the lily of the valley, violet, and rosewood. The landscape poet ignores the symbolic images of the lily as a woman’s breast or the emblem of French kings, common in the 1920s and 1930s. The stable bee–flower pair dating back to Oriental poetry is attributed in A.A. Fet’s lyrics, so the butterfly and moth act as a “substitute” for the bee, and the flower as a generic concept gives way to the rose, lilac, bird cherry, acacia, and apple blossom. Often, the image of a flower is anthropomorphic, and it has its own language and life cycle, independent of man. In the lyrical works of the author, a blossoming flower represents love, joy, and the fullness of life, while a wilted flower is a sign of death and a violation of the harmony of existence. Thus, the study’s objectives are met. However, further research is needed to further emphasize the connection between the semantic images of plants within lyrical poetry.

In conclusion, the incorporation of phenomenological and hermeneutical perspectives into the analysis of floral imagery in A.A. Fet’s lyrical works serves to enhance the understanding of the function of flowers as conduits of human emotion and philosophical reflection. Phenomenology emphasizes the subjective impact of

visual and colour imagery, whereas hermeneutics situates these symbols within broader cultural and existential frameworks. A.A. Fet's flowers, especially the rose, transcend metaphor, inviting readers to engage with universal human themes. This approach reveals the depth of A.A. Fet's floral imagery, transforming it into a nuanced exploration of the concepts of beauty, transience, and emotional resonance.

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