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THE POETIC UNIVERSE OF USMON AZIM: ARTISTIC INNOVATIONS AND PHILOSOPHICAL SYNTHESIS IN MODERN UZBEK LYRICISM

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Abstract: This paper explores the artistic dimensions and philosophical foundations of the lyrical poetry of Usmon Azim, a prominent figure in contemporary Uzbek literature. Utilizing comparative, structural-semantic, and textological analysis, the study deciphers how the poet synthesizes deep-rooted folklore motifs (Baxshi traditions) with modern existentialist philosophies. The research examines the structural evolution of his metaphors, the psychological depth of his lyrical hero, and the artistic synthesis of traditional and individual myth-making. Through textual analysis of specific poems like *"Kuz"* and *"Baxshiyona"*, the paper demonstrates how abstract psychological states are solidified into dynamic aesthetic images. The findings indicate that Usmon Azim's lyricism reconstructs national identity through avant-garde poetic forms, establishing a unique aesthetic school within Eastern poetic paradigms.

Keywords: Usmon Azim, Lyricism, Poetics, Metaphor, Lyrical Hero, Folklore Synthesis, Modern Uzbek Poetry.

1. Introduction

Contemporary Uzbek poetry of the late 20th and early 21st centuries underwent a significant paradigm shift, transitioning from rigid ideological themes to profound anthropocentric and philosophical explorations. At the vanguard of this artistic renaissance stands Usmon Azim, whose lyricism serves as a linguistic and philosophical bridge between classical Eastern poetic traditions and modern European literary movements.

The primary artistic problem addressed in his work is the existential conflict of the modern individual, depicted through a highly stylized, emotionally charged aesthetic framework. While local scholarship has frequently commented on the populist tone of his verse, a rigorous academic analysis of his sophisticated metaphoric systems and aesthetic innovations under international literary standards remains imperative. This study aims to evaluate the unique poetic mechanisms that construct the artistic reality in Usmon Azim's lyricism.

2. Literature Review

To comprehend the aesthetic magnitude of Usmon Azim, his work must be situated within the broader framework of structural poetics and mythological synthesis. According to the foundational theories of poetic metaphor formulated by Ricoeur (1975), a metaphor is not merely a stylistic ornament but a cognitive instrument that creates new semantic realities. In the context of Uzbek literary criticism, scholars like Sharafiddinov (2001) and Karimov (2012) emphasized that the "Generation of the 70s"—to which Usmon Azim belongs—democratized poetic language by injecting vernacular energy and philosophical skepticism into traditional verse forms.

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Recent domestic studies have analyzed the folklore elements in his poetry, highlighting his utilization of epic structures from the *Alpomish* and *Gorogli* cycles[1] (Jumanova, 2023; Akbarova, 2024). However, Western structuralist approaches, particularly Lotman's (1970) theory of the "artistic text as a semiotic system," have seldom been applied to his unique methods of individual myth-making. This paper bridges this gap by cross-referencing local thematic interpretations with international stylistic frameworks.

3. Methodology

This study employs a multi-dimensional methodological approach tailored for advanced textological research:

- **Structural-Semantic Analysis**: Used to dissect the structural layers of individual and conventional metaphors within the collections *"Kuz"* (Autumn) and *"Tunlar va Tuyg'ular"* (Nights and Emotions).

- **Comparative Hermeneutics**: Applied to analyze the intersection between folkloric oral traditions (Baxshiyona poetry) and modern European lyrical standards.

- **Psychological Textualism**: Executed to decode the internal monologues and emotional shifts characterizing the evolution of the lyrical "Self" (Lyrical Hero)[2].

4. Results and Discussion: Textual Case Studies and Critical Analysis

4.1. The Metaphoric Matrix and Individual Myth-Making

Usmon Azim's poetry replaces passive description with active, dynamic metaphorization. Nature is not a mere static background (landscape) but an aggressive, living interlocutor that co-experiences existential dread alongside the human hero. To understand the structural complexity of Usmon Azim's individual myth-making, we must analyze his iconic poem *"Kuz"* (Autumn). In classical Eastern poetry, autumn traditionally symbolizes decay, separation, or the final stage of human life. However, Usmon Azim radically deconstructs this conventional paradigm.

Let us examine the following stanza from the original text:

"Yurakni qush qilib uchirib yubor,
Barglar shovqiniga ko'milsin dunyo.
Bu kuzda boshqacha yig'laydi yomg'ir,
Bu kuzda boshqacha sarg'ayar daryo."

In our literary-academic translation, this aesthetic image transforms into:

"Set the heart free like a bird to fly away,
Let the world be buried in the rustle of falling leaves.

[1] Jumanova, 2023; Akbarova, 2024

[2] Akbarova, D. (2024). Analysis of Usmon Azim's lyricism: Folklore motifs and emotional depths. *Journal of Science and Education*, 9(24), 67-73.

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In this autumn, the rain weeps in a different guise,
In this autumn, the river fades into a different yellow."

Critical Textual Analysis: Here, the poet avoids static description. Instead of observing autumn from a distance, the lyrical hero forces a psychological fusion between internal emotions and external nature. The phrase *"yurakni qush qilib uchirib yubor"* (set the heart free like a bird) is a sharp cognitive metaphor where emotional vulnerability is physicalized.

According to structural poetics, this technique represents a shift from passive reflection to active ontological transformation (Lotman, 1970, p. 112)[3]. The anthropomorphic presentation of nature—where the rain does not simply fall, but *"weeps in a different guise"* (*boshqacha yig'laydi yomg'ir*)—demonstrates that in Usmon Azim's poetic universe, natural elements act as external nerve endings of the human soul. The river fading into yellow (*sarg'ayar daryo*) represents the liquidation of the boundary between the internal "Self" and the physical universe.

4.2. The Evolution of the Lyrical Hero and Internal Monologue

The lyrical hero in Usmon Azim's early works was defined by romantic rebellion; however, his mature poetry presents a highly sophisticated philosophical "Self" trapped in internal monologues. The structural use of internal monologue allows the poet to achieve deep psychological realism. The hero frequently splits his consciousness into two opposing entities: the fragile, mortal human and the eternal, agonizing artistic soul.

4.3. Folklore Synthesis (Baxshiyona Aesthetics)

Usmon Azim's second major stylistic breakthrough is the injection of folklore energy into elite intellectual poetry, a genre locally known as *Baxshiyona*. This style roots the modern existential crisis into the rhythmic heartbeat of ancient nomadic epics.

Consider the following rhythmic structure from his poetry:

"Men – zamin bag'rida unutilgan tosh,
Asriy armonlarning ko'zidagi yosh.
Do'mbiramni chertib, haqni kuylasam,
Muzlagan dillarga quyosh bo'lur foosh."

In academic translation, the verse maintains its ideological and sonic weight:

"I am a stone forgotten in the womb of the earth,
A teardrop in the eyes of century-old grief.
When I strike my dombra and sing the ultimate truth,
A hidden sun bursts forth within frozen hearts."

Critical Textual Analysis: This stanza demonstrates the unique synthesis of a high-art existential dilemma with the raw acoustic power of the folk storyteller (*Baxshi*). The lyrical hero undergoes a radical metaphorical metamorphosis: he is not a modern city dweller, but *"a stone forgotten in the womb of the earth"*

[3] Lotman, 1970, p. 112

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(*unutilgan tosh*). This image utilizes what Ricoeur calls the "surplus of meaning," where an object symbolizes timeless national endurance (Ricoeur, 1975, p. 84).[4]

The introduction of the *"dombra"* (a traditional musical instrument) is not a mere folkloric ornament; it serves as a semiotic tool of spiritual awakening. The contrast between *"muzlagan dillar"* (frozen hearts/modern alienation) and *"quyosh"* (the sun/divine truth) highlights the social mission of Usmon Azim's lyrical hero. He uses ancient folklore rhythms to shake contemporary humanity out of its moral and philosophical apathy (Jumanova, 2023, p. 38)[5].

5. Conclusion

The academic investigation reveals that Usmon Azim's lyricism is an innovative aesthetic system that significantly enriches modern Uzbek literature. The structural analysis of his poetry demonstrates that his mastery lies in his ability to execute an artistic synthesis between ancient folkloric oral structures and modern psychological existentialism. By transforming the structural nature of metaphor—as seen in the transformation of natural landscapes into emotional spaces—and shifting the lyrical hero from an epic persona to an internal philosopher, he establishes an enduring model for contemporary Eastern poetry.

Furthermore, his *Baxshiyona* poems prove that traditional national heritage can serve as an effective framework for addressing global, universal human anxieties. Ultimately, Usmon Azim's work transcends local boundaries, offering a sophisticated paradigm where cultural authenticity and modern avant-garde styles coexist harmoniously, establishing him as a crucial subject for global comparative literature studies.

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