



THE CONCEPT OF NATURE, SEASONAL SYMBOLISM, AND CULTURAL TIME IN UZBEK POETRY

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the linguocultural and poetic functions of the concept of nature, seasonal symbolism, and cultural time in Uzbek poetry, with particular attention to the works of Cho'lpon and Abdulla Oripov. The study treats nature not merely as a descriptive background but as a semantically active sphere through which emotional states, historical memory, national values, and philosophical reflection are articulated. The analysis focuses on the anthropomorphization of natural phenomena, the cultural semantics of the four seasons, and the sensory organization of poetic imagery through color, sound, temperature, movement, and silence. Particular attention is paid to the way universal calendrical time is transformed into culturally marked poetic time. A comparative reading shows that in Cho'lpon's poetry seasonal and landscape images frequently acquire a social and historical function and become symbolic expressions of national destiny, whereas in Abdulla Oripov's poetry, especially in the poem "Bahor" ("Spring"), nature is more closely associated with the lyrical subject's inner experience and with reflections on memory, life and death, homeland, love, and human existence. The findings demonstrate that seasonal imagery in Uzbek poetry functions simultaneously as a national-cultural code, an axiological marker, a psychological correlate, and a compositional device.

1.Introduction

Nature occupies a central position in literary representation because it allows the poet to connect the external world with human emotion, memory, and value. In poetic discourse, natural phenomena rarely remain neutral objects of description. Wind, rain, sunlight, mountains, trees, flowers, birds, and the cycle of the seasons may become interlocutors, witnesses, companions, or symbolic judges. Such representations do not simply oppose the human world to the natural world; rather, they integrate both into a shared semantic and spiritual system. From a linguocultural perspective, the concept of nature therefore includes

not only knowledge about the physical environment but also culturally conditioned attitudes toward it, including emotional, ethical, and axiological meanings.

The four seasons are especially productive in this respect. Spring may encode beginnings, renewal, vitality, and hope; summer may suggest maturity, labor, and fullness; autumn may activate meanings of harvest, summation, decline, or separation; winter may signify stillness, deprivation, estrangement, purity, mourning, or, in certain contexts, reunion. These associations are not fixed once and for all. Every poetic text recontextualizes them, and the writer may assign a single season several different anthropomorphic, symbolic, and emotional codes. In this way, universal calendrical time is converted into culturally meaningful poetic time.

Uzbek literary scholarship has addressed the poetic representation of nature and the seasons from several perspectives, including classical poetics, poetic imagery, individual style, and landscape symbolism (Ogahiy, 1971; Ishoqov, 1983; Komilov, 2005; Haqqulov, 1989, 2019; Matyoqubova, 2011; Mirzohidova, 2018; Boltayeva, 2020). Studies of modern Uzbek poetry have likewise examined the relation between poetic style, visual imagery, and historical-aesthetic development (Sharafiddinov, 1979, 1983; Rahimjonov, 1979, 2007; Qosimov et al., 2004; Tajibaeva, 2018; Davronova, 2019; Hojiyeva, 2018). Building on this tradition, the present article focuses specifically on the linguocultural semantics of nature, seasonal symbols, and cultural time, and compares their poetic functions in the works of Cho'lpon and Abdulla Oripov.

Methodologically, the study combines linguocultural interpretation, contextual-semantic analysis, comparative reading, and elements of linguopoetic analysis. The purpose is to determine how natural phenomena and seasonal images move beyond denotative description and become carriers of cultural memory, emotional evaluation, philosophical reflection, and individual poetic meaning.

The concept of nature in poetry is inseparable from the human subject who perceives and interprets it. A poet does not merely reproduce a landscape; the landscape is filtered through consciousness, memory, emotion, and aesthetic intention. For this reason, almost any detail of the natural world can become a poetic image if it enters the field of the author's artistic attention. Akramov (1979, p. 3) defines the poetic image as a concrete yet generalized artistic embodiment of poetic thought and feeling. Such an image may arise either from the reflection of the objective world in the poet's inner consciousness or from the poet's re-experience and rediscovery of reality according to aesthetic principles.

This understanding is especially important for the analysis of landscape. Literary description activates not only visual memory but also auditory, tactile, thermal, and psychological associations. Accordingly, images in literary texts may be organized around characters, animals, landscapes, objects, sounds, colors, or combinations of several sensory modalities. The interaction of these modalities increases the concreteness and emotional intensity of perception. The image thus functions as a bridge between linguistic form, sensory experience, and cultural meaning.

Anthropomorphization is one of the principal mechanisms through which nature becomes culturally and emotionally meaningful. Human verbs may be attached to natural objects; forms of address and exclamation may treat wind, sun, mountains, trees, or grass as

active participants in the lyrical situation. Nature may listen, sympathize, awaken, carry a burden, turn away, or respond. Formally, these personifying structures are expressed through predication, verbal semantics, direct address, and evaluative vocabulary. Semantically, however, they establish a relation of proximity between the natural world and the lyrical subject.

Seasonal imagery is one of the most stable ways in which poetic discourse models cultural time. Calendar time is cyclical and universal, but poetry individualizes this cycle by attaching to it culturally specific values and personal experiences. Spring is often associated with awakening, birth, youth, love, and renewal; summer with ripeness and productive energy; autumn with harvest, wisdom, decline, recollection, or separation; winter with stillness, hardship, isolation, purity, or death. Yet these meanings remain context-sensitive. A poet may portray spring as a child, a young man, or an exuberant girl, thereby placing different anthropomorphic codes upon the same season.

The resulting cultural temporality differs from ordinary chronology. Time becomes qualitative rather than merely measurable. A season can represent a stage of life, an emotional state, a collective historical condition, or a moral value. This is why seasonal semantics often overlap with axiological oppositions such as life/death, hope/despair, freedom/captivity, meeting/separation, youth/aging, and renewal/decline. In poetic structure, the season therefore functions not only as a temporal marker but also as a conceptual frame that organizes imagery, emotional tone, and thematic development.

Color, sound, temperature, movement, and silence form the sensory layer of seasonal representation. Yellow may evoke autumnal fading, wisdom, or separation; white may be associated with winter, purity, mourning, or reunion; green may activate the semantics of spring, vitality, and renewal. These meanings are not universal in a rigid sense: their interpretation depends on the immediate poetic context and on the cultural associations available to the reader.

Auditory and kinetic details also shape the emotional tonality of landscape. Wind, rain, birdsong, rustling leaves, or silence may turn an external scene into a psychologically charged environment. When visual, auditory, and tactile impressions interact, the poem produces a synesthetic effect: the reader simultaneously sees, hears, and senses the landscape. This multisensory organization strengthens the transmission of cultural and emotional meaning because the poetic image is experienced not as an abstract sign but as an integrated perceptual event.

In Cho'lpon's poetry, natural imagery is closely connected with the historical and social destiny of the country. Yo'ldoshev (1994, p. 7) emphasizes that nature in Cho'lpon's poetry is inseparable from the fate of the homeland. Consequently, details of landscape often acquire a social function. The seasons are not merely meteorological settings; they become symbolic forms through which oppression, awakening, stagnation, hope, and collective suffering are expressed.

Quvvatova and Sohibova (2019, pp. 103–106) show that Cho'lpon uses autumn to evoke the image of an oppressed East, winter to represent a people subjected to pressure and captivity, and spring to embody the life-affirming desire for renewal and creation. Such interpretations reveal how seasonal symbols can move from the private emotional sphere

into the domain of national history. The landscape is thus semiotically expanded: a dry branch, coldness, fading vegetation, or spring revival may function as a compressed cultural and political sign.

The poem “Yana ko’klam” (“Spring Again”) provides a characteristic example. The image of a “dry branch” represents a subject who remains unawakened and inert even when nature itself is renewing (Yo’ldoshev, 1994, p. 9). The contrast between the general revival of the natural world and the immobility of the individual intensifies the symbolic meaning of spring. In this poetic model, nature becomes a diagnostic space: it measures the degree to which the human subject or the social environment is capable of awakening.

Abdulla Oripov’s poetry also assigns exceptional importance to the seasons, particularly to spring. Poems such as “Bahor” (“Spring”), “Sen bahorni sog’inmadingmi?” (“Did You Not Miss Spring?”), “Bahor senikidir” (“Spring Is Yours”), and “Bahor kunlarida kuzning havosi” (“Autumn Air in the Days of Spring”) demonstrate the semantic flexibility of seasonal imagery. In these texts, spring is not simply celebrated as a natural phenomenon; it becomes a framework for memory, existential reflection, emotional renewal, and philosophical thought.

In “Bahor,” Oripov constructs the spring landscape through highly visual and anthropomorphic images. Wind is represented as awakening and rubbing its palms, the sun rises higher, mountains lift their shoulders as if throwing off a burden, and grass shakes its head. These images occur in Oripov’s first volume of selected works (Oripov, 2000, p. 122). Through these personifying predicates, the natural world is transformed into an active dramatic field. The landscape appears to move, awaken, and participate in the emotional state of the lyrical subject.

Quronov (2018, pp. 69–70) notes that in Oripov’s poetry visual imagery becomes a major vehicle for artistic and philosophical thought and, in “Bahor,” also contributes to compositional unity. This observation is significant because the poem develops beyond the praise of spring and turns toward the memory of earlier poets, the image of the mother, life and death, rebellion and obedience, and love of the homeland. The spring landscape therefore serves as a semantic and compositional nucleus that links otherwise distinct thematic domains.

This function distinguishes Oripov’s seasonal poetics from Cho’lpon’s in an important respect. Whereas Cho’lpon frequently aligns landscape with the social destiny of the nation, Oripov more often uses spring as a medium for the lyrical subject’s inner movement and for reflections on universal human existence. The difference should not be treated as an absolute opposition: both poets mobilize culturally recognizable seasonal codes. However, the dominant direction of semantic expansion differs. In Cho’lpon, seasonal imagery tends to move toward socio-historical symbolism; in Oripov, it tends to deepen psychological, existential, and philosophical reflection.

2. Discussion

The comparative material confirms that the poetic semantics of nature is produced at the intersection of shared cultural codes and individual authorial transformation. A season enters the poem with a culturally recognizable semantic potential, but it acquires its actual meaning through the structure of a particular text. For this reason, spring cannot automatically be equated with renewal, nor autumn with decline. Such associations are

interpretive starting points rather than predetermined conclusions. The researcher must examine verbal predicates, evaluative vocabulary, sound patterning, color terms, compositional position, intertextual associations, and the relation of the landscape to the lyrical subject.

From a linguocultural standpoint, seasonal imagery can be viewed as a form of cultural coding. The natural cycle becomes a repository of social memory and value. At the same time, poetic language may modify this inherited code through metaphor, personification, contrast, semantic displacement, and synesthetic combination. The artistic text thus preserves culturally recognizable meanings while simultaneously renewing them. This double movement – continuity and transformation – is one of the principal mechanisms through which cultural time is created in poetry.

The analysis also shows that landscape performs several functions at once. It is descriptive because it depicts the external world; psychological because it correlates with emotional states; symbolic because it activates culturally established associations; axiological because it encodes values and evaluations; and compositional because it can organize the progression of the poem. Such multifunctionality explains why the concept of nature remains central to linguocultural and linguopoetic analysis.

3. Conclusion

The poetic interpretation of nature and the seasons demonstrates that natural images in Uzbek poetry extend far beyond the function of landscape description. They operate as linguocultural signs through which emotional experience, historical memory, national worldview, and systems of value are represented. Spring, summer, autumn, and winter model cultural time by combining natural cyclicity with culturally and individually meaningful notions of beginning, maturity, summation, stillness, separation, renewal, and loss.

Anthropomorphic representation is a major linguopoetic mechanism in this process. Images of awakening wind, rising sunlight, burden-bearing mountains, or moving grass assign human qualities to natural phenomena and bring the landscape into the inner world of the lyrical subject. Color, sound, temperature, movement, and silence construct the sensory dimension of these images and intensify their emotional-aesthetic effect. As a result, the landscape emerges as a multilayered poetic structure that combines visual, auditory, tactile, symbolic, and axiological meanings.

The comparison between Cho'lpon and Abdulla Oripov further shows that seasonal symbolism is shaped by individual poetic strategy. In Cho'lpon's poetry, seasonal and landscape images are frequently socialized and historicized, becoming symbolic expressions of the fate of the people and the homeland. In Abdulla Oripov's poetry, particularly in "Bahor," spring imagery more often functions as a means of articulating inner experience and philosophical reflection on memory, life and death, homeland, love, and human existence. Thus, the concept of nature, seasonal symbolism, and cultural time should be analyzed as an integrated system in which lexical meaning, anthropomorphism, sensory imagery, cultural association, value, and compositional function interact.

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