

**JADID WRITERS' CREATIVITY IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY UZBEK
POETRY (WITH REFERENCE TO THE POEMS OF SADRIDDIN
AYNIY AND ABDURAUUF FITRAT)**

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Abstract: It is well known that one of the leading themes of Uzbek literature during the Jadid period is connected with interpretations of the Homeland. In the poems of Enlightenment-era writers, praise of the native land is closely intertwined with ideas of freedom and liberty. This article analyses such poems by Sadriddin Ayniy and Abdurauf Fitrat and reveals their artistic features.

Keywords: theme of the homeland, theme of freedom, syllabic metre, aruz, prose poetry, lyrical hero, independence, tajohuli arif, allusion (talmeh), personification (tashkhis).

The homeland is a sacred space. There is hardly a creative artist who has not sung of it or worried about its future. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Jadid writers who entered the literary arena on the wings of the Enlightenment movement breathed new life into the tradition of writing poetry about the homeland. In the works of poets such as Abdulla Avloniy, Sadriddin Ayniy, Abdurauf Fitrat, Cho'lpon, and Elbek, this theme is expressed in harmony with feelings of freedom and liberation and is imbued with a strong social spirit. In particular, Abdulla Avloniy's poetry presents distinctive interpretations of the theme of the homeland. His poem "Homeland" is significant in twentieth-century Uzbek poetry as a work rich in national imagery that initiated this theme:

Sening isming bu dunyoda muqaddasdur,

Har kim sening qadring bilmas – aqli pas(t)dur.

Sening tuyg'ung yuraklarga savdo solur,

Sening darding boshqa dardni tortib olur.

In the opening stanza, while emphasising the sacredness of the name and feeling of the Homeland, the poet calls those who fail to sense it or appreciate its value "weak-minded". Moreover, the spiritual power of this feeling — capable of captivating hearts and drawing all other sorrows to itself — clearly demonstrates how profound and meaningful it is.

Yering, suving bizni boqub to'ydiradur,

Semiz-semiz qo'ylaringni so'ydiradur.

Olma-anor, anjir, uzum – mevalaring,

Ot-u ho'kuz, echki, taka, tevalaring.

Bizlar uchun xizmat qilur barchalari,

Har birlari noz-u ne'mat parchalari [1.72].

In the lines above, scenes of the nation's daily life are vividly depicted: the land and water of our country, blessed with sunlight, serve as the material sources of life. At the same time, the poet reflects the everyday livelihood of ordinary people, closely tied to animal husbandry; expressions such as "your fat, flourishing sheep" and "your horses, oxen, goats, bucks, and camels" clearly refer to this way of life.

Sendan tug'ib, katta bo'lub, qaytib borub,

Yana senga kiradurmiz bag'ring yorub.

Onamizsan! Bizni(ng) mushfiq onamizsan!

Javlon urub yashaydurgon xonamizsan! [1.72]

The tradition of comparing the homeland to a mother actually began in modern poetry with the patriotic poet Abdulla Avloniy. Indeed, just as a child seeks the warm embrace of a mother, one longs for the bosom of the motherland.

Seni sotmoq mumkinmidur, o'zing o'yla,

Tiling bo'lsa, hasratlaring tuzuk so'yla! [1.72]

The opening line is built on a naïve, almost mystical logic: in the eyes of the lyrical speaker, the homeland cannot be bought or sold. The following line, infused with a spirit of independence, emphasises that the poet refers to a country devoid of freedom and rights when he speaks of "grief."

Ayb bizlarda, seni sog'ub emolmaduk,

Yemush berib yem o'rniga yem olmaduk.

Bilolmaduk ko'ksingdagi xazinani,

Biz bilasmiz tosh-tarozu, mazinani.

Sotib-sotib qoladurmiz g'amga botib,

Boyqush kabi vayronada yotib-yotib.

Seni sotub pul qilurmiz – ketur-qolur,

Bir yildan so'ng bahong ikki bo'lub olur. [1.72]

We know that a child grows up nourished by a mother's milk. In this sense, by saying "we have not nursed you," the poet expresses that he could not flourish within the embrace of the homeland. Indeed, at the beginning of the last century, our country had turned into a ruin, like an abandoned owl's nest.

Overall, Abdulla Avloniy's poem "Homeland" holds a special place in modern Uzbek poetry as one of the first works to develop the lyrical motif of the homeland. In it, the poet's love and devotion to his birthplace are evident, likening it to a mother. At the same time, he expresses concern for its future and dreams of seeing his country free.

The theme of the homeland also appears prominently in the works of other enlightened poets, including Sadridin Ayniy. His poem "Memories of Exile or Remembrance of the Homeland" is a striking example. With its artistic and ideological maturity, it stands out among Ayniy's poetry. As the poet himself put it, it captures the fate of the homeland "under a time of oppression." The poem is imbued with sorrow for the country's condition and a desire to soothe its suffering.

Ey Vatan, boshimga mushkul tushdi hijroning sening,

Benavo boshim o'ylaydi, qosh qurboning sening.

Literary critics have offered various interpretations of this poem. For instance, X. Niyozov, in his study on Ayniy's poetry, includes it among the works that strongly reflect civic and patriotic sentiments.[2.46] Indeed, the poet connects the fate of his homeland with the feelings of a struggling people. Typically, a person feels the pangs of homeland most acutely when far away from it. The above lines reflect exactly this emotional state. At the same time, expressions like "my helpless head" confirm the poet's personal suffering, which can be vividly understood in the context of the historical period. At that time, our country and people were oppressed under Russian domination. The lyrical speaker is ready to sacrifice himself for the freedom and independence of his homeland:

Sandug'ochlar o'rni qo'nsinmi joiz qarg'alar,

Boq! Na bo'ldi, bog'ing, gulistoning sening.

In this poem, the poet creates a vivid poetic landscape based on the art of contrast. The sandug'och (nightingale) symbolizes a bird that sings sweetly, while the qarg'a (crow), whose call is unpleasant to humans, carries a negative connotation. The Motherland is compared to a garden. The poet expresses deep sorrow because it is no longer ruled by the nightingale but by the crows. For the youthful poet, this signifies a painful conflict. In this context, the nightingale symbolizes the struggle for freedom and liberty, while the crow represents a cunning, malicious force.

Qon yutarlar navniholing bugun suv o'rni qo'nsinmi,

Nahri xunafshona do'ndimi Zarafshoning sening.

In this passage, the poet creates a vivid poetic scene using the art of contrast. The nightingale, or bulbul, sings sweetly and pleasantly, whereas the crow's cawing is unpleasant to human ears. Hence, the crow carries a negative connotation. The homeland is likened to a garden, and the poet, in the prime of his youth, experiences deep anguish because the garden is occupied not by nightingales but by crows. In this imagery, the nightingale represents those fighting for freedom and independence, while the crow embodies the cunning figure of the enemy.

Ha umiding uuzma, Ayniy, davr istiqbolidan,
Har vatandoshing o‘lur bir kun ham afg‘oning sening.

Only one who has internalized the feeling of homeland in their heart can truly grieve for it in anguish and care for its future. From beginning to end, this spirit dominates the poem. The work is also formally accomplished: it is known that Ayniy composed masterful ghazals in the classical aruz metre. “Vatan yodi” is among these, crafted in the ramal-i musamma’ mahfuz pattern of aruz verse.

Ey Vatan, boshimga mushkul tushdi hijroning sening,

- v - - // - v - - // - v - - // - v -

Benavo boshim o‘laydi, qosh(i) qurboning sening.

- v - - // - v - - // - v - - // - v -

In the ghazal, rhyming words such as “hijroning” (of separation), “qurboning” (of sacrifice), “gulistoning” (of your garden), “Zarafshoning”, “qoning” (your blood), and “afg‘oning” (your suffering) create the poem’s harmonious sound pattern. The word “sening” (your) functions as the refrain. Overall, the poem possesses a cohesive compositional integrity, evoking in the reader both profound pain and aesthetic pleasure.

The poet’s aspirations have come to fruition in our times. For every compatriot whose heart beats with love for the homeland, it is a sacred duty to honour the legacy of great figures like Sadriddin Ayniy.

Abdurauf Fitrat is one of the eminent figures who laid the foundations of Uzbekistan’s independence. His multifaceted work, imbued with the ideas of sovereignty, as well as his constructive endeavours, deserve special recognition and respect. His collection “Yurt qayg‘usi” (The Sorrows of the Homeland) comprises four poems, the first written in aruz metre and the remaining three in free verse. The central theme of these works is the liberation of the homeland. Onam! Seni qutqarmoq uchun jonmi kerakdir?

Nomusmi, vijdon bila imonmi kerakdir?

Temur bilan Chingiz qoni toshdi tomirimizdan

Aytgil, Seni qutqarmoq uchun qonmi kerakdir? [2.31]

The lines above, adorned with tajohuli orif (artful humility) and talmeh (allusive metaphor), resonate as the true voice of a devoted patriot. Indeed, the lyrical hero stands ready in every way to save the homeland from degradation and the yoke of oppression.

Boq, boq, turk tengizi toshqun qila qoldi

Turon yovini quvg‘ali to‘fonmi kerakdir?

Turon, yigiting, barchaga boq, qalqdi oyoqq‘a,

Yurtda qorovul qo‘yg‘ali arslonmi kerakdir? [2.31]

In the line “The Turk Sea has overflowed,” Fitrat alludes to the jadid reformers, portraying them as forces of upheaval and renewal. Furthermore, the “storm” and the “lion” serve as symbolic representations of the poet himself, ready to drive away enemies like a raging tempest and to defend his homeland as a courageous lion, in the struggle for its freedom.

The first prose-poem in the Yurt qayg‘usi (“The Homeland’s Lament”) collection resonates with the lamentations and regrets of a true patriot, deeply concerned for his country’s future:

“O Great Turan, land of lions! What has befallen you? How are your affairs? What days have come upon you?

O cradles of Genghis, Timur, Oghuz, and Attila! Where are those exalted heights you once reached? How did you fall into the depths of slavery?”

Firat, well-versed in the ancient history of Turkistan, laments the fate of his homeland under colonial domination and reflects on the causes of its fall into the “depths of slavery.” Here, the phrase “depths of slavery” is a literary invention, vividly portraying early 20th-century Turkistan:

“O Great Turan, land of lions! Do not grieve! Your former state, former sovereignty, your old heroes, and ancient lions—all still exist; none are lost. Only... dispersed and alone...”

The poet attributes the downfall of his people and homeland to their disunity and fragmentation.

In the second prose-poem, symbolism takes precedence. The homeland is depicted as a woman wearing a silk but tattered old dress, with bare feet and elbows smeared with black mud, whose cries have lost their resonance. The silk dress symbolizes Turkistan’s glorious past, while its tattered condition reflects the state of the country under colonial rule. Her bare feet and mud-smeared limbs signify the suffering of the people under the Tsarist oppression. According to the poet’s interpretation, this sorrowful, grieving woman is none other than the Homeland itself..

“Turonim, sendan ayrilmoq mening uchun o‘limim.

Sening uchun o‘lmoq mening tirikligimdir.

Men sen uchun tirildim

Sening uchun yasharman

Sening uchun o‘lurman,

The line “O sacred hearth of Turkicness!” is imbued with genuine patriotism and devotion to the homeland. The lyrical hero does not retreat, whether he finds himself on the “path of the Qof mountains,” faces the “fires of hell,” confronts the “legions of devils,” or encounters the “serpents of hell.” Here, “legions of devils” and “serpents of hell” are the poet’s artistic inventions, symbolizing the enemies of freedom and liberty.

In the third prose-poem, the lyrical hero seeks aid from the spirit of Timur (Temur) for the sake of his “oppressed head, crushed conscience, burnt blood, and tormented soul”:

“I have come to take kohl from your soil for the eyes of the Uzbek, left without light in the darkness... The honor, dignity, faith, and conscience of the Turk lie under the feet of the oppressors.

The homeland of the Turk, its greatness, its sacred hearth, Turan, has fallen into alien hands.”

The poet appeals to the spirit of the great ruler who founded an empire, pouring out the sufferings of a land deprived of freedom. He recounts all the wrongs endured and seeks pardon and sacred blessing from “Temur, the lion of lions,” hoping for his intercession. Before this spirit, he swears:

“I will not set foot before you until the old honor and greatness of Turan are restored.”

He remained true to this vow, not only as a poet but also as a devoted patriot, sacrificing his life for the independence of his homeland—a dream realized by subsequent generations.

Fitrat's poem Qor ("Snow"), though seemingly dedicated to the wonders of nature, radiates a profound sense of hope for national independence, blending natural imagery with patriotic optimism.

Bu kichkina, o'ksuz, oppoq bebaklar,
Ucha-ucha yetmay qolg'an tilaklar.

"Kichkina, o'ksuz, oppoq bebaklar" – snowflakes. When he calls them "wishes that never reached," it literally points to the snowflakes melting before they touch the ground. Symbolically, it represents the struggle for independence: like the snowflakes, those who fight for freedom often encounter obstacles and unfulfilled hopes at every step. Similarly, in his poem O'gut, the poet addresses the youth with imperatives—"Run, strive, do not bend—rise; Dare—enter, do not fear—cling, march—move"—using verbs and inner rhythm to urge persistence, courage, and aspiration toward liberty, emphasizing the need not to falter on this sacred path.

The poems we analysed above are heartfelt cries from Fitrat's patriotic, freedom-loving soul. Built on symbols, their deeper purpose is to reveal the spiritual and social foundations of independence and illuminate the psychology of national pride. In this respect, Fitrat's works remain a luminous chapter of Uzbek poetry, both in form and meaning.

Elbek, too, as a Jadid writer, developed this theme with fervour, following the example of Cho'lpon. His poem Uyg'on, ko'nglim ("Awaken, My Heart") closely resembles Cho'lpon's Ko'ngil in terms of theme and imagery. Elbek writes:

Uyg'on, ko'nglim, uyg'on, bir oz yumg'on ko'zing ochilsun,

Yerda bo'lgan shu hollarni ko'rub yoshin sochilsun...

Yong'il bir oz yolqunlanib, ey yuragimning o'ti,

Chiqsun sening yolquningdan alangalar ko'k sari.

Cho'lponda:

Ko'ngil! Sen bunchalar nega, kishanlar birla do'stlashding?

Na faryoding, na doding bor, nechun sen buncha sustlashding?

It is evident that both poets address the heart in their works. Elbek calls upon his own heart to awaken, and through this, he seeks to rouse the people, urging them to struggle for freedom. Beyond the natural eyes granted by God, humans also possess the eye of the heart. The poet's lyrical persona invites this inner eye to open, to observe the world with greater depth and insight. In a similar vein, Cho'lpon's appeal to the heart conveys comparable ideas: his lyrical persona implores the heart to break the chains of oppression. Indeed, in Elbek's lines, "Ignite a little, oh fire of my heart, let sparks rise from your flame to the blue sky", the yearning for freedom is vividly expressed.

Clearly, Elbek's poems portray a patriotic lyrical hero, courageous in the struggle for liberty, in vivid and striking imagery. Among contemporary and like-minded poets, the influence of Cho'lpon's poetry is distinctly visible in his work.

Elbek's numerous poems, such as "Fergana Evening," "The Captive Bird," "The Path of Wishes," "To the Victims of Freedom," and "What is Freedom?" hold significant literary value. In particular, "The Captive Bird" carries symbolic meaning. As Tohir Qahhor notes, aiming to convey Elbek's poetry to Turkish readers, Tohir Chig'atoy writes: In the poem "The Captive Bird," Elbek depicts a magnificent yet imprisoned life within a golden cage—a bird whose heart is crushed, who weeps and struggles, suffering silently—and also portrays the human figure standing before the cage, who confines it.

Oltindan to'qilg'on tor bir qafasda

Yotardi bir qushcha doim qayg'uda.

Ul har kun shu holda yotkach qamalib,

Yig'lardi ko'p vaqt, tinmayin o'ksib (3.23)

The poet portrays the little bird as being constantly in sorrow, weeping and sighing in distress. Indeed, Turkestan at that time was in an extremely pitiable condition. To escape from such a state, it was necessary to "break the golden cages."

Qutilmoq istasang, sen, ko'p yig'lama,

Ularga yolinma, sira indama!

Kuch to'pla, kuch bilan qafasin buzg'il,

Qullikning oltinli bo'g'ovini uzg'il!..(3.23)

The poet's lines resonate with Cho'lpon's verse, "Let us draw all strength from the people, let us go among the people with open arms." Indeed, to shatter the chains of oppression, the power of unity and solidarity is essential. Our fearless national poet (T. Qahhor) was able to speak with such courage about the paths to attaining freedom during those turbulent times.

Elbek's poem titled "What is Freedom?" is also aimed at revealing the essence of the homeland's liberty:

Erk muqaddas qonun erur,

Mazlumlarga erklik berur.

Kimki bunga ko'krak kerur,

Erk chechagin albat terur.

Erk ma'nisi: erkin bo'lmoq,

Ilmu hunar bilan to'lmoq.

Yo'qsul elga bilim bermak,

Mashaqqatga ko'krak kermak (4.70-71).

Elbek also emphasizes that to achieve freedom, it is necessary to “educate the poor people” and to confront hardships courageously on the path to liberty. Indeed, this was the primary goal of these Jadid intellectuals.

His poem titled “On the Path of Aspiration” similarly stands out for its rebellious spirit.

Zo'r muhitning dengizinda men bu kun

Hech to'xtamay olg'a qarab boraman.

Dengiz qo'rqinch, qora, tubsiz bo'lsa-da,

Tilak uchun qo'rqmay uni kechaman.

The lyrical hero of the poem is portrayed as a person prepared to overcome any obstacles on the path to freedom. The phrase “the sea of a harsh environment” represents the life of that era, full of contradictions and challenges. The sea is terrifying, bottomless, and turbulent—much like life itself. The hero's ultimate desire is to attain liberty, and for that reason, he is willing to swim against even the strongest waves of this metaphorical sea.

Mana, hozir men shu qo'rqinch dengizning

Eng quturg'on bir o'rnida turaman.

Munda bir vaqt ko'b yoziqsiz boshlarning

Unda cho'mib o'lganini sezaman.

Therefore, the “heads lost without a trace” depicted as drowning in the waves of the sea in the poem symbolize those who sacrificed their lives for freedom. Although the lyrical hero feels this loss deeply in his heart, he does not abandon his noble goal. He begins to sense within himself the strength to cross the sea for the sake of liberty.

For a person, the soil in which they are born and raised embodies the sacred concept of the Motherland. There is hardly a poet who has not sung about their homeland or dedicated verses to it. According to literary scholars, in the 20th century, the theme of the Motherland in Uzbek poetry was pioneered by the patriotic poet Fitrat. This tradition continued in the works of other Uzbek poets, one of whom is Elbek. His poems such as “Chirchiq,” “Toshkent Night,” “Along the Chirchiq,” “Our Village,” and “My Village” illuminate this theme.

It is known that Elbek was born and raised in the village of Khumson, located in the present-day Bostanliq district of Tashkent region. Khumson is a picturesque village near the mountains. In his poetry, the poet often references this beautiful homeland. One such poem is “Our Village.”

Bizning qishloq shahardan ko'b uzoqda,

Buyuk tog'ning etakiga solingan.

Aylanasi ko'rkam, yuksak tog' bilan

Qal'a kabi qattiqina o'rolg'on.

If we pay attention, the poet writes about his native village as being situated at the foot of a great mountain, surrounded by other mountains. Indeed, Khumson village is nestled among the mountains, making it a picturesque and beautiful place.

In the poem "My Village," the poet's boundless love for his homeland finds vivid expression through colorful and evocative lines.

Yoshligim ter kabi qo'yningg'a oqqan

Choqlarni eslasam ko'zimga shu on

Ko'rinar qir, o'rmon, dala, bog'laring,

Cho'qqisin qor bosg'on buyuk tog'laring.

Tog'laring bag'rida o'skan lolalar

Ko'zlarim o'ngida olovday yonar.

Xayolim qo'llari bu olovlarni

Keltirib dilimga ohista solar.

As the poet depicts the beautiful nature of his homeland, his affection and love for it swell with intensity. The hills, forests, fields, orchards, and snow-capped mountain peaks—all these inspire the creator's heart. These are the vast expanses of the homeland. The landscapes of his youth stir the poet's emotions. Before his eyes, the past of his homeland comes alive:

Qishlog'im! O'tmishda seni ezdilar.

Yirtqichlar bag'ringda erkin kezdilar.

Lolangdek ochilg'on mas'um jonlaring

Shu qora kunlardan ortiq bezdilar. [4.106]

As Elbek reflects on the history of his homeland, oppressed and shackled by tyranny, he describes the eras of Khorezm rule as dark days. Yet there is a force that soothes his heart. As is well known, like many other creators, Elbek awaited the October Revolution of 1917 with great hope, believing that these changes would bring true freedom and liberty to the people:

Qishlog'im! U kunlar abadiy ketdi,

Ko'rdim yuzlaringni lolalar kabi.

Dilimga dilingdan mujdalar yetdi,

Yuragim sevindi bolalar kabi.

Indeed, when the poet says, “from my heart to yours the glad tidings have reached,” he is alluding to those noble aspirations. These tidings are, in fact, messages of freedom and liberty. Elbek receives them with the delight and wonder of a child.

Qishlog‘im, seni men ortiq suyaman,
Sening ishqing bilan yonib kuyaman.
Sen, mening birinchi hayot beshigim,
Sen, mening hayotga chiqqon eshigim.

Indeed, the soil where a person’s umbilical blood has been shed is sacred. Perhaps for this reason, Elbek describes his village as the first cradle of life, the doorway through which one steps into the world. In other words, the place that first rocked the cradle and guided one into life is, in essence, the land where one was born and raised.

A renowned contemporary poet, in his poem titled “Ona” (“Mother”), writes:

Dunyo shoirlari vatan sha’niga
Sifat axtarmishlar takror va takror
Axiyri kelmishlar bitta ma’niga
Ona Vatan deya bitmishlar ash’or.

Elbek, in his time, wove this very idea into the following lines:

Onam bilan meni boqqan, ey ona,
Topib oldim aziz bir ona yana,
Bu onamdir – mening buyuk vatanim,
Bu onamdir mening jonim va tanim. [5.107]

Thus, the poet was able to identify a grand concept with which to compare the Motherland. It is like a mother who nurtures us in her embrace. The embrace of the homeland is as vast and fragrant as that of a mother. The essence of the idea of “motherland” is vividly expressed in the poet’s lines. He cherishes both equally and is always ready to serve them.

Overall, “My Village” is a poem of wide scope, imbued with philosophical reflections. In it, the poet not only explains the concept of homeland to his readers but also advances ideas about freedom and independence. It can be said that Elbek was a poet who, in the 1930s, passionately celebrated the intertwined and harmonious notions of homeland and mother.

It is evident that the theme of the Motherland was a leading motif in Jadid poetry. In A. Avloniy, this theme carried a strong national spirit and significance; in S. Ayniy, the patriotic sentiment predominates. In Fitrat’s sochmas, symbolic and emblematic thinking prevails. His verses reveal the image of a true patriotic lyrical hero who grieves sincerely for the future of his homeland. In Cho‘lpon and Elbek, love for one’s native land resonates as an extraordinary, boundless love for the Motherland itself.



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