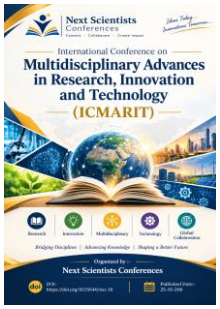
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The Artistic Interpretation Of The Homeland, Historical Memory, And Civic Responsibility In Contemporary Youth Poetry

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the interconnected poetic representation of homeland, historical memory and civic responsibility in contemporary Uzbek poetry by younger authors. Works by Suhrob Ziyo, Najmiddin Ermatov and Shahriyor Shavkat are analyzed with attention to historical figures, the reactivation of national memory, ethical appeals to contemporaries and the transformation of homeland into personal experience. Maurice Halbwachs's theory of collective memory and Jan Assmann's concept of cultural memory provide the main theoretical framework. The study argues that references to history in young poetry are not decorative retrospection but a means of evaluating present social conditions and constructing civic position. Images of homeland, Turon, ancestors, language, freedom and historical heroes connect personal responsibility with collective memory. Thus, national memory functions as an active poetic resource for understanding contemporary social problems.

KEYWORDS: Young Uzbek poetry, homeland, historical memory, collective memory, cultural memory, civic responsibility, national identity, historical image.

INTRODUCTION

Although the homeland and historical memory are traditional themes in Uzbek poetry, each generation gives them new meanings based on its own historical experience. In the works of contemporary young poets, ancestors, national liberation, historical figures, language, homeland, and civic responsibility are often presented in connection with the problems of the present day. An appeal to history is not merely a means of idealizing the past; rather, for the poet, it becomes a way of examining the spiritual condition of contemporaries, revealing points of rupture in national memory, and calling individuals to responsibility.

The aim of this article is to reveal the poetic relationship between the homeland, historical memory, and civic responsibility in the poetry of Suhrob Ziyo, Najmiddin Ermatov, and Shahriyor Shavkat. To achieve this aim, the semantic connections between historical heroes, national symbols, the memory of ancestors, and the contemporary lyrical "I" are analyzed.

Literature Review

Maurice Halbwachs interprets memory not merely as a phenomenon of individual consciousness but as a process formed and reconstructed within social groups [1]. According to his theory, individuals remember the past within a collective context and in accordance with existing social needs. Jan Assmann further developed this perspective through the concept of cultural memory, demonstrating how texts, symbols, rituals, and historical images transmit meanings across generations over extended periods [2]. These two concepts make it possible

to explain why historical figures and symbols are actively employed in contemporary youth poetry.

In Uzbek literary studies, the relationship of poets of the new era with history, national identity, and social reality has been examined in various studies [4; 5]. Among younger literary figures, the distinctive poetic voices of Suhrob Ziyo, Shahriyor Shavkat, and Najmiddin Ermatov have also been noted [5]. In their poetry, historical memory frequently becomes a criterion for evaluating contemporary moral and ethical problems.

Research Methodology

The study employs historical-poetic, hermeneutic, motif-based, and intertextual approaches. The historical-poetic method is used to identify the transformation of images of the homeland and history in the poetry of the younger generation, while hermeneutic analysis serves to reveal the underlying ethical meanings of lyrical appeals. Motif analysis focuses on recurring semantic elements such as "homeland," "ancestor," "Turon," "freedom," "language," "betrayal," and "awakening." The intertextual approach is applied to determine the function of references to historical figures and classical literary memory within contemporary poetic texts.

Results

In Suhrob Ziyo's poetry, historical memory is closely intertwined with strong civic passion. In the poem "What Jaloliddin Manguberdi Said to Temur Malik," historical figures such as Jaloliddin, Temur Malik, and Sheikh Kubro convey the ideas of preserving the homeland, resisting betrayal, and embracing a responsibility that transcends personal interests [6]. The semantic idea of "let the homeland remain" functions as a recurring central motif throughout the poem. Here, historical heroes are not merely museum-like relics but moral standards that speak to the present generation. The dramatic form of the lyrical discourse transforms the reader from an external observer of history into an internal participant.

Historical memory is also contrasted with the contemporary social condition in the poet's work "Grand Aspirations" [7]. Names such as Turon, Timur, and Babur are invoked not simply to recall a glorious past but to evaluate the spiritual passivity and civic indifference of contemporaries. Thus, memory performs a critical rather than merely retrospective function: the past becomes a moral measure for the present.

In Najmiddin Ermatov's poem "The Era Given to Us," historical memory emerges not directly through images of ancestors but through the opposition between freedom and submission [8]. The poet questions the social activity of the present generation and views "the era" not as destiny but as a sphere shaped by human moral choice. The reference to a historical-symbolic figure such as Mashrab intensifies the lyrical protagonist's protest against contemporary silence. In this context, historical memory becomes a force that both awakens contemporaries and confronts them with a sense of moral responsibility.

In Shahriyor Shavkat's poetry, national history and personal psychology often converge within a single poetic space. His addresses, such as "To Cho'lpon," demonstrate the dialogue between the new generation and the literary heritage of the Jadid period [9]. For the poet, Cho'lpon is not merely a historical figure but a symbol of freedom of expression, national suffering, and creative responsibility. Through this intertextual connection, the young poet links his own voice with the spiritual experience of the preceding generation.

The analysis demonstrates that in youth poetry, the concept of the homeland is not limited to a geographical territory. It becomes a common symbol encompassing language, historical memory, the honor of ancestors, cultural heritage, and personal duty. Consequently, civic responsibility does not emerge as an external political demand but as an internal moral necessity of the lyrical "I."

Forms of address and dialogue play a particularly important role in activating historical memory artistically. The young poet does not merely depict a historical figure but speaks to them, seeks a moral answer from them, or places contemporary society in confrontation with them. In this way, the historical figure transcends temporal boundaries and becomes an active interlocutor of the present. Such a dialogic structure reduces the distance between the past and the present and transforms history from abstract knowledge into personal experience.

The distinctive feature of the image of the homeland in the poetry of the new generation lies precisely here: the homeland becomes valuable not through solemn glorification but through a sense of responsibility and personal involvement. Speaking about the homeland means that the lyrical protagonist evaluates his or her own actions and examines the spiritual condition of the generation. Therefore, alongside historical heroes, concepts such as betrayal, silence, indifference, language, freedom, and awakening also enter the poetic space. These semantic elements interpret national memory not as a frozen heritage but as a moral responsibility that must be reappropriated by every generation. As a result, patriotism in youth poetry acquires a reflective and responsible meaning rather than remaining merely declarative rhetoric.

Discussion

As Halbwachs emphasizes, collective memory is always reconstructed in relation to the needs of the social group in the present [1]. The young poets' references to historical figures demonstrate the same principle: they reread the past from the perspective of contemporary questions. Assmann's concept of cultural memory, in turn, explains why historical names and symbols possess a stronger artistic impact than ordinary factual information [2]. They function as signs that ensure spiritual continuity between generations.

An important characteristic of youth poetry is its ability to connect history with contemporary responsibility without turning the past into romantic decoration. The heroism of ancestors serves not to praise the present generation but to examine its actions and silences. In this way, national memory becomes an active instrument of social criticism.

The analysis also reveals that the relationship between historical memory and civic responsibility in contemporary youth poetry is constructed through a dynamic interaction between collective and individual identity. Historical memory does not remain outside the lyrical subject; rather, it becomes part of the protagonist's self-awareness. When a poet refers to a historical hero, ancestor, or national symbol, the reference simultaneously raises questions about the contemporary individual's own position, responsibility, and relationship to society. In this sense, historical memory performs an identity-forming function: the past becomes a means through which the lyrical subject defines who they are and what values they should uphold.

Another significant aspect is the transformation of historical imagery from narrative representation into ethical symbolism. Figures such as Jaloliddin Manguberdi, Temur Malik, Mashrab, Timur, Babur, and Cho'lpon acquire meanings that exceed their historical

biographies. Within contemporary poetic discourse, they represent courage, freedom, intellectual independence, loyalty to the homeland, and resistance to indifference. Their artistic function therefore depends not only on historical authenticity but also on their ability to generate a moral dialogue with the present. This symbolic transformation allows the poets to address contemporary social problems indirectly while maintaining a strong historical dimension.

The poems also demonstrate that civic responsibility is frequently expressed through the motif of personal choice. The lyrical protagonist is placed before a moral alternative: remain silent or speak, accept passivity or act, preserve inherited values or allow them to disappear. Such oppositions make the concept of patriotism more complex. Patriotism is no longer presented simply as emotional attachment to the homeland; it is understood as an active ethical position requiring awareness, memory, and personal participation in social life.

Language occupies a particularly important position within this system of meanings. The preservation of the national language is implicitly connected with the preservation of historical memory and cultural identity. When language appears alongside homeland, ancestors, and freedom, it functions as a carrier of collective experience. Thus, the poetic concern for language can also be interpreted as a form of civic responsibility, since linguistic continuity ensures the transmission of cultural memory from one generation to another.

The study further shows that the poets employ historical memory not only to establish continuity but also to expose discontinuity. References to betrayal, silence, forgetfulness, and spiritual passivity indicate moments when the connection between generations becomes weakened. Such negative semantic fields are artistically significant because they create a contrast with the positive values represented by historical heroes. Through this contrast, the poets encourage readers to reconsider their relationship with national history and to recognize the consequences of indifference toward cultural and moral heritage.

Another important feature is the combination of collective historical experience with intimate lyrical emotion. The historical theme becomes particularly effective when it is refracted through the personal voice of the lyrical protagonist. Feelings of pride, shame, anxiety, responsibility, and hope transform historical events into emotionally immediate experience. As a result, the reader encounters history not simply as a sequence of past events but as something that continues to influence contemporary consciousness.

Therefore, contemporary Uzbek youth poetry demonstrates a movement from commemorative historical discourse toward reflective historical consciousness. The poets do not merely remember historical figures; they reinterpret their significance in relation to present-day moral questions. This approach strengthens the dialogic relationship between generations and allows historical memory to function simultaneously as cultural heritage, a source of identity, and a mechanism of civic self-evaluation.

Conclusion

In contemporary Uzbek youth poetry, the homeland, historical memory, and civic responsibility are manifested as interconnected poetic categories. Suhrob Ziyo calls contemporaries to responsibility through historical heroes and the image of Turon; Najmiddin Ermatov questions the moral condition of the generation through the opposition between freedom and submission; and Shahriyor Shavkat expresses the historical and literary continuity of the new

generation through dialogue with spiritual figures such as Cho‘lpon. Consequently, historical memory functions not merely as a means of preserving the past but as an aesthetic force that contributes to understanding contemporary social problems, strengthening national identity, and shaping an active civic position.

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