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Article

Poetic Models Of National Worldview And Ethnocultural Memory In Uzbek And Karakalpak Poetry

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Abstract: The article comparatively examines the representation of national worldview and ethnocultural memory through poetic images in twentieth-century Uzbek and Karakalpak poetry. Based on poems by Muhammad Yusuf, Usmon Azim, Erkin Vohidov, Ibrayim Yusupov, and Soginboy Ibragimov, it identifies material, epic, generational, toponymic, acoustic, verbal, epigraphic, and cosmic models of memory. A national poetic image is interpreted as an artistic unity of ethnographic detail, collective memory, and authorial reinterpretation.

Keywords: national worldview, ethnocultural memory, poetic image, national identity, doppi, kalpak, mother tongue, Alpamysh, comparative typology.

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1. Introduction

A poetic image is not confined merely to depicting the nature, way of life, or historical destiny of a particular people. Rather, it embodies, within an integrated artistic whole, a community's perceptions of its past, present, and future. From this perspective, it is essential to clarify the relationship between the concepts of national worldview and ethnocultural memory in order to reveal the semantic content of the national poetic image [1].

A national worldview is a relatively stable system of a people's conceptions of human beings, nature, space, time, society, morality, and history [2]. Ethnocultural memory, in turn, preserves the historical foundations of these conceptions, transmits them from one generation to another, and reinterprets them in accordance with the needs of each new historical period. Accordingly:

a) ethnocultural memory constitutes the historical reservoir of the national worldview;
b) the national worldview represents the active manifestation of ethnocultural memory within a particular historical period;
c) the poetic image serves as the artistic means through which both are realized [3].

Maurice Halbwachs, in his theory of the social nature of memory, argues that individuals remember the past through the frameworks of meaning provided by the family, religious community, social groups, and successive generations. Consequently, personal memory in poetry is not merely an individual psychological experience of the lyrical subject; it also embodies the values and cultural norms of a particular community [4].

Jan Assmann distinguishes communicative memory from cultural memory. Whereas communicative memory is sustained through the direct interaction of living generations, cultural memory preserves historical experience through texts, symbols, rituals, monuments, and exemplary figures. Cultural memory reconstructs the past selectively rather than in its entirety, emphasizing those meanings that sustain a community's collective identity [5].

Yu. M. Lotman and B. A. Uspensky interpret culture as a semiotic system of memory that preserves information regarded as significant by a given community. Culture elevates certain signs to the center of collective memory while relegating others to the periphery. Consequently, the past represented in a poetic image is not a simple reproduction of history but rather culturally selected, evaluated, and semantically reinterpreted information [6].

According to Pierre Nora's concept of "sites of memory" (lieux de mémoire), places, objects, names, texts, and rituals may become material, symbolic, and functional centers that embody collective memory. This approach provides a theoretical basis for interpreting images such as the doppi (traditional Uzbek skullcap), the qalpaq, Alpamysh, Boysun, the mother tongue, Altai, and Orkhon–Yenisey as markers of national memory [7].

Anna Wierzbicka examines cultural key words as linguocultural units that express a people's values and modes of understanding reality. From this perspective, poetic units such as the doppi, qalpaq, mother tongue, Boysun, and Altai function not merely as names of objects or places but also as major semantic centers of the national worldview [8].

The aim of the present study is to identify the poetic models of ethnocultural memory in twentieth-century Uzbek and Karakalpak poetry and to reveal their common as well as nationally distinctive features through a comparative-typological analysis [9].

The scientific novelty of the study is manifested in the following aspects:

a) ethnocultural memory is examined as an active artistic mechanism in the construction of poetic imagery;
b) the object-based, epic, generational, toponymic, acoustic, verbal, epigraphic, monumental, and cosmic models of memory are identified and classified;
c) the criteria by which ethnographic details are transformed into national poetic images are established;
d) it is demonstrated how Uzbek and Karakalpak poets reinterpret common cultural referents through different idiostylistic models [10].

2. Materials and Methods

A. Research Materials

The following literary works were selected for analysis:

M. Yusuf's poem "Doppi" (*The Skullcap*); I. Yusupov's poems "Qaraqalpaq Haqqında Söz" (*A Word about the Karakalpak People*) and "Poshsha Torğayğa" (*To the Royal Sparrow*); U. Azim's poems "A Sad Ballad about Boysun, or a Poem about Irretrievable Memories" and "A Secret Letter to My Poet Friend about Alpamysh"; E. Vohidov's poem "My Mother Tongue Will Never Die"; and S. Ibragimov's poetic cycle "The Roads Lead to the Altai Mountains".

These works were selected not only because of their thematic affinity but also because they represent different carriers of ethnocultural memory, including objects, epic heroes, toponyms, natural sounds, the mother tongue, writing, and historical space.

B. Research Methods

The study employs comparative-typological, historical-poetic, semiotic, contextual, and linguopoetic methods of analysis.

3. Results

A. The Images of the *Doppi* and the *Qalpaq*

In Muhammad Yusuf's poem "Doppi" (*The Skullcap*), the traditional national headdress is interpreted as a symbol of the gradual disappearance of a cultural tradition:

People no longer wear the doppi,
Except perhaps a poet or a writer.
Smooth hair,
Smooth footsteps—
It has become a burden upon the head.

A semantic opposition is established between the lexical units doppi and smooth. The doppi symbolizes national history, craftsmanship, and cultural identity, whereas smooth hair and smooth footsteps represent outward modernization and the homogenization of appearances.

The line "It has become a burden upon the head" refers not to physical weight but to a lack of spiritual readiness to bear the burden of national heritage [11].

The references to the Chust, Andijan, and Margilan styles of the *doppi* reveal the regional dimension of the image. These toponyms associate the traditional headdress with specific schools of craftsmanship, distinctive ornamentation, color patterns, and local aesthetic traditions. In this way, ethnocultural memory becomes spatially embodied through a tangible object [12].

The poem concludes with a reversal of perspective:

Perhaps there is no doppi worthy of the head—
Or perhaps no head remains worthy of the doppi.

The problem, therefore, lies not in whether the *doppi* suits the individual, but in whether the individual is worthy of carrying this national symbol. The lexical unit head denotes not only a part of the body but also consciousness, moral integrity, and personal responsibility. Consequently, the *doppi* becomes an axiological criterion for evaluating the individual [13].

In I. Yusupov's poem "Qaraqalpaq Haqqında Söz" (*A Word about the Karakalpak People*), the qalpaq unites the ethnonym, historical destiny, and spiritual resilience of the Karakalpak people:

Barefoot and poor,
My ancestors were remarkable people.
Their hearts were pure, their qalpaqs black,
And they had many encounters with the enemy.

In these lines, the social and ethnic meanings of the color black are activated. Barefoot symbolizes labor and hardship, poor people refers to ordinary folk, while black qalpaq signifies national identity. These images are contrasted with the expression pure heart, creating a chromatic antithesis between a difficult historical destiny and inner moral purity [14].

The ancestral injunction,

Even if you are left completely destitute,
Protect your qalpaq, my child!

transforms the qalpaq from an everyday object into a symbol of honor and ethnic identity. A person may lose material possessions but should never lose their national identity. Likewise, in the lines "Though it has lost many things, / Its qalpaq has never been lost," the *qalpaq* functions metonymically as a sign of the historical continuity of the Karakalpak people [15].

From a comparative perspective, Muhammad Yusuf presents the doppi as a cultural symbol threatened with disappearance, whereas I. Yusupov portrays the qalpaq as a symbol of ethnic identity preserved despite historical trials. The former poem is dominated by irony and criticism, while the latter emphasizes ancestral wisdom and historical continuity.

B. The Image of Alpamysh

In U. Azim's poem "A Secret Letter to My Poet Friend about Alpamysh," the epic hero is not simply glorified as a ready-made symbol of national pride. Instead, he is reactivated as a means of evaluating the moral condition of contemporary society:

Alpamysh sleeps in the Arpali Desert.
I will not awaken him.

Alpamysh's sleep carries a broader meaning than a mere physical state. It symbolizes the inactivity of epic memory within contemporary social consciousness. Before awakening the hero, the poet raises a fundamental question:

If he awakens, what task shall we assign to him?

A contradiction emerges between Alpamysh's heroic power and a modern society characterized by self-interest, everyday pragmatism, and moral compromise. The poet does not question Alpamysh himself; rather, he interrogates contemporary society, which can no longer find a mission worthy of its epic hero.

At the conclusion of the poem, the image of Alpamysh becomes associated with the relationship between generations:

But how can our father awaken,
If Alpamysh himself remains asleep...?

The semantic development of the image may be represented as follows:

Alpamysh's sleep → the weakening of epic memory → the failure of the older generation to awaken → the decline of the national will.

Whereas in I. Yusupov's poetry generational memory is expressed through the grandfather's testament that must be preserved and fulfilled, in U. Azim's poem it is embodied in the image of an epic hero who must be awakened. In the former, the continuity of cultural inheritance is emphasized; in the latter, the dominant motif is the danger of a rupture between generations.

C. Toponymic and Acoustic Memory

In U. Azim's poem "A Sad Ballad about Boysun, or a Poem about Irretrievable Memories," Boysun is transformed from a geographical location into a site of ethnocultural memory:

You became a fairy tale upon my tongue:
"Once there was,
Once there was not..."

The fairy-tale formula "once there was, once there was not" conveys two simultaneous states of the place. Boysun continues to exist in the lyrical subject's memory, yet in its contemporary form it has lost its former cultural essence.

My friends, where have we come?
Boysun itself has departed from Boysun...

The repetition of the same toponym produces two distinct referents:

$Boysun_1$ – the geographical place shown on the map;

$Boysun_2$ – the Boysun preserved in memory, embodying traditions, nature, human relationships, and authentic cultural values.

The paradox "Boysun has departed from Boysun" suggests that a place name and its physical territory may survive while their ethnocultural essence disappears. Here, memory does not idealize the past; rather, it serves as a means of recognizing cultural discontinuity.

In I. Yusupov's poem "Poshsha Torğayğa" (*To the Royal Sparrow*), the memory of one's native land is reconstructed through the song of a bird:

As a child, I inscribed your voice
Deep within my heart.

The metaphor "to write into the heart" transforms the bird's song into a text of memory. Roads may disappear beneath asphalt, houses and fields may change, yet the voice of the royal sparrow preserves the lyrical subject's connection with Kegeyli and the landscape of childhood:

Like a person's love for the homeland,
May only your song remain unchanged.

The unchanging voice of the bird becomes equivalent to the permanence of love for one's homeland. The parallelism "A homeland for a person is what a nest is for a bird" presents the bond between human beings and their native land as a universal law of nature.

Thus, U. Azim foregrounds a toponymic model of memory, whereas I. Yusupov emphasizes an acoustic model. In Azim's poem, the name Boysun survives while its cultural content is eroded; in Yusupov's poem, the bird's song preserves the spiritual code of the homeland despite changes in the physical landscape.

D. Verbal Memory and the Image of the Mother Tongue

In Erkin Vohidov's poem "My Mother Tongue Will Never Die," the mother tongue is interpreted as a form of verbal memory that preserves the historical existence and literary heritage of a nation. The poem opens with a prophecy concerning the disappearance of languages:

Languages will disappear completely;
Only one language will remain in the world.

This statement presents global linguistic homogenization as an apparent historical inevitability. However, the poet challenges this prediction by invoking the figures of Navoi, Pushkin, Dante, Schiller, Byron, Ferdowsi, Balzac, Tagore, Khayyam, Neruda, Lorca, Cervantes, and Fuzuli. Each anthroponym introduces into the poem a distinct language, literary tradition, and cultural memory.

Stop preaching, my brother,
What you predict will never happen,
They all declared together:
"My mother tongue will never die."

The first-person possessive form "my mother tongue" expresses both the personal and collective relationship of every nation to its language. Although the poets speak with one voice, their languages do not merge into a single language. This polyphonic unity is based not on linguistic assimilation but on the equal coexistence of diverse languages.

The cultural consequences of linguistic extinction are embodied through the images of Faust and the Khamsa:

Faust burned in roaring flames,
The Khamsa was consumed by fire.

Faust symbolizes the German literary tradition, while the Khamsa represents the Turkic and broader Eastern literary heritage. The disappearance of a language is therefore portrayed not merely as the loss of a means of communication but as the destruction of the historical experience, moral values, and artistic thought created through that language.

The semantic progression of the image may be represented as follows:

mother tongue → literary heritage → cultural memory → the historical existence of the nation → the cultural diversity of humanity.

At the conclusion of the poem, the refrain "My mother tongue will never die" rises from the assertion of a single nation to a universal humanistic conclusion. Loyalty to one's native language is interpreted not as the denial of other languages but as a means of preserving the cultural diversity of the world.

E. Epigraphic, Monumental, and Cosmic Memory

In S. Ibragimov's poetic cycle "The Roads Lead to the Altai Mountains," ethnocultural memory expands beyond the national territory of the Karakalpak people to encompass the common historical space of the Turkic world:

The roads
lead
to the Altai Mountains...

The road functions as a symbol of historical movement connecting the modern individual with ancient Turkic civilization. The Altai Mountains, in turn, transcend their geographical reality to become an image of the common Turkic origin and cultural roots.

Throughout the cycle, the Altai Mountains, the Katun River, the stars, the stone monuments, and the Orkhon and Yenisey inscriptions form an interconnected system of images:

There they saw
the craftsmen
who carved stone
on the Orkhon and the Yenisey.

The stone-carving craftsmen represent a generalized image of the historical generation that created the ancient Turkic inscriptions. The inscription engraved on stone connects the transient span of human life with enduring historical continuity. While the stone itself is a material monument, the inscription transforms it into a repository of cultural memory.

The image of the stars links historical memory with cosmic time:

For centuries
they have remained its witnesses...

The stars are portrayed as witnesses to centuries, human destinies, hopes, and sufferings. As a result, the poem constructs the idea that historical memory is preserved not only in inscriptions carved on earth but also in the heavens.

There must be
a connection
between these stars
and the human heart.

In these lines, the external universe is connected with the inner world of the individual. The history of the Altai and the Orkhon–Yenisey inscriptions becomes part of the personal experience of the modern lyrical subject, forming the following semantic sequence:

historical space → stone inscription → common Turkic memory → the human heart → contemporary national identity.

Whereas in Erkin Vohidov's poetry the principal medium of ethnocultural memory is the living language and literary text, in S. Ibragimov's work it is embodied through stone, writing, historical space, and the stars. Thus, Vohidov foregrounds a verbal model of memory, whereas Ibragimov emphasizes a spatial, epigraphic, and cosmic model.

Table 1. Classification of Cultural Memory Models and Their Leading Tasks

Memory model	Main characters	Leading task
Object memory	skullcap	expression of national identity and dignity
Epic Memory	Alpomish	evaluation of modern society with the ideal of heroism
Genetic memory	grandfather's will	transmission of values to future generations
Toponymic memory	Baysun, Kegeyli, Altai	preservation of the historical and cultural space
Acoustic memory	lark lark	reviving a sense of childhood and the Motherland
Verbal memory	native language, "Khamsa," "Faust"	preservation of literary heritage and national thinking
Epigraphic memory	Orkhon-Yenisei inscriptions	establishing contact with the ancient Turkic written heritage

4. **Discussion**

A. Classification of Ethnocultural Memory Models

The results of the analysis demonstrate that the following poetic models of ethnocultural memory are actively represented in Uzbek and Karakalpak poetry:

These models do not appear in isolation within the text; rather, they function as an interconnected system. For example, Altai simultaneously represents a toponymic, historical, and pan-Turkic memory image. Likewise, the mother tongue embodies not only verbal memory but also the literary canon and national identity. Although the doppi and the qalpaq are material objects, they also symbolize honor, intergenerational continuity, and national responsibility.

B. Criteria for the Formation of the National Image

Comparative analysis demonstrates that the national poetic image is formed through the following structural relationship:

national-cultural referent + collective memory + authorial evaluation + idiostylistic form + contemporary interpretation.

The presence of only one of these components is insufficient to establish the national-cultural character of an image. For instance, an ethnographic object may simply be mentioned in a text; however, unless it is connected with collective memory and the author's evaluative perspective, it remains merely an ordinary descriptive detail.

In Muhammad Yusuf's poetry, the doppi becomes a moral criterion by which a person is judged. In I. Yusupov's works, the qalpaq symbolizes the historical resilience of the people and the ancestral commandment. In U. Azim's poetry, Alpomish functions as an epic criterion for evaluating the spiritual condition of contemporary society. In Erkin Vohidov's work, the mother tongue becomes a form of verbal memory preserving the cultural diversity of humanity. In S. Ibragimov's poetry, the Altai Mountains and the ancient Turkic inscriptions transform into a civilizational memory awakened within the consciousness of modern people.

C. Authorial Idiostyle and National Memory

Ethnocultural memory is collective in nature, yet its poetic realization is shaped through the author's individual idiostyle.

Muhammad Yusuf transforms a national object into a moral problem through the use of folk expression, repetition, and irony.

Usmon Azim reinterprets epic and toponymic images through paradox, dramatic questioning, and the motif of cultural loss.

Erkin Vohidov elevates the image of the mother tongue to the level of a universal human value through the polyphonic dialogue of representatives of world literature.

I. Yusupov combines the national image with ancestral injunctions, color antithesis, nature–human parallelism, and lyrical memory.

S. Ibragimov presents historical memory on a philosophical and cosmic scale through the images of roads, stone, inscriptions, and the universe.

Thus, the same cultural referent does not carry an identical meaning in different poets' works. The author's idiostyle manifests itself in the selection, evaluation, and compositional organization of the material drawn from collective memory.

D. Comparative Findings

The study has identified the following patterns:

1. Ethnocultural memory preserves historical experience, whereas the national worldview transforms it into a system of values relevant to a particular historical period.
2. A poetic image does not passively reflect cultural memory; rather, it selects, re-evaluates, and enriches it with contemporary meanings.
3. An ethnographic object becomes an ethnocultural image only when it is integrated with collective memory and the author's evaluative perspective.
4. The national images found in Uzbek and Karakalpak poetry share common pan-Turkic historical foundations, yet their poetic functions differ according to each nation's cultural environment and the author's idiostyle.
5. The Uzbek poems analyzed are characterized more prominently by ironic-critical, dramatic, and polyphonic interpretations, whereas the Karakalpak poems more frequently emphasize ethnic symbolism, the natural landscape, ancestral injunctions, and references to the common Turkic historical heritage. This distinction should be understood not as an absolute national boundary but as a prevailing tendency observed in the texts examined.
6. National memory does not produce narrow ethnic exclusiveness. The image of the mother tongue is directed toward the preservation of global cultural diversity, while the images of the Altai Mountains and the Orkhon–Yenisey inscriptions point to the shared civilizational unity of the Turkic world.

5. Conclusion

In Uzbek and Karakalpak poetry, the national worldview and ethnocultural memory are represented through the images of objects, epic heroes, ancestral injunctions, place names, natural sounds, the mother tongue, writing, and cosmic space. The doppi and the qalpaq symbolize national identity and honor; Alpomish and the ancestral commandment embody intergenerational responsibility; Boysun and Kegeyli represent the cultural meaning of the homeland; the mother tongue signifies the verbal existence of the nation; and the Altai Mountains together with the Orkhon–Yenisey inscriptions express the civilizational memory of the Turkic world. The images analyzed are not immutable symbols of the past. Instead, they evaluate the relationship of contemporary people to history and national heritage. In Muhammad Yusuf's poetry, the doppi becomes a criterion for measuring a person's worthiness to inherit national tradition. In Usmon Azim's works, Alpomish symbolizes an epic memory that must be awakened, while Boysun represents a lost cultural authenticity. In I. Yusupov's poetry, the qalpaq signifies historical resilience, and the bird's song symbolizes the continuity of love for the homeland. In Erkin Vohidov's work, the mother tongue connects national culture with universal human civilization, whereas in S. Ibragimov's poetry the Altai Mountains and the ancient Turkic inscriptions become forms of historical memory revived within the human heart.

Therefore, the poetic image is not merely a means of reflecting the national worldview. It is an active artistic mechanism that selectively preserves ethnocultural memory, reinterprets it within new historical contexts, and establishes an aesthetic dialogue between generations.

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