

THE AGONY OF THE SOULLESS EXISTENCE OR THE WORLD BORN FROM WORDS

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Abstract

This article analyzes the creative work of Chori Avaz, a distinctive representative of contemporary Uzbek poetry, from an artistic-aesthetic perspective. The poet's lyrical oeuvre reveals the conflict between spirit and body, loneliness, love, ecological and social problems, national identity, and human inner experiences through a system of artistic images. The research examines the poetic features of Chori Avaz's poetry, symbolic imagery, metaphorical thinking, linguistic and stylistic mastery, as well as its philosophical content. Furthermore, the article scientifically elucidates the poet's place in the development of Uzbek poetry and his significance in enriching national artistic thought.

Keywords: Chori Avaz, contemporary Uzbek poetry, poetics, lyrical hero, artistic image, symbol, metaphor, spirit and body, philosophical lyricism, loneliness, artistic thought, poetic language.

Introduction

The landscape of Uzbek poetry at the end of the twentieth century was complex and diverse. The rigid ideological boundaries of the Soviet era strictly defined not only themes but also the means of artistic expression. It was precisely in such conditions that a poet emerged with a distinctive, direct, and utterly unique voice Chori Avaz (1957–1992) who wrote one of the most acute, most painful, and most sincere pages in Uzbek poetry. His creative work is the artistic expression of the socio-spiritual tensions of the 1980s, ecological catastrophes, the process of national self-awareness, and a lifelong sense of loneliness. Chori Avaz's first collection, "Tortilgan kamon" (The Drawn Bow) (1990), and the subsequent "Saylanma" (Selected Works) (2003) fully reflect his short yet prolific creative

path. At the center of the poet's poetry stands Man his spiritual world, his conflict with society, love, death, and the power of the word the philosophy of existence. This article analyzes the main artistic features of Chori Avaz's lyrical works, his system of imagery, linguistic mastery, and the philosophical views directly connected to the poet's personality.

Chori Avaz was born in 1957 in the village of Tujik, G'uzor district, Kashkadarya region. He was a representative of a generation that experienced early loss of his father, a difficult childhood intertwined with heavy rural labor, and the horrors of the "cotton affair." In a section of the epic "So'qmoqda" (On the Path) and in the poem "Savol" (The Question), the poet recalls with bitter irony and pain that more than ten of his school years were spent in cotton fields. This theme becomes not merely an autobiographical detail in his work but a form of social protest against an entire system. "Cotton is as dear to me as conscience," he says, yet at the same time, he confronts us with the terrible truth that "the cotton field is becoming a grave for the years thirsting for knowledge." For the poet, knowledge and school are sacred, while the system has stolen them from him. This conflict forms the philosophical foundation of many of his poems.

In Chori Avaz's lyricism, natural landscapes are not merely beautiful depictions. They are precise expressions of the lyrical hero's spiritual state. In poems such as "Kuz" (Autumn), "Bir kuz ertasi" (One Autumn Morning), and "Qish" (Winter), the seasons change in synchrony with human destiny. The theme of autumn occupies a special place in his oeuvre. In the poem "Kuz": "I was the past autumn, and you are the coming autumn..." through these lines, the poet expresses his premonition of his early end, his spirit having grown old in youth. Autumn is the fading of beauty, the yellowing of hope, and nature's lament. However, Chori Avaz's autumn is not passive. It is also the season of life experience and profound philosophical reflection. The poet's address in "Kuz" "Have you understood me, these yellowing trees?" invites the reader into dialogue, making them a participant in his pain.

One of the most powerful and complex themes in Chori Avaz's work is the conflict between spirit (ruh) and body (vujud). In the "Ballad about Spirit, Body, and Love" (found in "Saylanma" and in various versions in "Tortilgan kamon"), this conflict is elevated to a philosophical and even existential level. In the ballad, love initially conquers the body, while the spirit remains aside: "You besieged the

soulless body... But the spirit, apart from the body, where does it wander, where does it roam?" The soulless body enjoys itself, yet the spirit remains "restless, wandering." It is the tragedy of losing wholeness, of being displaced from one's center. At the ballad's end, "silence turned predator" suffocates both body and spirit. In this work, Chori Avaz interprets love not merely as a feeling but as a synthesis of a person's dramatic relationships with oneself, with others, and with the entire universe. Love is a flower that has bloomed through language, but its petals are sharp, its breath is gasping, and it fades quickly.

Another significant symbol that forms the foundation of Chori Avaz's poetry is "The Drawn Bow." The collection's title is itself based on this image. In the first poem of the "Tortilgan kamon" cycle, the sun rises at dawn, but it rises to show its strength against the cold and frost that is, out of compulsion. This is the symbol that existence itself is tension, struggle, and pain. Through the image of the "bow," the poet shows that he and his generation are gathering inner strength, yet at the same time, this strength is not within our control. Someone is drawing the bow. Someone is pressing the oar. It could be the Soviet system, fate, or the complex social mechanism of that era. But living in a state of "drawn bow" being always ready to be released like an arrow is evidently exhausting.

Another significant symbol featured in the "Ballad about Spirit, Body, and Love" is ash (xok) and fire (olov). The lyrical hero calls himself "burnt, burned ash" and the beloved "fire that ignites by itself." Through this contrast, the poet reveals the inequality in relationships, the disparity between weakness and power. The ash approaches the fire, but within it, the "soulless body" rejoices in its discovery, while the spirit remains in torment. This is the inseparable yet opposing unity of pleasure and pain, of the material and the spiritual.

The theme of loneliness is exceptionally powerful in Chori Avaz's poetry. This is not mere social isolation. It is existential loneliness the state of being detached from one's own body, from one's own spirit, from the very time one lives in. In poems such as "Yolg'izlik" (Loneliness) and "Sensiz" (Without You), this feeling reaches its highest point: "I love loneliness, because no one leaves me," he says jokingly, yet in truth, his loneliness is deeply painful. In the cycle "So'fiycha da'vat" (Sufi-style Invitation), through depictions of loneliness among train stations, ticket counters, and crowded people, the poet shows his spiritual isolation, his perceived uselessness to anyone, and the torment this state causes

him. "No one noticed me, I am needed by no one," is a confession of undeniable truth in these poems.

The poem "Dekcha" (The Clay Pot) is a true manifesto of Chori Avaz's creative work. In this poem, the poet compares his heart to "an ordinary clay pot." The pot is pitch-black, covered in soot, works only honestly, and in it, food is cooked only for the hungry, the poor, and the exiled. This is the people themselves. At the same time, it is the poem itself. For Chori Avaz, a poem is not a grand palace but a people's cauldron. In it, one must cook honestly and truthfully, albeit in poverty, and take one's share without envy. "My heart is a black, earthen pot," says the poet, and behind this expression lies great humility and immense responsibility. He never declares himself a "titan" or a "prophet." He is simply a vessel boiling his own pain and the people's pain.

The social orientation of Chori Avaz's poetry is strongly reflected in his works. In poems such as "Orol nidosi" (The Call of the Aral), "Yoriltosh ertagini o'qib" (Reading the Story of Yoriltosh), "Kema emas bular" (These Are Not Ships), and "Zamin chorlovi" (The Earth's Summons), he speaks not only about ecological catastrophe but also about social injustice, the destruction of national values, and the spiritual decline of the people. In "Orol nidosi," he asks for the sea to be given life, but not as a plea rather, as a confrontation with a terrible truth: "Come, be my companion, come, understand me it's not much, grant me just one moment of your time." Through the image of the Aral Sea, the poet depicts the disappearing future of an entire people, the drying up of their hopes and dreams. "These are not ships, they are heroes who died in battle without abandoning the battlefield," he says of the rusted ships at the bottom of the Aral. It is the symbol of the people's betrayal of their own past, their own history.

The poem "Yoriltosh" (The Split Stone) is an open resistance against oppression. It contains the image of a person who is oppressed, crushed, yet whose voice can split a stone. Lines like "The stone split, the stone split Yoriltosh!" are a declaration of self-confidence, of knowing one's own truth, and a call to struggle. "Yoriltosh" is the poem itself hard, sharp, and shattering.

The theme of love in Chori Avaz's lyricism is also expressed in a complex, dramatic manner. In his relationship with the beloved, there is always a distance, a misunderstanding, and a certain "terrible silence." In the poem "Sevgi" (Love): "Slowly, slowly the water flows, like fallen leaves / You are leaving, I remain,"

he says. Here, love is not pleasure but separation, pain, and self-loss. In "Tun va qiz" (Night and the Girl), the theme of love is intertwined with social oppression and moral pressure, revealing the conflict between love and society through the tragic fate of a girl.

One of the strongest aspects of Chori Avaz's artistic mastery is his skillful use of metaphor and symbols. "Autumn" symbolizes the end of life, "dawn" awakening and hope, "night" loneliness and torment, "bird" freedom, "forest" liberty, "darkness" ignorance and oppression. The poet enriches these traditional symbols with new, unexpected meanings in his own unique way. For instance, although the "bird" is a symbol of freedom, in many of his poems, it is depicted as being "in a cage" or "hunted." This expresses the poet's great yearning for freedom and the fact that this yearning remains unfulfilled, that there is always an obstacle.

The issue of language and style in Chori Avaz's poetry deserves special attention. His language is simple and accessible. Complex, artificial structures are rare. Yet behind this simplicity lies profound meaning, emotional intensity, and philosophical weight. He does not shout the word; he utters it slowly, quietly, silently. But this silence is often like the calm before a storm. The frequent epiphora (repetition of the same word or phrase) and anaphora (repetition at the beginning of lines) in his poems give them a unique musicality and enhance their emotional impact. For example, in the poem "Qishloq" (Village), through the series "Here... here... here...", the poet expresses the monotony and stagnation of village life and the impossibility of escaping it.

Chori Avaz's creative work is directly connected to the finest examples of world literature. His "Saylanma" includes excerpts from the Finnish epic *"Kalevala"*, as well as translations of poets such as Ishikawa Takuboku, Patu Simoko, Ridd Hози, Odia Ofeimun, Hossinju Edu, Anzelmas Matutis, and Lunsayni Kaba. Through these translations, Chori Avaz introduced the progressive ideas, images, and artistic methods of world poetry into his native language and freely applied them in his own work. Especially, his translations of Ryunosuke Akutagawa's "Pygmy Words" and "Conversation in Darkness" demonstrate the breadth of his worldview and his deep respect for literature.

Another distinctive feature of the poet's work is its autobiographical nature. He does not shy away from transforming the most personal, most painful pages of his life into poetry. In the epic "So'qmoqda," the vivid depiction of the traumatic

events of his childhood (at the age of six, a neighbor's false accusation, his mother's helplessness, his own emotional state during those difficult moments) reveals the "traces of Adam" in the poet's past. "Age six" remained a trauma in his life, a trauma that later turned into an intolerance for injustice. He continues to live through the eyes of that six-year-old boy. In the poem "Olti yosh" (Age Six): "How can I look into these eyes that even the demon couldn't bear?" This is a protest, late but never forgotten, against a lingering injustice.

Chori Avaz also wrote powerful poems about human inner conflicts, not just social injustice. In the poem "Menga bir tomchi yosh" (To Me, a Single Tear), he asks the artist Isfandiyor Haydarov to paint "a single tear from his bodyless heart, from his bodyless eyes." In this request, the poet wishes to depict a tear in its pure form, free from the reasons that produced it and the organ (the eye) that reveals it. It is the "absolute" form of suffering, the existence of pain in and of itself. "A single tear" becomes the symbol of an entire generation's, an entire people's agony.

The theme of death also occupies a significant place in Chori Avaz's work. He thinks about death often and prepares himself for it. In the poem "Meteor," he compares himself to a stone hurtling from earth to sky, then believes he is falling "from sky to earth, not from earth to sky." This is the beautiful yet painful expression of his belonging to "another world" (poetry, the spiritual realm, dreams), yet being doomed to return to earth, to the soil. At the end of "Meteor," he writes: "Let me go, I will find myself." This is a firm and courageous declaration of separation.

The poet's lyrical hero is a person who always lives with his contradictions. He is simultaneously brave and cowardly, strong and weak, rebellious and submissive, hopeful and hopeless. It is precisely these contradictions that breathe life into his poems, making them real and impactful. He does not give the reader ready-made answers; rather, he asks questions together with them, suffers together with them. This is not a preaching poet, but a poet who "cries together" with his reader.

As can be seen, Chori Avaz is one of the rarest and most impactful representatives of Uzbek poetry. He lived a short life. He died in 1992, at only thirty-five years of age. Yet he had so much to say. His poems contain cold, pain, injustice, and loneliness. But it is precisely through this pain that he sang of love, hope, and humanity. Chori Avaz's "clay pot" boils, his "drawn bow" is ready to release, and

his "single tear" flows not from the eye but from the heart itself. His poetic legacy is not only a pride of Uzbek literature but of the entire Turkic literary tradition. His words awaken us, make us think, and most importantly, turn us towards truth. As the poet said: "Seek no destiny other than awakening," and Chori Avaz's poems are precisely a call to this awakening, to spiritual renewal.

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