

## THE DEPICTION OF THE ERA OF OPPRESSION IN ASQAR MAHKAM'S POETRY

**Gulshoda Baxtiyorova**

Student of Urgench State University

**Abstract:** This article presents a literary and ideological analysis of the poetic lines written by Asqar Mahkam that reflect the period of totalitarian rule.

**Keywords:** Asqar Mahkam, poetry, colonial period, people, Jadid enlightenment, lyrical hero, rhyme, the principle of historicism.

When analyzing a literary work, several critical principles are employed. One of them is the principle of historicism. This principle focuses on the accurate depiction of a certain historical era within a literary text. Regardless of the form, the spirit of the time during which a work was written is always present, to a greater or lesser extent. It reflects the lives of people and society during specific years. When examining the works of any writer or poet, the context of the era they lived in cannot be ignored. The talented poet Asqar Mahkam's poems possess these features. In his works written in the late 20th century, he vividly depicts the hardships endured by the people during the totalitarian regime and the bitter reality of human lives at that time.

In his poems such as "Afsus" ("Alas"), "Zeb berdilar..." ("They Adorned..."), "Bu loy devor ostida..." ("Under This Mud Wall..."), "Mashriq" ("The East"), and "Chirigan shox-shabba tomini..." ("The Rotten Twigs on the Roof..."), the policies of the colonial period, the suffering of the people, and the cruelty of Soviet officials are presented.

We are the ones who honored traitors,

We are the ones who turned our brave into the unvalued...

What other nation sends its women

Into the fields to work like cattle?

This poetic fragment is taken from Asqar Mahkam's poem \*Afsus\*. The poet speaks of the tragic and sorrowful condition of our people during Tsarist Russia. Some Uzbeks flattered and served Russian officials. After the annexation of the three khanates, a resettlement policy was implemented, which brought Russians to Turkestan. They were given the most fertile lands and homes. Meanwhile, local people were left to perform menial labor, engaged in agricultural tasks without rest. They produced tons of cotton, even in the bitter cold of winter. People of all ages, from seven to seventy, were forced to work in the fields.

In this context, it is appropriate to recall a scene from Sharof Boshbekov's comedy "Temir xotin" ("Iron Woman"), in which the character Alomat says to Qo'chqor:

"You beat your chest claiming to be a cotton grower, yet you can't even find cotton in your bedding! Look at your clothes-everything the light industry rejects ends up on people like you. What is this? Who wears a nylon dress in this heat?"

These lines are a direct criticism of the situation endured by the Uzbek people. In the first line of Mahkam's poetic excerpt, this same issue is emphasized-how people honored the oppressive officials and gave them places of honor while they themselves remained marginalized. The second line accuses society of dishonoring its bravest members-those who, like Cho'lpon, Abdulla Avloniy, Abdulla Qodiriy, Abdurauf Fitrat, Mahmudxo'ja Behbudiy, Hamza Hakimzoda Niyoziy, Is'hoqxon Ibrat, and Munavvarqori Abdurashidxonov, strove to awaken national consciousness but were persecuted under colonial oppression due to betrayal by their own countrymen.

Such courageous and educated figures were devalued by their fellow nationals. During wartime, when men were sent to the frontlines, women and children were left to toil endlessly in the fields. Similar scenes are found in O'tkir Hoshimov's novel "Between Two Doors" (Ikki eshik orasi). Structurally, the poem contains absolute rhyme with the words "xoinlarini" ("traitors") and "xotinlarini" ("women"), with the consonant "n" as the rhyme letter. The rhythm follows a 6+5=11 syllabic pattern, and the repetition of "bizmiz u" ("we are the ones who...") at the beginning of the first two lines increases the emotional impact.

...Such national murderers

Know neither the homeland, nor us...

Their countless slaves

Let them live like pharaohs...

Even if the Uzbek perishes,

They have villas in Europe...

In this excerpt, the poet writes about "national murderers"—those who live in luxurious mansions under constant medical care. They are ignorant of the hunger and nakedness of ordinary people's children, of the sunburnt women and scorched men working in the fields. They are indifferent to the people's pain and know nothing of patriotism, national pride, or the fate of the nation. They have entourages to serve them and live like pharaohs. Even if the Uzbek people disappear, it means nothing to them—they have wealth and European villas. Artistically, the poem is masterfully composed. Though not obviously rhymed, the poetic flow is maintained through the harmonious use of grammatical suffixes: "bizlarni", "bari", "villalari", "qullarining", and "ularning".

The East no longer existed,

The great mosques had been destroyed.

At every step one saw the path

Of the "leaders" who devoured Asia...

This excerpt from Mahkam's poem "Mashriq" ("The East") recalls the dark days faced by the nation during totalitarianism. The first line states that the East-symbolizing the spiritual and cultural identity of the region-had ceased to exist. Due to the Russian invasion and forced Russification, Eastern traditions, values, and religious beliefs were trampled. Mosques were demolished. National holidays were banned. Uzbeks were forced to adopt the Russian way of life. Not only did colonizers seize land and resources, but they also destroyed national identity, traditions, religion, and language. Lenin and Stalin-the so-called "leaders"-were at the helm of this ideological and cultural destruction. They "devoured" Asia, both materially and spiritually. The poem follows a rhythmic meter of 4+5 syllables, enhancing its emotional intensity. The rhyming of "butkul" ("completely") with "yo'l" ("path"), and "jomelar" ("mosques") with "dohiylar" ("leaders") ensures phonetic harmony.

You think this people will not wash their pain with blood,

That they won't take a life in exchange for a life!..

You think this people is a treasure chest of gold for you,

White cotton, warm bread, hired laborers.

In "The Letter of Eshon Bo'rixon of Hoqand to General Iskobil", the lyrical hero addresses the Russian general, symbolically named "jonorol Iskobil" (a satirical rendering of General Skobelev's name). The poem portrays the fierce determination of the Uzbek people-those who would wash their pain with blood, who would give their lives for the homeland. The repeated phrase "you think" underscores the challenge to colonial arrogance and ignorance, warning that the nation will not remain passive under oppression. Uzbeks are not treasures to be plundered, nor slaves to be exploited-they are a resilient and proud people. Structurally, the first two lines rhyme with "qon" ("blood") and "jon" ("life"), while the suffix "-dir" in the last two lines contributes to the poem's rhythm. The repetition of "jon" adds to the intensity.

Whatever period is depicted in Asqar Mahkam's poetry, his central criterion is truthfulness-he calls black black and white white. He not only portrays the past but urges readers to love and defend their homeland, even at the cost of life. His patriotic, Jadid-inspired poems call upon us to understand the true value of freedom and independence.

#### References:

1. Asqar Mahkam. Bu ishq edi. Tashkent, 2017.
2. Boshbekov Sh. Temir xotin. Tashkent, 2016.
3. Hoshimov O'. Ikki eshik orasi. Tashkent, 2015.
4. Qosimov B. et al. Milliy uyg'onish davri o'zbek adabiyoti. Tashkent, 2004.
5. ziyo.uz internet site