

LANDSCAPE SYMBOLISM IN MODERN ENGLISH AND UZBEK LITERATURE

Abdullayeva Sokhibakhon Olimbek kizi

Doctorate student, Namangan State University

e-mail: abdullayevas191@gmail.com

Abstract: This paper provides a comparative analysis of the function and evolution of landscape symbolism in twentieth-century English and Uzbek literature. The study argues that while both literary traditions employed nature imagery as a core poetic device to express profound internal and external crises, their symbolic systems diverged significantly due to distinct historical, cultural, and ideological contexts. English modernist literature, exemplified by T.S. Eliot, used landscape symbols—such as the wasteland, sterility, and elemental forces—to articulate a universal condition of spiritual desolation, existential anxiety, and the fragmentation of the post-war Western self. Conversely, twentieth-century Uzbek literature, represented by figures like Abdulhamid Chulpon and Rauf Parfi, repurposed traditional Eastern nature imagery within frameworks like Jadidism and responses to Soviet rule. Their symbols—the moon, sun, snow, and seasonal cycles—covertly expressed collective national trauma, the yearning for freedom, and the resilience of cultural identity. The research employs a comparative literary analysis methodology to juxtapose key texts, demonstrating how landscape symbolism served as a crucial medium for navigating modernity, one oriented towards existential critique in the West and cultural survival in the East.

Keywords: Landscape Symbolism, Comparative Literature, Twentieth-Century Literature, Modernism, Jadid Literature, T.S. Eliot, Abdulhamid Chulpon, National Identity, Spiritual Crisis.

Introduction

The twentieth century witnessed a fundamental transformation in literary expression worldwide, marked by a decisive shift from external realism to an exploration of interiority, consciousness, and fractured experience. Within this paradigm, symbol systems, particularly those derived from the natural world, ascended from decorative motifs to foundational structural and semantic components of poetic language. This study investigates the deployment of landscape symbolism in two distinct literary traditions: English modernism and twentieth-century Uzbek literature.

The problem addressed is the need to understand how the same poetic tool—nature imagery—is molded by divergent historical pressures to serve unique cultural and philosophical ends. While T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land" (1922) is universally recognized as a landmark of modernist despair, the equally sophisticated symbolic landscapes of Uzbek poets like Chulpon remain less examined in comparative frameworks.

The primary objective is to conduct a parallel analysis, demonstrating that English modernist symbolism grapples with a universal, existential crisis of meaning, whereas Uzbek symbolic practice is fundamentally engaged with a particular, socio-political struggle for identity and autonomy. The significance of this research lies in its contribution to cross-cultural literary studies, highlighting how landscape becomes a contested site for expressing the defining traumas of modernity—be they the aftermath of world war or colonial and ideological subjugation.

Methods

This research employs a qualitative comparative literature methodology, focusing on textual analysis of primary sources. The study is structured as a parallel examination, selecting canonical

representative figures from each tradition: T.S. Eliot for English modernism and Abdulhamid Chulpon and Rauf Parfi for Uzbek literature of the Jadid and early Soviet periods.

The analysis proceeds through the following stages:

1. Contextualization: Establishing the historical and intellectual milieu of each tradition (e.g., post-WWI disillusionment vs. Jadid reformism and Soviet censorship).
2. Identification of Symbolic Lexicon: Cataloguing key recurring landscape symbols (e.g., waste/water, sun/moon, seasons).
3. Functional Analysis: Interpreting the primary symbolic function of these images within their respective texts—whether towards expressing existential alienation, spiritual critique, national lament, or covert political dissent.
4. Comparative Synthesis: Juxtaposing the findings to articulate core distinctions in philosophical orientation, audience, and intended effect.

The theoretical framework draws upon principles of symbolic analysis and comparative poetics, informed by scholars such as Sultanova and Afoqova.

Results and Discussion

The analysis reveals a clear dichotomy in the function of landscape symbolism between the two traditions.

1. Landscape as a Mirror of the National Soul in Uzbek Literature

In the works of Chulpon and Parfi, nature symbolism is deeply encoded with collective experience.

Celestial Bodies as Collective Fate: For Chulpon, traditional symbols like the moon and sun are stripped of romantic association and charged with anxiety. In “Sharq nuri,” they reflect not personal mood but the “shared Eastern tragedy” and the dimming hope for national freedom. The “Great Light” operates as a symbol of persistent collective hope.

Botanical and Seasonal Imagery as Covert Protest: The natural world becomes an allegory for socio-political state. The violet’s flight symbolizes liberation (“Binafsha”), while a piece of straw in a whirlpool depicts individual powerlessness amidst social chaos (“Somon parcha”). Seasonal cycles are politicized: spring holds duality (beauty/anguish in “Ko’klam qayg’usi”), and snow embodies pure national aspirations, with its melting signifying their crushing.

Winter and Autumn as Psychological Landscapes (Parfi): Parfi’s symbolism internalizes the political climate. In “Eslaysanmi, izg’irin kecha,” the harsh winter and “unmelted snow” directly correlate to “emotional heaviness” and “inescapable sorrow,” externalizing a national psyche under duress. Autumn, with its falling yellow leaves, becomes a potent symbol of “inevitable death” and existential reflection on transience and injustice (“Onamga xat”).

2. Landscape as a Metaphor for Universal Spiritual Crisis in English Modernism

For T.S. Eliot, landscape symbolism transcends the particular to diagnose a global human condition.

The Wasteland as Archetype: The central symbol of “The Waste Land” is not a specific place but an “archetype of spiritual barrenness.” It represents the universal “psychological and moral scars” of modern civilization, depicting a world devoid of faith, connection, and meaning.

Elemental Symbols of Existential State: Natural elements are abstracted into philosophical concepts. The absence of water signifies a universal “spiritual sterility.” Fire in “Four Quartets” embodies the paradoxical “destruction and purification” necessary for spiritual redemption. These are not images of a nation but of the human soul.

Urbanized Nature Reflecting Alienation: Even nature is filtered through a fragmented, urban consciousness. In “Prufrock,” the evening sky is a “patient etherized upon a table”—a clinical, detached image reflecting universal “numbness” and the “inability to form meaningful connections.” Fog and smoke symbolize mental confusion in the modern individual.

Comparative Synthesis:

The core distinction lies in the vector of the symbolism. Uzbek landscape symbolism is centripetal, turning inward to the specific fate of the nation and using nature to code messages of identity, memory, and resistance. It is a literature of covert communication and collective endurance. English modernist symbolism, particularly Eliot’s, is centrifugal, moving outward from the individual’s psyche to make grand statements about the state of Western civilization, faith, and the human condition itself. It is a literature of overt philosophical diagnosis.

Conclusion

This comparative study demonstrates that landscape symbolism in the twentieth century was not a uniform literary device but a highly adaptable medium shaped by historical necessity. While both English and Uzbek literatures abandoned straightforward realism for symbolic depth, their paths diverged. The Uzbek tradition, through poets like Chulpon and Parfi, harnessed the familiar images of sun, moon, and seasons to create a resilient poetic language of national self-preservation, embedding political longing and cultural lament within the natural world. In stark contrast, T.S. Eliot and English modernism deployed landscape to forge a new poetic idiom for a pervasive spiritual malaise, using symbols like the wasteland to critique the foundations of modern existence itself.

The implication is that the study of literary symbolism must be inherently comparative and contextual. Recognizing these divergent functions enriches our understanding of how literature responds to crisis: one tradition looks outward to diagnose the ailments of an era, while the other looks inward to safeguard the soul of a people. Future research could fruitfully extend this framework to examine landscape symbolism in other post-colonial or modernist literatures, further mapping the intricate relationship between place, politics, and the poetic imagination.

References

1. Afoqova, N. 2006. O‘zbek jadid adabiyotida she’riy shakllar taraqqiyoti tamoyillari. Filol. fan. dokt. diss. avtoref. Toshkent.
2. Chulpon, A. 2016. Asarlar. 4 –jildlik. 1-jild. T.: Akademnashr.
3. Eliot, T.S. (1963). *Collected Poems 1909-1962*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World.
4. Parfi R. Sabr daraxti. -T.: G‘afur G‘ulom nomidagi Adabiyot va san’at nashryoti, 1986.