

## COMPARATIVE POETICS OF THE LYRICS OF V. TSOI AND B. GENZHEMURATOV

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**Abdirov Amirbek**

*(Nukus, Karakalpakstan, Uzbekistan)*

### **Abstract**

The article compares the lyrics of Viktor Tsoi (rock song, tonic rhythm, verse-chorus) and Bakhtiyar Genjemuratov (free verse, frame compositions), analyzing vocabulary, imagery and sacred-civic motives.

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The article compares Viktor Tsoi's rock lyrics (tonic rhythm, verse-chorus form) with Bakhtiyar Genzhemuratov's poetry (free verse, framed compositions), examining diction, imagery, and sacred/civic motifs to highlight shared symbolism and different cultural focus.

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rock poetry, free verse, chronotope, mythopoetics

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Viktor Tsoi's lyrics, written in the form of rock songs, combine the traditions of Soviet-Russian poetics with innovative rock aesthetics. Researchers note the widespread use of free verse (tonic system) in rock lyrics, which brings poetry closer to colloquial speech. Thus, N. Klyueva notes that approximately 45% of the analyzed rock compositions from the 1980s are written in a tonic rhythm – almost four times more than in classical lyrics. This indicates a bold departure from a strict metrical scheme. In contrast, Bakhtiyar Genjemuratov's lyrics were formed in the traditions of contemporary Karakalpak verse and modernist poetics: in the 1980s and 1990s, he actively used free verse and free verse, rejecting canonical rhymes and meters.

As the researchers emphasize, Genzhemuratov's transition to free forms allowed him to focus on the expression of thoughts and lexical precision.

Compositionally and stylistically, Tsoi primarily works with a typical verse-chorus structure, where the refrain serves as the key emotional and semantic anchor. Genzhemuratov, on the other hand, utilizes framework lyrical compositions, often introducing prose fragments and anaphoric repetitions,

creating a complex, multi-layered stanzaic organization and emphasizing the gradual buildup of ideas. In both cases, the composition builds the "skeleton" of the text: in Tsoi's case, it captures the motif of struggle and a call for change, while in Genzhemuratov's case, it focuses on contemplation and the collective experience of one's home world. Nevertheless, Tsoi maintains a relative simplicity of form, allowing the word to "stick" in the memory through the repetition of the "mantra" ("Close the door behind me - I'm leaving") and a clear thought, while Genzhemuratov strives for traditional poetic density: his composition frames multi-level images and rhetorical repetitions, enhancing their symbolic richness (for example, the frame structures of the cycles "Sezler kozogalady...", "Kalbimde koara zhoq...?").

An analysis of the texts reveals a contrast in the poets' lexical construction: Tsoi's lexical and imagery is extremely economical and laconic, while Genzhemuratov's is rich in culturally charged metaphors. Tsoi, a rock poet, uses a "working" vocabulary and simple, everyday imagery. For example, in the song "Trolleybus," he introduces a mundane metaphor: "There's no driver in the cabin, but the trolleybus moves on," which, through minimalist description ("the engine is rusty, but we move forward"), becomes a symbol of a soulless system. Tsoi often limits himself to a single dominant metaphor or rhetorical question ("Should I live in the city or in the outback... should I lie like a stone or shine like a star?" - "Cuckoo"), which lends the text an expressive tone and leaves room for the reader's interpretation. Genzhemuratov's vocabulary, by contrast, is replete with catchy words with national and sacred connotations. In the poem "Ana tilim" ("Mother Tongue"), he uses key terms such as *nur* (light) and *ana tilim* (native language), which in Karakalpak culture acquire sacred meaning—light and protection, the continuity of the people. His style is replete with neologisms and historical-epic allusions; the poet actively uses parallelism and anaphora ("Sen arqalı... Sen arqalı...") to emphasize the significance of each element ("thanks to you..."). The emotional intonation of both is also different: Tsoi often resorts to repetition and appeal (refrains, exclamations such as "Let him hear us!"), but loud intonational outbursts in his songs are less common and are conveyed through contrasting images or pauses. Genzhemuratov's poetry contains passionate appeals to higher powers: his poems include interjections and references to Allah ("Áy, Jaratqan!" - "O Creator!") and even lamentations about the insolubility of life's questions, creating a prayerful, prophetic tone.

Both authors display a deeply rooted sacred and mythological layer, but the forms in which it manifests itself differ. Genzhemuratov directly appeals to religious and folkloric codes: his poetry regularly features invocations of God, Islamic

repetitive phrases ("Allohu Akbar" - "Allah is Great"), images of prayer and thanksgiving (for example, "Yo Allah, kechirgin mendek qulingni" - "O Allah, forgive Your servant"), and clear allusions to Sufi mystics ("Annal Khaq!" is the motto of the mystic Hallaj). The spatio-temporal chronotope of his lyrics is mythologized: the steppes of Karakalpakstan, the nomadic roads of Turan, and the "eternal desert" become the stage for the spiritual quest and memory of the people. Genjemuratov's poems regularly repeat natural cycles (seasons, the rhythms of spring and winter) as a "poetic calendar" of the hero's life: a spring thunderstorm contains the image of purification (muqaddas o't - "sacred fire," a key word in one poem), alluding to the holiday of Nauryz. Thus, the spring chronotope serves as a symbol of the rebirth of the soul and the hope for renewal. In contrast, in Tsoi's lyrics, sacred motifs are realistic and interpreted through the prism of archetypes: religious symbolism is rare, but the "cosmic" arsenal of stars and the sun is used as images of overcoming and freedom. For example, in "Cuckoo," a star is contrasted with a stone as a choice between passive existence and burning-flight. Tsoi introduces the chronotopic models of "night" and "road" as the main pillars of his myth: for him, night brings philosophical depth and intimacy, while the road conveys dynamism and aspiration to the future. Researchers emphasize that these motifs form a structural oppositional synthesis: "night gives the hero knowledge of truth, and the path is the embodiment of this truth in action." In general, the phonetic and rhythmic aspects of both poets' lyrics tend to be close to spoken language: Tsoi frequently uses intervallic rhymes and skipping rhythms, which brings the text closer to colloquial speech, while Genzhemuratov, sacrificing classical rhyme, enriches the verse with repetition and intonation to preserve musicality and emphasize key words.

Both authors share a similar interest in the theme of "path" – Tsoi's depiction of escape and the endless journey of the wanderer, while Genjemuratov's depiction is of the nomadic path of ancestors and a metaphor for the nation's historical journey. Both texts invoke the motif of rebellion: Tsoi addresses the turmoil within the urban "fence" ("asphalt, concrete"), while Genjemuratov addresses "foreign" imposed cultural traditions (see the calls to preserve "one's own truth" in his works against ideological restrictions). However, their "protest" is methodologically realized differently. The main differences boil down to the following:

Tsoi's works are often solitary and individual; through his image, the "we" of the Soviet youth generation resonates transparently. Tsoi constructs the "last hero" of the era, calling for change ("Our hearts demand change..."). Genzhemuratov's hero is both an individual and a representative of the nation: in his images, the

personal "I" is closely linked to the "we" of the people, reflecting collective historical suffering and hope.

Tsoi primarily creates an urban chronotope of the late Soviet city, where the hero "wanders in circles" in search of himself. Genzhemuratov is a steppe/mythological chronotope of Central Asia: desert expanses, oases, caravan routes ("shigista"—east, "Turan") as symbols of spiritual ascent ("burgut-padishokh") and connection with ancestors.

Tsoi's work is dominated by the pair "freedom and struggle": metaphors of the sun and stars serve as allegories of the struggle against oppression (the star calls one to the path, the sun personifies the light and heat of protest). Genjemuratov intertwines religious and mythical symbols with national and epic ones: he mentions calendar holidays (Nauryz), Islamic and esoteric motifs (God, angels, "waters of life"), and archetypal images of the steppe eagle and the dragons of the East. It is precisely thanks to this mythopoetic system of Genjemuratov's that his poetry acquires a sacred and ritual character: the word functions simultaneously as prayer and prophecy.

Tsoi's lyrical intonation moves from protest to pacification—his lyrics are characterized by dynamism: they can begin with a rebellious call and end with a plea for peace ("Good Night"). Genzhemuratov, on the other hand, more often constructs his lyrics as a litany or prayer—intensely collective and heroic, evolving into lyrical reverence (personal confessions to God).

The synthesis of traditional and innovative elements in the poetics of both poets reflects their place at the cusp of cultural and historical eras. Using the images of night and the road, Tsoi created a universal mythopoetic framework for the search for self and freedom: night in his mythology is a time of knowledge and existential depth, and the road is a space for trial and action. This gave his texts a "river of life" flowing through generations and allowed them to retain popularity and resonance. The study notes that such chronotopic oppositions gave Tsoi "mythopoetic scope and a national resonance." Genzhemuratov's poetics, in turn, constructs a unique "sacred-calendar" world: combining seasonal motifs (spring as purification and rebirth) with national archetypes, he creates a space for contemplating the historical destiny of the people. The combination of the sacred ("divinely inspired words," messages from angels) with the civic ("native land, the "path" of ancestors") emphasizes that Genjemuratov's poetry serves to consolidate national identity and preserve collective memory. Thus, the poet's central thesis, "Poetry is a sacred world," is interpreted as the idea that poetic words can be the foundation of a nation's civic consciousness. In Tsoi's lyrics, the "sacred" manifests itself differently: through mythologized symbols of the struggle for freedom and

the spirit of the era. Both authors create complex symbolic "cosmoses" – in Tsoi, the river of life for generations; in Genjemuratov, the intertwined history of the steppe and the sky – where the personal and the folk, the earthly and the divine, are inextricably intertwined. The findings highlight that the identified techniques and strategies serve not only as a means of authorial self-expression, but also as an important cultural function: they shape a poetic discourse that unites generations and entire nations, and make the work of both poets relevant for understanding personal and social meanings.

To summarize the comparative analysis, it can be noted that the lyrics of Tsoi and Genjemuratov are united by a desire for a profound symbolization of reality, but differ in language and focus. Tsoi speaks briefly and expressively, drawing on rock lyrics and universal archetypes, while Genjemuratov speaks figuratively and expansively, drawing inspiration from national, religious, and natural codes. Both construct holistic imagery systems with consistent motifs, but Tsoi transforms Soviet and global cultural codes into a language of protest and existence, while Genjemuratov enriches them with the sacred and epic dimension of national self-awareness. As a result, their poetic strategies reveal a profound artistic synergy between the individual and the collective: feelings and ideas are transformed into universal symbols, allowing us to understand the relationship between the individual and the era.