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THE CONCEPT OF LIVE IN POETRY OF ALEXANDER FEINBERG

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Abstract. This article analyses the artistic interpretation of the concept of life in the poetry of Alexander Feinberg based on two selected poems. The study demonstrates how life is presented not as an abstract philosophical idea, but through personal experience and inner emotional states. Through repetition and symbolic imagery, the poet reveals life in connection with human mistakes, dignity, and the individual's inner world. The analysis shows that in Feinberg's lyrical vision, life is depicted through the complex relationship between error and hope, limited existence and endurance. The poems present life not as a rigidly defined real concept, but as a gradually unfolding process of understanding.

Keywords: concept of life, human mistake, dignity, poetic imagery, existential reflection, inner world, hope and endurance

INTRODUCTION. Alexander Feinberg stands among the most philosophically reflective voices in modern Uzbek poetry. His lyrical works rarely offer direct declarations about existence. Instead, the concept of life in his poetry emerges through ethical tension, spiritual vulnerability, and symbolic concentration. Life is not treated as abstract optimism or simple despair; it is experienced as responsibility, struggle, and moral awareness.

In Feinberg's poetic universe, life unfolds between guilt and hope, faith and doubt, fragility and resilience. Rather than defining life theoretically, the poet constructs it through lived contradiction. The meaning of life appears not as a stable conclusion but as an ongoing process shaped by conscience, suffering, and dignity.

This article examines how the concept of life is articulated in two selected poems: "I Am Guilty" and "The Star." Through close textual analysis, the study explores how life is interpreted as moral accountability and existential illumination.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

The concept of life as an existential and philosophical category has long been central to modern thought. In existential philosophy, Heidegger (1962) emphasises that human life cannot be understood merely as biological existence. Rather, it is defined by awareness of responsibility, finitude, and authentic choice. This perspective is particularly relevant to lyric poetry, where existence is often articulated through internal conflict rather than external action.

Paul Ricoeur (1976) argues that poetic language does not simply describe life but reconfigures lived experience into symbolic form. Through metaphor and narrative tension, poetry transforms ordinary events into meaningful structures. This transformation allows readers to engage with life not as abstract theory but as interpretative experience. In this sense, lyric poetry becomes a space where





existential categories—guilt, hope, memory, illumination—are embodied in language.

Northrop Frye (1957) further notes that poetic meaning frequently emerges from structural oppositions. Concepts such as light and darkness, innocence and guilt, fragility and endurance function not as isolated themes but as dynamic polarities. When applied to Feinberg's poetry, this theoretical framework helps explain how life is constructed through tension rather than resolution.

Scholarly discussions of Feinberg's work often highlight his introspective tone and philosophical restraint. However, the concept of life as a central structural principle in his poetry has received comparatively less focused attention. This study, therefore, approaches his lyrical texts through an existential and symbolic lens.

Methodologically, the article employs qualitative textual analysis and close reading. Rather than offering biographical interpretation or historical contextualization, the analysis concentrates on internal poetic structure. Attention is given to repetition, paradox, symbolic imagery, tonal modulation, and semantic layering. The selected poems are examined comparatively in order to identify both converging and contrasting constructions of life.

This approach allows the study to move beyond thematic summary and toward conceptual analysis. The aim is not simply to show that life appears as a topic in Feinberg's poetry, but to demonstrate how it is artistically constructed and philosophically articulated within the poetic system itself.

RESULTS. Life as Moral Burden in "I Am Guilty"

The poem "I Am Guilty" constructs the concept of life through a radical gesture of ethical confession. It opens with repetition that immediately establishes moral intensity:

"I am guilty — animals became targets of arrows.
I am guilty — though I know not why myself."

The repetition functions structurally rather than emotionally. The speaker does not explain guilt in psychological terms; instead, guilt becomes a condition of existence. Life is portrayed not as innocence but as implication—the admission "though I know not why myself" introduces existential ambiguity. Guilt is not based on a specific crime; it reflects awareness of participation in a flawed world.

The ethical horizon expands in the following lines:

"I am guilty — they crucified Jesus.
I am guilty — because He rose again."

This paradox deepens the philosophical dimension of the poem. The speaker claims responsibility both for suffering and for redemption. The logic is not theological but existential. Life itself becomes inseparable from historical violence and spiritual contradiction. The poem implies that to live is to stand within the continuum of human action, whether direct or inherited.





As the poem progresses, guilt transforms from confession into structural awareness. The speaker's voice is neither hysterical nor self-pitying. The calm tone intensifies the effect. The climax arrives in the final paradox:

“In only one thing I am truly innocent —
I am innocent of being innocent for the whole world.”

This line reframes the entire poem. Life is defined by the impossibility of complete moral detachment. Absolute innocence becomes unrealistic. Human existence is bound to shared responsibility. The concept of life here is inseparable from conscience. To live is to acknowledge one's entanglement in collective reality. Thus, life in this poem is not vitality or pleasure. It is moral awareness carried with dignity and restraint.

Life as Existential Light in “The Star”

In contrast, “The Star” presents life through imagery of light within cosmic vastness. The tone shifts from confession to aspiration:

“Each star will have its turn,
Every wish may be fulfilled.
O lamplighter wandering the sky,
Light my own star for me.”

The star becomes a central symbol of individuality. Unlike the collective guilt in the previous poem, here life is singular and personal. The request to “light my own star” expresses a desire for recognition and inner illumination. Life is not measured by duration but by intensity.

The metaphor of the lamplighter suggests mediation between darkness and light. The human being cannot ignite the star alone; there is an appeal beyond the self. This gesture introduces vulnerability without surrendering dignity.

“Even if my final hour has come,
Still light my own star.”

Life is acknowledged as finite. Death is neither dramatised nor denied. Instead, the poem insists on preserving inner radiance even at the threshold of ending. The phrase “my own star” emphasises uniqueness. Existence is valuable because it is unrepeatable. Symbolically, light opposes darkness, but not in simplistic moral terms. Darkness represents finitude; light represents conscious presence. Life emerges as the ability to shine briefly within vast uncertainty.

While “I Am Guilty” constructs life through ethical burden, “The Star” constructs life through existential dignity. Together, they reveal two dimensions of the same concept: responsibility and illumination. Life is both weight and flame.

DISCUSSION. The two poems present complementary interpretations of life. In “I Am Guilty,” life is defined by responsibility and moral implication. In “The Star,” life is defined by singular illumination and existential dignity. Both poems reject superficial optimism. Life is not comfortable. It is tension. Yet they differ in emotional orientation. The first emphasises burden; the second emphasises light.

This contrast reveals Feinberg's broader philosophical vision. Life is not reduced to suffering alone, nor is it romanticised as effortless brightness. It exists





between these poles. Moral awareness and inner illumination coexist. The human being is simultaneously accountable and luminous.

Moreover, both poems share structural features. Repetition organises meaning. Paradox intensifies reflection. Symbolic imagery transforms abstract ideas into concrete poetic experience. Life becomes understandable not through explanation, but through tension.

Feinberg's concept of life, therefore, resists final resolution. It is dynamic and dialectical. Guilt does not eliminate hope. Finitude does not extinguish light. Instead, the awareness of fragility deepens the significance of existence. Through controlled language and symbolic economy, the poet presents life as ethically charged and spiritually vulnerable. His lyrical world invites reflection rather than conclusion.

CONCLUSION. The analysis demonstrates that the concept of life in Alexander Feinberg's poetry is articulated through ethical consciousness and symbolic illumination. In "I Am Guilty," life appears as a moral burden and an unavoidable responsibility. In "The Star," life emerges as a fragile yet persistent light within a finite time.

Together, these poems reveal that life in Feinberg's lyrical vision is neither purely tragic nor purely hopeful. It is conscious, accountable, and illuminated by inner awareness. Through paradox, repetition, and metaphor, Feinberg constructs a concept of life that is grounded in vulnerability, responsibility, and dignity. Life, in his poetry, is not explained. It is experienced as a burden and as light.

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