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THE PROBLEM OF UNDERSTANDING NAVOIY'S POETICS: OZOD SHARAFIDDINOV'S APPROACH

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Abstract

This article analyzes the problem of understanding Alisher Navoiy's creative legacy based on the views put forward by the literary scholar Ozod Sharafiddinov in his article "Navoiy Lessons". The study reveals manifestations of formality and superficiality in attitudes toward Navoiy's heritage and substantiates the necessity of comprehending the poet's works at the level of poetic essence. Within Sharafiddinov's interpretation, the main components of Navoiy's poetics - depth of artistic thinking, aesthetics of the word, and the artistic synthesis of philosophical and Sufi layers - are examined. The article emphasizes the need to study Navoiy's oeuvre in connection with modern aesthetic thinking and evaluates Sharafiddinov's views as an important methodological foundation for contemporary Navoiy studies.

Keywords: Alisher Navoiy, Ozod Sharafiddinov, Navoiy's poetics, artistic thinking, aesthetic perception, Navoiy studies.

Alisher Navoiy's creative work represents the highest peak of Uzbek literary thought and has exerted an incomparable influence on the development of national spirituality and artistic thinking over the centuries. However, the greatness and constant recognition of Navoiy's heritage do not necessarily



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indicate that his works are being deeply and comprehensively understood. On the contrary, attitudes toward the great poet's legacy are often dominated by formality, ceremonial glorification, and superficial praise, relegating the issue of grasping his poetic essence to the background. Literary scholar Ozod Sharafiddinov sharply criticizes this situation in his article "Navoiy Lessons", bringing the problem of understanding Navoiy's creativity to the forefront at a scholarly and theoretical level.

"Alisher Navoiy is the great poet of the Uzbek people. Over the past 60–65 years, how many times has this phrase been uttered in our press, books, various ceremonial and non-ceremonial gatherings, lecture halls, radio and television programs, international symposiums, and seminars? In my opinion, even the most advanced and perfect computer of the modern age would be unable to calculate it.

In any case, if you wake up any Uzbek today and ask, 'Who is Alisher Navoiy?', before fully opening his eyes he will answer, 'The great Uzbek poet.'¹

While not denying the deep respect accorded to Navoiy's personality, Sharafiddinov emphasizes that this respect often assumes an external and formal character. In his view, repeatedly mentioning Navoiy's name, erecting monuments,

or organizing ceremonial events does not amount to truly understanding his creative work. The core problem lies in the insufficient analysis of the artistic essence, poetic thinking, and aesthetic system of Navoiy's works. Therefore, the scholar

raises a crucial question: do we genuinely understand the internal poetic mechanisms of Navoiy's works, and what exactly makes his creativity unique within world literature? According to Sharafiddinov, the absence of clear and well-grounded

¹ Sharafiddinov, O. (2019). *Selected Works* (p. 209). Tashkent: Sharq Publishing House.



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answers to these questions constitutes one of the most serious shortcomings of Navoiy studies. In this regard, the author addresses today's readers as follows: "In my opinion, although some articles have been written and effective ideas have been expressed about Navoiy's philosophical views, taken as a whole, this field remains an unexplored area. Another important aspect of the problem is related to the reading habits of the general audience. At present, an interesting and paradoxical situation has emerged - our respect for Hazrat Navoiy is boundless and our pride is high, yet our reading of his ghazals, epics, wisdoms, rubaiyat, and qit'as, as well as his scientific and ethical works, is significantly lacking."² In "Navoiy Lessons", the issue of understanding Navoiy's poetics is interpreted as a complex, multi-layered process. Sharafiddinov first draws attention to superficial perceptions of Navoiy's creativity. The poet's works are often confined to vague and generalized descriptions such as "great," "genius," or "outstanding." Such an approach fails to reveal the internal artistic mechanisms of Navoiy's creativity and obstructs access to the essence of his poetic thinking. As a result, Navoiy's oeuvre is transformed from a living artistic phenomenon into a symbolic and official image. The issue of language and poetic form also occupies a significant place in Sharafiddinov's analysis. The frequent avoidance of Navoiy's works by readers on the pretext that "the language is archaic" is firmly rejected by the scholar. He refutes this claim on scholarly grounds, arguing that the problem lies not in the antiquity of the language, but in the reader's poetic competence and aesthetic preparedness. Referring to examples from the epic Layli and Majnun, Sharafiddinov demonstrates that if a reader is ready to perceive artistic imagery, symbolism, and poetic logic, Navoiy's language will never appear "outdated." One of the most important obstacles

² Sharafiddinov, O. (2019). *Selected Works* (p. 211). Tashkent: Sharq Publishing House.



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to understanding Navoiy's poetics is identified as a deficiency in aesthetic perception. According to Sharafiddinov, reading classical literature - especially Navoiy's

works - requires specific aesthetic preparation and a cultivated sensitivity to poetry. Without such preparation, even the most refined poetic text remains "silent" to the reader. Therefore, comprehending Navoiy's works is not merely a matter

of knowledge, but also one of aesthetic education.

In Sharafiddinov's interpretation, Navoiy's poetic thinking manifests itself through several fundamental aspects. Foremost among these is the depth of artistic thinking, expressed through images endowed with multi-layered semantic systems. Through poetic imagery, the poet conveys not only external reality, but also human psychology, spiritual quest, and philosophical reflection. In Navoiy's works, issues of humanity, the universe, and the divine are presented in poetic form through artistic thinking. The Sufi dimension appears not as pure mysticism, but at the level of philosophical generalization and aesthetic synthesis. The aesthetics of the word occupies a central place in Navoiy's poetics: in his creative world, the word is not a mere instrument, but a spiritual and aesthetic phenomenon. The significance of Sharafiddinov's views for contemporary Navoiy studies is immense. He proposes approaching Navoiy's heritage from the position of an active reader, establishing

a personal and intellectual dialogue with the poetic text, and reading classical literature in connection with modern thinking. Such an approach helps preserve Navoiy's creativity not as a museum artifact, but as a living artistic phenomenon organically linked to today's literary process.



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In conclusion, Ozod Sharafiddinov’s article “Navoiy Lessons” elevates the issue of understanding Navoiy’s poetics to a new scholarly level. It calls for abandoning formality and superficiality in attitudes toward Navoiy’s legacy and urges a profound comprehension of artistic thinking. Sharafiddinov’s approach serves as an important scholarly and methodological foundation not only for literary scholars but also for the broader reading public in understanding Navoiy’s heritage.

“Georgians deeply cherish Shota Rustaveli. It is said that in the dowry of every bride there must обязательно be a copy of *The Knight in the Panther’s Skin*. I do not know whether this custom should be introduced among us or not. However, I am firmly convinced of one thing: for the praises and tributes we offer to Alisher Navoiy to acquire genuine vitality, we must bring him into the depths of our hearts, transform his works into our most reliable support in everyday life, and make them a true spiritual pillar of our moral world.”³

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³ Sharafiddinov, O. (2019). *Selected Works* (p. 211). Tashkent: Sharq Publishing House.