

PROBLEMS OF INTERPRETING AND STUDYING CLASSICAL TEXTS

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Abstract:

Understanding the content of classical literature presents challenges for today's readers. This is because the multilayered nature of classical texts and the religious and Sufi concepts embedded within them require explanations. Today, interpretations, comments, prose narratives, and analyses play a significant role in understanding the works of Alisher Navoi. This article provides information about additional interpretations created within the framework of understanding Navoi's works.

Keywords: interpretation, commentary, prose narrative, epic, poetry, prose, explanation, dictionary.

Introduction

The concepts of interpretation widely used in the East and the concept of interpretation in the West serve as tools for exploring and teaching the ways to understand a work based on its reception in different periods. They identify the causes of the problem and seek ways to solve it. When summarizing the existing thoughts of Uzbek literary scholars on the perception and interpretation of Navoi's work by readers, the following issues arise:

- a) Understanding and perceiving classical literature well requires knowledge of the development laws, traditions, and innovations, methods, etc., in the history of Uzbek literature. Even if we do not admit it, classical works are not always actively consumed. The initial step to prevent this is to translate the work into modern language.
- b) Having an idea about the socio-political life, historical context, and literary environment of Navoi's time, and the sources that the poet was influenced by (knowledge of history, literature of Arabic, Persian-Tajik, and Turkic peoples help correctly interpret the meaning understood from the text).
- c) Having religious and Sufi knowledge. Understanding Navoi's beliefs, concepts, worldview, and the moral issues he envisioned within this worldview is essential. "The Sufi meaning is

so deeply embedded in the literary work that it cannot be interpreted without understanding the essence of Sufism" [Erkinov 1998, 48].

However, it is incorrect to claim that Navoi's works are completely incomprehensible based on the above thoughts. It is known that Navoi's prose works are more fluent and simpler in language compared to his poetry. One can read the text itself even without mastering the knowledge mentioned above. The formal beauty, artistic word elegance, theme, and ideas in poetry provide readers with great spiritual and aesthetic pleasure. However, the multilayeredness of understanding subtle meanings and hints intended by the poet, and the need to simplify complex words in dictionaries, necessitate prose narration. Furthermore, "understanding the unique subject behind the text also occurs through understanding the text" [Quronov 2013, 80].

A reader who starts reading Navoi's work may not have sufficient knowledge and preparation skills. The general public of readers does not always have the time and intellectual capability to acquire the necessary knowledge. This leads to the poet's work being confined to a narrow circle and read by a small number of specialists. Commentaries, explanations, analyses, and interpretations can fulfill this task, but individual piece analyses or scientific articles, or various interpretations, do not bring the reader closer to the original text. They only explain what is in the text and what the poet means through parts. The reader must be brought closer to the text to derive their interpretation, enjoy and appreciate the artistic skill of the author. The prose text is prepared for this purpose. This responsible task is now performed not by thousands of readers but by a scholar with sufficient knowledge and the obligation to study and promote literary works – the prose narrator.

The practice of interpreting texts has been formed more in processes aimed at understanding religious works. Ancient Jewish experiences related to interpreting and explaining religious works, and the commentaries and interpretations of the Quran in the East, laid the foundation for the scientific basis of interpretation. The necessity of interpreting and explaining artistic literature has been practically applied to works with such deep layers of meaning. Notes, explanations, and comments in the margins are the result of the authors' or copying scribes' and publishers' attempts to explain the text to some extent.

The Role of Prose Narratives

Although prose narratives of the "Khamsa" epics may seem necessary for the 20th-century person who is distant from the spirit of classical literature and cannot understand complex words without a dictionary, they have undergone a long gradual process to reach this state. Before the prose narrative emerged as an independent term, it lived within the processes aimed at revealing the layers of meaning in works and conveying them to the reader through ancient terms – commentary, exegesis, explanation, translation.

If we consider the hermeneutic processes of understanding and explaining resulting from the complexity of understanding and interpreting the layers of meaning in a work, specific to world literature, we realize that the prose narrative emerged as a manifestation of those processes. Although these processes occur in the literature of all nations, they emerge with

their national characteristics and nuances according to the mode of expression. In this regard, the process of understanding and explaining is common to both Western and Eastern people.

Understanding the "Khamsa" is an expected desire and need of the reader. The attempt to understand follows the act of reading, expected to be initiated by the reader. The reader starts reading the text and first encounters ancient Turkic phrases not used in today's literary language, as well as Arabic and Persian-Tajik words, necessitating additional assistance. Constantly searching for a dictionary tires the reader. Besides the formal beauty in the text, the inability to grasp the beauty of meaning deeply leads to a need for simplification. The prose narrative emerges as a necessity within this framework to make the text accessible and simplified.

Expanding and explaining Navoi's artistic skill, beliefs, themes, ideas, Sufi content, and so on is not the task of the prose narrator; rather, it is more important that they understand these aspects themselves. Here, the understanding in general transitions to individuality, and the individual understanding serves the general. The explanation process is managed by an intermediary person between the original text and the reader. They work on difficult words and strive for the coherence of text and content. The prepared text is presented to the reader without deviating from the author's intent and the content mold of the original. In this process, explanation stands closer to the original compared to interpretation. Prose narration is limited to not deviating from the text, meaning that analyses and interpretations do not grow from the text, and evaluating and interpreting are left to the reader's discretion, engaging in a solitary dialogue with the author's "I" close to the original. Compared to the concept of whole and part in interpretation, prose narration works with the whole, ensuring the integrity of the work.

The Challenges and Benefits of Prose Narratives

While prose narration serves as a tool for understanding, it is not entirely aimed at explanation. It contains the meaning within itself, unlike commentary and explanation. The hermeneutic process aimed at complete explanation strives to uncover the object with all its facets, revealing, explaining, and commenting on the truths the reader must understand. It brings the content embedded in the text to the surface. Unlike this, prose narration restores the original text to the environment, language, and period the reader lives in, simplifying relatively complex words. It opens the way to explanations, analyses, and imaginations that the reader must interpret. While scientific criteria dominate commentaries and explanations, prose narration moves within artistic boundaries. To avoid deviating from the original ("a rival in poetry, a slave in prose"), prose narration is a more specific and accurate term compared to prose interpretation and prose translation. It works on the text, a material of artistic work, and deals with the dictionary. In this process, the strength of explanation is seen in how well the narrator understands and can restore the text conveying the meaning of the original.

The intermediary person between the literary work and the reader – the recipient – plays a significant role. Just as the moral qualities and religious knowledge reserves required of a commentator of the Holy Quran are demanded, prose narrators interpreting Navoi's epics must also possess sufficient knowledge reserves. Specifically, N. Komilov states, "Only a perceptive, knowledgeable person who deeply understands the conceptions and ideas formed over millennia, the metaphors and similes created on the basis of legends and narratives preserved in the people's consciousness, and the subtle, symbolic allusions aimed at the wide-educated intellectuals of the poet's time can fully comprehend and explain the meaning of Navoi's verses to us" [Komilov 2005, 286].

Although some researchers consider prose narration a genre or literary form, it has not yet been recognized as a genre in theoretical literature. Prose narration lives more as a mode of expression. It follows the original with a distinctive set form and content. Prose narration cannot be confined to one genre; it moves across genres, applicable to ghazals, rubaiyat, and all poetic genres of our classical literature.

The convenience of prose narratives in explaining classical works is evident in the following situations: If we take poetry as a grand ornate building, prose narration guides the reader who cannot find a way inside, helping to understand all its beauty. Prose narratives serve as keys to the mysterious words for readers struggling to grasp the lexical layers of Navoi's works. They decode the meaning of difficult sentences and phrases.

Prose narration is a way to promote Navoi's works. It introduces the reader to Navoi's creative world and helps them understand the work more quickly. Reading it and feeling the spiritual pleasure will inevitably create a desire in the keen reader to read the original, which is one of the expected outcomes in promoting Navoi's creativity.

While prose narration has its advantages, it also has many drawbacks as a necessity. It is known that lyrical works, especially Navoi's lines created with the fire of his heart, with each line possessing unique charm and colorful reflections, lose their magic and allure when turned into prose. The verses, harmonized with a thousand nuances and beautiful words, turn into ordinary words. The beauty of poetry that captivates lies in its poetic form and musicality. In prose narratives, it is impossible to preserve the beauty of poetry. The weight and rhyme are lost, but the content is preserved. However, this loss is overlooked due to the necessity of conveying the meaning and essence to the reader. Additionally, prose narration has a relative nature, requiring periodic updates to remain relevant. Over time, the opportunity for its wide use diminishes. Prose narration should prepare the reader spiritually and guide them toward the original. The original remains timeless and unchanging, always serving as the primary source and opening the way to new interpretations.

Conclusion

It should also be noted that while prose narration brings the reader closer to Navoi's words and meaning, it can also distance them. Some readers may be satisfied with the prose

narrative and not feel the need to read the original. There are many who, after reading the prose narrative, think they have understood Navoi's work.

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