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ABDULLA ORIPOV'S CREATIVE LEGACY AS INTERPRETED BY MATYOKUB KUSHJANOV

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the literary dialogue between the prominent Uzbek literary scholar Matyokub Kushjanov and the celebrated national poet Abdulla Oripov. It emphasizes Kushjanov's unique approach to literary criticism, particularly his focus on artistic mastery and deep psychological insight into poetic creation. The article delves into Kushjanov's detailed analysis of Oripov's poetic works, including philosophical themes, patriotic motifs, and the poet's stylistic evolution. Special attention is paid to the literary value and ideological depth of Oripov's renowned poem The Road to Paradise and other significant works. Through comparative perspectives, the critic highlights the distinctiveness of Oripov's poetic voice in the context of Uzbek and world literature. Ultimately, the article presents Kushjanov as a scholar who not only interpreted but also preserved and popularized Oripov's literary legacy within the framework of modern Uzbek literary studies.

KEYWORDS: *Abdulla Oripov, Matyokub Kushjanov, Uzbek Literature, Poetic Interpretation, Literary Criticism, The Road To Paradise, Artistic Mastery, National Identity, Modern Poetry, Literary Analysis.*

Among Uzbek literary scholars, Matyokub Kushjanov is recognized as a masterful researcher, distinguished by his unique method of literary analysis. Regardless of the literary source he studies, he primarily investigates the aspect of artistic mastery. This particular focus has shaped his distinctive method of analysis and interpretation.

If we look into the critic's academic path, we can see that he worked in the fields of literary theory and literary criticism. Through the lens of works by Uzbek authors, he provided scholarly interpretations of various literary-theoretical concepts and genres that had not yet been solidified in theoretical terms, thus laying the foundation for their academic understanding.

Our observations reveal that M. Kushjanov primarily focused on the study of prose and the works of prose writers. The creative legacies of Abdulla , Oybek, and Abdulla Qahhor occupy a significant place in this regard. However, one cannot truly grasp the essence of literature and its irreplaceable role in human life without appreciating the spirit of poetry. This applies especially to the scholar himself.

Matyokub Kushjanov's book *Abdulla Oripov*, co-authored with literary scholar Suvon Meli, opens with the following words: "We have an unparalleled homeland. An amazing people. They are a poetic nation. The first sound heard by members of this nation upon being born must be poetry. Through poetry, their eyes open, their consciousness is revived, and they reach maturity." [1]

As we know, for many writers, the first station on their journey into the world of literature is poetry. Although M. Kushjanov is widely recognized as a researcher of prose works, he also conducted significant studies on the poetic explorations of poets such as Quddus Muhammadiy, Qudrat Hikmat, Erkin Vohidov, Abdulla Oripov, and many others.

Although the scholar himself admitted, *"I find it quite difficult to analyze poetic material... I do not feel as free and comfortable as I do when studying prose"* [2], his book *Abdulla Oripov* occupies a special place in his body of work.

One of the brightest representatives of 20th-century Uzbek literature, Abdulla Oripov, continues to amaze millions of poetry lovers with his unique and beautiful philosophical poetry, profound thinking, and vivid imagination. The book *Abdulla Oripov*, dedicated to this remarkable poet, is not only an interpretation of his literary works but also an in-depth analysis of those poems that occupy a special place in Uzbek poetry. Several of his poems and epics are examined from the perspective of literary mastery; some previously overlooked works are re-evaluated, and attention is paid to the specific aspects that make up the phenomenon of Abdulla Oripov. The artistic value of poetic lines infused with the spirits of literary giants such as Navoiy, Dante, and Shakespeare is brought to light.

In the *Foreword* of the book, M. Kushjanov recounts the following words once spoken by Gafur Gulom during a personal conversation:

"It is hard to find a person in the world who has never composed a verse. At the very least, one will rhyme two lines and hum them. Poetry is an eternal need of our people".

Undoubtedly, one of the creators who has fulfilled this deep spiritual need of the Uzbek nation is Abdulla Oripov. It is no coincidence that one of his books, which compiles his literary essays, interviews, and artistic-publicist works, is titled *Ehtiyoj farzandi* (*Child of Need*, 1988). Because the poet was well

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aware of his abilities and why he chose the demanding path of creativity.

Why is it that everything else can be studied and mastered, but there are no clear criteria for studying or teaching literary creativity? Why is there no special school or higher institution to study it? Why?! Why can't everyone be Navoiy, Pushkin, Maxtumquli, or Abdulla Oripov? The uniqueness of our fingerprints symbolizes the uniqueness of the home of our soul. Linking this idea to the content of the biographical method—which helps uncover the essence of creativity, its psychology, and the roots of literary works—M. Kushjanov concludes:

"When I reflect on it, I realize that the depth, humanity, and patriotism in Abdulla Oripov's poetry are directly related to the environment in which he was born, raised, and educated." [1]

Within that environment, the poet's father, Orif bobo, played an important role. For A. Oripov, poetry was "a weapon for survival, a means of struggle, a way to express the self… a sign of existence in life." The critic is so deeply impressed by the poet's work that he remarks:

"When I read his poetry, it feels as though the ceiling of the room rises higher, and the walls shift, expanding the space".

"Reading a literary work is a creative process. To understand it, the reader must fully activate their imaginative power. Poetry is constantly unfolding speech—it is not merely a sequence of words. For the words are infused with the melodies resonating from the poet's heartstrings. Thus, poetry is not read—it is listened to. And not just with the ears, but with the "inner ear", the "ear of the heart". [3]

M. Kushjanov listens to A. Oripov's poetry with such an inner ear, derives deep enjoyment from it, and doesn't stop there—he enables others to hear it as well. He analyzes it based on literary-aesthetic principles and reveals its essence.

The second part of the book is titled "The Birth of Talent." As the title suggests, this section discusses the environment in which the poet lived and grew up, his childhood, the qualities that distinguished him from others from a young age, and the path he took before becoming a poet recognized by the people. After analyzing poems like *Archa* (The Fir Tree), with a simple plot read during a university club session, and *Uchqun* (The Spark), the scholar is drawn to the following lines from Oripov's 1963 poem *Buloq* (The Spring):

Qutlug' bir saharda ko'z ochdi buloq,
Yo'l soldi daryolar sari adashib.
Unga rahm etmoqchi odamlar shu choq
Tog'-u toshlar aro yaqin yo'l ochib.
Odamlar, tegmangiz, mayli, toshsin u,
Mayliga, tog'ni ham ko'rsin yo'lida.
Qo'ying, o'z yo'lini o'zi ochsin u,
Zavqlanolsin u ham kurash so'ngida.

Sometimes on the path of life, we encounter obstacles—we fall, our noses bleed. At such moments, we face two options: either give up or move forward. In this poem, the scholar interprets the poet's creative principle, identifying it as perseverance. Abdulla Oripov was among those who chose to continue. "There are no ideal creative environments that raise and nurture a poet. A true poet finds his way through all conditions of life—its heat and cold, its ups and downs, its bumps and crooked turns—and gradually takes shape as a creator. In this sense, the upbringing and maturation of every true poet is like a spring that, as Abdulla described, must carve out its own path." [1]

In fact, we believe that every person must undergo this process of fortification, personally experience certain truths, and arrive at a personal philosophical principle.

M. Kushjanov presents the following lines from the poet's poem *To an Album* (*Albomga*) and acknowledges them as a key reflection of the experience that helped him emerge from the above-mentioned state:

Qalbim buyurmasa, biror so'zni ham
Yozmasman hech qayda, hech vaqt, hech qachon! [1]

Indeed, the thoughts and artistic truths conveyed in the poet's works, as the scholar notes, are in fact poetic reflections of real life.

We can explain why M. Kushjanov was more drawn to the works of A. Oripov than to other poets for two main reasons: first, the poet's undeniable, innate talent recognized by all; and second, the lasting influence of Oybek's persona, who served as a source of inspiration throughout the scholar's academic journey. As Oripov himself confessed, "I was raised in the school of Oybek. I evaluate other authors from that point of view" [4]. Just as there are different units of measurement in the world—weight, length, electrical current—for the poet, Oybek's literary legacy served as a measure of artistic skill and talent.

Remaining true to his prose-based analytical approach, the literary critic compares Oripov's work to that of other authors. Speaking of those who wrote poetry about Uzbekistan, he notes: "While Oybek compares events from Uzbek history, and Hamid Olimjon romanticizes the springtime of the beautiful land, and Uyg'un emphasizes the power of the homeland, Abdulla Oripov, in his poem *Uzbekistan*, learns from the masters but does not repeat them—instead, he creates an enchanting poem about his country" [1]. Same theme, but a variety of expressions. This unique style, personal voice, and mastery of execution define the poet and make him stand out in the literary arena. As a contemporary writer, he demonstrated the power of poetic expression to shape history and continues to nourish the hearts of millions with spiritual sustenance.

The poet himself described the genre of his poem *The Road to Paradise* (*Jannatga yo'l*) as a "dramatic tragedy." M. Kushjanov also draws attention to its satirical aspects and notes that a writer may employ a variety of styles in satire. Furthermore, he explains that "...a writer may exaggerate certain flaws encountered in real life, even depict surreal situations when necessary. The point is to derive real conclusions from such surreal situations, and to reveal faults from a healthy, rational standpoint" [1].

As *The Road to Paradise* began being published in issues of the satirical journal *Mushtum*, it sparked various reactions, especially when the publication was interrupted. Critics

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accused Oripov of "misrepresenting Soviet reality," labeling the poem as "entirely slanderous," and claimed that its characters were not "typical of contemporary life." Some even alleged that *Mushtum* was publishing ideologically harmful content.

It was at this moment that M. Kushjanov stepped forward to defend the work. He wrote a special review, and his critical commentary was later included as the foreword to the 1980 published edition of *The Road to Paradise*. The scholar proudly emphasized that Oripov's use of religious and mythological motifs—heaven, hell, judgment day—were merely devices through which he could affect the reader's soul and serve the progress of society.

Whenever Matyokub Kushjanov turned his attention to a writer's work, he approached it with a comprehensive analytical lens—not just focusing on a single piece, but synthesizing the entire body of work to provide a holistic and complete picture. He concluded: "The critical fragments in Oripov's poems, the satirical direction seen in poems such as *The Iron Man* and *The Golden Fish*, are brought to their full realization in *The Road to Paradise*" [5].

The scholar closely observed A. Oripov's literary development. He wrote a 24-page foreword titled *Shining Like a Rainbow* (*Kamalakdek serjilo*) for the poet's 1987 collection *Yillar armoni* (*Years of Regret*), which included poems and narrative verse. Later, some parts of this foreword were edited to reflect the changing times and published in their refined form in the book *Abdulla Oripov*. Nonetheless, the style of analysis and unique tone of interpretation remained unchanged—testifying to the scholar's unwavering academic approach.

It can be said that the bond between the poet and the scholar was not only creative but also deeply personal and friendly. The poet's own lyrical confession speaks for itself and needs no further explanation:

Dunyoning aslida doim biri kam,
Bilmadim bu yo'lda kim erur hakam.
Ijod yo'llarimda Oybek qo'llagan,
Toabad qo'llagan Matyoqub akam [6].

M. Kushjanov offers analyses of many of the poet's works and ultimately arrives at the following conclusion: "He always begins his poem with the word *life*, continues with words of *creation*, and ends with *Motherland*."

In conclusion, it can be stated that the critic M. Kushjanov, who translated the spiritual source imbued with A. Oripov's poetic thought into the language of scholarship, thereby creating a unique school within Uzbek literary studies, will continue to contribute to scientific discourse and national spirituality for many years to come. The literary legacy of Abdulla Oripov will undoubtedly remain a central subject of analysis for numerous future researchers.

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