

ANALYSIS OF THE LITERARY PORTRAITS CREATED BY THE FOLKLORIST SCHOLAR

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Bukhara Sharif has been world-famous since ancient times for its clever and refined sons. Among the elegant people born, lived, and created in this land of scholars and intellectuals—who have secured a firm position in the world of science through their noble deeds—one of those “deep in thought, deep in intellect, deep in word” Bukharans is the great scholar, outstanding folklorist, and astute researcher of children's literature, Oxunjon Safarov. He was born on February 18, 1940, in the ancient place called Shofirkon in Bukhara Sharif, in the village of Dodbog, into a family of intellectuals. His passion for literature was awakened by his respected mother, the teacher Muazzam aya.

After Oxunjon Safarov had already established himself as a skillful researcher of children's literature, his entry into folklore studies expanded the horizons of his research. “It is impossible to imagine the scientific and literary activity of Professor Oxunjon Safarov separately from the Uzbek folklore studies school founded by the eminent scholar Hodi Zarif.” These words of his teacher To‘ra Mirzaev can be applied to every aspect of the scholar’s work.

Oxunjon Safarov embarked on studying children's folklore as an integrated system. This approach enabled him to scientifically substantiate that this system consists of diverse genres and various performance styles, that it includes more than twenty genres, and that each has its own distinctive features. He successfully demonstrated this in his monographs “Folk Songs That Caress Children” (1983) and “Uzbek Children's Poetic Folklore” (1985). These studies laid the foundation for the defense in 1986 of his doctoral dissertation titled “The Genre Composition and Artistry of Uzbek Children's Poetic Folklore”, devoted to the scientific-theoretical study of Uzbek children's folklore.

One aspect of Oxunjon Safarov’s work is evident in his attention to spirituality, enlightenment, and national values. Current pressing issues of the time are reflected in his lectures, articles, poems, and books—particularly in the treatise “Family Spirituality” (1999), the historical-enlightenment journalistic epic “Bukharans or the Song of the Twelve Stars”, and his enlightening-historical articles. Indeed, besides being an astute researcher, folklorist, and literary scholar, Oxunjon Safarov is also a distinctive poet. In his poetry collection “The Spring of Sweethearts”, children lovingly read the playful, melodious, child-friendly poems and fairy tales written by a person with a naturally child-loving and pure soul.

Professor Oxunjon Safarov has created complete works that generalize the life paths tested by fate, creative activities, and human images of his contemporary scholars and poets. We consider studying them to be one of the important issues of today’s literary criticism. Examples include:

- “The Radiance of History in Feelings” (Sketches of the Creative Image), dedicated to the creative figure of Toshpo‘lat Ahmad — poet, journalist, Honored Cultural Worker of Uzbekistan, academician of the Turon Academy of Sciences;
- “My Poem – an Open Feast Table” (Sketches of the Image), dedicated to the famous children’s poet, People’s Poet of Uzbekistan, Honored Teacher of Uzbekistan, winner of the Hamza State Prize, Quddus Muhammadiy; and others.

The book by the scholar titled “The Radiance of History in Feelings” was published under the subtitle “Sketches of the creative image of Toshpo‘lat Ahmad, Honored Cultural Worker of Uzbekistan, poet and journalist” with the following sections:

1. The burning moments of life
2. Journalistic reflections on the meaning of life

3. Journey into the realm of “The Mysterious Word”
4. Bukhara – truth with all its height
5. Instead of an afterword
6. List of books by Toshpo‘lat Ahmad

Symbol of Childhood – Eternity – Sketches of the work of journalist and writer Erkin Malik, Honored Worker of Uzbekistan. Composed of separately titled sections; successfully embodies the overall, unified image of Erkin Malik:

1. The writer born for goodness
2. Introduction
3. The creative path of the author
4. Loyalty to journalistic duty
5. Journalistic chronicle of childhood
6. The world embodied in stories
7. Times are transient, childhood is eternal
8. Lessons in enlightenment

The creative portrait of To‘ra Mirzaev. Creating large-scale literary portraits, essay-novels about the life path and creative activity of academician To‘ra Mirzaev—who served as Vice-President of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, and for many years as Director of the Alisher Navoi Institute of Language and Literature, and whose entire life can serve as an exemplary model for youth—is one of the important and urgent tasks facing writers and literary scholars. The first step in this direction was taken by Professor Oxunjon Safarov, a student of the master. The scholar first created portrait-articles about T. Mirzaev. For example, in 2006, a portrait-article titled “Sensitive Folklorist and Science Organizer” was published in issue 1 of the journal “Bukhara Waves”. It briefly reviews the scientific-creative activity of the folklorist master [1].

The main goal of a portrait writer is to strive to “eternalize the image of this or that person.” “A portrait is not written because the aspects of a living person in life do not satisfy us, but in order to give some understanding about him to those who were not fortunate enough to see him, and to help eternalize him together with our memories of the person who has passed from our sight” [Chernyshevsky, 1978, p. 100]. The true value of the portrait as a unique way of understanding a person becomes even more apparent.

As the portrait writer enters the life of the scholar, he begins with pride by mentioning the name of To‘ra Mirzaev among the many scholars and ulama of Bukhara Sharif, as noted by our first President I.A. Karimov in his speech at the meeting with voters on December 17, 1999.

A literary portrait is also a product of literary criticism; therefore, it must combine scientific rigor with imagery. When simplicity is synthesized with scientific depth, a true literary-critical work is created. These qualities are clearly manifested in the internal headings of this literary portrait: “There are flowers and thorns on the path of life”; “Heroes learn ‘Alpomish’, friends”; “My riddle is a riddle”; “On the paths of folklore textology and book studies,” etc. These sections discuss the life, scientific research, studies, and activities of collecting and recording samples of Uzbek oral folk art by the folklorist scholar.

A literary portrait is the product of literary-critical thinking; therefore, it requires both scientific depth and imagery. When simplicity and imagery are synthesized with scientific rigor, a genuine literary-critical work emerges. These characteristics are vividly evident in the internal headings of the portrait mentioned above. In the composition of the literary portrait “To‘ra Mirzaev” by the folklorist scholar and master O. Safarov, the following classification stands out:

1. Narrating the life and work of the great folklorist scholar T. Mirzaev based on collected materials.
2. Devoting extensive space to the analysis of the scholar’s scientific life and the studies he produced.
3. Paying attention to the analysis of epics recorded from the repertoires of various bakhshis.

A portrait writer creates not an invented image like writers or painters, but the image of a real person, and considers his main task to be fully reflecting his uniqueness and characteristic features. For this purpose, he uses various documentary sources and the wealth of his own memory. Therefore, in both visual art and literature, we perceive the portrait as a generalization for long-term study of the depicted figure, as a full description of a specific person—a writer, poet, or scholar.

A portrait is both the depiction of a person and, at the same time, an evaluation of him. However, in a portrait expressed through words, the author directly refers to the evidence of creativity and biography, giving his own direct description. Especially in literary portraits where the author's personal "I" often appears as a conversational partner or active figure in relation to the contemporary being described, this subjectivity is felt with particular brightness and clarity. Academician B. Nazarov also speaks about this new direction in Uzbek literary studies as follows: "Examining a writer's work in close connection with his personality is one of the positive trends noticeable in recent years in our literary criticism and literary scholarship. Studying the artist's life path, nature, youth, interests, and dreams serves as a key to revealing the secrets of mastery and artistic-aesthetic principles in his works" [Nazarov, 1979, p. 84].

As can be seen, in the literary portrait, the entire life path of the folklorist scholar T. Mirzaev—his nature, youth, interests, personal life, relationships with friends and colleagues—is necessary to create his complete image. Admittedly, in this work, thoughts are expressed about the scholar's life and aspects unknown to others, but few life scenes are provided; therefore, it is appropriate to call it a creative portrait. Nevertheless, Oxunjon Safarov's creative portrait dedicated to his master To'ra Mirzaev holds several important values: it inspires young people to self-sacrifice on the path of knowledge, instills confidence that the scholar's life and creative path can serve as a model for youth, and is adorned with the spirit of showing love and loyalty to the teacher.

In conclusion, the explorations of the mature expert of children's literature and folklorist scholar O. Safarov in creating literary portraits are worthy of attention. In particular, the literary portrait dedicated to the life and creative activity of the great Bukharan folklorist scholar To'ra Mirzaev—who served in the position of Vice-President of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan and is currently the Director of the Alisher Navoi Institute of Language and Literature—serves as a vivid proof of our opinion.

In creating a literary portrait, attention must be paid to the following features: The author of the literary portrait must know the person being portrayed well, be closely acquainted with him, and have communicated with him for many years—this contributes to making the work readable and interesting.

Nevertheless, the literary portrait of To'ra Mirzaev by our master O. Safarov holds significant value: it inspires young people to self-sacrifice on the path of knowledge, instills confidence that the scholar's life and creative path can serve as a model for youth, and the small book is adorned with the spirit of showing love and loyalty to the teacher.

The author of the literary portrait, O. Safarov, by creating the scientific-creative portrait of his master To'ra Mirzaev, showed dedication in introducing the reader to the life and work of an unparalleled person, a generous scholar, and a great public figure. Indeed, Master To'ra Mirzaev built a monument to himself through his noble deeds, the books he wrote, and the good he did for people; everyone who knew and recognized him remembers him with deep love and respect in their hearts. Good words, good deeds, good actions became the life principles of the great man, academician To'ra Mirzaev, and were dedicated to illuminating the lives of the people of knowledge. Therefore, creating essay-novels, monographs, and studies about this invaluable person, his way of life, creativity, and activity remains one of the urgent tasks of literary studies and one of the efforts to call future generations to take example from great ancestors.

References:

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