
NASIMI'S POETRY IN THE DISCOURSE OF TURKISH RENAISSANCE: PHILOSOPHICAL AND AESTHETICAL ISSUES

A POESIA DE NASIMI NO DISCURSO DO RENASCIMENTO TURCO: QUESTÕES FILOSÓFICAS E ESTÉTICAS*

MYKOLA VASKIV

Department of Journalism and New Media
Institute of Journalism, Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University, Kyiv, Ukraine
myvaskiv@ukr.net

OXSANA PRYKHODKO

Associate Professor, Associate Professor of
the Department of Ukrainian language and culture of the
National Aviation University, Kyiv, Ukraine
oksana.prykhodko@npp.nau.edu.ua

DMYTRO DROZDOVSKYI

Academic Fellow at the Department of Foreign and Slavic Literatures
of Shevchenko Institute of Literature
the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine
[drozdovskiy@ukr.net](mailto:drozdoivskyi@ukr.net)

OLHA BYKOVA

Faculty of Journalism,
Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University, Kyiv, Ukraine
sonce01_84@ukr.net

HALYNA HAIOVYCH

Institute of Public Administration and Research in Civil Protection, Kyiv, Ukraine
halina15ukr@gmail.com

VIRA KOZACHOK

Teacher of the Department of Ukrainian Literature and Theory
of Literature Ivan Franko Drohobych State Pedagogical University
Drohobych, Lviv region, Ukraine
virusik89@ukr.net

* Artigo recebido em 02/10/2022 e aprovado para publicação pelo Conselho Editorial em 10/10/2022.

Abstract: In the paper, the authors examine the works of the classic of Azerbaijani literature Imadeddin Nasimi (1369-1417) through the prism of the theory of Nikolai Konrad. He stated that the Renaissance as a cultural era originated and developed first in Asian literature and then flourished in Europe. The dominant features of the Renaissance worldview, their manifestation in European and Asian literatures are determined. Nasimi was a prominent apologist for Hurufism, promoted it by literary means, but his work was much broader than the popularization of Hurufite teachings and had a universal significance. Interpretation of Nasimi's works shows that his glorification of a human being, recognition of godliness, national intentions, creativity in the native Azerbaijani language, along with the 'book' language of Farsi, reinforces self-knowledge, synthesis of faith with personal doubts, cult of feelings (love) giving grounds that Nasimi's work organically fits into the context of Renaissance culture. These features determine the greatness and genius of Imadeddin Nasimi's poetry.

Keywords: Philosophy of arts. Turkish philosophy. Imadeddin Nasimi. Humanism. Hurufism. Asian literatures.

Resumo: No artigo, os autores examinam as obras do clássico da literatura do Azerbaijão Imadeddin Nasimi (1369-1417) através do prisma da teoria de Nikolai Konrad. Ele afirmou que a Renascença como era cultural teve origem e se desenvolveu primeiro na literatura asiática e depois floresceu na Europa. As características dominantes da cosmovisão renascentista, sua manifestação nas literaturas européias e asiáticas são determinadas. Nasimi era um apologista proeminente do Hurufismo, promovido por meios literários, mas sua obra era muito mais ampla do que a popularização dos ensinamentos de Hurufite e tinha um significado universal. A interpretação das obras de Nasimi mostra que sua glorificação de um ser humano, o reconhecimento da piedade, as intenções nacionais, a criatividade na língua nativa do Azerbaijão, juntamente com a língua 'livro' do Farsi, reforça o autoconhecimento, a síntese da fé com dúvidas pessoais, o culto aos sentimentos (amor) dando motivos para que a obra de Nasimi se enquadre organicamente no contexto da cultura renascentista. Estas características determinam a grandeza e a genialidade da poesia de Imadeddin Nasimi.

Palavras-chave: Filosofia das artes. Filosofia turca. Imadeddin Nasimi. Humanismo. Hurufismo. Literaturas asiáticas.

1. INTRODUCTION

In 2019, according to UNESCO, the entire world celebrated the 650th anniversary of the birth of the prominent Azerbaijani poet Seyid Imadeddin Nasimi. In Azerbaijan, 2019 was declared as the "Year of Nasimi.". Translations of works by the Azerbaijani classic and collections of studies of his works have been published in different countries. Anniversary events did not miss Ukraine either. There was an unveiling of a monument to the poet in Kyiv, and ceremonial presentations dedicated to the anniversary of his birth. First, it is worth mentioning the publication of a collection of works by Nasimi (2019), which included works previously translated by Pavlo Movchan, Stanislav Telniuk, and Mykola Miroshnychenko.

Nevertheless, most of the poet's texts are the translations of Dr. Dmytro Chystyak, made intentionally for this collection.

The collections were preceded by forewords prepared by P. Akhundova and D. Chystyak. The authors of the prefaces sought to synthesize the work of researchers of previous years, to present fully and in detail the peculiarities of the worldview of Imadeddin Nasimi, partially and characterized the poetic features of the poet's lyrics. Consciously or unconsciously, they focused almost exclusively on the connection between Nasimi's work and Hurufism, so they inevitably turned to the figure of the poet's spiritual predecessor and mentor, Fazlullah Naimi. P. Akhundova, teaching the basics of hurufism, focuses primarily on the mysticism of letters and sounds, their combinations in *The Qur'an*. "Hurufism is a unique philosophical concept based on the postulate that the world is an emanation of the ancient Creator, which appears in letters, sounds, and in man, created by God in his own image and likeness. According to this doctrine, the letters of the Arabic and Persian alphabets are the basis for all things; the keys to all the mysteries of the universe, and in human appearance, there are certain features, attributes and reflections of the Truth. Hence, we have the comparison of letters with the features of the human face, which is reflected in Hurufite poetry" (Akhundova 2019, 15). At some point, the work of Imadeddin Nasimi is an interpretation, a poetic presentation of the basics of hurufism.

2. METHODOLOGY

The article exploits a comparative method to fit the work of Imadeddin Nasimi and, more broadly, Farsi-language and Turkic literature in the broad context of world literature in the X-XVI centuries. The achievements of the formal method are used to outline the peculiarities of the Renaissance, its leading ideas and characteristic features of literary works. The article provides an analysis of many texts by Imadeddin Nasimi, for which the hermeneutic and philological methods will be used. Biographical and cultural-historical methods are also partly used in the publication.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

N. Konrad's theory of Renaissance in Asian literature of the X-XVI centuries

Obviously, this is the case. However, the question naturally arises: if Nasimi's poetry is an illustration of the provisions of Hurufism, Naimi's philosophy, then why is Imadeddin Nasimi's "epigone" and not Fazlullah Naimi considered a genius of humankind and world literature? Perhaps Nasimi's poetry, correlating with Hurufism, goes beyond the Sufism, acquiring a universal sound. After all, this is also partially mentioned in P. Akhundova's preface, although she usually returns to the alphabetic mysticism. "In the sublime gazelles Nasimi in poetic form reflected the basic tenet of the philosophical concept of Hurufism that the Creator lives in his creations. According to Hurufism, the divine principle is manifested not only in the inner essence, but also in the appearance of a man. Followers of this doctrine sought the interpretation of letters, which they considered the original, eternal and invisible attributes of God, identical to his essence — in the image and appearance of the man. Cognition and self-knowledge are the pervasive motifs of Nasimi's poetry. The Qur'an, from the point of view of the Hurufites, is the true image of God who appeared before the Prophet Muhammad. A person, who has learned the letters of the Qur'an and possesses divine wisdom, acquires perfection" (Akhundova 2019, 27-28). Thus, despite attempts to focus the reader's attention on the mysticism of letters, P. Akhundova argues that the main position of Hurufism and Nasimi's poetry is the thesis of the divine origin of the human being, the reproduction in humans of the essence of Allah. Moreover, the motives of cognition and self-knowledge in Nasimi's lyrics are represented also.

Obviously, it is too narrow to consider Nasimi's work through the prism of only the philosophical intricacies of Sufism and, in particular, Hurufism. The poetry of the Azerbaijani writer convinces that the symbolism of the Qur'anic text, letters and sounds, their reading in facial features, occupies an important place in it, but much more often it is love that balances on the border of a specific love story and Sufi allegorical desire of the ecstatic believer to merge with Allah. Besides, it is the above-mentioned motif of the *godlikeness* of the human being, but Nasimi focuses precisely on the infinity of the spiritual world of humans, its diversity, and human self-sufficiency. This makes it necessary to consider the work of the classic of Azerbaijani poetry in a much broader context than Hurufism and Sufism — we mean Eastern literature in general and even world literature.

In this regard, it is quite appropriate to consider the lyrical works of Imadeddin Nasimi through the prism of the concept of the Russian literary critic-orientalist Nikolai Konrad (1891-

1970). N. Konrad was primarily a researcher of Japanese language and literature, a good connoisseur of Chinese literature, as well as an excellent connoisseur of Western European literatures. The researcher was inclined to theoretical generalizations of the results obtained, which could be explained by direct communication with Russian literary critics — former formalists, as well as interest in the methodology of the formal school in general. The consequence of this was N. Konrad's theory that the Renaissance in literature covered not only Western European countries but also Eastern countries. Moreover, the Renaissance appeared in the Eastern literatures earlier than in Europe. "Based on the newly realized individual facts of the cultural history of China in the VIII-XII centuries, the author (N. Konrad. – *authors*) proposes to see in certain facts the signs of the era in the history of XIV- XVI centuries Europe called *Renaissance* <...> Then paying attention to certain phenomena of cultural history of Central Asia and Iran in IX-XIII centuries, the author expresses the idea of the possibility of establishing the concept of "Renaissance" as a global phenomenon, not local; phenomenon for the history of great cultural peoples" (Konrad 1972, 5). In addition, let the expressions "certain facts", "certain phenomena" not be misleading, because the concept of N. Konrad was the result of thorough and long-term research.

The researcher was forced to have strong, indisputable arguments in favour of his theory, because its publication was risky for him. This was explained by the fact that N. Konrad's views were at odds with the statements of the classics of the Marxism, first of all with the provisions "concerning the geography of the Renaissance" expressed by F. Engels. <...> To the new cultural community, which developed in XV-XVI centuries, he is awkward only the countries of Western and Central Europe; here, as a result of the "greatest progressive coup", a new European literature emerges, which extends to that part of the Slavic countries that belonged to "Latin Europe" - Dalmatia and Croatia, the Czech Republic and Poland" (Nalyvaiko a1998, 65). Therefore, M. Konrad had to argue his theory properly, so as not to be accused of revisionism of Marxist theory, which was considered in the USSR almost a political crime and threatened at least excommunication from public research.

This helped the researcher as, in fact, he was not the first one to express the ideas about the Eastern "Renaissance". Thus, Konrad's investigation (Konrad 1972, 241–242) had predecessors: Sh. Nutsbidze with the monograph "Rustaveli and the Eastern Renaissance" (1947), J. Javakhishvili's "History of Georgia" (1948), V. Chanturiy's "Pedagogy of Georgian

Humanism of the XI-XII Centuries” (1961), V. Chaloyan’s “Armenian Renaissance” (1963). V. Zhirmunsky spotlighted the idea of the Caucasus Renaissance in the article “Alisher Navoi and the Problem of the Renaissance in Oriental Literatures” (1961), I. Braginsky presents this thesis in “12 Miniatures” (1965) (N. Konrad mistakenly calls the book “Iranian” miniatures”). I. Borolina and others discussed Turkish literature of the XIV-XVI centuries through the prism of Renaissance tendencies Taking into account Georgian researchers from the mid-1950s, M. Konrad formulates the first provisions of his theory, bringing them together in the final collection of articles “West and East” (1970). N. Konrad may have known the work of the Swiss scholar Adam Metz (died in 1917, the study was published only after his death) “Muslim Renaissance”. Nevertheless, it is significant that A. Metz’s book was published in the USSR in 1973.

Nikolay Konrad, as already noted, was an excellent connoisseur of Japanese and Chinese literatures. Influenced by the works of his predecessors and his own study of Eastern literature, he concluded that the Renaissance (as a cultural and historical epoch, not just a rapid tendency) originated in the VIII century in China. From there it “moved” to Japan, later it covered the Persian lands and the Turkic literatures, the literatures of Transcarpathia, and only then it covered the countries of Europe. Influenced, in particular, by M. Konrad’s theory, Ukrainian scholar D. Nalyvaiko (along with other Russian researchers) transfers Renaissance tendencies to Ukrainian literature (also contrary to the assertions of the classics of Marxism), limiting himself to the assertion of the late pre-Renaissance, which turned into the Baroque (Nalyvaiko).

Regarding Eastern literatures and the Renaissance, the apotheosis of Konrad’s theory was the second edition of the two-volume work “Literature of the East in the Middle Ages” (Literature of the East in the Middle Ages: textbook for university students), which was published under the editorship of N. Konrad. However, the researcher did not submit any section to it, probably because of his health problems, because in 1970 – the year of publication of the two-volume book – the scholar died.

Very quickly, Soviet literary criticism (apparently under pressure from above) began to harass Konrad’s theory, accusing the author and his followers of shifting, attributing almost accidental coincidences to the literary process and the search for communities where they did not exist. It is from such positions that both the expert in European literatures R. Samarin and

the orientalist B. Riftin criticized the theorists of the East Renaissance. Very quickly, Konrad's concept of the Renaissance was "evicted" to distant academic margins, as not being worth mentioning.

Thus, in the third volume of "History of World Literature", which covered the Renaissance, N. Konrad and his "cycle of works" (History of world literature 1985, 21) is mentioned. M. Balashov noted in the preface that in the East "a large gap, temporal and qualitative, between the emergence of pre-Renaissance trends in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance itself, which in its entirety never happened", was a manifestation of Eastern "antiquity" in the "old peoples". "Similar to the Renaissance, the trends fade in the East just when the Renaissance in Italy reaches its apogee..." (History of world literature 1985, 21). Therefore, there was something similar to the Renaissance, but it is not exactly the Renaissance, but only hints at it, a phenomenon of distant analogies.

Indicative in this sense is the position of Irina Borolina. In the second part of the two-volume "Literature of the East in the Middle Ages," she was the author of a profound section "Turkish Literature" (Literature of the East in the Middle Ages 1970, 314–439), in which, in particular, she mentions the political, economic and cultural features of the Renaissance in Turkey in the XV-XVI centuries, spotlighting a significant increase in the role of cities and, consequently, the intelligentsia. "The development of the economy, maritime and caravan trade, international relations causes a high rise of culture and achievements of scientific ideas <...>" (Literature of the East in the Middle Ages 1970, 372). I. Borolina lists the considerable achievements of Turkish science of that time, e.g., medicine, architecture, painting, book printing. "Thus, new tendencies are established in the cultural life of the society, in their content typologically similar to the phenomena of the European Renaissance. Overcoming religious dogmatism, a new secular literature is being created in Turkey, which focuses on the humanity and fights for human emancipation from the shackles of social and corporate consciousness and the medieval worldview. Affirming the beauty of earthly life and the enjoyment of the joys of life, the representatives of the Renaissance culture boldly challenge the medieval ideology, religious prohibitions and norms of feudal morality. Renaissance cultural movement in Turkey is just one of the waves of revival, self-determination of the Turkic peoples, which began in Central Asia, giving the world such titans as the Uzbek Alisher Navoi and the Azerbaijani Mohammed Fuzuli <...> The role Fuzuli played in the history of Turkish

literature in Turkish history is a real symbol of the closest cultural contacts of the Turkic peoples, which was especially strengthened in the era of the Renaissance blossom” (*Literature of the East in the Middle Ages* 1970, 376). And although the word “Renaissance” is printed in uppercase or lowercase, although the researcher notes that “the manifestation of Renaissance tendencies in Turkish literature was largely flawed” (*Literature of the East in the Middle Ages* 1970, 376), it is a question of renaissance tendencies, instead of simply some updates of cultural or economic maintenance.

In the third, “Renaissance”, volume of “*History of World Literature*,” I. Borolina is the author of the chapter “*Turkish Literature*” (*History of world literature: in nine volumes* 1985, 567–574). Describing the development of Turkish culture of the XV-XVI centuries, the researcher briefly repeats the information about the blossom of economic and cultural life of the country, but she does not provide any connection with the Renaissance. Only in the next paragraph, she briefly notes, “If the literature of the second half of the XV – middle of the XVI centuries is characterized by intense blossom, the establishment of humanistic ideas, largely related to the Renaissance, then from the second half of the XVI century along with the further development of these ideas, there are some signs of their rebirth” (*History of world literature: in nine volumes* 1985, 573). Moreover, that is all. She does not mention before or after any features of the Renaissance in Turkish literature.

Around the same time as N. Konrad was working on his theory, Richard Fry presented ideas about the Renaissance in the East, or more precisely, in Persian-Tajik literatures (his monograph in English was published in 1962). “The poets and all those who were engaged in literary activity found in the Samanids, who ruled Central Asia and Eastern Iran from 892 (the coming to power of Isma’il, the true founder of the kingdom) to 999, were wonderful patrons. At the Samanid court in Bukhara, Rudaki and Dakiki wrote their poems in Persian. The revival began” (Fry 2002, 343). However, Fry was, first and foremost, a historian who wrote about early Iran until the twelfth century, so he devoted only a few pages to fiction in his monograph. Secondly, like I. Borolina, he writes the Renaissance in uppercase or lowercase (as “renaissance”), and most importantly – it is unclear whether he means the cultural era, or a new stage of development, prosperity after the previous decline, that is, the revival of the literary traditions of previous centuries on a new Islamic basis. “The Neo-Persian literary revival contained no protest against either Islam or the Arabic language. Perhaps we should not talk

about the Renaissance, but about the Birth: a new Muslim Persian culture was created” (Fry 2002, 344). Although the word “Birth” indicates a new quality of literature, which had no analogues in its own history of previous centuries.

If Soviet and Western literary studies were not completely clear about the Renaissance trends and the Renaissance as a cultural and historical epoch in the blossoming of Eastern arts, especially literature, then for many scholars of the East the concept of a holistic Renaissance (especially in the post-Soviet discourse, not without Konrad’s influence) in Asian cultures has become a commonplace. For example, for Tajik researchers on Persian-Tajik literature of the tenth to sixteenth centuries: “The Samanid state lived a peaceful life for more than 100 years, which contributed to the prosperity of cities, crafts, agriculture and trade, and mining. The Renaissance gave the world great humanists, such as the founder of Persian-Tajik literature Abu Abdullo Rudaki, the creator of the immortal poem *Shahnameh* Abulkasim Firdousi and the world-famous encyclopedist scholar Abu Ali ibn Sina. As we can see, this statement is unequivocal about the Renaissance, about “great humanists”, “scientist-encyclopedist” who fit into the context of the Renaissance titans.

I. Borolina and Turkish literature were mentioned not only to illustrate how the ideas about the Renaissance were suppressed in Eastern literatures. In the section “Turkish Literature” in the two-volume edition “Literature of the East in the Middle Ages,” there is the only brief mention of Nasimi. Probably because it was about Turkic literature related to Azerbaijani, although the poet’s connection with Iranian literature was no less noticeable. Nevertheless, Nasimi is mentioned in the article about Turkish literature. This mention is short (obviously, mystics were not very popular in Soviet times), so we will quote it almost completely.

“Among the freethinkers of the era, who left a big mark in the cultural life of Turkish society, was the Azerbaijani poet Imadeddin Nesimi, who fell victim to the Inquisition - in 1403, according to a court verdict in Aleppo; he was flayed alive. Nesimi was a supporter of the religious and political doctrine of Hurufism, directed against orthodox dogma and which reproduced the popular protest against the bloody invasion of Timur. He proclaimed the divine essence of human beings: “The worshiper and the object of worship are one, the worshiper and his deity are one, confirming the statement: “The Most High Being is me.” <...> He had many

followers, inspired by tyrannical motives and humanistic pathos of his poetry” (Literature of the East in the Middle Ages 1970, 346-347).

As we can see, the main emphasis is on Nasimi’s free-thinking conception and tyranny. “<...> In the Soviet period his (Nasimi – *authors*) graceful gazelles were given in a distorted form, deliberately misinterpreted by literary critics who sought to adapt them to the official atheistic ideology <...>” (Akhundova 2019, 26). Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that both freethinking (because of Hurufism) and tyrannical motives permeate the work of the Azerbaijani poet. The Sufi motive for the union of a sincere believer with the Creator, and the divinity of the human being, and the humanistic pathos in Nasimi’s poetry are well defined. In addition, the vast majority of these features of Imadeddin Nasimi’s lyrics fit perfectly into the system of Renaissance poetic features.

If we return to the thesis about the kinship of the Azerbaijani poet with Persian literature (one of his *divans* is written in Farsi), the emphasis on its Renaissance character is even greater than on Turkish literature. The subdivisions of the section “Literature of Iran” are already indicative (Literature of the East in the Middle Ages 1970, 3-213): 1. Literature of the early Middle Ages (III – VII centuries); 2. Literature of the pre-Renaissance period (VIII-IX centuries); 3. Literature of the Renaissance (X-XV centuries); 4. Literature of the late Middle Ages in the period of feudal reaction (XVI - mid XVII centuries). As we can see, the work of Imadeddin Nasimi dates back to the heyday of Persian Renaissance literature, when Iran and Azerbaijan either were a single state, or were perceived culturally related in times of political fragmentation.

What are the renaissance features of Iranian literature defined in Part II of “Literature of the East in the Middle Ages”? These are the already mentioned unprecedented prosperity of the Turkish cities, the emergence of a significant stratum of the *intelligentsia*, and a significant flourishing of science. Besides, there is a large number of mystical heresies, primarily related to Sufism, religious freethinking (which, as in Europe, was not an expression of atheism or god-fighting), the creation of an ideal of absolute monarchy led by an educated ruler, works of utopia (al-Farabi), social and literary emancipation of women (the emergence of preachers and poets), etc.: “The mind, science, feelings, art, literature, work of artisans and peasants <...> were adored in poetry. The pinnacle of Renaissance thought was a critique of God, divine justice <...>” (Literature of the East in the Middle Ages 1970, 42). What is more, the

emergence of universal powerful figures of scientists and artists, which was notable for the Renaissance (“Iranian peoples gave birth to colossi similar to the titans of the Western European Renaissance” (Literature of the East in the Middle Ages 1970, 41)) should be also taken into account.

If we agree with Konrad’s theory of and his followers, it seems that in Persian literature chronologically the longest manifestation of the Renaissance was found. “The scale of the Iranian Renaissance was impressive for that chronological era, especially in the fields of science, philosophy, and literature. Renaissance phenomena coincided with the birth of literature as a work of arts of professionals. It marked a period of discovery in the perception of the world, the main thing is the “inner” human being and what surrounds the humanity. <...> Aphorism has become a common form of expression of free thought, impromptu, and competition of poets in the disclosure of the same topic - to assert the capabilities of the individual. <...> Aesthetic theories of the era were embodied in the leading figures so that their focus on reality, the sensory world and its essence became obvious. Parallels to these phenomena are easily found in the literatures and cultures of Western European peoples in the Renaissance” (Literature of the East in the Middle Ages 1970, 42-43).

Moreover, if N. Konrad spoke cautiously about the socio-cultural kinship of the Eastern and Western Renaissances, but avoided claiming the influence of the East (because the Renaissance was established there much earlier than in Western Europe) on the West, in “Literature of the East in the Middle Ages”, impressed by the incredibly powerful Persian culture, such influence is represented as a question. “Iranians influenced the later European Renaissance, especially in the field of inventions, science, and philosophy, to a lesser extent in literature, as well as the Uzbek, Turkish and Azerbaijani Renaissance. Therefore, the international role of the Iranian Renaissance for Europe, the Middle East and part of the Middle East is as indisputable as the undeniable importance of Italian culture for Europe <...>” (Literature of the East in the Middle Ages 1970, 50). We are most interested in the thesis about the powerful influence of the Iranian Renaissance on the formation and development of the Azerbaijani Renaissance.

Renaissance Features of Nasimi’s Works and its Universal Significance

Moreover, Imadeddin Nasimi in the XIV-XV centuries not only sporadically intersected with individual Renaissance phenomena, but also was completely immersed in the ocean of the Persian Renaissance during its heyday. In the end, if we consider the M. Konrad's theory questionable reducing everything only to typologically similar phenomena that have different origins and continuations, then we should talk about these typological ascents in the works of Imadeddin Nasimi.

Nasimi did not immediately come to Hurufism. Previously, he was a supporter of the Order (*Tariqat*) of the Calendars ("Nasimi first chose the Order of the Calendars <...>" (Akhundova 2019, 17)). If we focus on the difference between the two tariqats, then the doctrine of letters really comes to the fore, their mystical significance in early 29 *suras* of the Qur'an, the manifestations of these letters in the environment and especially on human faces - the image and likeness of God. However, if you try to find common ground between the two orders, the minimized implementation of the external, ritual side of Muslim doctrine should be noted ("Yes, the Sufi - a clown and cool, you do not believe double words, / This lazy cunning forever, so as not to sell useless shops" (Nasimi 2019, 97)) and focus on its inner essence, an unbridled desire to find signs of God's presence in the environment (which naturally correlates with *pantheism*) and through their knowledge to merge with Allah, to dissolve in Him. Finally, we can say that the desire to know God and merge with him is a noticeable, defining feature of all Sufism.

Therefore, "reading" the letters from the faces (especially beauties as a manifestation of God's beauty and perfection, but not only) and "deciphering" through them God's revelations was a way to know Allah. Moreover, "If we discard the religious-idealistic shell of pantheistic hurufism, its main guiding motive will remain humanism, philanthropy, and criticism directed against the feudal-clerical despotic way of life. These features of hurufism were reflected in the works of leading poets of that time" (Sufism in Azerbaijan). As we can see, the characteristics of Hurufism logically fit into the context of culture of the Renaissance.

Perhaps a key feature of the Renaissance is the break with theocentric views and the focus on the humanity (*anthropocentrism*) and nature, as a human being is its essential part. This does not mean that the Renaissance allowed atheism to blossom; on the contrary, deep faith in God (Allah) was inextricably linked to the desire to know the world, and this often gave rise to

a pantheistic worldview (“Hurufism” is based on the postulate about the world Creator <...>”) (Akhundova 2019, 15).

It is possible that the transition from the calendars to the Hurufites was due to the fact that the latter had a clear system of views on Allah and human kind, and the world as its manifestations. Special attention to human kind as the image and likeness of God, apparently, was also a strong point to choose hurufism for the poet.

The first thing that should interest us in this sense in the work of Imadeddin Nasimi is the cult of Man as the Creator. “Almost the most important feature that characterizes the Italian Renaissance, is the primacy of the human being. People have become at the center of everything - as the highest category with highest rights, as the highest value; everything else - society, history, and world - is valuable and important as far as all this applies to human beings” (Konrad 1972, 254). I should mention the well-known gazelle by Nasimi, in which he states: “I am the container of the worlds, and I myself will not fit into the universe, / I am a being that knows no boundaries, and I will not fit into being. <...> My premonitions are the entire world, and the origins of my life <...> With my wealth, you know, I will not fit in the treasures of the world. <...> I am the beginning of all beginnings, I am the sun, the six sides of the earth <...>» (Nasimi 2019, 39–40). In addition, this is not the only work in which we see the motive of immeasurable inner wealth and godlikeness, godliness of human sounds.

“I am God. And, like Mansur, I roar from the height <...> I - and the prophet Musa, who stood on the tongue with God, / I - and Mount Sinai, shining in the world... The worlds live in me - all eighteen thousand, / Allah is in me - for certainty. <...> I am the real God” (Nasimi 2019, 44–45); “Yes, I am a poet, I am the truth of God <...> I am the truth of the holy palace <...> I am the Torah, the Bible, Furkan, the Gospel and Sohof, / In my heart, I have the entire Qur'an <...>” (Nasimi 2019, 46); “O lord of the worlds, look: although I am a villain - not frivolous, / I am rich, your treasures lift me!” (Nasimi 2019, 107); “Only the son of Man - the God of the universe <...>” (Nasimi 2019, 117); “I am already God, and the world is a mine for me” (Nasimi 2019, 122); “You say everywhere: God-Truth is alive, / In you! In that - the prophets of the heat-word <...>” (Nasimi 2019, 133); “The word of God-Truth is in you!” (Nasimi 2019, 138) and other similar statements are explicated in Nasimi’s poems.

The poet’s desire for truth, his desire for each person to realize his divine origin, raises certain doubts in the poet. After all, a human being is not only *spiritual* but also *corporeal*.

Moreover, not everyone seeks to know his or her purpose and the deep meaning of the Qur'an. "What is in the earth, in the heavens, is in every human being." He who knows and does not know the words of God is a human being" (Nasimi 2019, 119) That is why there are constant motives to comprehend human way of life, to reconcile it with the essence of Islam ("Look, are you righteous or sinful? What did you sow around?" (Nasimi 2019, 121)). A significant and at the same time unworthy cause of deviations on the way to the Truth is the corporeality of human beings.

In Nasimi's work, the image of blood often appears as a synecdoche, a symbol of human flesh. "Let the devil settle in the blood of the human being, But the name is secret - in the essence of human beings" (Nasimi 2019, 138). Blood, the body is the bearer of sinfulness, the manifestation of the essence of "Diablo", so the poet-mystic is constantly disturbed, oppressed by such imperfections of the human being. That is why Nasimi constantly emphasizes the need to get rid of the burden of the flesh in order for the divine spiritual essence of human beings to be revealed. P. Akhundova notes that the classic of Azerbaijani literature, as well as Hurufism in general, was an apologist of *asceticism*. "Hurufism was unique among other Sufi tariqats - this doctrine did not support asceticism and rejection of earthly pleasures <...>" (Akhundova 2019, 18). Although, if we do not take into account the glorification of women's perfect beauty, which symbolized the beauty and perfection of Allah, it is difficult to find Epicurean motifs in Nasimi's poetry.

Interestingly, the poet connects his own doubts about the correctness of the chosen way not only because of the attraction of his own flesh over the spirit. Imadeddin Nasimi clearly identifies himself as an Azerbaijani. This is a definition of ethnicity, as well as - more broadly - to the Turkic community, its worldview and religious beliefs, which from the point of view of Islam is a sort of *paganism*. However, this paganism (obviously *Tengriism* or *Zoroastrianism*) is both a source of doubt for the poet and another way for the Truth, which leads to the same result as the movement to the Truth through deep knowledge of the essence of Islam: "I am a pagan and a Muslim same Azeri. / I am a shepherd and I am lost in the variety of roads" (Nasimi 2019, 117); "Although I will beat idols, Azer - I am too" (Nasimi 2019, 159). If a human being, in particular, the poet, is a container of dichotomy, of eternal doubt, then he is also a way, a form, a way of overcoming these doubts, a renunciation of carnal sinfulness.

Knowledge of human beings, of human essence, according to Nasimi, lies primarily in self-knowledge, in the ability to find and preserve the divine. “He who knew the Lord knew himself” (Nasimi 2019, 91). “You must know yourself - then know the Lord, / so in prayer Mustafa knew himself from the beginning” (Nasimi 2019, 96). “Without knowing yourself, you are a stranger to yourself, / and the epoch is a mystery to you, a dungeon” (Nasimi 2019, 120). Nasimi creates his own Hurufite hermeneutic circle: through the knowledge of Allah you know yourself better and better; having known yourself more deeply - the essence of the world is fuller, and “You know the Lord”, because “Everything is obvious - God's reflection is supernatural” (Nasimi 2019, 147).

Nasimi's work and Hurufism are inextricably linked. Yet we return to the problem of the greatness of Nasimi as a poet. Why is his name much better known and more popular in Azerbaijan, in the East, in the entire civilized world than the ancestor of Hurufism Fazlullah Naimi? We predict that the poetic reproduction of Hurufite ideas is much easier to perceive and remember in general than the philosophical and religious considerations of Naimi. Nevertheless, perhaps researchers of Nasimi's work are too focused on the Hurufite basis of the poet's work, reducing him to an illustrator, a poet-popularizer of the ideas of Hurufism. Perhaps it is worth talking about the self-sufficient value of his lyrics?

In this paper, we have already mentioned that Nasim moved on to the Hurufites. Yes, the second tariqat and its teachings seemed to him much closer than the first one. However, both here and there were in places based on ignoring the ritual, formal side, focusing on the divine origin of human beings and, consequently, a certain divinity, the desire to know not only Allah but also the human being and the world around people, the essence of the universe and human existence in it, etc. Moreover, here we do not go beyond the religious and mystical currents, although we expand the horizon. It is worth looking at the work of Nasimi from the standpoint of universal values.

There are and will be countless readers all over the world, in particular in the East, in particular in the Muslim community, in particular in Azerbaijan, who have never heard what *hururism* is, or have a very vague idea about it. However, Nasimi's lyrics have evoked, evoke and will evoke in many of them admiration and unforgettable impressions. This applies to the glorification of the human being, his spiritual existence, the pursuit of perfection, self-knowledge in the work of the poet. Similarly, the eternal theme of love, and the multifaceted

disclosure of this theme, balancing on the border of sensual emotions, human existence, and abstract desire to know the world, and through it - Allah, can merge in harmonious unity with the environment and God poured into it, dissolving in them as in its own basis. Undoubtedly, this also applies to unsurpassed images, linguistic and stylistic features, and to Nasimi's versification skills which are so perfect that translators are able to reproduce them. All these features of the classics of Eastern literature are the key features of European Renaissance culture and these features created the greatness and uniqueness of Renaissance literature, determining its unique place in the history of world literature.

In this sense, it is very interesting to mention the comprehension of Nasimi's work by Orhan Pamuk in *The Black Book*. The Turkish writer is well acquainted with the theory of Hurufism, and connection with the work of Nasimi. However, it seems more important to go beyond hurufism, to extend its principles of symbolism to different areas. For example, what Nasimi discovered for himself and his listeners and readers: "<...> not only the Qur'an, but also the world is full of mysteries <...>" (Pamuk 2012, 437). The desire and opportunity of knowing the world, to discover secrets, truths through objects, phenomena of material existence, especially through speech and writing, through reading the hidden semantics of tokens - this is what attracts Pamuk in the works of the Azerbaijani poet, without any close attachment to religion – mystical isolation, or orthodoxy.

Fazlullah Naimi, the founder of Hurufism, is also mentioned in *The Black Book*. However, Pamuk is not limited to the Hurufite religious-mystical essence, but rather he ignores it, going far beyond it. The novel is about the teaching of Fazlullah as principles and ways to know *transcendent truths*, irrational world, secret knowledge through sounds and letters. "According to Fazlallah, sound serves as the boundary between being and non-being. After all, everything materialized from *the invisible* has its own sound... As for the most developed form of sound, it is obviously a *word* <...> *word* is magic and consists of letters. As for the letters that denote the quintessence of being, its meaning and the presence of Allah on earth, they can be clearly seen in human images" (Pamuk 2012, 434). Pamuk resorts to such a valuable perception of Nasimi's work and hurufism in the novel.

Pamuk borrows some ideas from Nasimi (as well as Naimi) and unfolds in *The Black Book*: "The world is a book" (Pamuk 2012, 244); "<...> Behind the visible world around lies a simple mystery, whose shackles are able to be cast off as soon as it reveals its secret <...>"

(Pamuk 2012, 287). And in order to “reveal the secret”, “the way to get rid of”, the author of the novel resorts to another conceptual thesis of Nasimi - you need to know yourself (“<...> for the human being there is no recipe for how to become yourself” (Pamuk 2012, 302)). It is clear that Pamuk’s postmodern vision does not mean that such a symbolist interpretation of these theses (in *The Black Book* they are linked into the system, asserted as a methodology of knowing oneself and the world) is the only correct one. However, the writer, albeit ironic, gives these ideas a system of universal historiosophical character. Moreover, “he looks at the universe as a mysterious place full of mysteries and subtexts. Those who perceive the world as routine, unambiguous and completely predictable, are doomed to defeat, and hence to slavery...” (Pamuk 2012, 446).

3. CONCLUSIONS

This is just one possible interpretation of Nasimi’s work. However, every avid reader will find in Nasimi’s lyrics reactualizations, which will be much broader than the Hurufite teaching. Hurufism is an original and extremely interesting phenomenon in the world history of religion and culture, but this did not make it an exclusive concept that would find a response in the millions of followers and connoisseurs here and now. Instead, the work of Nasimi from century to century gained more and more fans; it had a growing influence on the development of Azerbaijani, Muslim and world literature and culture in general. Its uniqueness was largely determined by its correlation with the Hurufite doctrine. This poetry exploits and reinforces the desire to seek the highest truths, to know God, the world and yourself, the synthesis of universal values, the celebration of love for the earthly woman and the highest deity. In addition, Nasimi was closely connected with the spirit of the Renaissance, which gives additional grounds to say that the Asian. Eastern Renaissance had a long history, was extensive, diverse and marked by a unique and significant contribution to the history of world culture.

REFERENCES

- Akhundova, P. (2019). Poetry of eternal truth // Nasimi S. “And I set myself on the path of Truth...”: selected poems. Kyiv: Summit-Book, 11-30.
- Braginsky, I. (1966). 12 miniatures. Moscow: Fiction.
- Chystiak, D. (2019). In search of living names. In Nasimi S. “And I set myself on the path of Truth...”: selected poems. Kyiv: Summit-Book, 5-10.
- Fry, R. (2002). The Legacy of Iran. Moscow: Vostochnaya literature.
- History of world literature: in nine volumes. 1985. Volume 3. Moscow: Nauka.
- Konrad, N. (1972). West and East: articles. Moscow: Nauka.
- Metz, A. (1973). Muslim Renaissance. Moscow: Nauka.
- Murivatov, K. (2019). Tajiks - the people of poetry. In The people of Kyrgyzstan in a single family / Ed. V. Narozya. Bishkek, 261–266.
- Nalyvaiko, D. (a1998). Through the eyes of the West: the reception of Ukraine in Western Europe XI-XVIII centuries. Kyiv: Osnovy.
- Nalyvaiko, D. (b2008). Through the eyes of the West: the reception of Ukraine in Western Europe XI-XVIII centuries. Kyiv: Gramota.
- Nalyvaiko, D. (c1998). Commonality and originality: Ukrainian literature in the context of the European literary process. Kyiv: Dnipro.
- Nasimi, S. (2019). “And I set myself on the path of Truth...”: selected poems. Kyiv: Summit-Book.
- Pamuk, O. (2012). The Black Book. Kharkiv: Folio.
- Riftin, B. (1974). Typology and relationships of medieval literature (instead of introduction) // Typology and relationships of medieval literature of East and West. Moscow: Nauka.
- Samarin, R. (1974). “... This honest method?": On the history of realism in Western European literature. Moscow: Nauka.
- Sufism in Azerbaijan. (2011). [Electronic resource]. - Access mode: <https://wayter.wordpress.com/2011/03/26/суфизм-в-азербайджане>. - Accessed 03.04.2020.
- Zhirmunsky, V. (1979). Alisher Navoi and the problem of the Renaissance in the literature of the East // Comparative Literature. Leningrad: Nauka, 174–185.
- Zhirmunsky, V. M. (1979). Comparative Literature: East and West: Selected Works. Leningrad: Nauka, Leningradskoe otdelenie.