

## HISTORICAL JUSTICE AND REPUTATIONAL RESTORATION: THE ISSUE OF NATIONAL IMAGE IN OZOD SHARAFIDDINOV'S "UNDERSTANDING CHO'LPON"

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**Abstract.** *This article analyzes Ozod Sharafiddinov's "Understanding Cho'lpon" from the perspective of modern reputational management and public relations theories. The aim of the study is to identify the communicative strategies employed in the process of reinterpreting Cho'lpon's personality and creative legacy in the work. The research was conducted on the basis of textual analysis, a historical-contextual approach, Framing Theory<sup>1</sup>, and Image Restoration Theory<sup>2</sup>. The results indicate that Sharafiddinov refutes the negative discourse formed during the Soviet period by relying on facts and textual evidence, reinterprets Cho'lpon's personality within a new context, and establishes a scholarly foundation for restoring his national image. The work may be evaluated not only as a literary-critical study but also as a reputational strategy aimed at restoring historical justice.*

**Keywords:** *Cho'lpon, Ozod Sharafiddinov, reputation, image, framing, image restoration, national consciousness, literary criticism, PR strategy, historical context.*

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Cho'lpon (Abdulhamid Sulaymon o'g'li), who lived and created during this period, was one of the most significant figures in Uzbek literature expressing the spirit of Jadidism. As a poet, playwright, translator, and publicist, he actively participated in the process of national awakening and maintained his own independent position.

Through his novel "Kecha va kunduz" ("Night and Day"), numerous poems, and stage works, he brought Uzbek literature to a new stage of development. However, as a result of the repressive policies of the 1930s, he was condemned as an "enemy of the people" and executed in 1938. For a long time, his name and legacy were interpreted within a negative ideological discourse.

During the years of independence, the re-examination of Cho'lpon's legacy began. In this process, Ozod Sharafiddinov occupies a distinct place. His work "Cho'lponni anglash" ("Understanding Cho'lpon") is a significant study aimed at restoring Cho'lpon's personality and creative heritage on a scholarly basis. The purpose of this article is to identify the reputational and communicative methods employed by Sharafiddinov in this work, to demonstrate their evidentiary foundation, and to explain why this approach can be associated with certain elements of public relations. Today, the reassessment of national history and the Jadid legacy has become one of the priority directions of Uzbekistan's academic and cultural policy. However, since Cho'lpon's image had long been interpreted on the basis of political accusations, his public image was formed in a distorted manner. From this perspective, the issue should be examined not only within the framework of literary analysis but also as a process of reputational restoration.

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Entman

<sup>2</sup> William L. Benoit

This study addresses such scholarly questions as the communicative methods used by Ozod Sharafiddinov in reinterpreting Cho'lpon's personality, the place of these methods within reputational management, and the significance of the evidentiary model employed in the work for restoring Cho'lpon's image.

The research is based on qualitative analysis, and Ozod Sharafiddinov's "Cho'lponni anglash" was selected as the primary source. As units of analysis, passages evaluating Cho'lpon's personality and refuting the negative discourse of the Soviet period were identified.

These passages were analyzed on the basis of the concepts of image restoration (Benoit, 1995) and framing (Entman, 1993) within reputational management theory.

In analyzing the text, methods such as denial of accusations, explanation of historical context, and reinterpretation of personal qualities were applied. On the basis of these criteria, Sharafiddinov's system of argumentation and communicative strategy were evaluated. In public relations theory, reputation is understood as a stable perception formed in the public consciousness. If this perception is distorted due to political or ideological factors, its restoration requires the use of argumentation, contextualization, and framing. It is precisely these mechanisms that can be observed in Sharafiddinov's work.

First and foremost, the author demonstrates the lack of scholarly foundation behind the accusations advanced during the Soviet period. He writes:

"...Cho'lpon's inspiration surged like a fervent spring, overflowed like a torrent unable to be contained by its banks – in addition to his three poetry collections, he created numerous poems, stories, articles, and essays; he wrote dozens of dramatic works and enriched the treasury of our literature with a series of accomplished translations. These very works provided grounds for assessing him as an extraordinarily great figure. In particular, certain literary scholars abroad sought to define the essence of the poet's creative work with objectivity and accuracy... Is it really possible that over so many years, among a people as numerous as the Uzbek nation, not a single enlightened individual could be found who understood Cho'lpon, recognized him as a truly great poet, and did not fear to speak this truth? Is our nation truly so ungrateful as not to value the water flowing before it? Are our people so blind and deaf in the face of beauty? These are exceedingly difficult and complex questions. For during the Soviet era, we became accustomed to speaking about the people in general, vague, and grandiloquent terms — the people are wise, the people are great, the people are broad-hearted, the people are creators, the people are inventive, and so forth..."<sup>3</sup>

This passage demonstrates that the author responds not with emotional assertion, but with factual evidence. Why can this be considered an element of public relations? Because the first step in restoring reputation is the refutation of false accusations through facts. Ozod Sharafiddinov does precisely this: he enumerates the scope and influence of Cho'lpon's creative works and logically rejects the negative evaluation..

The second important aspect is framing, that is, the way a person is presented in a particular context. While the Soviet discourse interpreted Cho'lpon as a "nationalist," Sharafiddinov frames him as a representative of national consciousness and spiritual awakening.

For example, regarding the poem "Bahorni sog'indim" ("I Miss Spring"), he critiques earlier misinterpretations and explains the poem's meaning not as despair, but as inner confidence:

"No... there is no death!

<sup>3</sup> Sharafiddinov, O. (2019). \*Tanlangan asarlar: Cho'lponni anglash.\* Tashkent: Sharq Publishing House.

There is only a dying and a rekindling.  
One dies... fades, and then burns again  
Again springs,  
Again tulips.”<sup>4</sup>

By presenting these lines, the author shows Cho‘lpon not as a poet who has lost hope in life, but as a creator tested by trials who has not relinquished his inner confidence. This is a change in framing: the reality remains the same, but its interpretation changes. Sharafiddinov’s strength lies precisely in reading the poem not through the lens of political accusations, but through its aesthetic and philosophical content.

The third aspect is historical contextualization, that is, explaining an event, work, or idea in connection with the historical conditions (political, social, cultural) of its time. The author describes the 1930s as a period of “continuous moral and physical terror in literature.” This evaluation is not arbitrary. If the poet’s activity took place under repressive conditions, interpreting some cautious expressions or symbolic images as political treason is logically incorrect.

Sharafiddinov reveals this causal connection: the environment was such, and therefore the text must be understood in that context. From a PR perspective, this demonstrates the crisis context — showing that the reason for reputational damage lies in external factors.

Sharafiddinov also emphasizes Cho‘lpon’s talent: “Cho‘lpon was not only a man of iron will, but his talent was also extraordinarily powerful.” This statement is more than simple praise; it presents the poet as a unity of individual character and natural ability. In reputational restoration, highlighting personal qualities is crucial. The author portrays Cho‘lpon not as weak or hesitant, but as a person of strong will, thereby shaping a positive image in the public consciousness.

The analysis shows that Sharafiddinov’s main strategy is not merely to deny accusations, but to logically weaken them. He prioritizes evidence-based argumentation over emotional rhetoric, which is a key factor in increasing audience trust during the process of reputational restoration. In his work, PR elements are clearly visible: refuting unfounded accusations with facts, reinterpreting the individual in a new context (framing), explaining causes through historical context, and systematically highlighting positive personal qualities.

Why is this relevant today? The findings align with the image restoration model in reputational management theory. However, Sharafiddinov’s approach differs from a classic PR campaign. He does not promote the message through mass media; rather, he achieves reputational restoration through scholarly text. This makes his approach a distinctive form of national literary PR.

A limitation of the study is that the analysis was conducted within a single work. Future comparative analysis of Sharafiddinov’s other articles could lead to more comprehensive conclusions.

The scientific novelty of this research lies in the fact that “Understanding Cho‘lpon” is analyzed systematically from the perspective of reputational management for the first time. National memory and historical justice are important components of contemporary cultural policy in Uzbekistan. Today, the names of the Jadids are being restored and described as the architects of a “Second Renaissance.” Restoring Cho‘lpon’s legacy is not only a literary matter, but also a process of strengthening national identity.

<sup>4</sup> Sharafiddinov, O. (2019). \*Tanlangan asarlar: Cho‘lponni anglash.\* Tashkent: Sharq Publishing House.

Sharafiddinov's approach demonstrates that scholarly criticism can also serve as a tool of strategic communication. In conclusion, "Understanding Cho'lpon" is not merely a literary analysis; it is a clear example of reputational restoration. The author works with evidence rather than emotion, demonstrates through text rather than slogans, and responds to accusations not with denial alone, but with reasoned analysis.

For this reason, the work can also be considered an early example of national PR. In reinterpreting Cho'lpon's personality, Sharafiddinov carries out the three main stages of reputational restoration: refuting negative accusations with facts, contextualizing historically, and systematically highlighting positive personal qualities. As a result, Cho'lpon's national image is restored on a scholarly basis.

Therefore, the work can be evaluated not only as an example of literary criticism, but also as a strategic communicative act.

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