

**THE PHILOSOPHICAL INTERPRETATION OF SPACE AND BOUNDARY IN
ALISHER NAVOI'S "SADDI ISKANDARIY": THE SEMANTICS OF THE WALL
(SADD) CONCEPT**

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Abstract: This article examines the philosophical interpretation of space and boundary in Alisher Navoi's epic poem "Saddi Iskandariy," with particular focus on the semantic and symbolic dimensions of the wall (sadd). The study analyzes how spatial categories and boundaries are conceptualized within the narrative and explores the wall as both a physical and metaphysical construct. Through a close reading of the text, the paper highlights the ethical, political, and cosmological meanings embedded in the concept of the wall, demonstrating its role as a mediator between order and chaos, civilization and barbarity, and the material and spiritual worlds.

Keywords: Alisher Navoi, Saddi Iskandariy, space, boundary, wall, symbolism, philosophy, epic literature, semantics.

Alisher Navoi's literary heritage occupies a central place in the intellectual and cultural history of Central Asia. Among his monumental works, "Saddi Iskandariy" stands out as a profound synthesis of poetic imagination, philosophical reflection, and ethical discourse. As the final part of Navoi's famous "Khamasa," the poem not only narrates the legendary exploits of Alexander the Great (Iskandar) but also offers deep insights into the nature of power, knowledge, and human responsibility. One of the most intriguing aspects of the epic is its treatment of space and boundary, particularly through the symbolic construction of the wall, or "sadd."

The concept of space in "Saddi Iskandariy" is not merely geographical but deeply philosophical. Space is portrayed as a structured and meaningful domain where human actions unfold in relation to moral and cosmic order. The narrative moves across vast territories, yet these movements are not random; they are guided by a quest for justice, wisdom, and harmony. Within this spatial framework, boundaries emerge as crucial elements that define and regulate the interaction between different realms.

The wall constructed by Iskandar serves as a central symbol in this regard. At the literal level, the wall is built to protect civilized lands from the destructive forces represented by Gog and Magog. However, its significance extends far beyond its physical function. The wall becomes a manifestation of human effort to impose order upon chaos, to create a boundary that separates the known from the unknown, the safe from the dangerous. From a philosophical perspective, the wall can be interpreted as a representation of epistemological limits. It marks the boundary of human knowledge and the point at which the familiar world gives way to mystery and uncertainty. In this sense, the construction of the wall reflects the human desire to define and control the limits of understanding. Yet, Navoi subtly suggests that such limits are not absolute; they are subject to reinterpretation and transcendence.

The semantic richness of the “sadd” concept is further revealed through its ethical implications. The act of building the wall is not portrayed as an exercise of arbitrary power but as a moral duty. Iskandar is depicted as a just ruler who seeks to protect his people and maintain balance in the world. The wall thus symbolizes not only protection but also responsibility. It embodies the idea that power must be guided by wisdom and ethical considerations.

Moreover, the wall functions as a metaphor for the boundaries within the human self. Just as the external world requires regulation and order, so too does the inner world of thoughts and desires. Navoi’s narrative suggests that true strength lies not in conquering external territories but in mastering one’s own impulses. The wall, in this sense, becomes a symbol of self-discipline and spiritual integrity. The interplay between openness and closure is another important dimension of the wall’s symbolism. While the wall serves to enclose and protect, it also raises questions about isolation and exclusion. By creating a boundary, one inevitably defines what lies outside it. Navoi’s text invites readers to reflect on the consequences of such divisions and to consider the balance between inclusion and exclusion, security and freedom.

In addition, the construction of the wall can be viewed within the broader context of cosmological order. In many classical traditions, the world is understood as a harmonious system governed by divine principles. The act of building a wall aligns with the idea of maintaining this harmony by preventing the intrusion of chaotic forces. Thus, the wall is not merely a human creation but part of a larger cosmic design. The narrative technique employed by Navoi further enhances the symbolic significance of the wall. Through vivid imagery, allegorical language, and layered meanings, the poet transforms a historical or legendary event into a rich philosophical discourse. The wall becomes a site of multiple interpretations, inviting readers to engage with the text at different levels.

It is also important to consider the cultural and historical context in which “Saddi Iskandariy” was written. The concept of building walls and fortifications was a familiar motif in medieval societies, often associated with protection and authority. Navoi reinterprets this motif by infusing it with ethical and philosophical depth, thereby elevating it from a practical necessity to a symbol of universal significance. Furthermore, the wall can be analyzed in relation to the theme of civilization versus barbarity. In the epic, the forces beyond the wall are depicted as chaotic and destructive, while the world within the wall represents order and culture. However, Navoi avoids simplistic dichotomies by emphasizing the responsibility of those within the civilized world to uphold justice and moral values. The wall, therefore, is not an end in itself but a means to preserve and promote a higher ethical order.

Another layer of meaning emerges when the wall is viewed through the lens of temporality. Boundaries are not static; they evolve over time. The wall, though constructed as a permanent barrier, is subject to the passage of time and the changing conditions of the world. This introduces a dynamic element into the concept of boundary, suggesting that all human constructs are ultimately transient.

In conclusion, the wall in “Saddi Iskandariy” serves as a powerful symbol that encapsulates multiple dimensions of meaning. It represents the intersection of space and boundary, the interplay between order and chaos, and the ethical responsibilities of power. Through the semantic richness of the “sadd” concept, Navoi offers a profound reflection on the human condition, highlighting the importance of balance, wisdom, and moral integrity in navigating the complexities of both the external and internal worlds.

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