THE SCIENTIFIC CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM AND EPISTEMOLOGY IN ALISHER NAVOI'S DONISHNOMA

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ANNOTATSIYA:

This article examines the scientific classification system and epistemology presented in Alisher Navoi's Donishnoma. The study explores how Navoi organized knowledge, categorized disciplines, and theorized the processes of acquiring and validating knowledge. By analyzing the intellectual structure of Donishnoma, this article highlights its contributions to epistemology, philosophy of science, and the broader Islamic scholarly tradition. The work illustrates how Navoi's synthesis of logic, metaphysics, ethics, and natural sciences reflects a comprehensive approach to knowledge that resonates with both medieval and modern conceptions of scientific inquiry.

Introduction

Donishnoma, authored by the eminent Central Asian scholar and poet Alisher Navoi (1441–1501), represents a monumental intellectual achievement in the Islamic Golden Age. While Navoi is primarily celebrated for his literary masterpieces in Chagatai Turkish, his philosophical and scientific treatises, particularly Donishnoma, demonstrate a profound understanding of knowledge organization, logic, and epistemology. Written as an encyclopedic work, Donishnoma addresses diverse domains of human understanding, ranging from logic and metaphysics to ethics, natural sciences, and practical arts.

The aim of this article is to analyze the scientific classification system and epistemological framework in Donishnoma, emphasizing how Navoi conceptualized the structure of knowledge and the principles governing human understanding. By examining the categorization of disciplines and the theoretical foundations of knowledge, this study highlights Navoi's contribution to the intellectual heritage of the Islamic world and his relevance for contemporary discussions on epistemology and scientific methodology.

Main body

Alisher Navoi's Donishnoma reflects a systematic approach to knowledge organization, influenced by both Islamic philosophical traditions and the classical Greco-Arabic heritage.

Navoi inherited the intellectual legacy of Avicenna, Al-Farabi, and other Islamic polymaths, integrating logic, metaphysics, ethics, and natural sciences into a coherent epistemological framework. Donishnoma demonstrates an intricate classification system that reflects the hierarchical interrelation of disciplines, suggesting that knowledge is interconnected and structured according to principles of rationality and utility.

At the foundation of Navoi's epistemology is the principle that knowledge arises from both sensory perception and rational reflection. In Donishnoma, he emphasizes the role of empirical observation in understanding natural phenomena while simultaneously advocating the application of reason to synthesize and interpret sensory data. This dual emphasis on experience and intellect mirrors classical Islamic epistemology, particularly Avicenna's theory of knowledge, which distinguishes between theoretical and practical cognition, and highlights the interplay of empirical evidence and deductive reasoning.

The scientific classification system in Donishnoma organizes knowledge into several major domains. Logic occupies a central position as the tool for reasoning and the foundation of intellectual inquiry. Navoi discusses syllogistic reasoning, definitions, and the principles of demonstration, underscoring the necessity of logical rigor in acquiring valid knowledge. Logic, in this context, is not merely a formal exercise but a method for achieving certainty and avoiding error, thus establishing the criteria for scientific verification.

Metaphysics, or the study of being and causality, constitutes another crucial component of Navoi's epistemology. In Donishnoma, he explores the nature of existence, the distinction between essence and actuality, and the hierarchy of causes in the universe. Metaphysical inquiry is presented as essential for understanding the principles underlying natural and human phenomena, providing the conceptual framework for the sciences. By integrating metaphysics with empirical disciplines, Navoi demonstrates a holistic vision in which abstract principles guide practical investigation.

Natural sciences, including astronomy, medicine, and biology, are systematically presented and categorized according to their objects, methods, and practical applications. Navoi emphasizes the importance of observation and careful description in studying the natural world, advocating a methodical approach that anticipates later scientific methodologies. For instance, in discussing astronomy, he analyzes celestial motions using both theoretical reasoning and observational data, highlighting the interdependence of rational deduction and empirical verification. Similarly, in medicine, Navoi organizes knowledge according to etiology, pathology, diagnosis, and treatment, reflecting a structured and systematic approach to scientific practice.

Ethics and the philosophy of human action are also integral to Donishnoma. Navoi contends that knowledge should serve moral and societal purposes, aligning intellectual pursuits with ethical imperatives. This integration of ethics into epistemology reinforces the Islamic scholarly principle that knowledge is not merely instrumental but transformative,

guiding human conduct and promoting the welfare of the community. By situating scientific inquiry within a moral framework, Navoi ensures that knowledge is both intellectually rigorous and socially meaningful.

Another distinctive feature of Navoi's epistemology is the emphasis on hierarchical organization and interconnection between disciplines. He categorizes knowledge in a manner that reflects increasing abstraction and generality, beginning with practical and applied sciences and culminating in metaphysical and theological inquiry. This hierarchical structuring underscores the principle that mastery of fundamental concepts is necessary before engaging with complex or abstract domains. Furthermore, it demonstrates the pedagogical dimension of Donishnoma, which functions not only as a repository of knowledge but also as a guide for intellectual development and cognitive formation.

The influence of Donishnoma on subsequent scholarship can be observed in the way later Central Asian and Islamic intellectuals adopted and expanded Navoi's epistemological principles. His insistence on the integration of logic, empirical observation, and ethical consideration anticipated the later development of systematic scientific methodology. Moreover, the work's encyclopedic character reflects the broader Islamic tradition of knowledge synthesis, combining inherited wisdom with original insights to create a comprehensive framework for understanding the world.

Navoi's epistemological approach in Donishnoma also resonates with contemporary theories of knowledge organization. His classification system parallels modern attempts to structure scientific disciplines, categorize knowledge hierarchically, and establish criteria for validation and reliability. The dual emphasis on rationality and observation, combined with ethical accountability, prefigures contemporary interdisciplinary approaches that seek to integrate philosophy, science, and social responsibility.

In practical terms, Donishnoma offers a model for educational and scholarly practice. By systematically organizing disciplines, clarifying the methods of inquiry, and emphasizing the ethical dimension of knowledge, Navoi provides guidance for students and scholars seeking to navigate complex intellectual landscapes. The work's enduring relevance lies in its capacity to bridge abstract theory with practical application, ensuring that knowledge is both intellectually rigorous and socially beneficial.

Moreover, Navoi's synthesis of various intellectual traditions in Donishnoma exemplifies the intercultural transmission of knowledge in the medieval Islamic world. By drawing on Greek, Persian, and Arabic sources, he created a uniquely Central Asian perspective that enriched the broader Islamic scholarly tradition. The work serves as a testament to the dynamic interplay of inherited wisdom and original insight, highlighting the creative processes that underpin epistemological development.

Conclusion

Alisher Navoi's Donishnoma represents a landmark in the history of epistemology and scientific classification. Its comprehensive framework integrates logic, metaphysics, natural

sciences, and ethics, reflecting a holistic vision of human knowledge. The work's systematic categorization of disciplines, emphasis on empirical observation and rational deduction, and integration of ethical considerations exemplify the principles of sound epistemological inquiry.

By analyzing the scientific classification system and theories of knowledge in Donishnoma, this article has highlighted Navoi's contribution to the intellectual heritage of the Islamic world and its resonance with modern conceptions of scientific methodology. His insistence on the interconnectedness of disciplines, the hierarchical organization of knowledge, and the moral dimension of learning underscores the enduring significance of his epistemology.

Donishnoma not only preserves inherited knowledge but also advances original insights, providing a model for intellectual synthesis, methodological rigor, and ethical engagement. The work exemplifies the potential for cross-disciplinary integration and remains a vital reference for scholars exploring the history of science, philosophy, and epistemology. Navoi's vision, as articulated in Donishnoma, continues to inspire and inform contemporary discussions on the nature, organization, and purpose of knowledge.

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