

Ghulam Zafari's Role in The History of Uzbek Dramaturgy

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Abstract. *Ghulam Zafari is one of the most important figures in Uzbek modern literature. A poet, dramatist, folklorist and musicologist, his diverse creative output made a significant contribution to twentieth-century Uzbek culture. Zafari is also considered the founder of Uzbek children's drama, having written the first Uzbek musical drama. This played a crucial role in enriching the country's theatrical art and introducing new artistic forms to Uzbek literature. His play Halima was very popular among the Uzbek people in the 1920s and 1930s, attracting large audiences and gaining recognition for its artistic expressiveness and social significance. Prominent figures in Uzbek literature, including Fitrat, Cholpon and Abdulla Qadiri, as well as Russian art critics B. Pestovsky and V. Ouspensky, praised this work, emphasising its significance in the evolution of modern Uzbek dramaturgy and its impact on subsequent literary developments. In the twentieth century, Ghulam Zafari left a significant legacy in Uzbek culture, contributing to literature, folklore studies, musicology and the broader cultural sphere. His works reflect the socio-cultural environment of his time, demonstrating a deep connection with national traditions and values. This article provides a brief analysis of Zafari's life and masterpieces, based on archival research into newspapers published at the beginning of the 20th century. It offers valuable insights into his creative legacy and historical significance.*

Key words: *Ghulam Zafari, Theatre, Play, Literature, Halima*

1. Introduction

The first quarter of the 20th century was a period of sharp changes in the history of Uzbek literature and culture. Uzbek literature, which has been developing in the cultural environment of the East for a thousand years, began to see elements typical of Western literature during this period: poetry became social, new poetic style “barmaq” was used instead of the traditional aruz, novels and other genres appeared in prose [1]. One of the biggest innovations of this period was the emergence of a new European-style theater. As a result, dramaturgy began to develop rapidly. During this period, many Uzbek writers tried to create some artwork at dramaturgy. In particular, Ghulam Zafari was very fond of the theater and immersed himself in this art. As a result of his efforts, the genre of children’s drama and musical drama was founded in Uzbek literature.

A new European-style theater immersed deeply into the cultural life of Uzbek people. After the emergence of the genre drama in Uzbek literature it became one of the leading genres of the literature in a short period of time. Uzbek people welcomed this art with great interest. It turned out that the theater was one of the powerful weapons that influence people’s minds [2]. That is why most of the famous writers of that time paid great interest in creating some artwork in the genre of dramaturgy. The art of theater fascinated the progressive intellectuals and young people with its magnetism. Due to this interest in the theater, especially, after Behbudi’s famous work “Padarkush”, many new dramas began to appear. The emergence of the Uzbek theater was a historical necessity. Other Turkic nations, including the Turkic, Tatar, and Azerbaijani peoples, started this process a little earlier, and they also had certain contributions to the creation of the new Uzbek theater.

At the beginning of the last century, there were many people who did not understand that the theater could serve the development of the nation and condemned it. But thanks to the efforts of our devoted intellectuals, the nation, which was experiencing a period of national renaissance, realized that the theater was a school, a mirror in which the nation can see its shortcomings and inconsistencies

[3]. Despite the resistance of the Russian Empire's regional administration and local opposite-minded people, the theater developed rapidly.

2. Methodology

In this article, the dramatist's life and legacy was studied on the basis of archival materials using qualitative content analysis method. In particular, We analyzed the dramatic works of Ghulam Zafari through the thoughts of the Russian theater critic B. Pestovsky's published in in the 3rd and 4th issues of "Inqilob" magazine in 1922. we drew certain conclusions from the announcement and brief review about the presentation of several small plays of Ghulam Zafari in "Ishtirokyun" newspaper and In the issue of "Turkiston" newspaper dated October 4, 1919. We found out that the first performance of the drama "Halima" began on September 10, 1920, through the review of the "Ishtirokyun" newspaper on September 14 of the same year. In the 20s of the last century, the Uzbek people watched the drama "Halima" with interest, the national Uzbek tunes were appropriately used, and the fact that many Uzbek intellectuals gave it a high rating was based on Cholpon's review of this work published in the December 16, 1922 issue of the "Turkiston" newspaper.

3. Results and Discussion

Ghulam Zafari has a unique role in introducing the Uzbek people to the theater. His dramatic work began before the changes of 1917. A Russian theater critic who lived and worked at that time B.A. Pestovsky writes the following in the article "History of the Uzbek Theater": "Comrade Zafari's dedication to the world of the theatre, art and literature in general had a great impact and fruitful services to the nation." Indeed, Ghulam Zafari's love for the theater was exceptional [4]. He was burning with the desire to use the best traditions of the folk theater in the modern theater, to create truly national dramatic works saturated with the essence of Uzbek national art, close to the spirit of the people. According to Pestovsky, Ghulam Zafari, like a number of leading artists of his time, was influenced by Mahmudhoja Behbudi's work "Padarkush", and in 1915 he wrote a drama called "Unfortunate Apprentice". But the play was not published [5].

It was impossible to suddenly lose the ignorance that had hardened in the minds of the people for centuries. Therefore, it was necessary to start this work with the education of children, to instill in their pure hearts the feelings of patriotism, faith in the future, goodness and enlightenment. Realizing that the role of modern theater is incomparable in the implementation of this noble work, Ghulam Zafari began to write small stage plays based on the life of children and young people, in the spirit of the times, of a moral and promotional nature, and laid the cornerstone for children's drama in Uzbek literature [6].

That period was hard for local people in region, and Ghulam Zafari encouraged all enlightened people to work hard together in all areas, including preparing children for a bright future, educating them in an enlightened way. Works such as "Spring", "Viola", "Wish", "Resistance", "Merciful Disciple", "In the graveyard", "Rabbit", "Tatimboy father", "Children of freedom" written by the playwright in the late 10s - early 20s were created for this purpose [7]. These works were first performed on amateur stages, and later on professional theater stages. In the play "Wish" written in 1919 and staged in the same year, the playwright expresses his noble wishes and views through the character of Murad, the main character of the play [8]. According to Murad, in order for the nation to progress, all its members must be enlightened. "So, why women were not able to get education? After all, half of humanity is made up of women, isn't it?! If women are illiterate, doesn't it mean that half of the society will be illiterate?!"

The intellectuals of that time paid so much attention to the education of women and girls. Because, they deeply understood that the future of the nation is in the hands of mothers. Every person receives the first upbringing, first of all, from his mother. Therefore, the enlightenment of the mother is the guarantee of the bright future of the nation. The same idea is put forward in the play "Wish" [9].

This play was performed together with Ghulam Zafari's plays "Dishonest son" and "Merciful Disciple" by the theater troupe led by Mannon Uyghur on October 4, 1919. It is worth noting that this work was the first performance of the State Theater for children [10]. This performance was also

shown together with the works of Fitrat and Mannon Uighur, who were close friends of Ghulam Zafari. In the October 4, 1919 issue of "Ishtirokyun" newspaper, there is the following notice:

On Saturday, October 4, 1919, on the "Turon" stage, the following will be performed by the Artists Union:

1. "Tilak" is a one-act educational and didactic play. Writer: Ghulam Zafari.
2. "Dishonest son". A scene that shows the bad situation of a merciless son. Writer: Ghulam Zafari.
3. "The Merciful Disciple" An operatic scene depicting the Merciful Disciple. Writer Ghulam Zafari.
4. "Recitation". The works of the famous poet Fitrat Effendi will be played.
5. "House of science". A one-act comedy depicting the concepts of science of arrogant, ignorant people. The writer is Uighur.
6. "Turkistani doctor" A one-act comedy (comedy) showing the procedures performed by a so-called doctor. The writer is Uighur.

Ghulam Zafari's "The Merciful Disciple" is a one-view drama, written in a very simple and understandable way. One of the advanced students meets a beggar boy on the street and invites him to the school. He says that there is enough food and clothing, and that he can get a good education. The student promises to give a place in his house to the sick mother and sister of the beggar boy [11].

During this period, the socio-economic situation in the country was difficult. Orphans left without parents due to upheavals in society and class conflicts were living in the streets or getting into various corrupt ways. This situation also made the nationalist writer Ghulam Zafari suffer. As a result of these sufferings, he writes the pesos "In the graveyard". In this work, the crying of an orphan child on his mother's grave, his moans and groans, the dreamy moans of his mother's spirit coming out of the grave are expressed in a sharp dramatic manner. People who lived in that period and watched the play remember that this work had a strong impact on the audience and stirred their emotions.

Ghulam Zafari, who believed that enlightenment is the only right way to save the nation from destruction, calls people to get education in almost all of his works. This play also ends with the school children coming to the grave and inviting the child to school, and the orphan child also going to school with them. Naturally, such a solution created artificiality in the work. But this situation was characteristic of the work of most writers of that time, a great process that was taking place - the national revival demanded propaganda from the intellectuals.

Ghulam Zafari also praises the youth, beauty and love in the one-act musical dramas "Children of Freedom" and "Tuygunoy" inspired by the lives of young people. Both of these works depict the bright moments of two young men and women in love and their friends in a beautiful spring garden, delighted by the joy of youth and love. "Children of Freedom" and "Tuygunoy" were performed in 1921 by the theater troupe under the leadership of Mannon Uyghur and were performed in many industrial towns in all cities of the country for several years. Later, it took a place in the main repertoire of the ethnographic ensemble organized by Qori Yakubov. In 1923, both productions were performed by an Uzbek concert group at an agricultural exhibition held in Moscow with the participation of the author [12].

In 1925, at the world exhibition of decorative arts held in Paris, Qori Yaqubov and Tamarakhonim performed the plays "Children of Freedom". The libretto of the play was translated into French and German and published. The play's simple dramaturgy, pleasant and playful melodies attracted and aroused the interest of the European audience in Uzbek art [13].

In addition to the above-mentioned dramas, Ghulam Zafari also created stage works such as "Chin Temir Batir", "Gulasal", "Buzuklik Armughoni", "Pakhtakhon", "New Man", "Walk and Wedding". But such works were not preserved due to the fact that they were not published in time [14]. It should also be taken into account that the stage works created by Ghulam Zafari were the first attempts to create a musical drama. Therefore, it is natural for plays to have their own defects and shortcomings. But despite it, these works found their way into the hearts of the people at that time and received their praise and respect.

But the most important work that made the name of Ghulam Zafari a place in the history of Uzbek culture is his drama "Halima". "Halima" was staged many times in the 20s and 30s of the 20th century. It was also performed in the summer of 1930 by the team of the Uzbek Music Theater on the stages of Moscow and Leningrad. "Halima" was the first musical drama created in the history of Uzbek

culture, and it gained incomparable fame in its time.

Uzbek people, who could not fully understand the musical dramas of Tatar, Azerbaijani and other nations because of language barrier, wished to see such dramas in the Uzbek language. Ghulam Zafari, who felt this strong need from his heart, first started creating small stage works and after gaining a certain level of skill, he finished writing the drama “Halima” at the end of 1919. The stage life of the drama began on September 10, 1920. The play was directed by Mannon Uighur. “Ishtirokyun” newspaper reported about this: “On Tuesday, September 14, 1920, the five-act opera “Halima” will be played by Uzbek Soviet artists in the “Rohat” park of the old city. Writer: Ghulam Zafari. This work is a tragedy taken from real life. The music was played by local musical instruments along with the Uzbek language. The game starts at 7:30...” It was continuously shown on the stage of the Uzbek theater “Halima” from that day until the brutal Stalinist regime suppressed it in 1937, and every time it moved the hearts of the audience.

In Cholpon’s review of “Halima” written in the December 16, 1922 issue of “Turkistan” newspaper, we can read the following words: “On December 11, in the “Turon” theatre building that we saw that, “Halima” was played - probably the hundredth time... Despite the fact that the work was performed in the old stage, the building was full of people” [15]. At that time, the term opera was used instead of musical drama. Fitrat also called this work “opera”. “Ghulam Zafari took the first step in the path of opera,” he wrote in the book “Literary Rules”. B. A. Pestovsky in his article “History of Uzbek Theater” said: “Today, the founder of Uzbek opera is Ghulam Zafari”. In cooperation with Ghulam Zafari, they were constantly sought to increase the theatricality of the play. As a result of intense cooperation between the author and the theater team, “Halima” became one of the most perfect stage works of its time.

As a result of close cooperation between the author and the theater team, the events of the play have been enriched year by year, and the range of music and instruments has expanded. The playwright himself chose the music for the play. The musicians were also invited by Ghulam Zafari himself.

So, as a result of tireless research of the author and the theater team, “Halima” became one of the most perfect stage plays of its time. Although the play was staged again and again, the people came full, the audience enjoyed the play and watched it with tears in their eyes. A work that received so much public love was a rare event in the history of Uzbek theater. “Halima” is a symbol of people’s love for theater, and the role of Halima has become a favorite role of Uzbek actresses. Masuma Qoriyeva, Tursunoy Saidazimova, Lutfikhanim Sarimsokova, Halima Nosirova became known for the first time through this image. The skill of Abror Hidoyatov, who played the role of Ne’mat, deserves special praise. The Uzbek National Academic Drama Theater, which has been operating for 42 years in the building where the Uzbek Drama Theater is located, opened its first curtain in this building with the musical drama “Halima”. “Halima” was the first play of the first Uzbek musical theater established in Samarkand in 1929 based on the experimental ethnographic ensemble under the leadership of Qori Yaqubov. Its premiere took place on August 10, 1929 in Samarkand [16]. The performance was enriched with new music and tunes and was shown for the first time with the participation of the Uzbek national and symphony orchestra. The musical drama “Halima” and its author, along with being so famous, also have a tragic fate. From the end of the 20s and the 30s, the Soviet authorities began to make efforts to make literature and works of art fully serve their interests. Do we need the work of “Halima” by “class conscious” people in this era? Can it meet the requirements of Soviet policy?” Such questions were put on the agenda. “Halima” was a rather “raw” work in terms of covering issues of class struggle. Because the author himself was one of those creators who, in the words of “class-conscious” critics, “did not fully realize the importance of the Soviet reality.” Some critics interpreted the work, which was highly appreciated by writers like Fitrat and Cholpon, and most importantly, received the incomparable love of the people, as “...the feeling of hatred, struggle... does not reach the social vein of the construction that enslaved women and girls”. Such unfounded accusations gradually increased and reached a climax in 1937: Ghulam Zafari was repressed, and “Halima” was banished from the stage [17].

In the 70s of the last century, the drama “Halima” was reworked by Turob Tola and staged at the Mukimi Theater. In this “reworked” play, the main characters are more politically “matured”, and

even Ne'mat and Zakir are portrayed as revolutionaries. It contradicts the original intention of Ghulam Zafari and overshadows the authenticity of the work. Therefore, the "reworked" drama was not accepted by the people, and it rightfully caused objections.

The musical drama "Halima" was not published on time. Only a copy of the play, which was kept in the archives of the Institute of Art Studies and was placed in Andijan in 1926, has reached to nowadays. This play consists of four acts and contains more than ten songs - arias, duets, choral texts. After all, it is difficult to describe the state of the hero's inner world, which is extremely lively and the feelings are so heart-warming, that they can only be vividly expressed through songs [18]. Posters and reviews published at the time described the work as a "tragedy". This was not the tragedy of only two young people. As a result of various evils caused by misconception and ignorance, as well as due to the inadequacy of the civil society, the issue of personal freedom in the country was in a miserable state.

The author uses folk songs and songs to reveal the feelings of the main characters. Although no special music was written for the drama, it was selected from the musical heritage of the people, but no artificiality can be felt in the work. On the contrary, the behavior of the characters, the text of the songs and the music show an organic balance. While creating the drama "Halima", the playwright focuses on making the work popular, opening the sphere of people's spirit and interest. Ghulam Zafari, who conducted researches on Uzbek music and folklore, realized that folk art is an infinite ocean, a priceless treasure. In his articles on the history of Uzbek theater and music, written around the 20s, he emphasized that Uzbek cultural heritage is very rich and ancient, and that it can be effectively used in the modern literature. Enjoyment of folk art was one of the factors that ensured the success of the playwright's works.

The songs and music in the work dynamically increase, sharpen, become more and more intense in proportion to the events, and finally, at the end of the fourth act, the work reaches its climax. The dramatist vividly described the situation that shakes the viewer's heart and reaches the peak of emotions, using various possibilities of stage art. Halima's state before death is similar to that of the mad Ophelia in Shakespeare's Hamlet. Halima's last aria, sung in a semi-conscious state, undoubtedly caused a strong emotion in the audience of that time. Russian theater expert B. Pestovsky who saw "Halima" on the stage of "Turon" in the 20s writes: In the first act, the aria of the young man who fell in love with Halima, and in the fifth act, the Uzbek wedding and Halima's death were very moving [19]. Even a person who has no knowledge of music and no sense of music will be deeply affected by this piece".

In his review of the drama "Halima", Fitrat commented on the success of the work: "Ghulam Zafari has a new quality that is not found in many of our writers. Ghulam knows our national tunes very well. In fact, the songs and melodies embedded in the text of the drama have a charming and magical power that moves everyone. Through the sad arias of Ne'mat and Halima, the main characters of the work, the dreams that burst out from the depths of their hearts, at the same time, the suffocating atmosphere of the time are vividly described. This is one of the factors that ensured the success of the drama and gained popularity among the people.

4. Conclusion

Based on the opinions and considerations presented in this article, a few important conclusions can be drawn. Initially, the emergence of European-style theater in Turkestan was a historical necessity. Among many Uzbek writers, Ghulam Zafari has a special place in laying its foundation. He was one of the first actors, playwrights and directors of the Uzbek theater. He expressed his life's story, his original ideas through small stage works, sought and found ways to instill enlightenment in the hearts of young people. Ghulam Zafari's small stage works were a stepping-stone in the creation of the musical drama "Halima". The play "Halima" was an absolute novelty for both Uzbek dramaturgy and Uzbek theater art.

Moreover, Ghulam Zafari brought the melodies of folklore into dramaturgy and was the first to understand that this important part of the centuries-old heritage can be one of the leading factors in the development of written literature. He correctly understood that theater is a new form of art that can influence all layers of the public, actively participated in the change of people's consciousness

and worldview with his works, and tried to bring it to the level of a conscious member of the society. For this purpose, he also used elements of sentimental literature. On the basis of the ideas described above, it can be said that Ghulam Zafari as a dramatist is a creator who made a great contribution to the expansion of the horizons of Uzbek theater.

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