



Article

Features of Hamza's Dramas

Suyunova Malika¹

1. TSUUL, Uzbekistan

Abstract: This article delves into the role of folk theater in the works of Hamza Hakimzoda Niyoziy, an influential figure in Uzbek literature who integrated the traditions of folk theater into his dramatic works. Hamza's engagement with oral folk art and folk songs deeply influenced his dramaturgy, particularly in the context of his plays such as Maysara's Case, which highlight social issues through humor and resourceful characters. Although the connection between folk theater and Hamza's dramaturgy has been explored, the full extent of folk motifs and their integration into his works has not been extensively examined. The study aims to explore the impact of folk theater on Hamza's dramatic style, examining how he used folk melodies, language, and comedic structures to reflect social realities. The analysis reveals how Hamza's dramas, including Maysara's Case and Punishment of Slanderers, use folk elements to satirize social vices like corruption and the moral decay of officials while promoting progressive social values. This work highlights the fusion of folk traditions with early modern dramaturgy, marking a significant shift in Uzbek theater. The findings underscore the importance of folk theater in shaping national identity through literature and drama, suggesting further research into how folk forms continue to influence contemporary Uzbek writing.

Keywords: Hamza Hakimzoda Niyoziy, Folk Theater, Drama, Maysara's Case, Folk Songs, Puppet Theater, Social Satire, Uzbek Dramaturgy, Cultural Heritage

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1. Introduction

It is no secret that oral folk art, as well as folk songs, served as inexhaustible spiritual nourishment for the creator, the main and fundamental source for his works. In the works of Hamza Hakimzade Niyazi, whose works are imbued with modern ideas, a unique artistic expression of folk melodies is also manifested. Academician Laziz Kayumov emphasizes that the artist was so familiar with folk songs and music that from childhood he had a great love for examples of folk art, songs and music: "In his youth, Hamza gathered his peers Bo'ronboy, Boqijon, Usmonxon, Umar kalla, Marajab, his sister Achaxon, his friends Kupiaxon, Abduljalil in the courtyard, sang the poems of poets like Navoi and Muqimiy, which he had read, and taught them songs by making them dance [1]. Based on the memories of Hamza's nephew Meliboy Abdullaev's mother, young Hamza loved to listen to the best of his compositions played by artists named Qosim iyak and master Marasub naychi in his neighborhood. In his autobiography, Hamza mentions that he read poetic treatises such as "Masnavi," Hafiz, Bedil, Yusuf Ahmad, Bakirgani... to his parents"[2].

Literature review

Folk theater, which has developed throughout the history of our culture, acquired a syncretic mixed essence and lived in the embrace of comedy and puppet theaters, as well as various mass festivals. At the end of the 19th century, Turkestan theater troupes began

to appear in the region, and the first theater was established in Tashkent [3]. Interest in the new theater combined with its promotion among the local population, changes in economic, political, and cultural life prepared the ground for the creation of unique dramatic works by Jadid writers who came forward with enlightenment ideas: Mahmudhoja Behbudi's play "Padarkush" was considered the first work in this field, while Hamza Hakimzoda Niyoziy's plays "Poisonous Life" and "Guidance of Knowledge" were examples of early written dramas [4]. In addition, such plays as Nusratilla Qudratilla's "Toy," Badri's "Juvonmarg," "Ahmoq," and Abdulla Qodiriy's "Baxtsiz kuyov" were published during those years. Hoji Muin Shukrilo's plays such as "The Oppressed Woman," "The Old School or the New School," "The Poppy," "The Victim of Prostitution," and "The Council Meeting on Reform and School" are also among them [5]. According to scientific literature and research, more than 15 plays were published before 1917. Among the Jadid dramas emerging in the region, there were very few plays that captivated with their high-quality, diverse, and powerful characters, leaving a deep mark on our art. However, such examples in dramaturgy are important as the beginning of traditions in a new art form [6]. In the 1910s, alongside Jadid dramaturgy, folk-oriented dramaturgy and theater troupes emerged, encompassing the lives and interests of ordinary people. Abdulla Avloniy and Hamza Hakimzoda Niyoziy showed particular dedication in this area. Hamza Hakimzoda Niyoziy pioneered Uzbek folk dramaturgy with plays such as "Poisonous Life," "Guidance of Knowledge," "Normuhammad Domla's Error of Disbelief," and the first part of "The Tragedies of Loshmon" [7].

2. Materials and Methods

The methodology for this article focuses on analyzing the influence of folk theater on the works of Hamza Hakimzoda Niyoziy, particularly his contributions to Uzbek dramaturgy. This study employs a qualitative approach, combining historical and literary analysis to explore the integration of folk traditions into Niyoziy's plays. The primary sources include Niyoziy's plays, such as 'Poisonous Life', 'Guidance of Knowledge', and 'The Tragedies of Loshmon', as well as works by other Jadid writers and contemporaries. A comparative analysis of these texts will highlight how Niyoziy used folk elements like folk songs, puppet theater, and comedic traditions to address social issues, such as corruption, moral decay, and the role of women in society. In addition to textual analysis, the study incorporates secondary sources, including scholarly research on the development of Uzbek theater, the emergence of Jadid dramaturgy, and the broader cultural context of the early 20th century. This historical background is critical for understanding how the socio-political and economic changes of the time influenced Niyoziy's dramatic works. The research also draws on the work of other scholars, such as Askarov and Muminov, who have examined the influence of folk art on 20th-century Uzbek literature. By combining these methods, the study aims to provide a deeper understanding of how Niyoziy's dramas contributed to the evolution of Uzbek theater and how folk traditions were used as a tool for social commentary and cultural expression [8].

3. Results and Discussion

Jadid writers, including Hamza Hakimzoda Niyazi, aimed, through their works, first of all, to get closer to the people, to feel the joys and sorrows of people like themselves, and thereby to convey the true causes of backwardness to the masses in this form. Examples of oral folk art, as a means of reflecting the spirit of the people, served as a key to their works. Dramas, in particular, proved particularly useful in this regard. S. Askarov, a scholar who studied the influence of folklore traditions in 20th-century Uzbek poetry, notes that the epic motifs characteristic of folk tales are embedded in the plot structure of the comedy "Maysara's Case," the active use of phrases and combinations characteristic of the folk language, and the use of the saj' method in folk epics in the speech of the characters. Sh.Khodzhaeva and G.Muminov note that the work "Maysara's Case" was based on

variants of one of the Uzbek folk tales "The Deception of the Poor Woman," and this tale has the same name and plot as the tale "The Deception of the Poor Woman," recorded in 1935 by folklorist M. Afzalov from the Fergana region [9]. Literary critic Hakimjon Homidi, who expressed his opinion on the issue of the source of the plot of the comedy "The Case of Maysara," notes that the source that formed the basis for the creation of this dramatic work is "One Thousand and One Nights." Literary critic K. Juraev determined that in Uzbek dramaturgy of the 20s of the 20th century, "the expression of freedom-loving and love motifs using the spirit of classical literature and folklore samples, their materials, was leading," and he expressed his opinion that the plot of the comedy "Former Judges or the Case of Maisara" is not an exact repetition of the plot of such fairy tales as "The Resourceful Woman," "The Deception of the Poor Wife," which are close or related to this topic. He describes it as a new work, a new plot, created on the basis of the artist's processing of the traditional plot characteristic of folklore. In the works of Hamza Hakimzoda Niyazi, there are unique dramas in which one can find both people belonging to the intelligentsia and ordinary, simple, naive people from among the people. Through these images, embodying the painful points of society, the dreams and aspirations of the people, the artist shows people to each other as mirrors, for this was the artist's true purpose.

There are characters in Hamza's dramas who stand out through their intelligence and resourcefulness, such as Maysara ("The Former Judges or Maysara's Case") and Fatima ("Punishment of Slanderers"), who are also symbolic characters "under a mask," as Russian theorist Mikhail Bakhtin emphasized. We see that women are embodied as cunning characters and intelligent characters in most of the writer's dramas, and this delicate creature wants to show once again that, although the young man who can move mountains has no strength, he can control such young men with his cunning and resourcefulness. The image of cunning women is also often found in Uzbek folk tales and epics [10]. The characters of Surkhayl, the old woman who trapped Alpomish, the old woman who condemned Farhad to death, and Maston, the old woman who condemned Huroyim and Rustamkhan to wandering, are among them. In such characters as Akbarali ("Punishment of Slanderers"), Kholmat ("Who is Right"), Mulladust ("The Former Judges or the Case of Maysara"), a peculiar simplicity of folk character and mastery of words are clearly visible. "This comic syncretism is evident in the character of Kholmat in Hamza's drama 'The Rich Man and the Servant.'" "This image, imbued with the nature of the author Nasriddin Efendi, although in a comic way, served to strengthen the drama in the work," says literary scholar Uzoq Jurakulov. The character of Akbarali in the drama "Punishment of Slanderers" at first glance does not appear as the main character in the work. But the main event in the work begins because of him, events change because of his message [11]. While Fatima is distressed by the change in Kasimdzhan's attitude towards her, Akbarali's words serve as a key. *"Aya-chi, and that one, I filled the jug with water and was about to lift it, but behind that one, there's my uncle Imam and that drunkard Sultan, and then they started talking about 'Kasymdzhan's wife...'"* Fatima's heart was troubled by Akbarali's words [12].

Hamza's plays "Punishment of the Slanderers" and "Who is Right" initiated the tradition of creating comedies on contemporary themes in our dramaturgy. In the comedy, religious fanatics are exposed with laughter, and their behavior, all their efforts, and their helplessness in the face of new traditions of life are sufficiently revealed. It was in the plays "Punishment of the Slanderers" and "The Former Judges or the Case of Maysara" that Hamza effectively used and expanded the methods and melodies characteristic of folk folklore, and was able to create wonderful comedies. The image of resourceful women, characteristic of ancient folk tales, is embodied in these works [13].

In "The Former Judges or Maysara's Case," the author expresses through the sharp humor of folklore satire the domestic corruption and moral degradation of certain officials, their ability to commit any absurdity at the expense of money obtained through dishonest means, fraud, and violence, at the expense of people's labor, and that the condition and fate of working people are insignificant to them. Indeed, in artistically reflecting an

important contemporary social issue, the writer turns to the rich tradition of our people's cultural heritage - folklore sources [14]. In exposing bad qualities, the author widely uses exaggerated mockery - grotesque means, methods of artistic expression of life belonging to folklore. In "Maysara's Case," two important features are intertwined. That is, on the one hand, such vices as bribery, moral corruption, and womanizing in the social life of that time are revealed through the images of Mullarozi, Qozi, and Khidoyatkhan, while the disenfranchisement and lack of value of women are clearly manifested through a generalized image like Nodira. In such places in the work, the forms of the real world are reflected as they are perceived. On the other hand, in cases related to the exposure of the judge and persons of his category, the author refers to conditional-allegorical methods and details that do not resemble real-life events. Through Maysara's resourcefulness, he mocks the officials of society. Through the image of cunning in the drama, he reveals the machinations of corrupt officials in society. The genre of folklore satirical spirit in the anecdote and the quick-wittedness of Mulla Nasreddin serve as a weapon for the heroes of these works to destroy the opponent. For example, the characters of Kholmat in Hamza's "The Rich Man and the Servant," Mulla Dost and Maysara in "The Old Judges or the Case of Maysara" clearly demonstrate such characteristics [15].

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study highlights the significant influence of folk theater on the dramaturgy of Hamza Hakimzoda Niyoziy, illustrating how his works such as *Poisonous Life* and *Maysara's Case* integrate folk traditions to critique social issues like corruption and moral decay. The research finds that Niyoziy's use of folk songs, puppet theater, and comedic elements effectively conveys the aspirations and struggles of ordinary people, showcasing his pioneering role in Uzbek dramaturgy. The findings underscore the importance of folk art in shaping the narrative structures and characterizations in Niyoziy's plays, positioning him as a key figure in the development of modern Uzbek theater. The study also suggests that further research could explore the long-term impact of Niyoziy's work on subsequent generations of playwrights, particularly in how folk traditions continue to influence contemporary Uzbek literature and theater. Additionally, investigating the interplay between folklore and other modern literary forms could provide deeper insights into the cultural evolution of the region.

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