

A NEW UZBEK EPIC NOVEL “THE GLORY OF LONELINESS “- ETHNIC DRAMA OF PERSONALITY IN A MODERNITY

Associate Prof. Dr. (Ph.D.) Mustaev Kamol Turonovich

International Tourism University "Silk Road", Department of the Uzbek language and literature and social sciences
kamolmustaev@univ-silkroad.uz ORCID 0000-0002-9172-4412

ABSTRACT:

This article dedicated to Uzbek writer Surkhon Buriev's novel named "Tanholikning tantanasi" ("The Glory of Loneliness") published by publishing house "Tafakkur" in Tashkent, Uzbekistan in 2019. This latest Uzbek epic trilogy portrays ethnic values with an inherent dualism on a subconscious level. The article draws attention to the novel, where the author, for the first time, depicts the life and experience of an ordinary Uzbek – a traditional hero of ethnic novel, outside of the perspective of traditional dogmas. The dualism in a character confused critically conservative readers and publishers. And this let this trilogy to be published.

Keywords:

Modern Uzbek epic novel, contemporary Uzbek trilogy, Uzbek drama and modernity.

INTRODUCTION

This article introduces to us biography of young Uzbek writer Surkhon Buriev, who lives in NY city nowadays, and his novel trilogy "The Glory of Loneliness"¹, published in 2019. It is one of the most outstanding piece of art in the contemporary Uzbek literature. Unfortunately, modern Uzbek literature stays unknown to the biggest part of world audience because of several reasons. In this case, Surkhon Buriev's novel, presented in this article, is the most appropriate one to be known to the literature critics and historians as a significant phenomenon of the latest Uzbek ethnic literature.

Content

Surkhon Buriev (1981) born in Urgut – rural area in Samarkand region of the Republic of Uzbekistan. After graduating Turkish Lyceum in his town (1999) studied at Uzbek philology faculty of Samarkand State University. And he has got master degree at the World Literature Department of Uzbek National University (his research work for master degree: "Early Turkic Novels", 2005). Later, in 2010 he earned Ph.D. It's topic is on "Lexical-semantic Analysis of Urgut Micro Toponymy". In 2010, young writer immigrated to US with his family. Since then, he lives in NY city. First two years 2010-12 Surkhon Buriev worked for Uzbek magazine "Uzbegim" as editor. Later, because of

closing this magazine, he did casual job for 5 years and only in 2017 he has got a position of chairman of "Shohin INC" transportation company. Despite the difficulties and lack of certain job until 2017, Surkhon Buriev never did stop writing and this complicated period ended with publishing his most essential and voluminous, 654 pages novel-trilogy "The Glory of Loneliness".

Dr. (Ph.D.) Surkhon Buriev is known in Uzbekistan as novel writer. And one of his early works made him seen to the wide audience in Uzbekistan is a collection of novels and stories in two books named "Qalb siri"² – "Secret of the Heart" (2009). Before this collection some of his short stories and novels such as "Dreaming Spinster"³, "Gilmindi"⁴, "Long-awaited Guest"⁵ and etc.⁶ were published in different local literary magazines. Then he disappeared on literary stage of Uzbekistan for seven years almost. And, suddenly, in 2019 he presented to Uzbek readers his huge novel trilogy "The Glory of Loneliness". It was unexpected great success in his homeland for young writer living abroad. In social media such as YouTube, Facebook, Telegram and Uzbek blogs in USA "The Glory of Loneliness" was most discussed literary phenomenon of contemporary Uzbek Novel. One of Uzbek

¹ Бўриев, Сурхон. Танҳолик тантанаси.- Тошкент: Тафаккур, 2019.- 656б.

² Buriev, Surxon. Qalb siri.- Toshkent: Алишер Навоӣ номидаги Миллий Кутубхона нашриети, 2009.- 312р.

³ Buriev, Surxon. Tush ko'rayatgan qari qiz.- Toshkent: Guliston, N1, 2006.- P.N/A

⁴ Buriev, Surxon. Gilmindi.- Toshkent: Sanam, N6, 2008.- P N/A.. (Gilmindi – Uzbek traditional pancake)

⁵ Buriev, Surxon. Uzoq kutilgan mehmon.- NY: Uzbegim, 03.29. 2011.- P

⁶ More than 10 novels and stories

newspaper⁷ named him a writer who resurrected almost dead for last 30 years voluminous novel.

It just so happened that the year of publication of the Surxon's trilogy coincided with significant data – the Century of the Uzbek novel. It is necessary to mention Abdulla Qodiriy – the founder of Uzbek Novel Genre exactly a hundred years ago in 1919, right after WW I, during the civil war at the beginning of last century. A century between Abdulla Kodiriy and Surxon Buriev keeps in the memory such names of great Uzbek novel writers as O. Yoqubov, X.Kadirov, Muhammad Ali and many others. Of course, there a lot of other great novel writers and it is another topic for another article. Uzbek novel has only hundred years history and mostly oriented to Uzbek readers. And it is a reason why Uzbek novel stays conservative and still in the beginning of era of modern art and does not want accept postmodernism's new rules of no rules and no tabu. Another reason of conservatism is that for a century Uzbek culture was faced to Russian cultural imposition (Suny, 2012). Soviet ideology aimed to create unique Soviet nation and replace other nations in USSR. When Soviet collapsed national literature did find as a main task rebuilding, reestablishing Uzbek traditions, culture and its value, and started eagerly protect past achievements denying any new idea of art of contemporary world literature as a strange and harmful to unique nature of ethnicity.

Last thirty years of independency the tendency of guarding and reestablishing national identity was taken as a main role for Uzbek novel. Now cultural uniqueness got freedom and became major theme as a main dogma. This condition created the situation when literature was trying to bring old value which is not satisfy contemporary art. Nonetheless, Uzbek novel writers of last three decades - 1990-2020 mastered forgotten traditions and values of the past and were trying to adapt some new topics and formative elements to classic novel writing style. One of Uzbek literature critics prof. Qozoqboy Yoldoshev says: “ Bugungi kunda o'zbek romanchiligi o'z taraqqiyotining polifonik

bosqichiga yetib keldi”⁸ – ‘Nowadays Uzbek novel on it's developing process came to the stage of polyphonism’. He believes modern Uzbek novel must master polyphonism to make a step toward to the level of world novel. And he is right. Professor Yoldoshev came to this conclusion after reviewing and analysis of modern novels by Muhammad Ali - “Great Kingdom”⁹, Omon Muhtor – “Woman Padishakh”¹⁰ and “Love is Stronger than Death”¹¹, Ahmad A'zam – “Unmarried Matchmaker”¹², Isajon Sultonov – “Eternal Stranger”¹³, Jumagul Qurbonova – “Sardoba”, Zulfiya Qurolboy qizi – “Hardships Vortex”¹⁴, Nurilla Abbosxon – “Salty Town”¹⁵, Abduqayum Yoldosh – “Banker”¹⁶.

Coming back to Surxon Buriev's novel I would say he reestablished lost reader's interest to voluminous novel. His work consists of three parts – total 656 pages with more than hundred ten active characters. Each of its part can be considered as separate novel, and they are united by the commonality of the storyline and the fate of the protagonist. When signing with a book we notice that the writer uses instead of the traditional word “китоб” – ‘book’ the word “фасл”- ‘period’. So, we see in Content “Биринчи фасл”- ‘First period’, “Иккинчи фасл”- ‘Second period’, “Учинчи фасл” – ‘Third period’¹⁷. The word “фасл” as the meaning of ‘book’ never has been used by Uzbek novel writers. This way of usage one can meet in philological researches. Buriev transferred scientific notation into artistic fiction. It indicates author's philological background. First book of this trilogy named “Кўёшга эргашганлар”¹⁸- ‘Followers to the Sun’, next is – “Йўқлик симфонияси”¹⁹- ‘Symphony of Emptiness’, and last book is - “Қирмизи йўл”²⁰- ‘Red Way’. The title of trilogy “The Glory of Loneliness” echoes to Gabriel Garcia Marquez's “Cien anos de soledad”²¹ who is popular in Uzbekistan.

The novel is somewhat autobiographical. Protagonist - Jobbor, as author, native of Urgut²², worked as a teacher than immigrated to USA and lives in NY. It tells us a story and adventures of ordinary young Uzbek from rural town. In the First Book - plot begins with

⁷ Б. Ўктам. ТАҲДИД БОР ЖОЙДА РИВОЖЛАНИШ ЎТА СУСТ КЕЧАДИ.- Qarshi: Qashqadaryo, 20 Noyabr 2020.- <http://qashqadaryozg.uz/>

⁸ Qozoqboy, Yoldoshev. Roman va bugungi o'zbek romanchiligi.- Savia.uz.- 15.11.2017

⁹ Muhammad Ali. Ulug' saltanat.- Toshkent: Sharq, 2003.- p. N/A

¹⁰ Омон Мухтор. Хотин подишоҳ; Романлар - Тошкент: Шарк, 2010.- 464 б.

¹¹ Омон Мухтор. Мухаббат ўлимдан кучли; Романлар – ziyouz.com, 02 noyabr 2013.- 464 б.

¹² Ahmad A'zam. O'zi uylanmagan sovchi; Romanlar – ziyouz.com, 02 noyabr 2013, 718 Kb.

¹³ Isojon Sultonov. Boqiy darbadar; Romanlar – AimUz.com, 01 fevral 2018, 20 Mb.

¹⁴ Zulfiya Qurolboyqizi. Mashaqatlar girdobi; Roman.- ziyouz.com.- 577 Kb.

¹⁵ Nurilla Abbosxon. Suo'rqishloq; Roman.- ziyouz.com.- 1,09Mb.

¹⁶ Abduqayum Yoldosh. Bankir; Roman.- Toshkent: Tafakkur qanoti, 2012.- P. N/A

¹⁷ Сурхон, Буриев. Танҳолик тантанаси.- Зангиота тумани: Тафаккур, 2019.- 654б. Hereinafter pages of the trilogy are given according to this edition.

¹⁸ The same book, - P. 4 – 202

¹⁹ The same book, - P. 203 - 551

²⁰ The same book, - P. 552 - 652

²¹ Marquez, Gabriel Garcia, GABRIEL GARCIA MARQUES Ž ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF SOLITUDE For details write or telephone the office of the Director of Special Markets, Avon Books, Dept. FP, 105 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10016, 212-481-5653.

²² Urgut – district of Samarkand region, located in mountainous area of Uzbekistan

surrealistic drama and abstract elements of absurdism: two little girls were making cowpies and sticking them on a wall²³ suddenly strange bearded man in a torn robe came from somewhere and starts talking to girls. During conversation bearded man found out that he knows the mother of one of the girls. Suddenly, he grabbed her head and pushed her face into a muddy puddle on the road and begins to drown, condemning that her mother is a bitch. Another girl run away in panic calling people for help. When it was heard the voices of people hurrying to help, stranger left unconscious girl in the puddle and retreated into the unknown. People found girl still alive. They searched around and found no one. There no names of characters, no place and time in this short story. And it is not related to the plot until we read till the end all three novels. Only at the end we can assume that this bearded man is the main character of the trilogy. Here the novel starts with intriguing criminal ending as a popular detective story²⁴. And then, suddenly, it takes us to a completely different world – to the world where three young guys eat and drink vodka. One of them Jobbor, barely holding a conversation, he is concerned that he does not have a son. Traditional theme of the heir remains urgent through the millenniums. And contemporary Uzbek literature does not dare to ignore such an important value of Central Asian Cultures. And theme of heir covers all Uzbek literary genres including folklore (remember heroic epic “Alpamysh” begins with the same reflections²⁵). Such a sharp and contrasting transition from criminal story to traditional banality, in the beginning, is quite an unique phenomenon for trilogy - epic novel. Surxon Buriev confuses readers starting with detective conception²⁶ written in surrealistic style and jumping to the traditional topic in conservative exposition. He went out of rules of detective story, where after criminal story appears the story of investigation(Leitch, 2020), and after it comes the epic in a narration in realistic style typical for XX century Uzbek novel with a lot of long philosophical thoughts. Perhaps, Western reader, spoiled by the variety of modern novels, will find the first part of trilogy boring, tedious and over lasted. There no adventures here. There is image of dull everyday life, which is completely incomprehensible to a foreign reader.

Instead of epic hero, it appears ordinary hero living in rural area, teaching at the school, with negative critical thinking. Author presents us a young man surrounded with the people like him. They are surviving in a poor

condition of lack of spirituality. Jobbor, as everyone around him, does not show any interest to the arts, or sport, or volunteering. The only thing he has is a contempt to wealth and poverty. There is no joy in his life. A picture of a wretched life with wretched hero in the style of critical realism of the XIX century evokes disgust for the events described in the novel. Surkhon Buriev dared to tell in an epic work not a heroic journey at all. The plot of the novel presented with use of elements of fairy tale, fantasy, adventure, philosophy, absurd, surrealism, drama, sentimentalism, detective story and novel of critical realism. And this is new to Uzbek epic novel which has been keeping classic rules “Epic originally focuses on the narrative of the heroic and claims to truthfulness, objectivity of presentation”(Роман-Эпопея в. Гроссмана Как Собрание Жанров, 2017). The heroes of the novel are ordinary people and there no scenes of heroism here. But, for the readers, the characters are exotic because they represent rural Uzbeks, whose lifestyle and thinking are going through a great turn. They are not ready to break up with their usual contemporary way of life, build during Soviet era, and at the same time they do not feel upcoming changes.

Author tries to bring a change to traditional classic epic and adapt to the postmodern world(Noe, 1996) what is still something very special and new in contemporary Uzbek literature(Farrell, 1999). And novelty lies in the use of elements of different genres. Of course, Surkhon Buriev is not first who did it in Uzbek literature. There are many other Uzbek writers who used elements of different genres in the narrative, nevertheless, their attempts were timid and no so catchy. In the contrary, “The Glory of Loneliness” is the first Uzbek epic in which the author boldly experiments and tries to combine not only various elements of different genres, but also various style of narration. All three parts of the trilogy are combined to depict events through the story of Jabbor and what is happening to him. The role of narrator alternates between of the main character and author himself. Another distinctive feature of Surxon Buriev’s work is that, if in epics main characters remain hero or transform from ordinariness into a hero or a sage, here we see the degradation of protagonist. At the end of the trilogy we understand that Jobbor has turned into mentally sick schizophrenic murderer who disappeared. His further fate remains unknown to us. Such an incompleteness we can trace in each separate novel. An epic trilogy describes many characters and events associated with the protagonist, sometimes allowing to

²³ Tezak – dried cowpie, traditionally dried cowpie is used as firewood in Central Asia.

²⁴ Desyatov, V. V., and V. N. Karpukhina, ‘Metaphysics of a Detective Story (on the Novel of Boris Akunin “The Sennight of the Three-Eyed”)', *Sibirskii Filologicheskii Zhurnal*, 2019.1 (2019), 134–47
<<https://doi.org/10.17223/18137083/66/12>>

²⁵ Mustaev, Kamol, Поэтика Цвета и Числовых Знаков-Символов в “Песне о Роланде” и “Алпамыш”, ed. by A.Ubaydullaev (Samarkand: Zarafshon, 1995)

²⁶ Pelizzo, Riccardo, ‘How Ian Fleming Reconsidered Innovated the Detective Story’, *Current Research Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 3.1 (2020), 51–60
<<https://doi.org/10.12944/crjssh.3.1.05>>

flow the stories of other characters. In the work of Buriev, there are signs of tragedy. Particularly, at the catastrophic final, where the lonely hero no longer has interpersonal relationships. Jobbor who left mental clinic is not communicative anymore. He could not fit into the traditional life of his village, and into new life in United States. The author touches such eternal topics as justice, love, moral principles and avoids judgements about patriotism, responsibility, freedom and equality. All of these great ideas of human existence are distorted and reflected into worthless philosophy. Love, sex, famine cause cynical disgust in protagonist. Jobbor considers himself superior and better than others. But, in the reality, he is out to be worse than those whom he condemns. Here is remarkable episode, when our hero – Jobbor learns that young American, who sheltered his entire family, when they were thrown onto NY streets by their roommate – compatriot, suddenly showed up and found out to be a gay. All their friendship disappears in an instant, the feeling of gratitude turns into disgust and Jobbor with his family flees from this only apartment, where it was given to him decent human attitude. Our superman out to be an ordinary person with traditional superstition and biases like many other immigrants. Jobbor could not pass the test of loneliness, he is broken and this is his tragedy. Followings can be considered as a novel statement: Loneliness does not mercy weakness; One might be not successful, but, cannot be weak; The glory of Loneliness crosses over weak, breaking them on its path. No matter how much our hero boasts of his peculiarity, he remains petty loving no one and beloved by no one. He lives in his delusions as a “man in overcoat”. Only unlike the Gogol’s hero, he has no fear and in his thoughts he considers himself the only correct one (Эпштейн, 2005). One can find in him Gogol’s “little man”, Dostoyevsky’s Idiot, Saltikov-Shchedrin’s Iyudushka with peculiarities of Uzbek character living nowadays. Jobbor could not overcome cultural barriers. In his village where he was born, he grew up without father and of course it was a reason why fellow villagers did not identify his personality as a unique. His individuality is locked and trapped in his inner experiences. His behavior within the framework of the national culture does not give him the opportunity to express himself even in NY city. His brain, programmed in traditional thinking way, was harmed by contradictions between reality and ethnic views of life and moral. The good can be done only by good peoples not by gays or others; raped wife can not be forgiven and be a spouse anymore. When he left his wife, what was a last possibility to identify himself as a person, he is not responsible anymore even for himself. Jobbor is the perfect example of that how upcoming new era of technology and globalization affect the lives of conservative ethnic mentality.

In conclusion I would say that Surxon Buriev’s epic trilogy “The Glory of Loneliness” a significant piece of contemporary Uzbek novel. We can say that this work is the embodiment of ideas and a reflection of the problems of the Uzbek novel of the first quarter of the twenty-first century. Also, it shows that Uzbek literature faces a problem where, on the one hand, human nature universal human rights, era of technology without any moral and, on other hand a conservative ethnic culture with prejudice and religious moral distorted during the Soviet period. Triumphal theme of the “little man” walking on the planet takes on dramatic character in the trilogy of Surxon Buriev. And this epic is a unique object for research and analysis for literature, anthropology, historians and cross-cultural studies.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abduqayum Yoldosh. Bankir; Roman.- Toshkent: Tafakkur qanoti, 2012.- P. N/A
- Ahmad A’zam. O’zi uylanmagan sovchi; Romanlar – ziyorat.com, 02 noyabr 2013.
- Buriev, Surxon. Tanholik tantanasi.- Toshkent: Tafakkur, 2019.- 656b.
- Buriev, Surxon. Qalb siri.- Toshkent: Alisher Navoi nomidagi Milliy Kutubxona nashriyoti, 2009.- 312b.
- Buriev, Surxon. Tush ko’rayatgan qari qiz.- Toshkent: Guliston, N1, 2006.- P.N/A
- Buriev, Surxon. Gilmindi.- Toshkent: Sanam, N6, 2008.- P N/A.. (Gilmindi – Uzbek traditional pancake)
- Buriev, Surxon. Uzoq kutilgan mehmon.- NY: Uzbegim, 03.29. 2011.- P
- B. Uktam. Tahdid bor joyda rivojlanish o’ta sust kechadi.- Qarshi: Qashqadaryo, 20 Noyabr 2020.- <http://qashqadaryogz.uz/>
- Desyatov, V. V., and V. N. Karpukhina, ‘Metaphysics of a Detective Story (on the Novel of Boris Akunin “The Sennight of the Three-Eyed”)', *Sibirskii Filologicheskii Zhurnal*, 2019.1 (2019), 134–47 <https://doi.org/10.17223/18137083/66/12>
- Epshteyn, M. (2005). Malen’kiy chelovek v futlyare: Sindrom Bashmachkina-Belikova. *Voprosi Literaturi*, 6, 193–203.
- Farrell, J. (1999). Walcott’s Omeros: The Classical Epic in a Postmodern World. *Epic Traditions in the Contemporary World: The Poetics of Community*, 1997, 270–296.
- Leitch, T. (2020). The Many Pasts of Detective Fiction. *Crime Fiction Studies*, 1(2). <https://doi.org/10.3366/cfs.2020.0018>
- Noe, J. R. (1996). *Modernism, postmodernism, and the Grateful Dead: the evolution of the psychedelic avant-garde*.
- Suny, R. G. (2012). The contradictions of identity: Being Soviet and national in the USSR and after. In *Soviet and Post-Soviet Identities*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511894732.003>

Роман-эпопея в. гротсманна как собрание жанров.

(2017). 1(62), 62–63.

Эпштейн, М. (2005). МАЛЕНЬКИЙ ЧЕЛОВЕК В
ФУТЛЯРЕ: СИНДРОМ БАШМАЧКИНА -
БЕЛИКОВА. *Вопросы Литературы*, 6, 193–203.

Zulfiya Qurolboyqizi. Mashaqatlar girdobi; Roman.-
ziyouz.com.