

SATIRICAL REFLECTION OF TRADITIONAL VALUES IN TOHIR MALIK'S "THE HOSPITALITY TRAP"

Narzieva Dilnoza Inoyatovna

Independent researcher of Bukhara State University, teacher of Turon Zarmed University, Uzbekistan

Abstract: *Tohir Malik's short story "Hospitality" satirically reveals social issues such as bureaucracy, bribery, and the erosion of traditional values in contemporary Uzbek society. This article examines the symbolic meanings, literary techniques, and satirical language used in the story, exploring the conflict between ancient hospitality traditions and their modern distortion.*

Keywords: *Hospitality, satire, bureaucracy, national values.*

The genre of satire in Uzbek literature, especially after independence, has acquired new meanings and forms. Among the humorous works written in this period, Tohir Malik's short story "Hospitality" holds a special place. The story highlights social problems, bureaucracy, and corruption through humorous depictions of the relationship between a small entrepreneur Balliql and his "guests"—representatives of the system such as the tax inspector, prosecutor, and health inspector. The writer centers the narrative on the traditional value of hospitality and presents a harsh social critique of its modern distortion. This article analyzes the symbolic meanings, artistic devices, and satirical language used in the story, revealing the contradiction between the ancient Uzbek tradition of hospitality and the realities of contemporary society.

Tohir Malik's "Hospitality" is a vivid example of modern satire in Uzbek literature. In the story, the humorous interaction between Balliql, a small business owner, and his official "guests" (inspectors and bureaucrats) exposes societal flaws and bribery. The satire is steeped in "clever irony."

Balliql's "guests" (tax officer, prosecutor, health inspector) come to his business under the pretext of "inspections" or "consultations," but each leaves with some form of benefit. For example, the tax officer indulges in cream, while the prosecutor claims he "won't stay more than an hour" — but his true purpose remains unclear.

Here, the contradiction between the names and realities becomes evident. For instance, although the company is called "Hospitable," it does not actually produce anything that aligns with its name. The company's activities and products are never specified. Through this, the author implicitly criticizes a system that maintains formality without genuinely serving the people. Exaggeration and folk expressions are masterfully employed. For example, the phrase "Every flower has its own scent" is used to subtly illustrate the prosecutor's pride. This ironic portrayal reveals the cunning nature of high-ranking individuals and supports the satirical tone.

Satirical epithets such as “cheap guest” (government official) and “neat young man” (health inspector) emphasize the duplicity of the characters. Additionally, phrases like “The guest is a gift from God,” though originally reflecting noble values, are distorted in usage, contributing to the satirical effect and philosophical depth.

The story harshly criticizes bureaucracy and bribery. The line “Every guest takes something from Balliquil: the tax officer – cream, the prosecutor – ‘soap money,’ the government official – sweets” is particularly telling.

Balliquil’s belief that entertaining guests is a virtue reveals how individuals adapt to a corrupt system. This also reflects inner psychological contradictions.

The author does not ignore human duality. The detail about the prosecutor having “three wives” while showing “respect for traditional foods” reflects how people often hold conflicting values simultaneously. Balliquil’s contradictory reasoning about his mother-in-law’s birthday also symbolizes the multifaceted nature of societal relations.

Tohir Malik’s “Hospitality” can be meaningfully compared with Abdulla Qodiriy’s story “Uloqda” in terms of theme and satire:

Both works expose social flaws through humor. While “Uloqda” criticizes the irresponsibility and artificiality of leaders, “Hospitality” satirizes the excessive practice of hospitality replacing business professionalism.

Comparison:

In both stories, bureaucratic and leadership failures are the focus. They use humor as a lens for social criticism, presenting real aspects of Uzbek life. Below is a comparative analysis:

Criteria	“Hospitality” (Tohir Malik)	“Uloqda” (Abdulla Qodiriy)
Genre	Satirical short story	Satirical short story
Main Idea	Excessive hospitality hinders social development	Leaders’ irresponsibility and empty talk
Main Character	Simple engineer (narrator)	Pseudo-effective leaders
Target of Critique	Office workers, artificial hospitality	Leaders, societal indifference
Literary Devices	Satire, irony, humor	Satire, irony, exaggeration
Author’s Position	Realist – reveals painful truths through humor	Critical – exposes leaders
Time Period	Late Soviet era – critique of social relations	1920s – Soviet rule and its issues

Approach	Humor, lively storytelling	Deep critique in concise form
----------	----------------------------	-------------------------------

Both stories, written in a satirical style, highlight specific societal flaws through humor. “Hospitality” critiques exaggerated traditions, while “Uloqda” targets leadership inefficiency. Each remains relevant to modern readers.

In Uzbek culture, hospitality is considered sacred. Respecting and generously hosting guests is a deeply rooted tradition. In Malik’s story, these values are shown to be exploited in the modern context, where formality and corruption prevail. The story explores how these traditions are distorted today.

The author uses the concept of the “table” as a symbol of respect. In Uzbek tradition, the table represents not just food but love, generosity, and honor. Balliqul prepares rich tables for every guest with cream, pastries, and sweets. Yet, these tables serve more as tools of manipulation:

- The tax officer devours cream.
- The official only eats sweets.
- The health inspector demands “soap money.”

Thus, the table loses its original meaning and becomes a means of transaction. The true essence of hospitality—love, unity, and sustenance—is lost.

Overall, the story effectively reveals the degradation of traditional hospitality values and the formation of transactional relationships in modern society:

1. Positive aspect: Balliqul’s generosity reflects national values.
2. Negative aspect: This generosity is exploited, undermining true hospitality.

Tohir Malik’s satirical story “Hospitality” not only provides humorous entertainment but also delivers a deep socio-philosophical message. Through this work, he skillfully critiques bureaucracy, corruption, and moral contradictions in Uzbekistan. The abuse of traditional values like hospitality is portrayed through folk expressions, symbolic characters, and subtle irony. The work stands as an important contribution to Uzbek literature with its profound critical insights.

References:

1. Tohir Malik. “Hospitality.” – Tashkent: Sharq Publishing, 2000.
2. Toshqulov Sh. The Genre of Satire in Uzbek Literature: Theory and Practice. – Tashkent: Fan, 2015.
3. Kholmatova Z. Uzbek National Values and Their Literary Interpretations. – Tashkent: O‘qituvchi, 2018.
4. Rahmatov A. Satire and Irony in Modern Uzbek Short Stories. – Samarkand: Zarafshon, 2020.
5. G‘ulomov M. Uzbek Satire: History and Development Stages. – Bukhara: Ilm Ziyo
6. Abdulla Qodiriy – “Days Gone by” and “Short Stories” collection. G‘afur G‘ulom Literature and Art Publishing. “Uloqda” 176–181