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ABSTRACT

of the disseration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

**THE STRUCTURE OF THEATRICAL PERCEPTION IN
AZERBAIJAN**

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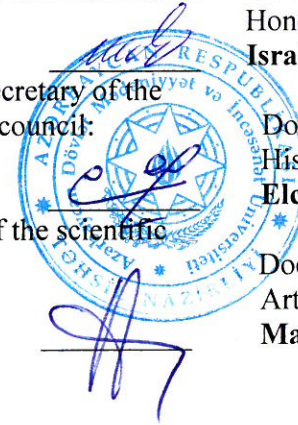
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GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE WORK

Relevance and studying degree of the topic. When it comes to theatre, we first think about its moral qualities and educational significance. It should be noted that the theatre is a place where the soul finds peace and self-sufficiency. Theatre reveals to us that is not really seen or felt and it forms in people vital, intellectual and moral feelings. Because the topic is multifaceted, it is related to other fields, including psychology, in other words, the tandem of theatre and psychology is one of the important aspects of research.

At this point, we think it is expedient to give information about perception in brief, by referring to scientific sources. The events that take place around us are fully reflected in our perception of reality which create the process of perception necessary for our entire life. When a person perceives the objects around him, he is also able to distinguish them from each other and show his attitude. It should also be noted that the attitude to the surrounding objects and events, to properly differ them from each other, to evaluate them is in fact a complex cognitive process. It depends on a person's experiences, knowledge, emotional state, as well as interests and inclinations. The state of apperception changes the way people perceive and distinguish one from the other. But the process of perception is still not enough to profoundly understand the true essence of events and objects. Contemplation has an important role in a deeper and more accurate understanding of reality. The correct formation of contemplation indicates the completeness of the ability to think. Benefiting from the above-mentioned scientific ideas¹, linking these cognitive processes with the theatre is in accordance with the research topic. Theatre plays the role of communication between the audience and the social environment, or rather, between a man and society bringing reality

¹ Bayramov A.S., Alizadeh A.A. Psychology. Baku. Chinar-Publishing House, 2009, p. 269-276; 326-333

very close to our perception. All of these processes in relation to each other form the aesthetic taste of the spectator. We see, hear, feel, perceive and enjoy. This period of pleasure gradually enters our consciousness and affects our way of thinking. From all that has been said it is possible to conclude that theatre plays an important role in the formation of the process of human perception. In order to correctly determine the theatre and the dynamics of its development, first the necessity of the theatrical perception, as well its impact on this process must be understood. It is impossible for this art to exist without a complete and well-formed theatrical perception. Today the main reasons of the problem of both ups and downs, successes and failures that have taken a place in the national theatre is the theatrical perception. A trivial approach to the problem of the national theatrical perception and disregard for its importance is a serious obstacle to establish a proper relation with the past and current theatre, to identify and analyze similarities and contradictions between them. While researching the period of the national professional theatre (March 10, 1873) from its inception to the present day, useful information about pros and cons of these stages which provides an opportunity for a comparative analysis of all periods of the theatre is obtained.

The national theatrical perception that existed in the 1920s and 1950s, including the 60s of the 20th century changed its form during the national self-consciousness that began in the early 70s and flared up in the 90s and became adequate to the processes and events taking place in society. But there is also the fact that these or other epochs are always interrelated creating a unity of tradition and modernity. In order to properly understand the theatre, its rudiments and the very comprehensive stages it has gone through, all the components of the structure of theatrical perception must first be studied and mastered.

The subject of the research can be considered one of the most relevant and important topics in the field of the modern theatrical thinking. The subject is opened to the history of theatre, on the other hand, to the sociology and psychology of theatre. The subject is also on the agenda of our culture in terms of determining the levels of our spiritual-psychological world, our mentality and need for theatre.

Although the subject of the dissertation- "The structure of theatrical perception in Azerbaijan" has not been systematically studied by other researchers, there are plenty of monographs on this topic. Monographs written by our prominent scientists J. Jafarov,² M. Alizadeh,³ I. Israfilov,⁴ I.Rahimli,⁵ A.Valiyev,⁶ A.Talibzadeh⁷ are valuable materials in the research of the dissertation.

Object and subject of the research. The object of the dissertation is the national theatrical culture and its subject is the theatrical perception.

Research aims and objectives. The main purpose of the research is to study the theatrical process of all epochs of Azerbaijan, to relate the ages, to create association of ideas and finally to come to a straightforward and concise conclusion about the structure of national theatrical perception. Proceeding from this goal the following objectives have found their scientific solution:

-To clarify the cognitive-psychological relation of the national theatrical perception with national traditions and local beliefs;

-To follow the dynamics of the historical formation and change of perception in the national theatre;

-To explain the problems of modern theatre in the context of national theatrical perception;

-To make a theoretical analysis of the impact of theatre-spectator relations on the national theatrical perception;

-To resolve the role of the personality factor in the process of formation of the national theatrical perception.

The research methods. Comparative-typological, systematic and semiotic methods were used in the analysis of the dissertation.

² Jafarov J.H. Azerbaijani theatre (1873-1973).Baku: Azerneshr,1974,316p.

³ Alizadeh M.A. Theatre: observation and magic.Baku:Science,1998,251p.

⁴ Israfilov I.R. Adil Iskandarov's theatre.Baku:Mars-Print,2001,208p.

⁵ Rahimli I.A. The history of Azerbaijani theatre. Baku: Chashioglu,2005,864p,

Rahimli I.A.Aesthetic principles of Azerbaijani theatre.Baku:Chasioglu,2004,280 p

⁶ Valiyev A.M. Belief, spirit and theatre. Baku , 2009, 240 p.

⁷ Talibzadeh A. A. Theatre and theatricality in the Islamic

world.Baku;Sabakh,2006,312 p. (in Russian)

The main provisions put to the defense.The research work is reflected in the following scientific provisions:

-The cultural and psychological problems of the history of Azerbaijani theatre are analyzed;

-Process of change in the perception of national theatre is followed in the stages of development of the history of Azerbaijani theatre;

-In the process of emergence and formation of theatrical perception theatre-spectator relations are revealed and the role of the personality factor finds a solution;

-The theatrical thinking of Azerbaijanis is systematically studied based on the facts of the history of our theatre.

Scientific novelty of the research. The subject of the dissertation entitled "The structure of theatrical perception in Azerbaijan" has never been researched. In the dissertation, for the first time, the Azerbaijani theatre was studied in the context of national perception and the stages of national theatrical perception were studied for the first time in a systematic way.

Theoretical and practical significance of the research. The theoretical significance of the research is that it evaluates the need to study our national culture, especially theatre art and our national theatrical perception as a key factor.Scientific work plays an important role in terms of teaching theatrical specialities, such as Drama Studies, the Art of Acting and Directing. The dissertation can also be used in the research of other similar scientific works.

Approbation and application. Articles related to the research topic were published in scientific journals and presented at local and international academic conferences.

Name of the organization where the dissertation work is carried out. The dissertation was carried out in the department of "Drama studies" of the Azerbaijan State University of Culture and Arts.

The volume of the structural sections of dissertation separately and the general volume with the sign. The dissertation consists of an introduction, three chapters, six subchapters, conclusion

and list of references. Introduction is defined 8.542, 1.1-43.282, 1.2-34.798, 2.1-34.033, 2.2-31.203, 3.1-31.515, 3.2-49.366, Conclusion-18.438 characters. The general content of the research is represented in 140 pages (252.997 thousand characters) of the computer typing.

MAIN CONTENT OF THE DISSERTATION

In the **Introduction** of the dissertation, the relevance and the studying degree of the subject are discussed, aims, objectives and methods of the research are determined, main scientific provisions put to the defense are explained, the scientific novelty and theoretical and practical significance of the work are justified.

In the first chapter of the research that is entitled **“Ethnopsychological and religious context of theatrical perception in Azerbaijan”** folk and ceremonial performances, epics, ashug creativity and classical traditions which are our national moral values are studied in order to analyze and draw concrete conclusions about the emergence and formation of national theatrical perception. Since the epic is an integral part of ashug creativity, both topics are covered in the research. *“The peak of the master ashug’s creativity is considered to be a saga”*.⁸

In the first subchapter that is entitled **“The role of the rural performances in the national theatrical perception”** the impacts of ethnic and psychological factors on the perception of the national theatre are analyzed. In this part of the dissertation examples of spectacular episodes found in the epic stories, such as “Boghach Khan, Son of Dirse Khan”, “Bamsi Beyrek, Son of Baybure”, “Kanturali, Son of Kanli Koja” of the national epic “The Book of Dede Korkut”⁹ are mentioned. The reason why these examples are elucidated in the dissertation is to study the factors that are the sources of the national theatrical perception. The virtuoso qualities of Gorgud’s personality, such as a performance culture and the art of transformation, which he demonstrates at ceremonies turn him into a theatrical image in the true

⁸ Aliyev R.M. Azerbaijani folk literature (Current issues).Baku:2014,p.218.

⁹ The Book of Dede Korkut. Original and simplified texts. Baku: Onder,2004,p.178-257.

sense of the word. In the same image we notice the signs of shamanism, which is the primitive form of a religion. If the musical symbol of shamans is a drum, Dede Korkut cannot be imagined without his gopuz (the ancient musical instrument that was used by Turkic people). There are features of shamanism, such as communication between the Earth and Sky, singing, narrating legends, communicating with the second world through the power of mysticism, which are also reflected in Dede Korkut. *“Dede Korkut-Myth, the Saviour, poet, shaman of Oghuz who is the connoisseur, the first and last reference point that determines the future of others and protects them from calamities”*.¹⁰ The theatrical approach to the epic and its characters is fully consistent with the topic of the dissertation.

Our folk performances which are one of the main components of the national theatrical perception have been studied in a comprehensive way in this research. It should be noted that folk games have always played an important role in the formation of the national theatrical thinking, including social consciousness. At the ceremonies organized during Novruz holiday our traditions, national dances and songs, proverbs and plays are clearly reflected. These episodes are closely related to national theatrical thinking. The performances,¹¹ such as “Godu-godu”, “Kosa-kosa”, “Kilimarasi” (Out of carpet) and “Maral oyunu” (Deer dance)¹² should be mentioned. Through such kind of scenes the first theatrical ideas began to appear in people. The formation of habits, such as watching spectacles, understanding, comprehending, evaluating events, mobilizing their perception and emotions to those that happened on stage was the first and main phase in the formation of the national theatrical thinking. The feelings and emotions rooted in the subconscious ethnogenesis of our people appeared even after the establishment of the national professional theatre and later became the basis for the qualified performances. The

¹⁰ Abdullayev K.M. From myth to the writing or Hidden Dede Korkut-3. Baku: Mutarjim,2009, p. 57.

¹¹ Rahimli I. A. Folk games-performances. Baku: QAPP-Poligraph,2002, p. 18-24; p.38-42; p. 218-220.

¹² <https://m.youtu.be/VsNqawoFbhs>

prominent professor I. Rahimli rightly points out that certain branches of the history of national folk performances date back to BCE.¹³

Our folk games and national ceremonial culture are reflected in one of our great poet's-N. Ganjavi's poems. In each of "Khamsa's" poems, the poet revealed theatrical elements and continued this manner with magnificent skills, poetic language and in an improved form. Although these poems were studied in detail by F. Rzayev,¹⁴ they were analyzed from a new perspective and directly related to the subject of the research. In the poems words and expressions, such as "hoqqa and hoqqabaz" (trick and bufoon),¹⁵ "mutrub" (dancing boy in a woman's dress)¹⁶ and "min dona girmek" (to change colours)¹⁷ were analyzed from the theatrical aspect.

Pre-Islamic burial ceremonies yugh and shabih performances which are performed in association with the spread of Islam are closely related to the subject of the dissertation. Referring to M. Seyidov's scientific view, the prominent professor M. Alizadeh elaborates the theatrical elements in these ceremonies, especially the relation between the ceremonies and theatrical thinking in her monograph entitled "Theatre: observation and magic":

"The ceremony consists of non-verbal (moving) and verbal sections, the use of musical instruments, the performance of a defined composition, the ceremony organized by professional performers and natural participants, the division of roles and responsibilities and the specific functions of the person who manages the ceremony are the signs of theatrical thinking".¹⁸

In professor M. Seyidov's¹⁹ scientific researches it is possible to notice interesting facts in the analysis of theoretical structures of yugh

¹³ Rahimli I. A. Aesthetic principles of Azerbaijani theatre. Baku, Chashioglu, 2004, p. 31.

¹⁴ Rzayev F.M. Nizami Ganjavi and theatre. Baku: Science, 2008, 372 p.

¹⁵ Ganjavi N. I. Treasury of mysteries. Baku: Lider, 2004, p. 65.

¹⁶ Ganjavi N. I. Khosrov and Shirin. Baku: Lider, 2004, p. 133.

¹⁷ Ganjavi N. I. Seven beauties. Baku: Lider, 2004, p. 165.

¹⁸ Alizadeh M. A. Theatre; observation and magic. Baku: Science, 1998, p. 38.

¹⁹ Seyidov M. M. While thinking of the ancestral roots of the Azerbaijani people. Baku: Yazichi, 2009, p. 349.

ceremonies. Both yugh and shabih performances play a crucial role in the formation of theatrical thinking and social consciousness. Religious performances, ceremonies and especially shabihs aroused spirituality and gave impetus to the tragic part of the theatre arts. Art developed under the phenomenon of religion and theatre. In the Islamic world sermons, the recitation of surahs in the "Holy Quran", gathering in a certain place and listening to meddah (storyteller) slowly began to form a branch of the synthetic art and people made extensive use of these factors in the theatrical scenes they created.

Here a paradoxical point is encountered. It is known that the religion Islam has restrictions on theatre, performance and music. How the religion formed theatrical thinking in our people? How the religion and art came into being? The main point is that the rituals and ceremonies related to Islam (for instance, shabihs) were not intended to develop the theatrical process. They were related to the religious beliefs as it was mentioned in the dissertation in a comprehensive way. But at the same time without planning they were the factors that laid the foundation for the development of people's artistic thinking and theatrical perception.

In this subchapter of the research folk games related to the initial stages of the Azerbaijani theatre, national ceremonial performances, religious rituals have been studied and all this research can be considered as a basis for the next subchapter.

The second subchapter is entitled "**New tendencies in the national theatrical perception in 1870-1920**". If we have a look at the general atmosphere of the period we are talking about, we see from the day its establishment to the 1920s the national professional theatre functioned as a school or an educational institution of enlightened intellectuals. After becoming a fact of national institutional culture, the theatre which undertook the mission of educating people began to take a decisive step on this arduous path. The audience of the theatre used to be the enlighteners themselves. The concept of "theatre is a school" was a style demanded and inspired by that period. The theatre was a school, the playwrights and actors were the teachers of this place. The main mission of the school was to influence the audience

with words and to form in them the ability to think clearly and to come up with bright ideas. It should be noted that it was very difficult, even maybe impossible to create and develop a modern and professional theatre, because the majority of the population was narrow-minded. In spite of all difficulties, the intellectuals of the time worked hard, looked for the right way to enlighten the people and to save them from ignorance. As the result of H.Zardabi's and N. Vazirov's support our professional theatre was originated on the 10th of March, 1873 with M. F. Akhundzadeh's play "Vizier of Lankaran Khanate". The main purpose of preparing this play was to form artistic and aesthetic taste in the indigenous Muslim population, to arouse their interest in art and theatre. M.F.Akhundzadeh's idea to establish the professional theatre by staging comedy works should be considered as a perfect theatrical event for that period. Akhundzadeh's main goal was to influence the people and make them love science and culture. For this reason the writer did not hesitate to skillfully use satire in his works. The society and social life of that time encouraged him to write comedy plays, because comedy described all the flaws under ironic laughter. The hypocrisy and ignorance of the time could be revealed to the people only with laughter, irony and satire. *"If there was no ugliness in the world, there would be no laughter. The culture of laughter is the culture of self-awareness of the people"*.²⁰

Akhundzadeh brought a new manner and breath to the dramaturgy by approaching folk laughter and national carnival aesthetics in the European way, integrating traditions with modernity. The characters that he portrayed in his comedies, such as Lenkeran Khan, Vizier Mirza Habib, Haji Gara, Mesteli Shah and Molla Ibrahimkhalil are modernized versions of actors of the ancient square theatre. Akhundzadeh's comedy works and their stage versions can be considered as the beginning of new tendencies in the national theatre, including theatrical thinking. Professor I. Rahimli²¹ evaluates

²⁰ <https://old.525.az/view.php?lang=az&menu=7&id=37679&type=1#gsc.tab=0>

²¹ Rahimli I. A. Aesthetic principles of Azerbaijani theatre. Baku: Chashioglu, 2004, p. 55.

"Tamsilat" as a factor ensuring the birth of Azerbaijani national theatre.

The initiative of intellectuals, such as N. Vazirov, A.Hagverdiyev and N. Narimanov was irreplaceable when the concept of "theatre is a school" was actual. The stage interpretations of the works of these writers were one of the most progressive steps taken in the way of enlightening the people. It was the problem of that time which prompted the prominent playwright A. Hagverdiyev to write "Aga Muhammad shah Gajar". There were no female characters in this work. It is known that at that time the nationwide actress problem prevailed in the Azerbaijani theatre. The portrayal of interesting female characters by actors or foreign actresses limited the position of Azerbaijani theatre in comparison with Russian and European ones. The dissertation also highlights the fact that our first national actress Goyerchin Khanum (Govhar Gaziyeva) came on the stage without fear of persecution and laid groundwork for the nationwide actress problem.

During the years when the concept of "theatre is a school" was widespread, tours organized in the regions also served to enlighten the people and form their worldview. In this subchapter the fact of murder of the great actor H. Arablinski-one of the essential components of the national theatrical perception is studied and it definitely corresponds to the subject of the research. This fact alone proves that despite all the efforts and endeavors, the attitude towards theatre and actor has not completely changed and opinions about actors were uncertain.

In the 1920s, a new stage of theatrical perception began in Azerbaijan. The socio-political and ideological factors of that period were influential in the national theatre. We get acquainted with all these facts in the second chapter of the dissertation that is entitled **"The influence of socio-political and ideological factors on theatrical perception in Azerbaijan"**. The second half of the second chapter is entitled **"The socio-political and ideological bases of the transformation of theatre into a cult in Azerbaijan"**. The research conducted in the first chapter provided an opportunity to get acquainted with deep roots and traditions of the national theatre, and

paved the way through comparative analysis and evaluation of the new stage to be studied in the next chapter. In the first chapter (especially in the second subchapter) we studied that in 1873-1905, 1905-1920 theatre functioned as a school and an educational institution. Starting in the 1920s, the national theatre showed itself in a new and different concept. In this subchapter the main object is the change in the national way of thinking of the people living under the influence of the Soviet ideology. In the Soviet period people's old mythological thinking was being replaced by new ones. For a nation alienated from Islamic rites, religious beliefs, and places of worship under the influence of the ideology of the time, a new faith was needed to fill these spiritual gaps and this belief could be theatre and performances. Reconstruction which began in the 20s, manifested itself in all spheres of life, including in theatre in the 30s and 40s. So, in the true sense of the word, theatre became an object of worship for the people. In our people's minds theatre rose to the level of a temple. We must draw more attention to the word "temple". The point is that theatre was called a temple, not a mosque. When we examine its origin, we realize that both words actually have the same meaning. The eminent scholar A. Valiyev gave a perfect explanation of this problem in his monograph "Belief, spirit and theatre". This citation is remembered just as it is:

"If we say that the theatre is a temple, we put a sign of equality between the theatre and mosque. But no Azerbaijani Turk living in Azerbaijan says that "theatre is a mosque". So why we said for so long that theatre was a temple? The meanings of the concepts of mosque and temple belong to the same semantics. But the point is that when Muslims, and especially Azerbaijani Turks call it a temple, they first think of the sacred places of other religions, and there is nothing surprising here. Because the Arabic word for temple is derived from the word mabud. The temple means to be worshipped and it is primarily a reference to the idols of the polytheists. The temple is above all, a place where those who are worshipped are kept. Therefore, when the speaker calls the theatre "a temple", he never equates the theatre with the mosque in his orbit of thought, nor does he

bring it to mind. Even if for a moment he accepts the temple as the meaning of the mosque, he will immediately give up calling the theatre "a temple". The word "temple" in the imagination of Azerbaijani Turks refers more to the beliefs and the Lords of Indians, Japanese, and Chinese. Therefore, the Azerbaijani Turk shows his tolerance against "theatre is a temple expression".²²

From all that has been said, it can be concluded that the dictation of politics and ideology of the time are always manifested in dramaturgy and theatre. The transformation of the theatre into a cult at that time was also a matter of the Soviet era, especially its ideology. The leader who turned the theatre into an object of worship in the full sense of the word was A. Iskenderov, who was appointed a chief director in 1938. Although successful performances were directed by A. Tuganov, Y. Yulduz, R. Tahmasib and I. Hidayatzadeh, it is considered that their way of thinking was not adequate to the policy of the Soviet State. A. Iskenderov perfectly knew the audience of his time and was conscious of what they wanted from the theatre. The Azerbaijani spectator reached the culmination of his attitude towards theatre since 1938. In addition to political and ideological influences, and other factors also played a role in the transformation of theatre and actors into objects of worship in the second half of the 30s. During the years of Soviet rule, education, culture and several related reforms led to an increase in the number of educated people and as a result of the development processes taking place in the society, the worldview and thinking skills of the illiterate population formed. The people who perceived actors as infidels became their admirers. During this period, actors were perceived as inaccessible as the sacred figures in religious ceremonies that held in the last century. The performance "Vagif" that was directed by A. Iskenderov demonstrated in 1938 and laid the foundation of a new period in the Azerbaijani theatre. A. Iskenderov's concept coincided with the way of the audience of that time. The heroic pathos of "Vagif", the events described in a poetic way evoked

²² Valiyev A.M. Belief, spirit and theatre. Baku, 2009, p. 43.

the impression of an ancient tale or myth, which significantly developed the aesthetic taste of the spectator. In this and other performances of this director great importance was attached to gestures and pathetic expressions,²³ and the speeches based on the performances matched the policy of the Soviet government and manifested themselves as propagandists of that strategy. A. Iskenderov formed creative traditions in Azerbaijani theatre over the years and these were clarified in prominent professor I. Israfilov's monograph "Adil Iskenderov's theatre" based on the scientific facts. The reasons why the pillars of these traditions formed by the director began to fail in the 50s were systematically written in the dissertation. In the above-mentioned monograph²⁴ I. Israfilov rightly came to the conclusion that A. Iskenderov could not determine the artistic and strategic goals of the theatre he directed.

In the research, the attitude to the processes taking place in theatre, socio-political factors, the events taking place in society during that period were examined and a theoretical analysis was conducted. In the late 50s and early 30 audience perception was not same as in the 30s. As the period renewed, desires changed and needs increased. In the late 50s, the audience was displeased with the principles that had been in the theatre for years and new generation expected concepts, aesthetic indicators and styles from the theatre. This was not an assignment A. Iskenderov would do. It is true that the director's creative potential did not come to an end, only his theatre could no longer adequately respond to the thought of the audience, as well actors of that time, the director could not catch the manner of that epoch. If A. Iskenderov had set himself a goal of creating a new style in the 50s, working on a new concept, trying to experiment with a new methodology by changing his direction to some extent his theatre would continue in the 60s, would be able to gather more spectators around and this would be engraved in the page of the history of theatre as A. Iskenderov's new theatrical poetics. In any case, Iskenderov did not

²³ Valiyev A. M. Belief, spirit and theatre. Baku, 2009, p. 61.

²⁴ Israfilov I. R. Adil Iskenderov's theatre. Baku: Mars-Print, 2001, p. 136.

undertake the mission of creating a new theatrical aesthetics and did not deviate from the traditional aesthetic criteria on which he relied. The period after A. Iskenderov's termination from the directing position the change in the national theatrical perception under the influence of external factors is researched in the next subchapter of the dissertation entitled "**Features of the national theatrical perception in the 1960s**", and a number of issues related to the topic are clarified.

While studying the national theatrical environment of the 60s, A. Valiyev's "Belief, spirit and theatre", M. Alizadeh's "Theatre: observation and magic", as well the press of the time were beneficial materials.

M. Mammadov's appointment as a stage director in the early 60s was not able to eliminate the current stagnation. The performances in the director's interpretation differed according to the power of ideas, psychologism, lyricism, philosophical and aesthetic aspects, unity of content and form. But in terms of style it did not differ much from A. Iskenderov's method. A successor of A. Iskenderov's theatre, style and method M. Mammadov's arrival was in fact the beginning of the end. The interpretations of his performances were inadequate to that time and environment and he did not have the aesthetic features that would bring the required innovation to the theatre.

In the early 60s, it was impossible to form modern theatrical traditions in Azerbaijan so that the theatre was experiencing a period of stagnation. Demonstrating innovative performances in a way that differed from the previous years was important for the Soviet audience, known for its rapidly advancing inventions in the field of science and labour.

The eminent researchers I. Israfilov's²⁵ and I. Rahimli's²⁶ monographs are essential materials for studying the 60s, especially T. Kazimov's activity, the performances directed by him and lyrical-psychological concept. Based on scientific facts and studies, the

²⁵ Israfilov I.R. Time. Director. Poetics. Baku: Mars-Print. 1999, p. 65-80.

²⁶ Rahimli I.A. The history of Azerbaijani theatre. Baku: Chashioglu, 2005, p. 316-318.

features of the national theatrical perception in the 60s were systematized:

1. The audience of the 60s was totally different from the audience of the 30s and 50s in terms of thinking. The outlook, intellectual level, approach to the events, perspective and world view of the audience of the 60s were quite different and this difference had to be reflected in the concept of the national theatre. Because the audience is the main factor to determine the future of the theatre. Theatre in turn, must be able to adequately respond to expectations of its audience, as well the political processes.

2. Through the performances of the previous years it was impossible to please the soviet audience of the 60s whose outlook, and attitude to life renewed. The audience demanded simplicity, not a pathos, modern heroes taken from real life, not the idols.

3. The audience of the 60s refused the certain theatrical traditions and expected thought-provoking performances from the theatre which would provide them morally and show the realities of life. Pathetic expressions reminiscent of heroic tales, poetic verses and festive scenes were not of interest to the audience of the 60s. Rapid development in the field of science, culture and labour, the expansion of national television which began in the late 50s, influenced the way of thinking of the Soviet people. The Soviet audience who encountered innovations in all spheres of life eagerly expected these changes from the national theatre.

The above-mentioned features of the national theatrical perception of the 60s allow us to emphasize that the new concept brought to Azerbaijani theatre by T.Kazimov at that time was an affirmative response to the expectations of the audience. The needs and aesthetic tastes of the audience coincided with T.Kazimov's ideas and creative imagination, that is, the spectators who determined the future of the theatre watched the performances which they demanded and wanted.

Although the national theatrical process of the 60s may seem brief and simple at first glance, in fact theatre succeeded in writing a new theatrical page in this decade which unprecedented in its fifty- year

history. Nevertheless it should not be forgotten that as the times changed, the needs also changed and renewed, and in the late 60s and early 70s a new concept was in demand to stimulate the process in the theatre. In the early 70s, the theatrical process was not good enough in Azerbaijan. We examine the national theatre of those years, the perception of the audience in the first paragraph of the third chapter entitled **“Manifestation of the process of national self-consciousness in theatrical perception”**. The subchapter is entitled **“The process of self-consciousness in the 1970s and 1990s and the role of theatre in society”**.

The spectator problem which arose in the late 60s, became more serious in the 70s. Day by day the audience was deviating from the actors and performances they valued and watched with deep affection. We cannot attribute the causes of the spectator problem simply to the process of inflation in the economy and the significant decline in the interest of actors in the art compared to previous years. Of course, we do not deny the influence of these factors, but it should be noted that the causes of the problem in the 70s were also related to the development and innovation in our cultural life in the 60s. As noted in the previous half-chapter the expansion of the possibilities of television in the 60s led to the development of society's worldview, perception and thinking skills and the audience began to differentiate every detail, to think more globally to react to processes unambiguously. As the result, the influence of external factors changed the taste of the audience, doubled the needs and desires. This led to the fact that in the 70s performances of the theatre did not affirmatively react to the expectations of the audience. The theatre continued its monotony. Spectators wanted what they had never seen or heard before. Based in our research, we can answer the question **“What the audience wanted from the theatre in the 70s?”** as follows:

1. The audience demanded a mass of actors who took their profession seriously and did not waste it on banquets for the sake of money. Because the actor's great respect towards the character he played and the performance he participated in was a sign of respect for

the audience which came to watch him; otherwise, people would stay away from the theatre.

2. Although the audience came to the theatre to watch a number of titled artists, they wanted to see new faces and experiences. T. Kazimov's generation of actors had already reached the middle age. Along with these actors the audience had the right to watch the representatives of the new generation. The citizens living in the 60s were already teenagers and young people in the 70 and 80s. This once again proved the importance of a new generation of actors and directors.

3. The audience was bored with the monotony, or rather of the performances they always watched. Thus, the audience of the 70s expected new reforms and creative potential from playwrights directors and actors.

4. The audience of the 70s was looking for the roots, traditions and national identity.

The theatre had to revolutionize at this time, taking advantage of its aesthetic criteria, despite all the difficulties. Going back to the 30s and 50s would not help to obtain an achievement. It was necessary to think and develop new and different concepts for the modernization of the theatre, and most importantly, the theatre had to be able to provide the aesthetic taste of the audience of the 70s.

In the 70s the awakening of national consciousness in our country became a key issue. The predominance of national tendencies in political and social life was reflected in the field of culture and art. At that time, the embodiment of national and moral values in films and monographs meant the revival of national consciousness and ideology. It is true that the national and spiritual awakening became more widespread in the 90s. But it should be emphasized that the process of re-awakening was founded in the 70s and intensified in the 90s. *"It is an undeniable fact that the intensification of national emotions in the 90s and the acceleration of the process of national self-consciousness are originally linked to the atmosphere of the 70s"*.²⁷ V. Ibrahimoglu,

²⁷ Valiyev A. M. Belief, spirit and theatre. Baku, 2009, p.107.

H. Atakishiyev and A. Nemat should be especially mentioned among the directors who embodied the process of national self-awareness in their performances. Performances, such as "Hungry guys", "Long live the Sun", "Komsomol poem" and "Zanjirband" ("The chain") directed by V. Ibrahimoglu reflected the environment of the time in all its reality, including mentality, moral values and traditions. H. Atakishiyev, the prominent figure of the theatrical avant-garde of the 70s and 80s, skillfully used the aesthetic principles and criteria of the new concept in his performances. The actor-audience communication in the traditional Azerbaijani theatre came back with Atakishiyev's performances. In spite of all these, the socio-economic and ideological crisis of the Soviet State in the 70s and 80s, as well as the worsening situation and poor governance affected theatres. In the first half of the 90s, after gaining independence the condition of the theatres became so much worse. This period is examined in the second half of the last chapter entitled **"Azerbaijani theatre in the period of independence and ethnoculture: problems of theatrical perception"**.

In the research process, we notice that political and ideological issues came to the fore in the 90s. The main reason for this was the mass of tense situations. *"In the first stage of our independence, the potential opportunities of theatrical thinking were clearly associated with the goals of socio-political processes"*.²⁸

In such circumstances, the ideology of freedom became our people's main criterion. Everyone thought about freedom, independence and Karabakh conflict. Although these issues caused a stagnation in theatre, as well as in cultural life, they had a positive effect on the awakening of national consciousness. The process of self-determination which began in the 70s, became widespread in the early 90s, when our people regained their national identity, tradition and mentality, and it was embodied in the culture and art. Despite the intensification of theatrical searches in the 90s, lack of audience

²⁸ Alizadeh M. A. Theatre: observation and magic. Baku: Science, 1998, p.196.

remained an important problem. The core reasons for this issue are these:

- The emergence of chaos in dramaturgy;
- The emergence of the problem of unprofessionalism in the field of Directing, especially in the mid-90s;
- Events occurring in the socio-political and socio-economic life of our country;
- Azerbaijani theatres that were lagging behind the modern theatre standards, and decrease of material-technical base.

In this part of the dissertation J. Grotovski's "poor theatre concept"²⁹ was mentioned and associated with subject. One of the important features of the concept was that it always stood in a minimalist position. In this theatre the scenery, the costumes of the actors, makeup and the use of special effects on the stage were inconsequential. This method required actors to fill existing gaps. The concept we have mentioned had been applied in many countries and brought success to theatres. But the point is that in the 90s, extremely limited technical capabilities of our national theatre were the only factors that brought it closer to poor theatrical aesthetics. For a professional and talented actor who takes his job seriously, it is not important whether the stage is rich in modern technical equipment or not. Real actors and theatre should not make such excuses. It is no coincidence that there are many successful performances in world theatres using this method. But a poor theatre concept is successful when the theatre consciously applies it to its performances and deliberately limits its possibilities. The situation in the Azerbaijani theatre in the 90s was completely different. The theatre did not apply this concept as a creative method, but blindly, or rather inadvertently deprived of stage equipment. This should not be directly related to the financial situation of the state. The main reason for the failure of the theatre was a very low of material well-being. All this made it difficult to meet the needs of the audience, who for many years watched

²⁹ <https://www.google.com/amp/s/fotosintez.wordpress.com/2013/06/13/teatrd-a-grotovski-f%25C9%2599RQI-2/amp>

performances in different concepts and styles. It was necessary to develop theatrical methods that were new and interesting for the audience.

Despite the many problems mentioned above, the establishment of the State Yugh theatre, the State Puppet Theatre and Baku Chamber Theatre included ethnoculture in their performances. Some of the prepared plays were briefly reviewed in this half-chapter of the dissertation, and enough information was given about their compatibility with the way of thinking of that period. Moreover, entrepreneurial and documentary theatre, absurd performances were discussed and it became clear whether these performances are important or not for the audience in our time. The dissertation made suggestions and remarks on the topic, as well as highlighted the problem of production, which currently exists in our theatres.

In order to prepare and promote various performances, our theatres must be properly organized. Today, those who work as producers in Azerbaijani theatres are in the minority. The Academic National Drama Theatre and the Theatre of Musical Comedy have production departments. Although the law of the Republic of Azerbaijan. "On theatre and theatre activity"³⁰ declares about the people who will be engaged in theatrical production, our theatres are indifferent to this issue.

At the end of the half-chapter, the factors that cause the audience problem in our theatres were clarified. In modern times, factors, such as the inability of some actors to escape the influence of old traditions, participation of other actors in weddings and folk festivals as toastmasters or singers, the lack of effort by directors, actors, including theatre workers to create new trends by integrating tradition with innovation, computerization at the current time and the rapid development of technology, further expansion of the position of television, replacement of performances with TV series, lack of time as a result of the people working in more than one job, unsatisfactory advertising of prepared and presented performances, the presence of

³⁰ <https://wipolex.wipo.int/en/text/224680>

poor works in dramaturgy and their staging in theatres lead to a shortage of spectators. The spectators want to see events that take place in their surroundings, environment and society in the performances prepared in the theatre, to find the answers they do not know and to clarify the indefinite issues. The spectators want to see characters from real life in the theatre, with who they interact with every day, they want to feel and understand their inner experiences. There is no denying the fact that the majority of Azerbaijani spectators are not interested in absurd performances, do not look for the subtlety of the play, do not reveal the invisible in their minds, do not understand the relation between the visible and invisible. One of the main reasons for this is that our 148-year-old theatre has not yet formed a complete spectator tradition. In the process of researching the dissertation, we were convinced that throughout history, our people have been exposed to ethnic-psychological, political- ideological and socio-economic influences, and their thinking has been formed in accordance with these influences. Our theatre has sometimes stagnated, sometimes developed, and sometimes sought its own national identity, all these processes have shown themselves in the national theatrical thinking and have hindered the integrity, unity and completeness of the structure of the national theatrical perception. Our theatre which is still experiencing a transition period, not a renaissance, must continue its experiments and searches and try to meet the needs of the audience and try to adapt its performances to the thinking of the modern age in order to attract the audience.

In the **Conclusion** part of the dissertation the results reached by the studies throughout the research are summarized as follows:

1. The national theatrical perception is always associated with national customs and local beliefs.
2. Theatrical perception is adequate to the processes and events taking place in society.
3. The influence of ethnic-psychological socio-political economic and ideological factors is inevitably manifested in theatrical perception.

4. Theatre-spectator relations do not pass unnoticed to the national theatrical perception.

5. It is the spectator and personality factor who forms the national theatrical thought.

6. It is the spectator who determines the future of the theatre.

7. The theatre which affirmatively reacts to the needs and desires of the spectators draw the audience.

8. The process of innovation and development in every sphere of life directly affects human psychology and changes his worldview, thinking, intellectual level and desires and in this case the spectator forms a theatrical perception. These factors are linked like a chain, adapting to the necessary requirements of the time.

9. The process of rapid development in the 21st century does not go unnoticed in the minds and thoughts of the people and a person with a renewed mind expects innovative performances from the theatre.

10. Theatre directors must have a strong ability to observe, they must recognize the audience of their time, be able to work on new concepts and styles and to conduct experiments.

List of scientific articles published on the theme of the dissertation:

1. The structure of theatrical perception in Azerbaijan: religion and theatre// Baku: The World of Culture, scientific-theoretical journal, the XXXII edition, -2016, -p. 32-37.
2. Directions of Azerbaijani culture within multiculturalism// Socio-philosophical and cultural foundations of the concept of multiculturalism, materials of scientific-theoretical conference.–Baku: Azerbaijan State University of Culture and Arts, December 9, 2016, -p. 131-136.

3. The stage version of the Book of Dede Korkut// -Baku: Gobustan, -2017. № 1, -p. 56-58.
4. If there was a theatre in Nizami's time// Baku: Gobustan, -2017. № 3, -p. 68-69.
5. Roots of ashug creativity (in the context of national theatrical thinking// -Baku: Culture. AZ, November- December (316), -2017. – p. 109-110.
6. Theatricality in the Book of Dede Korkut// Culture: problems and perspectives. Materials of the XI international scientific conference of doctoral students and young researchers. –Baku: Azerbaijan State University of Culture and Arts, -2017, -p. 64-65.
7. Heydar Aliyev and his cultural strategy// Actual problems of Azerbaijani studies. Materials of VIII international scientific conference devoted to nationwide leader Heydar Aliyev's 94th birth anniversary. Baku Slavic University. May 4-5, 2017, -p. 592-594.
8. Culture of national representations of the Azerbaijanis (in the context of national theatrical perception)// POISK, The High School of Kazakhstan, -2017, № 4, -p. 66-70.
9. Azerbaijani model of gender equality// Materials of “ Gender problem and modern Azerbaijan” Republican scientific conference. Azerbaijan University. November 25, 2017, -p. 410-412.
10. New tendencies in the national theatrical perception in the 60s of the 20th century// - Baku: The World of Culture, the XXXVI edition. -2018, -p. 29-32.
11. Heydar Aliyev's role in the development of national-moral values// Materials of international scientific conference” National-moral values: tradition and modernity” devoted to the nationwide leader Heydar Aliyev's 95th anniversary. -Baku: Azerbaijan University of Architecture and Construction, -2018, -p. 406- 410.
12. Manifestation of the process of national self- consciousness in theatrical perception (in the context of the 1970s)// Culture: problems and perspectives. Materials of XXII international conference of doctoral students and young researchers. – Baku: Azerbaijan State University of Culture and Arts, -2018, -p. 74-75.

13. The structure of national theatrical perception: religion and theatre// Materials of the XXI Republican scientific conference of doctoral students and young researchers. The 2nd volume. Baku State University. October 24-25, -2017, -p. 273- 275.
14. Nizami Ganjavi and national theatrical perception// Materials of XXII Republican conference. The 2nd volume. Azerbaijan State Pedagogical University. – Baku: November 22-23, 2018, -p. 532-534.
15. Actual problems of Azerbaijani theatre// -Baku: Culture.AZ, November- December, (322), -2018, p. 72-75.
16. Azerbaijani theatre in the period of independence and ethnoculture// Scientific research in the humanities: innovations of the 21st century. Materials of the VII international scientific-practical conference.- Pyatigorsk. June 6-7, -2019. - p. 145-148.
17. Nationwide actress problem in Azerbaijan// Culture: problems and perspectives. Materials of doctoral students and young researchers. – Baku: Azerbaijan State University of Culture and Arts, -2019, p. 82-83.
18. Theatre: The victim of the global problem// <https://tembr.net/teatr-global-problemin-qurbani-kimi>. June 7, 2021.

The defense will be held on the 29 October, 2021 at 11⁰⁰ at the meeting of the Dissertation council FD 2.35 of Supreme Attestation Commission under the the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan operating at the Azerbaijan State University of Culture and Arts

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