

## GAFUR GHULAM THROUGH THE EYES OF LITERARY GIANTS

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**Abstract.** *This article examines the perception and portrayal of Gafur Ghulam, one of Uzbekistan's most prominent literary figures, through the perspective of his contemporaries and other literary luminaries. By analyzing memoirs, critical works, and testimonials from various sources, this research illuminates Ghulam's multifaceted personality, his impact on Uzbek literature, and his enduring legacy. The study reveals how Ghulam was perceived not only as a gifted poet and writer but also as a cultural ambassador, mentor, and national voice who significantly shaped Uzbek literary identity in the 20th century.*

**Keywords:** *Gafur Ghulam, Uzbek literature, literary criticism, writer's memoirs, Soviet-era literature, literary influence, cultural identity.*

## ГАФУР ГУЛЯМ ГЛАЗАМИ ЛИТЕРАТУРНЫХ ГИГАНТОВ

**Аннотация.** *В данной статье рассматривается восприятие и изображение Гафура Гуляма, одного из самых видных литературных деятелей Узбекистана, с точки зрения его современников и других литературных светил. Анализируя мемуары, критические работы и свидетельства из различных источников, это исследование освещает многогранную личность Гуляма, его влияние на узбекскую литературу и его непреходящее наследие. Исследование показывает, как Гулям воспринимался не только как одаренный поэт и писатель, но и как культурный посол, наставник и национальный голос, который значительно сформировал узбекскую литературную идентичность в 20-м веке.*

**Ключевые слова:** *Гафур Гулям, узбекская литература, литературная критика, воспоминания писателей, литература советского периода, литературное влияние, культурная идентичность.*

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Introduction

Gafur Ghulam (1903-1966) stands as a towering figure in the landscape of Uzbek literature, whose contributions transcend mere literary output to encompass cultural diplomacy, mentorship, and national representation. As an academician, poet, and writer, Ghulam's work emerged during a period of profound transformation in Uzbekistan's social and political landscape, making his perspective and creative expression particularly significant [1]. Despite extensive scholarship on his literary works, there remains a compelling need to understand how

Ghulam was perceived by his contemporaries and other literary figures - a perspective that offers unique insights into both the man and his creative legacy.

This article aims to analyze how Ghulam was portrayed and remembered by fellow writers, poets, and literary critics who knew him personally or engaged deeply with his work. By examining testimonials, memoirs, and critical assessments from various literary sources, this research seeks to construct a multidimensional portrait of Ghulam that goes beyond conventional literary analysis to capture the human dimension of his influence and legacy [2].

### **Methodology and Literature Review**

This study employs qualitative content analysis of primary and secondary sources to examine how literary figures perceived and represented Gafur Ghulam. The research draws from three main categories of sources:

1. **Memoirs and personal testimonials** from contemporaries who knew Ghulam personally, including prominent Uzbek writers like Zulfiya and other Soviet-era literary figures [3].
2. **Critical literary analyses** published during his lifetime and posthumously, from Uzbek, Russian, and international scholars [4].
3. **Historical documents** including letters, interviews, and speeches that reference Ghulam and his contributions to literature and culture [5].

The existing literature on Ghulam primarily focuses on textual analysis of his works, with limited attention to how he was perceived by his contemporaries. Rahimjanov's work (2018) provides valuable insights into Ghulam's role as a cultural diplomat but lacks comprehensive analysis of how fellow writers viewed him [6]. Similarly, Karimov's study (2003) examines Ghulam's literary technique but offers only cursory attention to personal dimensions [7]. This research addresses this gap by synthesizing diverse perspectives to construct a more nuanced understanding of Ghulam as perceived through the eyes of other literary figures.

### **Results and Discussion**

Analysis of memoirs reveals that Ghulam was consistently characterized as embodying the voice and identity of the Uzbek people. According to poet Zulfiya, "He had become the face of Uzbekistan, the voice of the Uzbek people" [3]. This perception stemmed from Ghulam's deep knowledge of history, culture, and traditions, combined with his unwavering love for his homeland and people. His contemporaries repeatedly emphasized his ability to articulate national sentiment in a way that resonated broadly, positioning him as more than a writer but as a cultural representative.

The analysis shows that this characterization was particularly prevalent among writers from other Soviet republics, who viewed Ghulam as a literary ambassador of Uzbekistan.

During literary congresses and international forums, his presence was described as commanding respect not only for himself but for Uzbek literature as a whole [4].

A recurring theme in the memoirs of younger writers is Ghulam's role as a mentor.

Literary testimonials highlight his commitment to nurturing emerging talent through both formal and informal guidance. Zulfiya's account of the "train examination" in 1947-48 illustrates Ghulam's pedagogical approach, emphasizing the importance of literary heritage and comprehensive knowledge [3]. His famous statement that "I don't consider anyone a poet who doesn't know at least 25,000 lines of poetry by heart" reflects his high standards and belief in the importance of tradition.

Several sources indicate that Ghulam's mentorship extended beyond professional guidance to personal support. He maintained relationships with the families of deceased colleagues, provided emotional and practical assistance to younger writers, and created opportunities for their professional development [5]. This dimension of his personality appears consistently across accounts from writers of various backgrounds and generations.

Literary figures' descriptions of Ghulam reveal a complex personality characterized by seeming contradictions. He is portrayed as simultaneously scholarly and folksy, serious and humorous, demanding and generous. Critical analyses from the 1950s and 1960s emphasize his intellectual rigor and erudition, while personal memoirs highlight his accessibility and connection to ordinary people [7].

Particularly noteworthy is the recurring image of Ghulam as someone who moved seamlessly between different social contexts. His comfort in marketplaces (as described in Zulfiya's memoir) alongside his authority in academic settings suggests a versatility that impressed his contemporaries [3]. This multidimensional quality is frequently cited as contributing to his effectiveness as both a writer and public figure.

Fellow writers consistently praised Ghulam's authenticity and emotional honesty in his creative work. According to Zulfiya, "His truthfulness and sincerity as a poet were such that he would write some poems while crying, and read them while crying" [3]. This emotional authenticity appears to have been particularly valued by his contemporaries, who viewed it as distinguishing his work from more formulaic or ideologically rigid Soviet literature.

Critical assessments from international sources similarly emphasize Ghulam's ability to infuse even politically conformist works with genuine emotion and artistic integrity [8]. This quality seems to have earned him particular respect among fellow writers who recognized the challenges of maintaining artistic authenticity within the constraints of the Soviet literary establishment.

## Conclusion

This analysis of how Gafur Ghulam was perceived by his literary contemporaries reveals a figure of remarkable complexity and influence. Through the eyes of fellow writers, Ghulam emerges not simply as a talented poet but as a cultural institution - one who embodied national identity, upheld literary traditions, and nurtured future generations of writers.

The consistency with which certain characteristics appear across diverse sources - his authenticity, generosity, erudition, and versatility - suggests these were fundamental aspects of his character rather than strategic self-presentation. His contemporaries' accounts highlight how these personal qualities informed and enhanced his literary contributions, making him not merely respected but beloved within literary circles.

This research contributes to a more nuanced understanding of Ghulam's legacy by illuminating the human dimensions of his influence. While his published works remain his most tangible contribution, the impact he had on other writers through personal interaction and example represents an equally important aspect of his literary significance. Future research might productively examine how these personal influences manifested in the creative output of those who knew him, further elucidating the complex networks of influence that shape literary traditions.

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