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KARINE KHODIKYAN'S BIOGRAPHICAL AND CREATIVE PROFILE AND THE "TWO PLAYS" COLLECTION

Abstract

Karine Khodikyan, a contemporary Armenian prose writer, poet, playwright, publicist, translator, and editor, is one of those female writers of our time whose literary and authorial profile is reflected in her multi-genre works. She was the editor of the prose and poetry section of the magazine "Garun" (1989–2001), Deputy Minister of Culture of the Republic of Armenia (2004–2008), founder and Editor-in-chief of the literary and artistic journal "Dramaturgia" (2000 to present), Editor-in-chief of the "Grakan Tert" (2001–2004 and 2012 to present), founder and Editor-in-chief of the website "www.tatron-drama.am" (2018 to present), etc. K. Khodikyan has written poems, stories, plays, novels, and a number of publicistic articles, which aesthetically and artistically reflect the current Armenian national situation and vitally important issues.

She has received a number of awards and prizes for her tireless literary, cultural, and creative activities, and her plays have been staged both in Armenia and abroad, and films have been shot based on her scripts, which have brought new life to Armenian cinema.

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K. Khodikyan's collection "Two Plays" includes the plays "How to Marry an Unmarried Man" (well known as "The Woman After the Rain") and "The Last Gypsy." Both present our days, our everyday life, and human relationships, emphasizing the complex and incomprehensible, ups and downs of the relationship between a man and a woman.

Keywords: *Karine Khodikyan, writer, literary and cultural figure, "Literary Newspaper", "Dramaturgy", creative world, plays.*

Introduction

Karine Khodikyan is a writer whose literary, artistic, and cultural accomplishments define the essence of a modern Armenian prose writer. She has excelled in both poetic and prose genres. Her multi-genre approach is most vividly expressed in her prose, which has undergone a long journey of literary refinement of time. It is noteworthy that K. Khodikyan's plays, through their second life on stage and path to theatrical eternity, make her even more prominent as a voice of contemporary literary and artistic thought. They are also works of universal nature.

Khodikyan's "Two Plays" collection once again addresses the relationships between women and men, as well as several vital issues and stereotypes that remain relevant for all times.

Karine Khodikyan as a Creative Individual and Cultural Figure

K. Khodikyan was born on June 24, 1957, in Akhalkalaki (Samtskhe-Javakheti region, Georgia). "I was born in Georgia, although my ancestors are from Karin. I live in Yerevan, and I am certain I will remain here for the rest of my life, even though my father's grave is in my birthplace, Akhalkalaki. This means I will forever live divided between the land of my ancestors, my birthplace and parents' resting place, and my true homeland,"¹ she once confessed.

She received her primary education in her hometown at the Derenik Demirchyan Secondary School in Akhalkalaki.² She then continued her studies at the Faculty of Philology of Yerevan State University. After graduating in 1980, she

¹ Modern Armenian Women Writers. Plays, 2006, p. 6, as well as www.thearmenians.am/hy/authors/42, accessed on 28.04.2025.

² "Zaruhi", Yerevan, 2002, № 17, p. 3. In this article, K. Khodikyan also shares sweet memories of her late father.

returned to Akhalkalaki and worked as an Armenian language and literature teacher at her alma mater from 1980 to 1985.

"I became a philologist, taught at a school, and even worked as a kindergarten teacher and bookkeeper. At the age of thirty-one, I started everything anew – as a journalist for a factory newspaper and then for the 'Garun' magazine."³ From 1988 to 1989, Khodikyan worked as a correspondent for the 'Kerpasagorts' newspaper, and from 1989 to 2001, she served as the editor of the prose and poetry department at Garun magazine. "This beginning coincided with the start of the Artsakh Movement... I was able to remain honest and true in all my publications, from essays to journalistic investigations and political analyses,"⁴ – the prose writer confessed.

Since 1991, Khodikyan has been a member of the Armenian Journalists' Union; in 2001, she joined the Armenian Writers' Union, and in 2005, the Armenian Theatre Union. Since May 2000, she has been the founder and Editor-in-chief of the literary and artistic journal 'Dramaturgia'.⁵ "The journal 'Dramaturgia', founded and edited by Karine Khodikyan, plays an important role, particularly in discovering young playwrights and introducing notable works of foreign drama,"⁶ wrote literary critic Zhenya Kalantaryan. She also emphasized Khodikyan's role as a creator whose plays address both socially significant issues and stand out for their aesthetic explorations.⁷ The journal has consistently featured works by both emerging and well-known authors, as well as pieces by contemporary Armenian playwrights.⁸ Literary critic Armen Avanesyan rightly observes: "...The existence of the 'Dramaturgia' journal is doubly significant. First, it draws attention to this literary genre, and second, it provides an

³ Contemporary Armenian Women Writers: Plays, p. 6.

⁴ Contemporary Armenian Women Writers: Dramaturgy, p. 6.

⁵ See more at www.tatron-drama.am/դրամատուրգի-հանդես, where K. Khodikyan provides detailed insights into the creation and presentation of the journal. Notably, in 2009, the journal was awarded the Golden Commemorative Medal by the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party for establishing the unique 'Dramaturgy' journal in Armenian press and dedicating its pages to contemporary Armenian playwrights.

⁶ Kalantaryan 2006, 138.

⁷ Kalantaryan, 2003, p. 167.

⁸ "Aravot," Yerevan, 15.12.2010, № 239, p. 12.

opportunity to comprehensively review the plays written (unfortunately, not staged) over the course of a year..."⁹

From 2001 to 2004, and since March 1, 2012, K. Khodikyan has served as the Editor-in-chief of the 'Grakan Tert', the official newspaper of the Armenian Writers' Union.¹⁰ "This time, she returned with entirely new programs and approaches, returned because she wanted to contribute to the literary life..."¹¹ wrote theater critic Levon Mutafyan.

From 2004 to 2008, K. Khodikyan served as the Deputy Minister of Culture of the Republic of Armenia,¹² adopting the motto: "Culture must be saved from neglect."¹³ Years later, she confessed: "As the Deputy Minister of Culture of Armenia, I got used to sleeping only four hours a day. I would enter my office and forget that I was a playwright."¹⁴ Her tenure was marked by various theatrical and artistic festivals,¹⁵ through which she sought to engage the society in the development and promotion of contemporary culture, encompassing all regions of Armenia.¹⁶ L. Mutafyan, who referred to Karine Khodikyan's office as a "home for cultural figures," writes: "Karine Khodikyan was unlike other officials; her office door was always open. She stood with all artists and cultural figures... Numerous programs and initiatives came to life thanks to Karine Khodikyan."¹⁷

In 2018, Karine Khodikyan became the founder and editor of the website www.tatron-drama.am.¹⁸ The project's goal is to create a unified platform for classical and contemporary dramaturgy and theaters operating in Armenia, strengthening collaboration between national theater and dramaturgy. It also aims

⁹ 'Garun,' Yerevan, 2007, № 1–2, p. 106.

¹⁰ 'Azg,' 10.02.2012, No. 24, p. 6: Thanks to the current editor K. Khodikyan, 'Grakan Tert' has always presented innovative solutions to its readers, but it also revisits and recalls interesting and memorable articles published in its pages years ago.

¹¹ Famous Armenian Women of Our Time, Book Two, Yerevan, "Sitoprint" Publishing, 2015, page 148.

¹² See 'Hraparak,' 07.05.2008, № 44, p. 7.

¹³ 'Hartak,' 09.06.2005, No. 20, p. 2.

¹⁴ Regarding the decision to voluntarily resign from the position of Deputy Minister, Khodikyan said: "So that I may be at peace with my conscience" (see 'Taregir,' 18.04.2008, № 21, p. 7; 'Hraparak,' 02.07.2011, № 124, p. 7).

¹⁵ 'Aravot,' 02.11.2006, № 208, p. 3.

¹⁶ See 'Azg,' 28.09.2006, № 184, p. 6.

¹⁷ Famous Armenian Women of Our Time, Book Two, pp. 147–148.

¹⁸ www.tatron-drama.am/about-us, accessed on 28.04.2025.

to address the key issues and developmental trends of contemporary theatrical life through theoretical articles and publications.

An Overview of Karine Khodikyan's Works

K. Khodikyan is a multi-genre writer, creating in both prose¹⁹ and poetry genres. Her poems, published in the late 1980s and 1990s,²⁰ reflect the contemplations of her mind and heart, resonating with the thematic, stylistic, and tonal approaches of renowned Armenian writers such as Sahyan, Teryan, and Charents.

*In my mountains now, the snow is deep,
No sun is shining, no light to keep.
The wind there isn't just a guest,
It's the true master, strong and blessed.
In the mountains' quiet embrace,
The water's clear, cold as lace.
Green hides beneath the bare tree bark,
A quiet secret in the dark.
In my mountains, silence stays,
Clean and pure through all the days.
In my mountains, greatness shows,
Beyond the pain that no one knows...*²¹

As a prose writer, K. Khodikyan is the author of numerous short stories, plays, and journalistic articles.²² Her works have been published both in literary and artistic periodicals of the time and in book collections. These include *Plays*,²³ *The Street of Dead Love*,²⁴ *Two Plays*,²⁵ *The Time of Play*,²⁶ *My Classics*,²⁷ and

¹⁹ Ohanyan 2018, 17–58; Ohanyan 2025, 127–135.

²⁰ See 'Garun' magazine, Yerevan, 1989, № 12, p. 57; 1992, № 4, pp. 52–53; 1994, № 1, pp. 28–29; № 5, pp. 20–21, etc.

²¹ 'Garun' magazine, 1989, № 12, page 57.

²² Ohanyan 2018, pp. 72–91; Ohanyan 2025.

²³ Khodikyan 1997.

²⁴ Khodikyan 2001.

²⁵ Khodikyan 2003.

²⁶ Khodikyan 2004. In 2006 this collection was published in Persian in Tehran by the *Naghreh Afraz* publishing house.

²⁷ Khodikyan 2011.

The Great Trilogy, a comprehensive three-volume collection of the writer's prose.²⁸ It is worth mentioning that Khodikyan's first novel, titled *Reverse Return*, has also been published, weaving together the dramatic events and images of our time through the fateful stories of four different heroines.²⁹ Khodikyan's works have been translated into Russian, English,³⁰ Persian, Romanian, Bulgarian, and Spanish.

For her literary and cultural contributions, Khodikyan has received numerous awards and honors. Her plays have been staged both in Armenia and internationally, in Russia, Europe, Georgia, the United States, and beyond. She has also written screenplays for several films, including *Interrupted Childhood* (2012), *Tevanik* (2014), and *Roots* (2016), among others.

The works in the collection Two Plays

This collection is Karine Khodikyan's third book, featuring the plays *How to Marry a Bachelor* (better known as *A Woman After the Rain*) (1998) and *The Last Gypsy* (2002).³¹ The works depict contemporary life, daily routines, and human relationships, emphasizing the complex and enigmatic, often turbulent dynamics between men and women.³² A vivid example of this is the play *How to Marry a Bachelor*, where Khodikyan attempts to uncover, through dramatic interplay,

²⁸ **Khodikyan**, Book 1, 2013; **Khodikyan**, Book 2, 2015; **Khodikyan**, Book 3, 2016.

²⁹ **Khodikyan** 2024.

³⁰ In 2008, in Yerevan, a collection of plays by the playwright K. Khodikyan titled *Plays* was published in English translation through a state commission. This collection included works previously published in Armenian: *Trilogy of Plays* (*Gates, The City, Station*, as well as *A Treatise on a Handkerchief, The Second Will, Don't Shoot, I'm Dead Already*, and *Attention, Doors Are Opening*. This book was published for international audiences and, perhaps, to establish the writer's voice in world literature (see **Khodikyan**, 2008).

³¹ The play *A Woman After the Rain* was first staged on July 13, 2002, at the G. Sundukyan National Academic Theater, and in 2004, it was performed in Georgia at the P. Adamyan Armenian State Drama Theater in Tbilisi. The premiere rights for *The Last Gypsy* belong to the "Nork" Theater (see Aravot, 27.03.2003, № 57, p. 6). Notably, in 1998, *The Last Gypsy* won the award for "Best Short Film Screenplay" from the Ministry of Culture of Armenia and the "Paradise" company.

³² The literary critic Zhenya Kalantaryan asserts that Khodikyan's female protagonists, representing various social strata, display diverse behavioral and temperamental traits. At the core of these characters lies an exploration of women's psychology and a redefinition of their assigned roles (see **Kalantaryan**, 2021, <https://tatron-drama.am/archives/5440>, accessed on 28.04.2025).

the unpredictable and incomprehensible actions of the male figure. In contrast, she portrays the woman as the cornerstone of a man's success, embodying loyalty and forgiveness.³³ The play also touches upon the theme of love – more precisely, eternal love. Playwright and director Musayel Galoyan writes: "In Khodikyan's play, love ascends from earth to heaven. The most marvelous thing occurs: the individual journeys toward the eternity of love, leaving behind the often-lost battles of love on earth."³⁴ And theater critic Varsik Grigoryan highlights the harmony between Karine Khodikyan as a playwright and Vahe Shahverdyan as the director in their collaborative work: "The author does not overestimate her abilities; she understands the multifaceted burdens and relationships of Armenian women. To convey this idea, the director has crafted an engaging theatrical form, while the actors, regardless of the scope of their roles, have worked with dedication, enriching them with emotion and thought."³⁵

There is an intriguing, progressively evolving, and logically constructed interplay in the plays *How to Marry a Bachelor* and *The Last Gypsy*. These works feature characters, both men and women, engaged in dramatic interactions and collaborative dynamics, highlighting their complexities and emotional depth.

In the first play, the male characters Tigran, Armen, and Mrs. Mari's "second/fifth" husband (mentioned only twice in the play) are contrasted with the female characters through a diverse range of psychological and social expressions. The women, including the main protagonist Anna, her neighbor Mrs. Mari, and Anna's two friends, Arpine and Gayane, are portrayed with distinct temperaments and relationships that influence the narrative and dynamics of the story.

In the second play, the narrative trajectory unfolds around the central character Aram the cobbler, whose personality is further shaped and nuanced by the other characters, his wife Nvard, his sister Anahit, and other relatives. Notably, these plays emphasize the theme of individual self-expression and the psychological journey of making personal decisions, highlighting that both men and women possess the capacity to assert their choices in life.

³³ K. Khodikyan has shared that after the staging of the play, people approached her and said, "You helped me believe in myself and continue living." This, indeed, is the ultimate acknowledgment from the public.

³⁴ "Iravunk," 03-05.12.2002, № 94, p. 7.

³⁵ "Hayots Ashkharh," 20.07.2002, № 137, p. 14.

It is important to emphasize that the female characters created by Khodikyan are diverse. They try to fight for their place and role in life, show determination to keep the family together, and more. Here, under the surface of the plot's developments, the relationship between man and woman becomes a kind of drama, even taking the form of a suicide attempt in *How to Marry a Bachelor*. For the sake of family peace and stability, the woman can bear everything silently on her shoulders while considering the opinions of those around her, and relatives, often choosing not to speak up in *The Last Gypsy*.

Karine Khodikyan's collection *Two Plays* can be considered a work filled with social, psychological, and universal themes that creates a deeply dramatic tension. The characters in it are engaged in an eternal struggle for their present and future, never yielding even in the face of the greatest hardships.

Conclusion

From Karine Khodikyan's biographical and creative profile, it is clear that she is one of the contemporary writers characterized by versatility, and the use of expressive means that creatively reinterpret the depiction of various stages and situations of life in diverse and aesthetic forms. In her works, life appears with all its struggles and various expressions, and the characters she creates are people living among us who act, strive, and overcome difficulties.

The plays included in her collection *Two Plays*, *How to Marry a Bachelor* and *The Last Gypsy*, affirm and complete the writer's creative and aesthetic profile. These works present the eternal interplay between women and men, address various social issues, convey dramatic tension, and merge the present with the future.

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ԼԻԱՆԱ ՕՀԱՆՅԱՆ

ՀՀ ԳԱԱ «Պատմաբանասիրական հանդես»-ի

պատասխանատու քարտուղար,

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ԿԱՐԻՆԵ ԽՈԴԻԿՅԱՆԻ ԿԵՆՍԱԳՐԱԿԱՆ, ՍՏԵՂԾԱԳՈՐԾԱԿԱՆ ԴԻՄԱՊԱՏԿԵՐԸ ԵՎ «ԵՐԿՈՒ ՊԻԵՍ» ԺՈՂՈՎԱԾՈՒՆ

Ամփոփում

Հայ ժամանակակից արձակագիր, բանաստեղծ, դրամատուրգ, հրապարակախոս, թարգմանիչ Կարինե Խոդիկյանը մեր օրերի այն կին գրողներից է, որի գրական-հեղինակային դիմապատկերն արտացոլում են իր բազմաժանր ստեղծագործությունները: Նա եղել է «Գարուն» ամսագրի արձակի և պոեզիայի բաժնի խմբագիր (1989–2001 թթ.), Հայաստանի Հանրապետության մշակույթի փոխնախարար (2004–2008 թթ.), «Դրամատուրգիա» գրական-գեղարվեստական հանդեսի հիմնադիր-գլխավոր խմբագիր (2000 թ. առ այսօր), «Գրական թերթի» գլխավոր խմբագիր (2001–2004 թթ.)

և 2012 թ. առ այսօր), «www.tatron-drama.am» կայքի հիմնադիր-խմբագիր (2018 թ. առ այսօր) և այլն:

Կ. Խողիկյանը հեղինակել է և՛ բանաստեղծություններ, և՛ պատմվածքներ, և՛ պիեսներ, և՛ վեպ, և՛ մի շարք հրապարակախոսական հոդվածներ, որոնք գեղագիտորեն արտացոլում են ներկա հայ ազգային իրավիճակն ու կենսական կարևոր հարցեր:

Գրական-մշակութային, ինչպես նաև՝ ստեղծագործական անխոնջ գործունեության համար արժանացել է մի շարք մրցանակների և պարգևների, իսկ պիեսները բեմադրվել են ինչպես Հայաստանում, այնպես էլ՝ արտերկրում, գրած սցենարների հիման վրա՝ նկարահանվել ֆիլմեր, որոնք նոր շունչ են բերել հայկական կինոյին:

Կ. Խողիկյանի «Երկու պիես» ժողովածուն ընդգրկում է «Ինչպես ամուսնացնել ամուրուն» (առավել հայտնի՝ «Կինը անձրևից հետո») և «Վերջին գնչուն» պիեսները, որոնցում ներկայացվում են մեր օրերը, կենցաղը, մարդկանց առնչությունները՝ շեշտադրելով կնոջ և տղամարդու բարդ, վայրիվերումներով լի փոխհարաբերությունները:

Բանալի բառեր՝ *Կարինե Խողիկյան, գրող, գրական-մշակութային գործիչ, «Գրական թերթ», «Դրամատուրգիա», ստեղծագործական աշխարհ, պիեսներ:*