

## PRESENTATION OF HISTORICAL PERSONALITIES IN MODERN TATAR LITERATURE (ON THE BASIS OF R. ZAIDULLA'S PLAYS)

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### ABSTRACT

The article examines some aspects of historical theme reflection in contemporary Tatar dramaturgy. In the course of dramatic work study by R. Zaydulla, contradictory, often tragic pages are demonstrated in the life of the Tatar people and the literary images of individuals closely associated with a particular historical epoch. The originality of a work plot presentation is determined within the framework of this or that era as an organic fusion of historical facts and a documentary basis with author's fiction. The literary images of historical personalities and the conditions that influence the actions and deeds, the properties and traits of a hero's character are revealed through a detailed analysis of the texts. R. Zaydulla, picturing the tragic periods of people's life in a new plane, considers and evaluates them from a slightly different point of view. Using successfully the synthesis of different genres, symbols, artistic details and phenomena elevated to the rank of metaphor, the author comes to the assessment of the content and the main idea of the works through the prism of the main heroes actions and deeds.

**Keywords:** Tatar drama, modernity, Rkail Zaydulla, historical personality, literary image, national idea, symbol, style.

### Introduction

#### *1. Tatar history and official policy*

The study of certain aspects of historical events and personalities picturing in literature makes it possible, on the one hand, to create a more complete picture of people history, their way of life, desires and aspirations, about individual mental properties, and on the other hand, to determine the personal views of the author, reveal the artistic features of his works and give the assessment of the era itself from the aspect of modern concepts. The relevance of this work is determined by these judgments. The display of the Tatar people history in Russia and individuals through literary images is extremely significant and important, because after the conquest of the Kazan Khanate by Russian state in 1552, Tatar history was covered and evaluated one-sidedly both in official sources and in scientific works and art works [1:5]. This situation changed only at the end of the twentieth century. Under the influence of perestroika processes taking place in the country and the emergence of new social and political conditions, they created the prerequisites to study the history of the Tatar people from an objective standpoint and in their entirety, without leaving any "blank spots" [2: 219-223].

#### *2. Historical themes in Tatar drama*

The Tatar people, who lost their statehood in the 16th century, gained the spiritual support, first of all, in the religion of Islam. Under the "cover" of the religious way of life, the people managed to preserve their language, customs and rituals, national features and thus could largely resist the policy of Russian state Christianization [3: 41]. At the beginning of the 20th century the Tatar people formed as a nation that embarked on the path of its rights protection using a parliamentary rostrum, the national idea turned into the leading force of revival [4: 5-6]. Many works appeared in literature and art where they sought to

reflect their ideas about the ideal of national freedom and independence in one way or another. The founders of this trend are G.Ibragimov - "The Daughter of the Steppe" (1909), "Our Days" (1914), Sh. Kamal - "At Dawn" (1927), M.Galyau - "Troubled Years" (1930), "Emigrants "(1934). The idea of national freedom or, according to Y. Nigmatullina, "the pathos of idea romanticism" [5: 123] turned into a kind of Mecca and the only landmark of our literature, becoming the main motive in the art of the word.

In the Tatar drama, which took its first steps only at the end of the XIXth century, the historical themes are related with the name of G.Iskhaki. The playwright refers to the events of the violent baptism of the Tatars in his tragedy "Zuleikha" [6: 347]. The plays by K. Tinchurin "Without the winds" (1923), "Swarm" (1927), by N. Isanbet "The Flight" (1923), M. Galyau "The Pugachev's Army" (1927), A. Faisy "Pugachev in Kazan", etc. written after the October Revolution of 1917, changed the history of Russia fundamentally and are worthy of attention in terms of historical event artistic reconstruction. However, they could not completely get rid of the myth influence generated by Soviet ideology - to depict the past only in black colors, which was characteristic of all literature of that period [7]. Already in the following years the reflection of historical events and the fates of individuals in the dramaturgy found a more worthy embodiment in N. Isanbet's plays "Idegae" (1941), "Guljamal" (1943), "Musa Jalil" (1947), M.Gali's and H.Urazikova's "Kayoum Nasiry" (1944), T. Minnulinna's "Bakhtiyar Kankaev" (1974), "There are no variants of conscience" (1982), "We are leaving, you are staying" (1986), R. Batulla's "The Bridge over Hell" (1986), etc. The authors sought to reveal the deep roots and the causes of the Tatar national tragedy by turning to the historical events or the activities of individuals, taking the attempts to make generalized conclusions [8: 298]. These works are united by the fact that 1) the plays by G.Iskhaki and F.Burnash are based on religious subjects, myths and legends, other authors take real events and images of historical personalities as the basis; 2) the authors turn to the turning historical events, which left an indelible mark on the fate of the people; 3) national images are created in the works, whose life and destiny are the example of serving the people [9].

Of course, there was no way to display the national idea directly during the Soviet period. On the contrary, the works in which the issues of national originality and national peculiarities were reflected to some extent were immediately categorized as "harmful", and their authors began to be persecuted [10]. During this period, writers were forced to express their views and opinions by "Aesopian language", that is, to hide them in subtext, between lines.

Since the second half of 1980-ies the interest in the history of Tatars and historical figures increased, numerous works of historical content were written. Within a short time, literary images of many historical personalities were created, whose names were on the lips of every Tatar, not indifferent to the fate of his people, Attila, Kubrat Khan, Almush Khan, Kul Gali, Idegay, Syuyumbike, Kul Sharif, Batyrsha, Said-batyr, Tukay, Jalil, etc. are among them who by their whole life, serving the people, by the strength of spirit and faith, aroused admiration and made a strong influence on contemporaries by their own example [11].

In contemporary stage literature, historical themes are reflected in the works by M. Malikova, G. Kayumov, R. Khamid, R. Zaydulla, Z. Hakima, etc. A. Sattarova writes, "the authors, linking the past, the present and the future of the Tatar people, call for sensible meaningful actions dictated by the code of honor and dignity, as well as by love for their neighbor and for their homeland, for the avoidance tragedies in the future" [12: 130]. In terms of literary image creation concerning bright and extraordinary personalities, possessing a strong character and rich internal spiritual world, by the will of fates found themselves in the midst of extremely contradictory historical events, the works by R. Zaydulla deserve the closest attention undoubtedly.

## Methodology

The main purpose of this work is the identification of reflection features in the dramas by R. Zaydulla concerning the most tragic and instructive pages of the Tatar people history and the literary images of genuine patriots of their nation. Our research is based on the provisions of hermeneutics, that is, through the interpretation of literary texts, the disclosure of their internal properties, through historical-functional and aesthetic analysis, the determination of the signs and properties of the author's artistic thinking. In the course of the work, we also relied on the methods of comparison and comparative historical analysis, which allowed us to consider the views of the playwright in comparison with the concepts that dominated before and provide a scientifically valid assessment. The principle of historicism was in the center of our attention, because the events and the activities of historical personalities described in the works can be understood and explained only in the context of social life history, and also depending on the level of the Tatar art and aesthetic thought of the era development.

## RESULTS

Rkail Zaydulla, who first appeared in literary art during the 80-ies of the 20-th century and who is equally active in the genres of poetry, prose, drama, first of all, was widely recognized as a poet. New trends, searches that were conducted in the Tatar poetry of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, were most fully reflected in his work [13]. The inner spiritual freedom of the writer is presented in all of his works. He creates, adhering by all his essence to the destiny of the nation, reflecting its contradictory past and rather difficult present with such a piercing clarity that it is impossible to remain indifferent to his creations. Knowing the language excellently and in all subtleties, the writer uses an entire rich palette of visual means, especially by a wide resort to such kinds as metaphor and symbols, relying on techniques that facilitate their disclosure. Therefore, he was noted as one of the modern writers who managed to "revive the beautiful patterns of symbols and breathe new life into them" by literary criticism [14: 199].

When he was recognized as a poet and a prose writer, the writer also tries the genre of drama. It should be noted that he was rather successful in this area of creativity. His plays "The Crazy Nightingale", "Love the Immortal", "The Kazan Orphan" were staged by the Tatar theaters and were approved by the general public. The attention of critics and viewers was attracted by the fact that the acute social issues were selected, posing complex, contradictory and ambiguous questions for the public, which have no definite answers, as well as the style and the brightness of the author's creative features. The writer, freely referring to the categories of the past, present and future, bravely raises the moral and philosophical aspects of being, political and religious issues.

## DISCUSSION

What are the artistic features of historical events and vivid personalities display in the playwright's works? R. Zaydulla refers to the tragic periods in the history of the Tatar people and to the literary images of bright personalities that left an indelible mark in the memory of the people by the plays "The Last Tatar", "Love is immortal", "This happened".

The conquest of the Kazan Khanate in the middle of the 16-th century by the Russian state is a tragic page in the history of the Tatars, it still remains an unhealed wound in the heart of the people, and writers turn to this topic now and again. This or that epoch is imprinted in history and related with the names of individuals. In connection with the events of the Kazan Khanate capture and its destruction, the names of Safa-Girey, Shah-Ali, some Tartar prince are mentioned, but the names of three personalities - Syuyumbike<sup>1</sup>, Kul Sharif<sup>2</sup>, Muhammadjar<sup>3</sup> - were preserved in the memory of the people. The literary images of these three personalities were very successfully embodied in the eponymous poems by A.Rashitov, recognized as the achievement of Tatar poetry of the late twentieth century [15: 156].

In his play "The Last Tatar" R. Zaydulla describes the events of the national tragedy - the destruction of the Kazan Khanate, placing in the center the image of Kul Sharif, who served as the spiritual leader in the Khanate - Sayid. Unfortunately, there is almost no information about the conditions of his upbringing and

education, about his family, etc. He was very respected by his people, engaged in literary creation, and when the enemy broke into the city, he entered the battle with a sword in his hand and died heroically. We presume all of this, relying mainly on his poems or on the statements about him, as well as on Russian chronicles [16: 11-16, 153]. And nevertheless, there is no doubt that Kul Sharif was a famous person in the Kazan Khanate, who had authority not only in the eyes of people, but who also had a huge influence on the policy of the Khanate. His name and work, being extremely popular, were kept for centuries and passed down from generation to generation. A vivid example of this is the construction of the Kul Sharif mosque at the end of the 20th century on the territory of the Kazan Kremlin as a precious relic and as the symbol of the Tatar people Renaissance.

R. Zaydulla, relying on the myths and the legends about the fall of the Kazan Khanate, as well as on historical documents, creates a neo-myth about Kul Sharif. This hero is ready to give all his strength, all his talent to protect the interests of people, to do everything possible to uphold his independence. He is confronted by a group of his tribesmen who make efforts to implement the aggressive policy of Russian state. In the play Kul Sharif is presented as a person who won the recognition of the people with his mind and enlightenment, as a mature religious leader, capable to be a leader during dark times. Kul Sharif, realizing the depth of the danger, hanging over the country, is shocked by imminent tragedy. He reveals himself as a person ready to sacrifice his life for the sake of his country and people. The courageous Said is seriously worried about the departure of Khunbika Syuyumbike as a "free" prisoner to Moscow - at the request of the Russian Tsar, allegedly as the condition for a mutual peaceful coexistence between two countries. According to R. Zaydulla, Kul Sharif loves Syuyumbike. By the will of circumstances he is compelled to send a "man who is more dear than himself" to a distant country by his own hands [17: 52]. This inflicted endless mental torments on Kul Sharif. Although his heart resisted, but his mind was forced to agree with this state of affairs. By sending Syuyumbike to a foreign land, Kul Sharif hoped to preserve the country independence. However, his hopes did not come true. The tragic fate of Kul Sharif is perceived as a common tragedy of people and adds to the existential attitude of the reader. This phenomenon is also given considerable attention in numerous works of art, including the tragedies "Khan's daughter" by R. Khamid, "Suyumbike" by M. Malikova and "Suyumbike" by G. Gilmanov.

Kul Sharif in R. Zaydulla's picturing is perceived ambiguously. A religious figure ready to give his life for the happiness of the people lacks spiritual strength. He rushes between personal desires and the interests of the country. This is emphasized in the play by the presence of classicism principles. The blurring of the contradiction between the hero's feelings and duty leads to the belittling of the main idea and the emotional impact on a reader and a viewer. Ultimately, the hero does not rise to the image ready to lead the people's liberation struggle.

Picturing his tragic and instructive fate, the grandeur and meanness of his close ones, the author opens another page from the contradictory history of the Tatar people and pushes us to reflect on its past, present and future.

In the drama "Love immortal" R. Zaydulla refers to the personality of an outstanding woman named Mukhlisa Bubi, who occupies a special place in the history of religion and enlightenment of the Tatar people. Relying on the help of the brothers Gabdulla and Gubaidulla Bubi, she created the school for girls in the village of Izh-Bubi at the Kazan province during the beginning of the 20th century and became its head. She deserves attention by becoming the first Kazi (Sharia judge) woman in the history of the Spiritual department of Muslims in Central Russia. The author does not pose the task of tracing the whole life path of this woman and in any way to assess her deeds and acts. In the center of his attention the last days of M.Bubi in prison, and her life's path appears before a viewer as a series of fragmentary memories and individual episodes.

The event takes place in 1937. Not only the fate of an individual person appears convexly, but also the history and the tragedy of the entire people through the tragic and instructive destiny of Mukhlis Bubi. The author pays a serious attention to reveal the reasons for this. Rather, this complex problem is considered in the context of the distant past interconnection, the period of the 1930-ies and present time. The tragedy of time is most fully manifested in the episode of Makaev's and Mukhlis' interrogation by an investigator named Kurbanov. From severe beatings and all kinds of torture, Makayev, broken in spirit, is portrayed as a miserable, unhappy man, ready to confess to any crime. The slander against himself and others on the part of this unreasonably accused person, who understands the meanness and the falsity of his testimony and suffering from the impossibility to resist it, deprived of the happiness to live a real, full-blooded, genuine life forever, evokes a whole range of emotions from a viewer, from the feelings of pity, compassion, bitterness, from the sense of injustice and to the desire to express protest, to make some resistance.

An inhuman, cruel regime established by Stalin, is based on fear and intimidation first of all. Acting as the defenders of this system, the investigators Kurbanov and Davletov are powerless, weak-willed beings. However, they are not the only victims of that system. Commissioner Galiya had to survive the same fate who was trained at the school of Mukhlis and was ready to give her soul for the new power. Completely desperate to understand and realize the reason she was imprisoned and accused as an enemy of the people, even during the last moment before the execution the woman yells: "Long live Stalin!" Her fate is not an exception to the rule. The courageous and talented sons of the Tatar people - M.Sultangaliyev, A.Davletyarov, Sh.Usmanov, G.Ibragimov, K.Tinchurin and many others, who gave all the forces and all the creative energy to the service of new government, were mercilessly destroyed by this system.

In the play, she reveals herself, first of all, as a real person, and spiritual freedom is her priority. The escape from the house of her husband, with whom she lived for ten years, with a small child in her arms, the work as the head of the school for girls, and then the service as the first female Sharia judge among the Muslims of Russia - all this testifies to a strong character, strength of faith, spiritual beauty and Mukhlis courage. Her strength is that she is a believer and she lives according to the canons of the Koran. The sources of her spiritual power lie in sincere love to Allah Almighty, to parents, children and relatives, to her nation, to people, to life itself. Her clear and conscious words, actions and deeds reflects true faith in Allah Almighty, and her judgments and views are enriched with authentic hadiths differ by the depth of thought and the richness of sound. N.Igalamov writes: "Zaydulla was able to show that a believer remains unbroken in the face of all sorts of trials, even when death looks into his eyes" [18: 8].

The author reveals the personality of this woman not only as a strong and strong-willed person, but also as an intelligent, an enlightened citizen, who is interested in the most important issues of life, capable to assess the events and phenomena occurring in society correctly. She firmly believes that the only way to preserve the Tatars as an original and independent people is to educate an enlightened, cultured and deeply believing person, and Mukhlis herself devotes her whole life to this idea. The main idea of the work in the generalized form is reduced to the fact that a strong faith, moral purity, hopes and thoughts make a person strong, and the confidence in the rightness of his deeds develops, serving the interests of the nation enriches spiritually and creates a solid ground for that in order to remain a real person under the most difficult conditions. The drama "Love immortal" sounds like a glorification of the spiritual strength and the purity of a man's faith. It is impossible to remain indifferent to the tragedy of Mukhlis Bubi, she strikes a reader and a viewer, raising the feelings of pain and anxiety, pity and admiration in a soul which ultimately causes spiritual cleansing.

R. Zaydulla certainly could not help turning to the image of Gabdulla Tukai, who occupied a special place in the life of the Tatar people. At the beginning of the 20th century, the Tatar people took the path of the Renaissance in the political, economic and especially cultural fields and achieved serious achievements.

Tukai comes to the poetic arena as a unique phenomenon, as the fruit of that epoch and receives recognition as a "singer of people's sorrow" as a "true son" of the people, responding to its spiritual needs [19: 108]. He finds understanding and support in the general public through a complex and controversial destiny, an individuality of personality and, above all, the proximity of creativity to ordinary people. He received recognition as a people's poet even in life, and throughout the twentieth century Tukay remained a great Tatar poet. And nowadays he represents the symbol of the nation. Therefore, Tukay's life and work, his personality will always be in the field of view of the figures of literature and art, inspiring the creation of numerous literary works. His bright image, created in theatrical literature, especially in such plays as "I flew from the cage of the world ..." by I. Yuzeyev, "We leave, you remain" by T. Minnullin, "The bridge over hell" by R. Batullah, received a wide public resonance.

By the drama "That's happened ..." R. Zaydulla looks at Tukay's personality and his work from the height of the XXIst century, wanting to understand the "Tukay's phenomenon" and assessing the present through Tukay's actions and deeds. The playwright sets a difficult task for himself: to portray the great poet in his environment, among friends and enemies, reveal his personality in all contradictions, assess creativity as the reflection of his actions and deeds, thoughts and dreams, desires and aspirations without the repetition of the things written about Tukay to this day.

From the compositional point of view, the events in this work occur in the editorial office of the newspaper "Al-Islah", in the club "Shyryk" ("Vostok"), in the house of Zaytun, in the rooms of the hotel "Bulgar". Such a structural composition allows us to observe Tukay, first of all, in an open space, that is, in the natural environment of that epoch, and on the other hand, to see the poet in a very delicate sphere of personal life, to understand his innermost feelings and experiences. The drama conflict also unfolds in two planes: the first of them is between Tukay and the society in which he lives. In the course of events, this conflict finds harmony with the present, and in certain episodes, the events of the life of the Tatars at the beginning of the 20th century and at the beginning of the 21st century merge. Due to this the personality of Tukay and his work acquire a new meaning, becoming the banner of struggle with those who would like to destroy our national identity. The second conflict is Tukay's internal contradictions, which are revealed through different life conflicts, in which a poet burned in the fire of love, under the pressure of many circumstances, is forced to be submitted to fate.

In the drama, the desire to understand Tukay's personality comes to the forefront. Unlike other writers, R. Zaydulla creates his image of a poet living by simple everyday worries, but at the same time, a special person with a big heart, giving him "prophetic" properties. Depending on a situation and a mood, ready to play with street boys, Tukay appears as "Majnun" in the work, burning in the fire of love. Since there is little information on the actual relationship between Tukay and women, this issue still controversial one. However, the poet is in no way deprived of the feeling of love. His poems about love for the richness of colors and shades of this feeling, for the depth of the lyrical hero's experiences, about the reflection of this amazing state of a soul as a source of strength, the poet's inspiration are considered as the best ones in his genre. Therefore Tukay's feelings towards Zaytun are revealed in the form of a "love of a soul" enveloped in a romantic fleur, within the framework of platonic love concept, which is entrenched widely in Eastern literature. According to the interpretation by R. Zaydulla, it was enough to look at each other to break love between them. The peculiarity is that spiritual unity is more important for them. On the one hand, Tukay is well aware that he does not shine with health and the sun of his life is already beginning to decline, and on the other hand, his aspirations, hobbies and the way of life as a poet do not conform with the willingness to create a family and raise children. You can not fool a fate. However, he longs to love and be loved. The realization of the fact that his pure feelings are shared by Zaituna, even though for a short time, makes Tukay happy, causes a burst of creative energy and fills with vitality.

R. Zaydulla also comes to the discovery of Tukay's poetry mystery in his own way. In connection with the events related to the poet's personal life, his love lyrics acquire a strong sounding. Quite a number of them are present in the text canvas, they help to understand Tukay's experiences, thoughts and aspirations better, to create an atmosphere of lyrical warmth and emotional impressionability. Tukay's personal life is inseparable from his literary creativity and social activities. Caring about the aspirations and the destiny of the people, he worries about his present and future, makes every effort to turn it into a united, friendly and cultural nation. A. Akhmadullin writes the following: "It is clear from those events that the poet will remain an invaluable asset of the Tatar people not only within his epoch, but also after centuries".

Quite a lot of space is reserved for era contradiction demonstration in the drama. The thing is about the era when Tukay lived, where he felt like a bird in a cage, struggled and rushed about in search of an exit from it. This era is compared with the beginning of the XXIst century, moreover, they seem to be interpenetrating. The work that tells of Tukay's love prompts serious reflections about the nation destiny, the role of a personal origin, spiritual and material values in its present situation. "Arrest" and the solemn presentation of the book, the cover of which states "Gabdulla Tukai", also has a profound symbolic meaning, hinting at restrictions in Russia related to the national language.

In the understanding and the disclosure of the author's idea an important place is occupied by "Prologue" and "Epilogue". The author puts Tukay and Zaytun in different epochs conditionally. At first glance, they are in our time, after all one of the streets of Kazan bears Tukay's name, there is also the Tukay's Museum. However, these phenomena are permeated with existential pathos. As in his epoch, Tukay meets with the phenomena of injustice in society, his soul can not find rest.

Thus, R.Zaidulla illuminates the side of Tukay's personality covered with a veil of secrecy - the relationship with women, the events caused by his love, are displayed in close connection with creativity, through the prism of the era phenomena in which the poet lived, the assessment of modern society is given, bringing a viewer and a reader to instructive conclusions indirectly.

## **SUMMARY**

After the study of the playwright by R. Zaydulla in the aspect of history and historical personality picturing, we came to the following conclusion: first of all, R. Zaydulla recreates the literary images of historical personalities whose instructive and largely tragic fates are consonant with the fate of the people; Secondly, the playwright explores historical epochs from the height of modernity, assesses the era through the spiritual world of heroes, portrays the life of great personalities from the point of view of national psychology; Thirdly, its historical figures are formed under the influence of social and suprasocial (national mentality, originality of a national ideal) determinant, therefore they differ in ethical, moral and psychological constitutions; Fourthly, if in many similar works the main characters are described by their relation to historical events (for example, in the plays "Boris Godunov" by Alexander Pushkin, "Bakhtiyar Kankaev" by T. Minnullina), the heroes of R. Zaydulla being in the center of historical events look for themselves, they are looking for an opportunity to fight for the bright ideals of the people. Therefore, they appear not only as strong historical figures, but also as national symbols with romantic content, who embodied the ideals of the people's freedom; Fifth, Zaydulla describes the contradictory, turning points of the depicted ages, so his characters have sublime tragic features, are distinguished by wisdom, the faith in the bright future of the nation. They appear more often as an image of the Sage, exposing the thoughts and the actions of enemies; Sixthly, R. Zaydulla appears as a master of artistic details, symbolic images, phenomena that acquire the properties of a metaphor. These artistic techniques contribute to the fact that his plays receive a wide public resonance and have a stage success.

At the same time, the study of historical themes and peculiarities, the creation of personality images gives rise to other questions for a literary critic. In particular, about the ways the heroes and the representatives of a different nationality are portrayed in the works, the historical significance of historical personality

activities, the correlation issue of real historical reality and author's fiction in the content of the works. These and other equally interesting aspects of the topic studied by us still wait for their researchers.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The work is performed according to the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.

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### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>Syuyumbike - the wife of the last Khan Safa-Girey, was subsequently sent to Moscow as a hostage, became the wife of khan Kasimovsky from Shah Ali khanate

<sup>2</sup>Kul Sharif - spiritual leader in the Khanate - Sayid, died defending the city of Kazan

<sup>3</sup>Mukhammedyar - a famous poet of the Kazan Khanate era