



Analysis of Traditional Symbolics in the Tatar Poetry in the 1930s: Nominative Meanings and Functions: The Case Study of Tatar Language

Ayrat Faikovich Yusupov¹, Nurfiya Marsovna Yusupova¹, & Svetlana Vasilyevna Sheyanova²

¹Department of Tatar Linguistics, Institute of Philology and Intercultural Communication, KFU; faikovich@mail.ru

²Department of Finno-Ugric Philology, FSBEI HE, National Research, Mordovian State University named after N.P. Ogareva; sheyanovas@mail.ru

Abstract

The article discusses the nominative domain and function of image symbols traditional for the Tatar poetry in the 1930s based on poetic works by M. Jalil, Kh. Tufan, and A. Fayzi. The mould-breaking pursuit of the verse form in the 1920s, playing with more complicated techniques, and plausibility to generate an image out of numerous mosaic details caused poets to folklore image symbols. The study demonstrates that traditional image symbols are observed as an opportunity to develop the artistic paradigms, regenerate the ideological and philosophical depth, as well as to present ambiguity and a chance to double read the text and national traditions of the Tatar poetry. The scientific novelty is defined through a different means to reviewing traditional (folklore) images in the structure of the poetic heritage, i.e., the study concentrates on their usage as a symbol being a structure-forming component. The analysis explained that the presentation simplicity and musicality typical of folk songs becomes the dominant feature of the period's Tatar poetry. It was facilitated by the sociocultural characteristics of national artistic mentality too.

Keywords: Nomination; Image Symbol; Function; Tatar Poetry; Folklore.

1. Introduction

Children's Tatar literature is genetically aligned with folklore (Abdullazyanovich, Hanipovna, Kamilovna, & Faritovna, 2015; Aydarova et al., 2017; L. Mingazova & Sulteev, 2014; Liailia I. Mingazova, Gabdrakhmanova, Dautov, Yuldybaeva, & Hajrullina, 2019; Safarova, Galimullin, & Galimullina, 2016; Tatar, 1998). The influence of folklore on the development of Tatar literature for children took place in the form of creative reception by the writers of works for children and the processing of children's folklore genres. For authors, folklore often played an important role, being an inexhaustible source of inspiration and a way to learn about the Tatar people's cultural heritage (Absalyamova, Absalyamov, & Absalyamova, 2015; Amirkhanov, 1998; Chumarova, Vinnikova, Fakhrutdinova, & Yudinseva, 2019; Kirillova & Kalganova, 2016; Rorlich, 1999; Sibgaeva, 2015). Folklore elements, folk poetic topics, motifs, pictures, archetypes, genre-stylistic styles, etc., enrich and nourish children's modern literature even now (Dorson, 1963; Espinosa, 1990; Martinoska, 2005). And so, the essay explores different approaches to the incorporation of folklore content into an artistic text of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century Tatar children's prose. Folklore is proven to serve as an indication of people's ethnic-psychological features, through which writers attempt to expose philosophical beliefs and moral values (Bering, 2006; Díaz & Almagro, 2019; Marett, 1920; Mehl, Gosling, & Pennebaker, 2006; Poole, 1985; Simons & Hughes, 2012; Toiviainen & Eerola, 2001). The authors aim to achieve such goals when referring to folklore as the reflection of the life details of the hero within the mentioned reality, the approach of a reader to the environment of the narrated reality, the enrichment of the semantic portion of the work, the awakening of readers' associative feelings (Bogen, 1995; Ellis, Frey, & Jalkanen, 2009; Mathew, 2016; Shtyrlina & Antropova, 2018; Stickgold, Scott, Rittenhouse, & Hobson, 1999; Winkielman, Coulson, & Niedenthal, 2018). More frequently and more harmoniously with the main text, the works where the main theme is the raising of national consciousness use folklore samples. For the Tatar authors, oral folk art often played an important role, being an inexhaustible source of inspiration and teaching the cultural heritage of the Tatar people. Even now the elements of folklore, namely folk poetic themes, motifs, pictures, archetypes, genre-



stylistic forms, etc., enrich and nourish modern literature. In the span of the Tatar poetry, the 1930s are marked as a period when a new ideological and artistic orientation emerged as well as ideological guidelines, and artistic paradigms changed (Ibragimov, Yusupova, & Zakirzyanov, 2016; N. M. Yusupova, Ganieva, Minnullina, Nadyrshina, & Yusupov, 2018; N. M. Yusupova, 2019). The tendency led to "initiating a new quality in literature ... owing to repulsing from the old literary tradition – both classical and refined standards on the cusp of the centuries" (Maguire, 1996). In the context of repelling the old literary customs – classical and modernist ones alike – the literature of "new quality" springs throughout the Soviet space, "the art is turned into a tool to aestheticize reality" (Günther & Dobrenko, 2000), while the primary task of poets is to display the ideological environment through a specific language of their poetic works.

In the national literature, the phenomenon had its own peculiarities. The Tatar literature made an intuitive or conscious attempt to protect the previous literary standards (Khatipovna Kuzmina, Kamilovna Khadieva, Raisovna Galiullina, & Ramilevna Akhunzhanova, 2019; M Zhetibay, R Zamaletdinov, F Zamaletdinova, & H Gabdrakhmanova, 2019; Ravilevna Abulhanova, Ihsanovna Mingazova, Faridovna Kayumova, & Tarbinovna Ibrayeva, 2019); it was manifested by preserving the conventional symbol system's foundations primarily via symbol images genetically related to folk customs that continued the symbolizing traditions in the early 20th century (Gage, 1999; Glassberg, 1990; Hobsbawm & Ranger, 2012; A. D. Smith, 2009; Whitehead, 1962). Interacting with the socialist realism literature and proceeding from it, folklore images softened the consequences of unification for the national literature (Yusupov, Yusupova, & Sibgatullina, 2019).

It is facilitated by the sociocultural characteristics of national artistic mentality as well (August & Shanahan, 2006; Bochner, 1982; Fernandez-Balboa, 1993; Inkeles & Levinson, 1969; Ryba, Stambulova, Si, & Schinke, 2013; Sabirova, Solovyova, Pomortseva, & Antonova, 2019). When determining the foundations of the creative process and artwork in the 20th century, Borev labels the period as an era of "reciprocal processes" that "embrace culture too and are typical of literature, art, and aesthetics" (Nikolaev & Dulova, 2019). In the symbol system, such a "reciprocal process" defines the dynamics of ideological, folklore, and traditional images (Geyzen, Ryckbosch, Scholliers, Teughels, & Leroy, 2019; Häyrynen & Hämeenaho, 2020; Parry, Cleland, & Kavanagh, 2020).

The primary objective of the article is to study and analyse nominative meanings and functions of traditional image symbols and identify transformation in artistic mentality in the 1930s.

Some aspects of researching the Tatar poetry are considered based on the Tatar oral folklore (L. I. Mingazova, Galimullin, & Galimullina, 2014), the Sufi poetry by Siberian Tatars (Khusnutdinova, Galiullina, Ivanova, Bilalova, & Sayfulina, 2015), the Tatar poetry of the 20th century (F Yusupov, M Yusupova, & A Kudryavtseva, 2019; Karkina, Nurgayanova, & Kaur, 2019; Nureeva, Mingazova, Zamalieva, & Yildirim, 2018; Zagidullina & Yusupova, 2017) as part of reviewing the ideological motives and archetypes in poetic texts of the 1920s-1950s (F Yusupov et al., 2019; Ibragimov et al., 2016); as well as mythological symbols. Developing the aspect, our interest was kindled with examinations (Khaybullina, Khabibullina, Nagumanova, & Almenova, 2017).

1.1. Research Objective

Centred on poetic works by Jalil, Tufan, and Fayzi, the article explores the nominative domain and role of image symbols common to Tatar poetry in the 1930s.

2. Material and Methods

The hermeneutic approach is deemed to be fundamental to our research (Ibragimov et al., 2016; Kulko, Horbanova, & Biryukova, 2019), as it assumes that, by joining diverse cultural values recorded in the literature, the reader finds their place within its border.

System-structural, structural-semiotic, synergetic methods of analysis and motivating poetics can be ascribed to core methods too (Kotlyarova, Roudenko, Shubina, & Shestakov, 2015). Those are implemented as an integrated approach to studying and analysing the symbol images. When determining the ideological and artistic function of the fixed images-symbols in the Tatar poetry of the early 20th century, we applied the structural-semiotic research method justified by Yu.M. Lotman and representatives of the Tartu-Moscow semiotic school (Champagne, 1978; M. Lotman, 2000; Y. M. Lotman, 1988; Y. M. Lotman, Uspensky, & Mihaychuk, 1978; Shukman, 1977; G. S. Smith, 1979).



When examining replacement in sociocultural, literary, and aesthetic guidelines influencing the symbol system transformation, a synergistic approach was found to be of great use. As it enables to present the interaction of artistic and ethnocultural consciousness when the new semantic variations are formed, as well as to identify the ability of the symbol system – "the secondary nomination linguistic signs" – to self-regulate, determine the "interaction synergetic integrity" (Alefirenko, 2002) of traditional symbols, artistic consciousness and culture within the context of the Tatar poetry of the 1930s.

3. Results and Discussion

The mould-breaking searching for the verse form in the 1920s, playing with more complicated methods, and a probability of creating an image out of numerous mosaic details directed poets to folklore image symbols (Chongyin, 2008). In the 1930s, poets deviated from edgy poetics in terms of its form, while the presentation simplicity and musicality typical of folk songs take up dominant positions. Against the background of investigations and examinations, the traditional image symbols are regarded as a possibility to alter the artistic paradigms, regenerate the philosophical and ideological depth, as well as provide ambiguity and an opportunity to "double read" the text.

Similar alterations in the artistic paradigm primarily appear in work by Kh. Tufan (Minnegulov, 2018; N. M. Yusupova, 2016). Starting from the early 1930s, devotion to folk mentality and the classical verse standards can be traced in his creative process, as evidenced by such poems as *Seeing Off* (1933), *The White Birch* (1933), *The Alarm Bell* (1933), *Wings* (1933), etc. For example, the theme of separation in *Seeing Off* (1933) is presented through images of a valiant young man going away to defeat the invaders and a beautiful girl seeing him off. The theme is based on details recognizable in the Tatar folklore: sabres, a zealous horse, an image of a young person eager to sacrifice themselves to protect their Homeland. A lump of native land wrapped up in an embroidered handkerchief and presented to her beloved young Man symbolizes the strength of the girl's love, on the one hand, and the trust granted to the brave Man by his country and aspirations to see him back on his native land, on the other hand.

In the poem, *The White Birch* (1933), a pastiche of folk songs, lyricism, simplicity in expressing feelings, and musicality typical of folklore can be traced back. Basically, creating images and dialogues with a birch recreate a form of a folk song. The symbol image of the birch and its derivatives in the Tatar folklore texts conventionally marks the soul's psychological state system and is employed to express melancholy, grief, and sadness. M. Bakirov explains the feature by the consonance in words "kaen" (birch) and "kaigi" (grief), as well as the fact that the green branches of birch hang like mourning banners. It is no coincidence that birch trees have been planted in cemeteries and along roads since old times" (Bakirov, 2012). At the subjective poem layer, an image of the white birch regenerates traditions of the Tatar folk song, symbolizes grief and longing, while a view of the birch shedding off its leaves becomes a means to display the strength and depth of heart sinking and mourning (Breiteneder et al., 1988; Chen et al., 2009; Haukioja, 1982; Jeong et al., 2012; Saka & Goring, 1988; Zhao, Yan, & Cao, 2007; Zyryanova, Terazawa, Koike, & Zyryanov, 2010).

Starting from the mid-1930s, Kh. Tufan begins to apply traditional images to convey the tragic theme of the prevailing evil in reality in the period (Ahmed, 2006); the complicated image symbol becomes the ideological centre in such pieces of poetry as *And the Stars Are Still Silent* (1937), *Only without Words* (1937), *Do Not Fall down to the Ground, December* (1937), *Songs about Timerkay* (1938), *Send My Regards* (1940).

M. Jalil can trail the appeal to recognizable folklore image symbols in the works in the 1930s (Mehri, 2017). Although the ideological component is preserved in the content of his heritage, the folklore image symbols enable double reading it. In turn, a palatalized attitude to the protagonist's inner world causes enrichment of the lexical means in the language, generates the poetic images adjacent to traditional tokens, and provides the broad semantic comparisons and emblems. In the poem *Song of the Spring* (1936) written in anodic stanza typical of folklore, the image of a spring purifying and rejuvenating nature brings the theme of the protagonist's love for humanity, their desire to cleanse the earth to the forefront.

Thus, in the poem *The Postman* (1938), the theme of celebrating a new life is highlighted through the love story of the forewoman and farmer Fayruza and a postman Timerbulat. In the text structure, the description of natural beauty by folklore poetic means, the folk songs, being the oldest tools presenting a spiritual state, the figurative and emotional



wisdom, the depth of philosophical thinking, the symbols of flowers, the snowdrop, the white birch, and the dawn wind are employed to reveal the fairness of love.

When creating the character of a young heroic champion, M. Jalil also draws inspiration from the folklore. Such poems as *The Grey Ambler* (1933), *The Song of the Brave Dzhigit (a military trick rider)* (1936), *Anguish* (1936), etc. a courageous young man is presented through a white-grey stallion symbolizing a hard fate and a man in the folklore, as well as a sharp sabre. The national and mythological features are displayed in the image: the batyr (*a daring horseman*) borrowed from the Tatar fairy-tales turns into a fighter. The pastiche of the Tatar folk songs serves to reinforce the impression. Thus, M. Jalil broadens the mythological image of a warrior beyond socialist realism in his poems.

Furthermore, in his works from the 1930s, the poet initiates a transformation in interpreting the image of the Homeland: it changes from a country "fighting for a new life" to a "native" country. It is facilitated by the use of such traditional folklore image symbols as the morning wind, the grass in dew, the star of Venus, the apple trees, the flowers. In his works from the 1930s, the token of the Homeland is presented as the Motherland ("Ana" – "Mother", etc.), and such details as a dark red horse, a forest, a willow, red flowers tune it as a national sound.

A. Fayzi of folk songs employs images, meter, and structure regular in the poetry. Folklore image symbols and artistic techniques that would later become crosscutting in his oeuvre, first appear in such poems as *The Lullaby*, *The Song of the Glove* and *The Swan* wrote in 1927. Metaphors of a swan, a snowdrop, a shawl, and rain are introduced therein; a pastiche of folk songs is observed too. In his poem *The Steppe and the Man* (1936), A. Fayzi activates symbolic images of the steppe, water and horse, as well as their relationship with a man to represent the process of forging and adapting a person to a new life, forming new values within a human being.

4. Summary and Conclusion

Trackability of the traditional images-symbols in the Tatar poetry of the 1930s and the definition of their diachronic transformations clearly testify on alterations in national artistic mentality.

Interacting with the social realism literature and proceeding therefrom, the traditional images-symbols mitigated consequences of unifying the national literature and facilitated striding over the ideological schematism of socialist realism; the artistic mastery of folk traditions under the new conditions expands a creative, nominative, and semantic range of the symbol system alike.

Traditional symbols like "nightingale" and "spring", "daisies", "pigeon", "wind", "bird", "flower" and details: "white-grey stallion", "diamond sword", "rattle of hoofs", "sword with a silver handle" become nominations of love feelings, emotional experiences, and psychological state of the protagonist.

In contrast to the rigid determinism of culture by sociopolitical factors, the symbolic images traditional for the Tatar poetry are employed as a "mouthpiece" of the author's "anti-ideological" position. In works by Kh. Tufan and A. Fayzi, such symbolic images as "wind", "moon", "snowdrop", "star" are applied as nominations of their philosophical and aesthetic views and subjective attitude to current events.

The revival of traditional images and artistic means in the Tatar poetry of the period demonstrates an enormous role of the poets and the part played by their searches of the form and content of poetic work and literary process in general.

Overall, the survey devoted to traditional images' usage as an emblem being a structure-forming component. The analysis demonstrated that the presentation uniformity and musicality typical of folk songs enhance the period's Tatar poetry's dominant feature. Traditional symbols in the Tatar poetry of the 1930s artistically represented actuality and distinguished one of the most dramatic trends in the literary process. In this regard, classic characters exhibit the artistic traditions: national specifics of the poets' creative thinking and the artistic world of poetic pieces of work, principles of the emotional level organization as well as the ideological and semantic potential of their oeuvre. The symbol coining procedure is associated with the artistic individual's peculiarities and thinking of poets, their creative principles, attitude, and world-view. The nominative meanings, semantics, and functions of fixed symbolic structures manifest underlying mechanisms in developing social, philosophical, and ideological bent. Consequently, symbols traditional for the Tatar poetry turn into a kind of "code" to define national literature's unique and universal properties on the whole.

4.1. Contribution

The study shows that traditional picture symbols are seen as an opportunity to build creative paradigms, to regenerate the depth of ideology and theory, as well as to present uncertainty and an opportunity to double-read Tatar poetry's text and national traditions. All this allows for stating the revival of folklore images and artistic means in the Tatar poetry of the period testifies to the enormous role of poets whose efforts while searching for their poetic works' shape and content played a dramatic part in the general literary process.

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