



## Poetics of Potamonyms in Ideological Literary Text (Based on Novel «Spring Winds» By Kavi Nadjmi)

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### Abstract

At the turn of the XX-XXI centuries the point of view was established in the Russian literary science, according to which the literature of socialist realism (Soviet literature) has undoubted aesthetic and historical value, and its own unique features. At the same time, the conviction matured that it was necessary to reanalyze the classical texts of the Soviet period from extremely non-ideological standpoints (as far as it is possible in humanitarian studies). Kavi Najmi's novel "Spring Winds" is considered a classic work of Tatar socialist realism. It clearly expresses the generic features of Tatar socialist realism, when all components of a literary text obey the dictates of the dominant ideology. The analysis of the poetics in the system of potamonyms of Kavi Najmi's novel "Spring Winds" convincingly demonstrates this. The novel is replete with references to different rivers: Volga, Kazanka, Lena, Pechora ... At that, the description of these rivers often depends on a hero who perceives them: a positive or a negative one.

**Keywords:** Tatar Literature; Socialist Realism; Kavi Najmi; Poetics; Potamonyms.

### 1. Introduction

The image of the river plays an important role in the artistic systems of folklore and literature (Colwell, 1989; Engman, 2008; Ranne, 2006). "The motive of the water element in its various transformations is an ancient mythological motive of eternal change and movement" (Neelov, 1986). "The river image is one of the most significant in mythology, folklore and literature (Freeman Jr, 2017; Karadaş, n.d.; Kóczy, 2017; Riabov, 2016). Within the European tradition, a number of stable functions are inherent in it: a river can be associated with motives of movement, barriers, borders, it can be a habitat for demonic forces, etc." (Yureva, 2019). According to E.Sh. Galimova, "the basic mythological meanings of the archetypal river image cannot but overlap and coincide in the works of different authors. However, the artistic world of a great writer actualizes the meanings that are important specifically for him and correlate with the entire figurative system of this artistic world" (Galimova, 2012).

Potamonyms also play a significant role in Tatar classical literature. "The image of the river (Volga) is found in the works by M. Gafuri, M. Jalil, F. Karim, G. Bashirov, A. Yeniki, N. Fattakh and others. Quite frequent use of this image by the word masters is also observed in Tatar prose (20-30-ies of the XX century), where the river (Volga) appears in different meanings (A Khaybullina, F Nagumanova, Z Khabibullina, & A Nakhodkina, 2019; F Yusupov, M Yusupova, & A Kudryavtseva, 2019; G Khairullina, Z Khabibullina, F Nagumanova, & I Zeifert, 2019; Khatipovna Kuzmina, Kamilovna Khadieva, Raisovna Galiullina, & Ramilevna Akhuzhyanova, 2019; M Zhetibay, R Zamaletdinov, F Zamaletdinova, & H Gabdrakhmanova, 2019; Ravilevna Abulhanova, Ihsanovna Mingazova, Faridovna Kayumova, &



Tarbinovna Ibrayeva, 2019). In most of the works, the Volga River symbolizes the path of the country in a given period of time, at the same time identifying with the image of the Motherland. The immense latitude, fullness, speed of the river and at the same time the tortuosity, turbulent character, its greatness characterize the contradictory nature of social life, the presence of numerous collisions and unexpected turns in it”.

Socialist realism is a form of idealized realistic art that was created in the Soviet Union and was the official style in that country between 1932 and 1988, as well as after World War II in other socialist countries. The glorified portrayal of communist ideals, such as the proletariat's liberation, characterizes socialist realism. The figures in the style, despite its name, are very often highly idealized, particularly in sculpture, where it often leans heavily on classical sculpture conventions. While linked social realism, a style of art that realistically portrays subjects of social concern or other types of "realism" in the visual arts, should not be confused. Socialist realism was the prevailing type of accepted art in the Soviet Union from its emergence in the early 1920s to its gradual decline from official status starting in the late 1960s until the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. Although a specified canon of art has been employed by other nations, socialist realism existed longer in the Soviet Union and was more restrictive than elsewhere in Europe. Over many decades, several thousands of artists, in a diverse society, established socialist realism. The works of Peredvizhniki and Ilya Yefimovich Repin are early examples of realism in Russian literature (Morandi, 2019; Valkenier, 1977). Although these works may not have the same political connotation, their predecessors show the techniques practiced. There was a marked change in artistic trends after the Bolsheviks gained control of Russia on October 25, 1917. In the time between the fall of the Tsar and the rise of the Bolsheviks, there was a brief period of artistic experimentation. Anatoly Lunacharsky was appointed as the president of Narkompros, the People's Commissariat for Enlightenment, soon after the Bolsheviks took power. In the newly formed Soviet state, this placed Lunacharsky in the position to determine the course of art. While Lunacharsky did not dictate a single aesthetic model to be pursued by Soviet artists, he created a human body-based system of esthetics that would later help influence socialist realism. He claimed that it was basically life-enhancing to see a healthy body, an intelligent face or a welcoming smile. He concluded that art had a direct impact on the human organism and that effect could be beneficial under the right circumstances. Lunacharsky claimed that art could educate people on how to be the ideal Soviets by portraying the perfect individual (New Soviet man). The fate of Soviet art was discussed by two major groups: Futurists and Traditionalists. Russian Futurists, many of whom before the Bolsheviks had produced abstract or leftist art, claimed that communism demanded a complete break from the past and thus so did Soviet art. The value of accurate depictions of daily life was believed in by traditionalists. A certain amount of private commercial enterprise existed under Lenin's rule and the New Economic Policy, enabling both futurists and traditionalists to create their art for individuals with money. The Soviet government had ample power and authority to end private companies by 1928, thus ending support for radical groups such as the futurists. At this point, although there was no use of the term "socialist realism" its defining features became the standard. The term was first used in the press by a high official of the Union of Soviet Authors, Ivan Gronsky, in the *Literaturnaya Gazeta* on May 23, 1932, according to the *Great Russian Encyclopedia*. In meetings that included top-level leaders, including Stalin himself, the word was accepted. A popular essay titled "Socialist Realism" was published in 1933 by Maxim Gorky, a proponent of literary socialist realism. Four principles were set down for socialist realism during the 1934 Congress. The role must be (Bown, 1998; Groys, 1990; James, 1973; Kolesnikoff, 1982; Lahusen, 2019):

Proletarian: art important to and understandable to the workers.

Typical: scenes from real people's lives.

Realistic: in the sense of depiction.

Partisan: in favor of the interests of the State and the Party.

Kavi Najmi's novel "Spring Winds" can be attributed to the Tatar prose of the 1920-ies and 1930-ies in a certain sense, although the novel was published only in 1948. When they analyze his potonyms, the emphasis, as a rule, is on the actualization of plot formation function. At the same time, the ideological aspect of Tatar socialist realism literature remains underestimated, in our opinion. And it, perhaps, is the key one.

The novel "Spring Winds" is a classic example of the literature of Tatar socialist realism with all its generic features (Chmielewska, 2019; Fort, 2019; Tatar, 2020; Yusupov, Yusupova, & Sibgatullina, 2019; Yusupova, 2019). Let's mark them. First, the narrator of "Spring Winds" is the winner in the struggle against "enemies of the people", and he expresses the view of the world, the truth of these winners, asserts a new, mythologized reality. Secondly, the total ideologization of the novel. The genre of the work, the composition, the structure of the novel, the system of positive and



negative characters, chronotopes, the system of reminiscences, symbolism, the poetics of titles, the poetics of colour, the poetics of details - absolutely everything here is subordinated to ideology, everything works on the basic idea of the inevitability and laws of revolution, and its victory. Thirdly, one feature of socialist realism literature in the novel acquires special significance, previously not actualized in literary criticism. This is the suggestive nature of Socialist Realism literature. Fourthly, it is necessary to note the principle of mythologist, which was not actualized in the Soviet period. Kavi Najmi in "Spring Winds" explains (in fact, mythologizes) the history of the origin, development and establishment of the Tatar socialist cosmos with its sacred time, space, and heroes. Potamonyms, which are an organic part of the novel chronotype, also play a significant role in this.

### **1.1. Research Objective**

The paper considers the issue of the subject's ideological and linguistic development.

## **2. Material and Methods**

The methodological basis of the study is the synthesis of traditional approaches that have stood the test of time (historical-literary, system-typological, comparative-historical) with the involvement of relatively new research practices.

The methodological principles of the listed areas are used depending on the specific material and the tasks set (Rinat F. Bekmetov, Tzan, Rad, & Yunusova, 2019; Rinat Ferganovich Bekmetov, 2015; Nigmatullina, Pashkurov, Razzhivin, & Dulalaeva, 2017; Ozerova & Bekmetov, 2016; Spirchagova, Bekmetov, & Gazizov, 2017).

Besides, the article takes into account the results of Western Slavist studies on the literature of socialist realism (Dobrenko & Jonsson-Skradol, 2018; Lahusen & Dobrenko, 1997; Morson, 1979).

## **3. Results and Discussion**

The relevance of potamonyms in Kavi Najmi's "Spring Winds" is, first of all, evidenced by the total number of their references (78 times). The most frequently mentioned are "The Volga" (35 times), "Kazanka" (27 times), "Lena" (5 times), "Bulak" (4 times), "The Pechora" (2 times). Oka, Kama, Neva, Don, Dry River are mentioned once.

The life of the main characters of "Spring Winds" takes place on the banks of the river Volga, Kazanka, and Bulak. Rivers play an important role in the symbolism of the novel. Usually, the river occupies the central place in the description of spring - the main symbol of the "Spring Winds". This is the place of love dates, and philosophical reasoning, and ice fights. At the same time, rivers are also mentioned in the novel in connection with a transport function.

The Volga is mentioned 35 times in the novel. It is a quite frequent mentioning. This river occupies an important place in the lives of heroes. Gabdulla Tukai's poem "We Shall Not Leave", which is quoted in the novel by Kavi Najmi, has a remarkable verse: "We will not go there: cities and rivers will not be able to leave!" (Najmi, 1986).

Indeed, a Tatar person ceases to be a Tatar without a native Tatar landscape. This idea is fundamental for the author of "Spring Winds". The Volga is perceived by all characters, both positive and negative, as something alive. The words of the buoy-keeper Haybush are especially indicative in this sense: "Let's say, I went ashore in the evening. I went out and stood. People thought that I just stood there. But they were wrong! For me, the Volga is like an ancient book with all the marks. As I look at it, I forget all the sorrow and become younger in my heart. I look and see: where the sand has settled, a shallow has formed, or, conversely, the current has washed a new channel, and everything is clear to me - where to put the red buoy, where to put the white one. Another would measure the depth with a stick, while your father sees the depth of the water with his eyes. To the very bottom! ... Yeah, I say, a shallow has appeared here today. Well, I move the buoy right to the boat ... I see now: sand began to settle on your (daughter's) heart" (Najmi, 1986). The last sentence is remarkable. Like Haybush, the narrator relates the Volga to the experiences of his heroes.

The Volga accompanies the heroes of the novel in love. Hasan Aivazov, in his letter to his beloved, mentions the name of this river twice, which not only connects him and Nasim in its own way but is also associated with happy moments. "Today I said goodbye to the Volga too, got on a sea steamer ... I met the dawn, thinking about you, Nasima, about Kazan. My heart remained there, near the dear banks of the Volga, where I first met you" (Najmi, 1986).

The Volga accompanies the love of other heroes of the novel: Gerey and Fairuza. "Here it is, my happiness!" Fairuza thought, and she could not believe that Gerey was now nearby, right here, on the native Volga, under the high autumn sky". Both Gerey and Fairuza often recall the happy moments they spent on the Volga. Moreover, when Fairuza felt bad, she went to the Volga, and, having been there, "returned home with bright dreams and hopes for tomorrow" (Najmi, 1986).

The Volga is admired, first of all, by positive characters. The narrator also admires: "It was good and at ease on the wide river. No wind, no waves. Only occasionally the boundless water surface was twitched with a gray muslin of light ripples" (Najmi, 1986).

Since childhood, the world of the Volga is special, and festive for the heroes of the novel. Being at the Volga is an event for them.

"Saima suddenly sat down next to her and covered her ears with her thin fingers.

- Noisy?

Nasima smiled through her tears.

- Noisy.

"These are the waves making noise on the Volga," Saima said. - Do you hear how the water splashes over the stones? In the summer, when the water in the lake turns green, you will have to rinse your linen on the Volga" (Najmi, 1986).

As a child, "once Gerey did not find his grandmother at home and went to the Volga, and when he found himself on a crowded beach drenched in the sun, he forgot about everything in the world". The adult heroes in Kavi Najmi's novel cannot resist admiration at the sight of the Volga. So, returning to Kazan by steamer, "Hasan admired the delicate light steel trusses, thrown across a wide river from one reinforced concrete abutment to another. The familiar shores began - the witnesses of joyful meetings and sad partings. Here it is, the eternally young beauty Volga!" Or elsewhere: "It's a pity, I not an artist ..." said Gerey, crossing the rapids where the stately current of the Volga was becoming violent. - Look at the beauty around! I would like to draw all this ..." (Najmi, 1986).

On the contrary, rather negative emotions are associated with the Volga for the negative characters of the novel. This is how Ksenia, an active participant of the workers' movement, tells about the death of her hated husband: "Nikifor came from somewhere drunk. As usual, he got mad, hit me, then began: let's go for a walk to Verkhniy Uslon ... But how can we go? The Volga is about to open, and besides - the night, darkness, the wind has risen. I tried to persuade from this - and he does not want to listen." And then I think: Go, goblin, I will feel free without you." In the morning I woke up from the noise, and I hear: The Volga is breaking". Thus, Xenia's husband drowns. Here the thing is about a negative character, but not about an ideological enemy. In the case of an ideological enemy, the Volga evokes a painful reaction. "The tongues of crimson flame licked the dark sky. The wind blew the flames down to the Volga, and the hill seemed to Valishin a huge red-maned monster". And further: "Yunus-bai fixed his distraught eyes at the huge glow that was blazing over the Volga, and, groping his hand along his chest over his heart, fell to the floor with a groan: "Oh-h-h!" (Najmi, 1986).

The narrator here does not talk about what happened to Yunus-bai: whether it was a heart attack or death in this way. But it is important that in both cases the Volga acts as an opponent of negative characters. And, on the contrary, the Volga turns out to be an ally for the positive characters. The lyrical folk hero addresses with his sorrow and hopes to the Volga, in the song that the Russian worker sings. "Andrey Petrovich, handing Mustafa the oars, wiped the sweat from his brow with a handkerchief and started his favourite song with his low and pleasant voice. The accordion responded to him with a beautiful polyphonic sound, the voices on other boats responded, and the sounds full of heartfelt sadness rushed along the wide expanse of the river: Volga, Volga, high-water spring ... Gerey did not know this song, but it caught him, and he repeated its exciting words to himself swaying from side to side" (Najmi, 1986).

It is also important here that the Volga appears not only as a Tatar but also as a Russian river. And the Russian song about the Volga finds a response in Gerey's soul. True, the song about the Volga is also performed by negative characters, the guests of Idris and Sufiya Valishins. After taking a fair dose of alcohol, the guests took a walk. And now



“in another corner, someone started to sing “Over the Volga” sharply and falsely by a nasal voice (Najmi, 1986). The narrator, actualizes the unnaturalness of the situation with the epithets “nasal” and “fake” when the bai sing about the Volga.

As you can see, a kind of "ideologization" of the Volga is obvious in the novel. Perhaps it is most clearly manifested in the fact that the great river expresses the main symbolism of the working title. At the beginning of the novel, we read: “The days were anxious. The Tatar settlement was threatened by a spring flood. The snows melted immediately, the ice drift went violently, and the Volga, flooding the shore, lake, outskirts of the settlement, swelled muddy spring waters under the very walls of the merchant's courtyards” (Najmi, 1986).

Let us further note that the beginning of the revolutionary activity of the Kazan workers is symbolized by the following lines: “A warm wind, the harbinger of spring blew from the west, from the Volga. Icicles, transparent as glass, flew from the rooftops and smashed with a crash on the wooden sidewalks. Streams were already running along the streets, murmuring and shimmering with silver scales” (Najmi, 1986).

The novels give the following “announcement” about the upcoming events of the revolutionary 1905: “This year spring began with a violent melting of snows. Kazanka and Volga were cleared of ice. In the twenties of April, warm summer weather set in” (Najmi, 1986).

Finally, the connection between the Volga and the symbolism of the novel is pointed out in the book finale: “The huge masses of the people started to move again. In cities and villages, in factories and plants, in the army and in the navy - everywhere, throughout the vast country, like on the Volga in the spring, the waves of this movement rose higher and higher, crashing onto the shores of the old life and washing away all the rot that had been accumulating for centuries” (Najmi, 1986).

After the Volga, Kazanka is in second place in terms of the number of references (27 times). If the Volga was associated with breadth, liberty, picturesqueness, poetry and romance in the novel, then Kazanka has none of this, although it is also a native river for the heroes of the novel. The first mention of Kazanka is indicative in this sense. “A gloomy, dark silence stood over the Kazanka River. The squat houses of the Admiralty Sloboda, the factory chimneys and bare willows with bare branches seemed to plunge into the muddy water and doze in it. Occasionally, dilapidated steam floats from coast to coast, sliding along an iron cable, leaving behind a scaly silvery trail, and a minute later the water surface reflects pipes, houses, and bare branches of trees again” (Najmi, 1986).

Kazanka is associated with poor working-class districts, with a difficult, dull life, a hectic struggle for survival. Kazanka can be mentioned in the novel in the context of prison or waste that flows into it (Najmi, 1986), which cannot be imagined about the Volga in the "Spring Winds".

Winter Kazanka occupies an important place in the novel. First of all, as a place for fistfights between Russians and Tatars. Kazanka is mentioned eight times in this context. But at the same time, Kazanka also acts as a river of friendship. At Kazanka, Russian Bolshevik worker Alexei Khalyavin is having a spa session, a Tatar girl Saim drowns in icy water. Besides, a Russian worker prevents fistfights: “Andrey Petrovich came out to the middle of Kazanka and, taking off his hat with earflaps, made a short speech. He spoke about the provocateurs who are trying to kindle enmity between the Russians and the Tatars and said that the workers of Kazan would not allow fist fights anymore” (Najmi, 1986).

Kazanka becomes the river of class confrontation. A terrible fire breaks out at the railway bridge across the Kazanka, which could have turned Kazan into a dead city, if not for the selfless actions of the workers. They accused the “damned bourgeois” of the arson. And at the end of the novel, the most important battles between the revolutionaries and the defenders of the old regime take place at Kazanka. Finally, "a thousand-voiced" hurray "rolled along the banks of the Kazanka, now everyone ... rushed ... to the walls of the Kremlin" (Najmi, 1986) for the final assault.

As you can see, the Volga and Kazanka become original symbols of the revolutionary heroism of the Kazan workers at the end of the novel.

However, we can say that all potamonyms, with the exception of the Oka and Kama, which are mentioned in the context of the owners of steamers on these rivers, are directly related to the revolutionary theme. So, Lena is mentioned five times in connection with the performances of workers in the Lena gold mines. Bulak also appears as a place where



revolutionary battles take place (last two times out of four). The Neva is mentioned twice in the novel and both times as one of the brightest symbols of the revolutionary struggle. The Sukhaya River in Kazan also appears when the revolutionary events in the city are described. Don, although it is mentioned in the novel in connection with revolutionary events, as a place where the revolution opponents are concentrated. Finally, twice mentioned, the Pechora arises as a place of exile for the revolutionary Khasan Aivazov.

#### 4. Summary and Conclusions

Thus, potamonyms perform broad functions in the artistic system of Kavi Najmi's novel "Spring Winds".

The Kazanka River is associated mainly with the poor working-class neighbourhood in the novel, with a boring, dull, dirty life. The Volga in "Spring Winds" allows the artist to go beyond the limits of everyday life. It often turns out to be associated with the spiritual aspirations of the positive characters in the novel. However, Kazanka and Volga, and almost all the other mentioned potamonyms appearing in the novel is associated with revolutionary events.

Potamonyms are actualized in Kavi Najmi's novel "Spring Winds", first of all, in the context of their role and participation in the revolution preparation and accomplishment. It would seem that such geographic objects as far from human social and political relations as rivers, being reproduced in the ideologized texts of socialist realism, turn out to be a kind of socio-political markers that characterize both characters and events. This does not in any way discredit the literature of socialist realism, but only embodies its dominant principle - total ideologization.

#### 4.1. Contribution

The author establishes a complete typology of rivers and river landscapes. If, for example, the Volga is associated with a wide space and lively people's lives, then Kazanka, the Volga tributary, is associated with crowded conditions, poverty and tough life on its banks.

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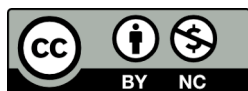
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