

## STYLE AND POETICS OF TATAR SUFI WORKS OF XIX-TH CENTURY

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### ABSTRACT

This article identifies the stylistic and poetic features of the Tatar Sufi works of the XIX-th century. During the study they prove that the Tatar Sufi poetry of this period evolves in stylistic perspective within two trends: a "simple" and an "elegant". On the other hand, Sufism complicates extremely the poetic system of works. In Sufi literary texts of this period, related to the second trend, Sufi symbolism prevails, providing the variability of poetry reading and complex symbolic images become an element of another main symbol. The scientific novelty of the article is conditioned by the study of Tatar Sufi poetry of the XIX-th century in terms of an epic "simple" and elegant style participation; the explaining of a new study methodology concerning the stylistic evolution of Tatar Sufi poetry of that period. The methodological basis of this study is hermeneutical approach that reveals the stylistic features of written texts on the basis of systemic-functional approach to a language. He directs the receptive activity of a reader on the cognition of the principles and the methods of images, the artistic forms of reality understanding, the selection and interpretation of typological similarities and the originality of an artistic search. In this way they reveal the poetic originality of the Tatar Sufi poetry of that period.

**Keywords:** *Tatar poetry, style, poetics, Sufism, symbol.*

### INTRODUCTION

With the adoption of Islam, Sufism makes the part of the spiritual and cultural life of the Turkic-Tatar area. The activation of Sufism in different periods of history was related to the socio-political situation in the region. It is well known that the the increase of Sufi beliefs in the Muslim society had been observed already in the XIV-th century. A similar situation continues in the XVI-th century. It was connected with the religious persecution [Yuzeev A.N., 1998, 66]. The same trend is defined by A.T. Sibgatulina [A.T. Sibgatullina, 2000, 24]. In the history of Tatar people the second half of the XVIII-th century is characterized by the beginning of a new wave of Tatar people christianization. In such historical conditions Sufi works are perceived by Tatar people as a powerful weapon against the Christianization policy. M. Kemper noted that "in the second half of the 18-th century Naqshbandiyya Brotherhood became the leading one in Tatarstan and Bashkortostan" [Kemper Moscow, 2008, 131]. This feature of Sufism in the region becomes the reason of such a strong influence of the mystical teaching in artistic and aesthetic thinking of Tatars.

Sufism occupies a special place in the socio-philosophical and literary-aesthetic thought of the end of XVIII-th - first half of the XIX-th century. It influences not only the Tatar poetry, but also determines the "peculiarities of the Volga region literature development" [Galimullin F.G., Mingazova L.I. 2014] in

general. There is even the opinion that the establishment of the Turkic-Tatar religious and didactic poetry of the Volga region was directly connected with Sufism originally, and this influence remained until the middle of the XIX-th century. (Kul Sharif, Maula Koly, Abelmanih Kargaly, Shamseddin Zaki et al.) [Idiyatullina G.G. 2001: 9].

Sufism fills the verbal art with mystical content, a kind of spiritualized perception of the world, shrouded in mystery and hidden meaning and images and symbols. And this in its turn complicates the stylistic and poetic system of literary texts. Certain studies of this issue were made by Tatar scientists within the lexical structure of Sufi work language [A.F. Yusupov, 2015] on the basis of the medieval Sufi literature material [A.T. Sibgatullina, 2000; Zagidullina D.F., 2007; N.M. Yusupova Yusupov A.F., 2014; Khusnutdinova L. G., 2015]. This trend is particularly pronounced in the Tatar poetry of the XIX-th century. Accordingly, the purpose of this article is the revealing of the stylistic trends and the determination of XIX-th century Sufi poetry poetic features.

## **METHODS**

The methodological basis of this study is the hermeneutical approach that allows to reveal the stylistic features of written texts on the basis of systemic-functional approach to a language.

Besides, it directs the receptive activity of a reader on the understanding of image principles and methods, the artistic forms of reality understanding, the selection and interpretation of typological similarities and the originality of artistic searches. In this way they reveal the poetic originality of the Tatar Sufi poetry of that period. Thus, using the hermeneutic approach, we expect to penetrate into the essence of stylistic trends in Tatar Sufi poetry and reveal the poetic originality of the Sufi works of the XIX-th century.

## **DISCUSSION**

Tatar Sufi poetry of the XIX-th century is characterized by stylistic features. So, the researchers of the medieval Persian Sufi literature determine two main areas in it: "inaccessible simplicity (sahl-e mōmtani)" and "new special grace (figaniyat)" [Prigarina N.I., 1983, 104-105]. The figurative-symbolic system of Tatar Sufi poetry evolves on the same principle - from "simplicity" to "grace". At that a "simple" dominates in the medieval Tatar literature [A.T. Sibgatullina, 2000, 31]. You can also draw parallels with the early Muslim Sufi poetry, which, according to I.M. Filshtinsky, "has mainly declarative nature. The expressiveness of her best samples is created not so much by the richness and the brightness of images but by emotional spirit ..." [Filshtinsky I.M., 1989, 224].

The didactic, humanistic origin dominates in the works UmmiKamala, M. Kulyya, Muhammadyara, the process of approaching it is described, the religious picture of the world is recreated. This style is most similar to religious-didactic trend or it is completely dissolved in the religious literature within some moments. This trend can be seen in the works of Tatar Sufi poet of the XIX-th century H. Salihov. A believer, a lyrical hero, who talks about his faith and calling others to follow him comes to a forefront in his works. This hero-adept strives to even closer spiritual contact with the Absolute, to be reunited with it - to ecstasy. All these states find an artistic expression in the poetry of an epic style.

In contrast to the first style, an elegant style has its own special "language". It is addressed to a specific type of a reader who is familiar with the fundamentals of Sufism. The researchers of Tatar Sufi poetry define it as "nəfis" ("elegant") style [A.T. Sibgatullina, 2000, 31]. According to D. Zagidullina, this style in Tatar poetry is characteristic of the verses describing the state mahabba (love of Allah), or zikr singing [Zagidullina D.F., 2007, 211]. This trend is indicative of religious, didactic and Sufi trend separation. The language of symbols becomes a distinguishing feature of the new phenomenon, providing elitism and a complicated intelligence.

The verbal art of the XIX-th century has a pronounced Sufi symbolism, the poetry, wrapped in Sufi symbolism, indicate the dominance of fine art style. In such works the symbols which are built often within the traditional images of the eastern Sufi poetry, become the predominant structural principles and act as artistic and linguistic categories that help poets to understand the divine knowledge by the images expressing an author's position. This trend is observed in the works written by G. Chokry, A. Kargaly, Sh. Zaky, etc. and they evidence of a sophisticated poetic system.

Sh.Zaki refers often to paired symbolic images of "moth - candle" in his works. These images are widespread in the Arab-Muslim aesthetics. The poem "... Ygränmäk kiräk", for example, resembles the graceful works of Oriental poets, full of quasi-symbolic images and codes: *Ир исән, пәрванни хушхойдан үгрәнмәк кирәк, / Гыйшкь мәгъна шәмгына пәрвана кыйлды үзенә* [Minnegulov H.YU., 1982, 39] (Butterfly was dissolved in the loving fire for God). In the poem ... «...Йазыкым чук, азыгым юк» the poet, describing the feelings of the adept in the stage of mahabba draws to the symbolism of "flower - nightingale".

According to E.E. Bertels' observations, paired symbols are used in Sufi poetry to transmit the foundations of the Muslim world picture and the change of human experience [E.E. Bertels 1965, 111]. Often Oriental poets used several paired symbols at the same time. This phenomenon also takes place in the abovementioned poem. In the conditional symbolic subtext of the poem the paired symbolism "butterfly - candle" is equivalent to the traditional Sufi interpretation of "rose - nightingale" and provides the motive of divine love. The parallel paired symbols in its turn serve as the complication of poetics and a poetic text form.

The same function in the poem "... Әylade" ("Showed mercy") by Sh. Zaky is performed by paired Sufi symbolic images of "moth - candle" and the traditional symbols "Garesh and weeping eyes". Traditional Sufi image of "of a tear in the eyes" within the work is associated with the "starting point" of movement along a mystical path. According to A. Schimmel, "the abstaining from sleep and the crying of eyes are considered to be an effective way of Truth understanding" in Sufism [A. Schimmel, 2000, 96]. A pessimistic view of the world is reflected in the self-flagellation of a man, calling himself as "kol" (a slave). A.T. Sibgatullina connects this phenomenon with the theory of "məlamət" (a blame), based on "the dogma of a man complete insignificance before God" [A.T. Sibgatullina, 2000, 33]. The trance state is transmitted by the means of the paired Sufi symbolism. "Fire (candle) and moth" in Sufi poetry is interpreted by poetic images of ecstasy: "a moth burns in a fire, a man merges with the truth» [The Nurbakhsh, date of appeal: 05.04.2015]. The same value is assigned to the symbols of "candle - moth" in the structure of this work.

Such complicated symbolism is found in the poem "Akyzdymkanlyyashem ..." ( "I weep tears of blood"), "Күңләңе гуышк илә дөрләт" ("Warm my heart with love") by Sh. Zaky. The author refers the image-character "love" - the main category of Sufi aesthetic thought, and interprets it as a divine power. According to N. Geyushov, "the source of spiritual experiences, which found its poetic expression in the lyrical works of poets, is the symbol of love, which according to the opinion of Sufi thinkers, leads a traveler to the contemplation of truth and the merging with it" [Geyushov N.D., 1988, 51-52]. Divine love (love to God) is a structure forming center of Sufi literature as a whole. On this basis, Sufism is perceived as unselfish love for God, the Almighty.

We have mentioned already that the Sufi writings describing the infinite love to God have the possibility of a dual reading. "Duality (...) supported by consciously and texture and shades of meaning of the words can be changed every moment" [A. Schimmel, 2000, 26]. This phenomenon is also observed in the poems of Tatar poets: love is interpreted as the feelings to a girlfriend, and as a mystical love for God. Such ambiguity of symbols which is the key to the various options of reading, pointing to the different layers of

content in one product, ensuring polysemy and polyphony in artistic texts, eventually becomes the Tatar literature tradition.

In the works, describing the love to God, the paired symbols of "wine and intoxication" are used often. For example, in the poem "Yz-yzen bitərլəy shıgıre" written by Sh. Zaky (The poem about blaming himself) ("Echəle hikmət shərabən, och əle kyklər yaga (Drink you wine to the bottom, and fly in the sky drunken) intoxication acts as the state of ecstasy.

The same picture is observed in the poem "... Bulgan, bulmagay" ("Will be, won't be"). In addition to wine image within a poem the divine love is explained using the term "bazarnıñ səydəse" which is interpreted as a place where they sell souls. The author encourages people to spiritual and moral perfection, through which you can understand the truth, feel the love to Allah.

The poem "Yə, ilyahi, nəzar kylyl ber" ("Ya Allah, do something") discloses the concept of divine love by the means of "wine and cup" Sufi symbols which concentrate mystical feelings.

Sharab symbolizes the consuming power of love, accompanying a traveler special behavior, which brings a public reprimand on him (malamat). Within the work the butler's image becomes "a reference to God", dzhamayak represents the "heart of Sufi and the world of being" [Nurbahsh J., date of appeal: 04/05/2015]. The lyrical hero strives to be "Garif" - the owner of a mystical knowledge. The recreation the Sufi philosophy and the concept of fusion with God is strengthened by the reference to the symbols of "river" (water, the droplet, which "symbolizes the divine Being phenomenon") and "garden" symbolizing paradise in Sufi poetry [Nurbahsh J., date of appeal: 5.04.2015].

The image symbol "gyyshk gəlzary" (bakcha, garden of love) is one of the most popular symbols in Sh. Zaky poetry, which becomes an integral part of the concept of merging with God, stratifying on a traditional content. The same value is assigned to the symbol in the poem "Keshe nə iksə, Any uryr" ("A man reaps what he sows"). In the poem "Sufıchylyk tərıkatənə Cakır shıgıre" ("The poem, calling in Sufi tarikat") the garden "vasly gəlzar" is interpreted by the author in a purely Sufi meaning as the starting point of a divine beauty and the "meeting place" with the Truth. Besides, Sh. Zaky refers to Sufi terms "Fəna" and "bəka". Fana is one of the highest levels of spiritual elevation, which opens only for a few ones. In this state, a person disappears and acquires the attributes of God [Ali-zadeh A.A., date of appeal: 05.03.2015]. According to researchers, "the soul which realized the signs of the creator and his defeat by beauty, falls into the Fan's state in order to join the eternity (baka), i.e. its essence is comprehended" [Prigarina N.I., 1989, 116]. So in the poem written by Sh. Zaky Sufi symbolism summarizes the author's position: the ultimate goal of a man's life is the merge with the divine, the escape into oblivion, the unification with Him in the Garden of Eden.

Such an idea, specified in such images, symbols, is represented in the poems written by G. Chokry "Zəhi bostane ..." ("Beautiful Garden"), "Fosule ərbaga" ("Seasons"), written in the rhythm of zıkr and complicated by symbols. Such images as the "drop of water", "garden", "a singing nightingale", "flowers", "morning wind" symbolize the divine, heavenly beauty. The lyrical hero appears as Sufi, glorifying the love to God in a state of immersion in God and cognizing the world through zhikra.

Besides, using the poem "Fosule ərbaga" complicated by the language of symbols, the poet refers to the symbols of Mahmoud and Ayaz (also "a rose and a nightingale" are specified - gəllər ilə bylbyl) which became "the benchmark of a man in love": Kүreң gəllər ilə bylbyl / Misale Məhmүd Ayazdyr (Look at the nightingale and the rose, Mahmoud and Ayaz are their examples).

## CONCLUSIONS

1. Tatar Sufi poetry of the XIX-th century evolves in the stylistic perspective within two trends: from a "simple" to an "elegant" one. The first of these is addressed to a general reader. It is close to the religious and didactic trend, in some moments it is completely dissolved in religious literature. The special language of symbols becomes the hallmark of the second trend, providing elitism and complicated intelligence.

2. Sufism extremely complicates the poetic system of works. In Sufi literary texts of this period, related to the second trend, the complex images and symbols also become the part of another main symbol. Often poets use several pairs of symbols simultaneously, the stratification takes place, indicating content mosaicism and rhizomatic nature. The parallel paired symbols used simultaneously, serve as the complication of Sufi text content and form.

3. Such ambiguity of symbols, is the key to various option reading, pointing to the different content layers in one product, ensuring polysemy, polyphony in artistic texts, becomes eventually the tradition of the Tatar literature.

## SUMMARY

Summing up, it should be emphasized that the Tatar Sufi poetry of the nineteenth century in the stylistic perspective, indicates the presence of two styles in it - an epically "simple" and elegant. In poetic aspect Sufi symbolism prevails in Tatar Sufi works providing the variability of poetry reading.

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