

Motives of Islamic Culture in Tatar Folk Tales

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Abstract: The relevance of this study topic is conditioned by the increased interest in the world and in Russian Federation to Islam. For millennia, religious values were synthesized with popular culture. Tatar traditional culture and its literary heritage is not an exception. Native folklore studies under the influence of ideological dogmas of the 20th century, dominated for >70 years, tried to avoid the issues of folk art and Islam mutual influence. The very first scientific research which considered this issue is the doctoral thesis by Sadekova Aisyly Husyainovna (Sadekova, 2001). It is focused on the works of Munajat genre. This genre appeared in the Tatar folklore due to Islamic tradition. Its content and functional parameters are determined by Islamic philosophy. Munajats were prohibited in Tatar folklore before 21st century. It was not studied and collected. Such a fate befell the genre of parable (hikayata) also associated with the philosophy of Islam. By the end of the 20th and early 21st centuries, the interesting researches by Iskhakova-Wamba (1997) and Nigmedzyanov (2003) appeared, devoted to book tunes that are related to musical folklore. Fabulous works included in 13 volume academic collection of the Tatar oral-poetry (published between 1977 and 1986), were cleared from the Islamic impurities. The changes were introduced in the motive structure of fairy tales, often the motives of Islamic culture and philosophy were missed. This may be explained by objective reasons dictated by the dominant anti-religious ideology of the ruling communist party. Therefore, we can't talk about the existence of any system research related to the study of Islamic traditions in the Tatar Tale theory. Taking into account the facts mentioned above, this study can be defined as the first experience dedicated to the identification of Tatar fairy tales motivational structure, composed under the influence of the Islamic tradition.

Key words: Fair tale, story, Islam, character, mullah, value, prayer

INTRODUCTION

The folklore and literature of the Tatar people evolve under the influence of the ideology and philosophy of Islam for over 1,000 years. The literature of the East had a great influence on Tatar literature from the beginning of its development. Since, literature and folklore were interpenetrating among Turkic peoples had unsteady borders, all these religious motives were heard in Tatar folklore. The Eastern tradition of imitations gave room for new variations of popular stories among people. Poetic mindset inherent to Tatar people produced gifted spiritual works, Munajats. Other genres of folk art such as baits, songs, stories, parables, hikayaty, etc., developed under the influence of Islamic traditions. Art, literature, Eastern folklore absorbed numerous Quranic themes, motifs and images. Tatar people by adopting Islam more than a thousand years ago, joined through it to universal spiritual values. First of all, the processes of Islamic culture influence on the poetic traditions of the Tatar people, attracted the attention of Tatar literary scholars. The research works by Gosman (1984), Ganieva (1992),

Minnegulov (1993), Bakirov (1999, 2012), appeared which in varying degrees, addressed the issues of interaction of cultures including the literature and folklore of East and West as well as the issues of themes and motifs influence on the development of Tatar literature and folklore.

The motivic structure of the Tatar folk tale plot consists of the functions of "actors" (Propp, 1969) where the character's actions are dictated by its mythological semantics (Freudenberg, 1997). In fairy tales, related to Islamic culture, the system of characters is supplemented with images of mullah and his followers; sheikhs; shakirds. In these tales, as opposed to the traditional folk ones, the system of character features is a little bit different. This related to the moral ethical content of the work, dictated by the philosophical concept of Islam where the essence of phenomena (cosmic, natural, social, personal ones) was predetermined by the will of God.

In order to achieve the fairness of opinions the researchers in this study, performed a comparative typological, functional, structural analysis methods elaborated by folklore and literary sciences.

MOTIVIC STRUCTURE OF TATAR TALES RELATED TO ISLAMIC CULTURE

The problem of fairy story motivic structure throughout the 20th century, beginning from Veselovsky's researchers (Veselovsky, 1940) attracted many well-known scholars such as Propp (1969), Putilov (1975), Freudenberg (1997), Ivanova (2004), Dandes (1985) and Silantev (2009), etc. Subjectological studies were not conducted within the Tatar Folklore theory. The theme of Tatar fairy tale and Islam was also not developed. Although the studies covering this range of problems began to appear in modern studies folklore (Khusainova, 2012).

Taking into account the facts mentioned above this study is the first attempt, aimed at the identification of Islamic motif structural features in the plot formation of the Tatar fairy tales. The object of the article research are the tales collected by a known dialectologist, Professor F.Yu. Yusupov among the Tatars living in Western Siberia. Folklore archive of RTSRTK, F.Yu. Yusupov fund, case number 1, inventory number 2. When we carried out a comparative-typological analysis the selected tales were divided into the following groups.

The first group included the fairy tales with the motif of "special prayer miraculous effects, verses from Quran suras and the epithets of Allah concerning a hero". Let's focus on the fairy tale "Dream" as an evidence. The motivic structure of the tale story line is developed by the line stringing of motifs (Zavgarova *et al.*, 2014). Let's consider it in the following order:

- A horseman lived and pasture horses
- He had a dream
- He left in search of sleep clues
- He went into the house, there was a girl
- The girl went with him
- She took three gems
- She agreed to marry him
- They read nikah and became husband and wife
- The couple decided to buy a house
- The hero bought a mansion using the wife's gems
- Khan asked to get a miraculous flower from Yelbigin (a mythical character of Siberian Tatars, equaled to a devil or an imp.)
- The husband tells his wife the Khan's request and his wife gives him a letter
- A bear, a lion and a tiger are met on his way
- The tiger attacks. At this time, the horseman raising his hands to the sky begins to say: "Oh, Almighty! Oh, one! Save me with your power"

- The tiger stops and starts talking to jigit: "Yelbigin will kill you!"
- Djigit says: "If the God does not wish to, then he won't kill"
- Djigit reaches Yelbigin, puts down the letter
- When Yelbigin saw the letter, he gave him the flower
- Djigit brings the flower to Khan
- Khan invites the djigit in the stone house
- Having closed the door of a stone house, Khan tells him to burn it
- Djigit remembers the miraculous verse from the Koran sura and is released from the burning house and finds himself in his own house after its reading
- Khan is sent to the djigit's house in order to kill him
- Khan realizes that djigit is an educated man who knows what prayers and verses may defend him and that he protects the Almighty
- Khan apologizes, gives him his Khanate and begins to serve him in exchange for the preservation of life

As can be seen from the storyline of the fairy tale, the hero was in a difficult and dangerous situation. The motifs interspersed in the plot of the works related to Islamic culture. These are the motifs to the following numbers: 14 a plea for help to the Almighty with faith and love; 22, the miraculous nature of verses and surahs, the Muslim holy book Quran. 25: the understanding of power, protection of "an educated man" who knows the verses from the Quran suras, a true believer in God, a man and the recognition of him as a strong person who is socially above him. In this tale, the recognition of power, protection of an educated horseman-shepherd is proved. The 25th motive has a slightly different functional field. It is included in the story plot is not for development but to strengthen the moral and ethical content of fairy tales. The content of this motive is subjected to the value system of Islam philosophy concluded as follows: each person has to bear a life retribution comparable to sin.

The second group included the story "Son of Khan" in which the motif of the "magic/wondrous power of the word "Bismilla-hyr-rahman-nir-rahim" is one of the leading ones in plot development. Let's present a structural-functional analysis of fairy tale motifs. The story plot is also developed by a linear stringing of motifs. The line scheme looks like this:

- Khan had 3 sons. Seniors were taught by 24 languages and by 24 crafts and then they were married
- He sent the minor to study the 24th language and Craft
- The hero lost on his way

- He came to an island and saw Karakosha nest where the chicks were
- A dragon was crawling to a nest, the hero slew it and fed the chicks
- Chicks wished him: "Let Almighty Allah help you with your wishes!"
- The parents of Karakoshi chicks arrived and took the hero to the other side of the ocean as the reward
- The hero arrived to the locked house
- He read the note attached above the door, where the following was written: "If a person entering this house, say "Bismillah-hir-rahman of nir-rahim", the lock will be opened for him"
- He went into the house, gained strength, rest and continued on his way
- He met with the giant-soap-boiler, who locked him in his dungeon
- The zindan owner built a house, invited the mullahs and the mullahs told him to lay the floor with carpets and gave the advice to perform charitable acts
- The hero began to weave a carpet where he wove the story describing his adventures
- The mullahs came to see the carpet. After reading the story, they provided its contents to Khan
- Khan found his son, released everyone from zindan, canceled many penalties, fed for 3 year everyone who was hungry and gave to everyone horses, so they can ride enough

In this tale, the functional field of the 9th motive regulated the semantic essence of the expression (term) *bismillah rahman ir-rahim* in Islam. In Islamic culture, the value of this expression (term) and its function is a big one. The scale is predetermined by the fact that each Quran sura starts from it (except the ninth one) and it is translated as "in the name of Allah, Gracious and Merciful". *Basmallah* was recited in every prayer, before start of any important matter, it usually starts with the documents prepared by Muslims (letters, contracts, appeals, wills, etc.). It is perceived as the key from all doors and a prayer which continuously delivers everything created by words or actions. Also, this expression (*Basmallah*) is understood as a tool that provides an open channel of spiritual connection of a believer with Allah.

This meaning of the expression inherent in Islamic tradition has the primary meaning of the fairy tale 9th motive. A tired, hungry hero has an opportunity to gain strength and continue his journey home. In the plot structure, the logic of 9th motive inclusion is understandable, it is dictated by the content and the semantic load of the 6th motif which is also linked to

Islamic philosophy. Thus, a traditional fairy tale by its structure with a proper embedded component in people's motif plot number 6, number 9, dictated by Islamic culture, are turned into a didactic work, aimed at the education and the perception of Islamic values.

The third group consisted of a fairy tale, the plot of which has the theme of "Mullah or his students, who may transform using Islamic teachings". Let's analyze the fairy tale "An educated child" as an example. The motivic chain of the fairy tale story is as follows:

- A young man was brought to a mullah to study
- After three years the guy learned to transform better than his teacher
- Mullah started to envy the student's talent and began to fight with the guy getting different incarnations using special prayers
- The guy turned into a bird, entered the Khan's house, met with his daughter
- The guy with the cunning and knowledge of Muslim religion special prayers manages to deceive the mullah and destroys him
- The guy and Khan's daughter read nikahs and became husband and wife, their children are born
- The wife burns their children
- It appears, therefore, that the children took the wife's mother, who was fire
- Meeting with snakes
- The hero helps a white snake to get rid of a black snake
- A white snake was the son of Khan. He invited the couple to his domain
- The hero marries the Khan's daughter
- A happy family life with two wives starts

In this fairy tale the motifs are in common with the legends recorded by us in the course of expeditions to Tyumen region (2006-2009). The content of these legends were associated with the life of sheikhs who came from Bukhara Sufi Order *Nakyshbandiya* in the amount of 336 sheikhs to Islamize Tatars living in the territory of Western Siberia (Bakhtiev, 2013). They tell about the superhuman abilities of these sheikhs which they learned due to the knowledge of special Islamic prayers. The whole storyline could be reduced to three reasons: study; the possession of superhuman abilities the acquisition of a decent life. But, we have decided to specify all the reasons influencing the development of the plot for a complete perception. Indeed, the motivic structure of the work is subjected to the main content idea the idea of endless possibilities and the abilities of an educated person according to Islamic canons.

Summary: On the basis of this study, we may conclude about the prospects of the proposed technology as a kind of a scientific tool for the analysis of the popular works of various genres, related to Islamic culture.

CONCLUSION

The motives of Islamic culture are incorporated in the Tatar folk tale for the conversion of a traditional tale into didactic work, aimed at the education and the acceptance of Islamic values by the younger generation.

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