

TUFAN MINULLIN DRAMA: THE SYNTHESIS OF EASTERN AND WESTERN TRADITIONS

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The article is devoted to the analysis of one of the greatest Tatar drama writers Tufan Minullin from the point of his using Eastern and Western literary esthetic traditions and historical and cultural context of the time period. The most famous dramas are analyzed in the aspect of Eastern and Western traditions, in which the author's innovative findings may be observed. It reveals the common T.Minullin drama peculiarities and the original features of social changes as well as the understanding of a human nature itself through the personal integrity prism, philosophical and social problems. In this context, together with the artistic peculiarities of the author's thinking disclosure, there is also an interaction of various national literatures. All these help to understand the depth and the national peculiarities of any of the literatures, taken separately.

Keywords: Tatar drama, Tufan Minullin, era, national peculiarities, eastern and western traditions, transformation, philosophical comprehension.

1. INTRODUCTION

Literary-esthetic ties of East and West had deep impact on formation and development of Tatar literature. Doubtlessly, the key role played the event of the beginning of the X century in a history of Volga Bulgaria state – Islamic religion enactments that determined the new cultural progress of the intercourse of Bulgaria state and Islamic world of the East. According to H. Minnegulov, “with the inclusion into Islamic world and literary cooperation with Turkic-Tatars; there are new, particularly meaningful march stages that cover the aspects of more than a millennium period” (Minnegulov, 2010). Turkic-Tatar writers loaned the ideas from the literature of the East. They were using the accepted terms of science and theory of the East, its genre system and various figures of speech and through the prism of the national peculiarities, they filled and elaborated them. Among the traditions of Eastern literature the most remarkable became “social philosophical ideas (Sufi science), based on teaching of a “perfect man” (Yusupova, 2008). It is natural that in different eras and historical periods the interconnections went through the variety of approaches, but the most meaningful and beautiful survived to the present days.

1.1. The interactions of the Eastern and the Western literatures.

The first testimonies of connections between Tatar graceful philology and Russian literature are dated from the Middle Ages. As an example, it can be recurred to the antiquity of Russian literature of the end of XII century “Slovo o polku Igoreve”

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and “Skazanie o Yusufe”, the literary work of the beginning of XIII century – the Volga Bulgaria period. “These, such different written works have deep, functionally-purposeful affinity of views, writes Y. Nigmatullina. – In each, there are constants of national cultures, social, political and moral ideals that mostly defined the further development of Russian and Tatar literatures. They include the potential content, which is actualized and improves in the further historical march” (Nigmatullina, 1997). In the following eras, despite contradictions, difficulties and sometimes even tragic political relations between the states, particularly after the forcible accession hold of Kazan Khanate into the Russian state, nevertheless, the cultural mutual interaction has always remained. Since the end of XIX century, particularly in the beginning of XX century, Tatar literature appeals to Russian and European literary and socially cultural ideas in search of its own marching path (Gilazov *et al.*, 2015). Reviewing the works of Russian and European writers and philosophers, Tatar literary artists managed to output esthetic meaningful traditions of European and Russian cultures with national heritage. According to R. Ganiyeva, Tatar and some Turkic literary writers “are deeply affected by Rousseauism and positivistic philosophy of Nietzsche and Schopenhauer human understanding”. Considering this, “Tatar literature is enriched by impressionistic and expressionistic tendencies. It is formed in the image of Russian and West-European literatures” (Ganiyeva, 2014).

1.2. The theme studies

Rather broad cultural relationships of Tatar literature with West and East appeared in XX century, where the comprehensive studies were made by Y. Nigmatullina (Nigmatullina, 1997), E. Nigmatullin (Nigmatullin, 1977), R. Ganiyeva (Ganiyeva, 2014), N. Hisamov (Hisamov, 1979), O. Kadirov (Kadirov, 1996), H. Minnegulov (Minnegulov, 2010), A. Sayapova (Sayapova, 2006), R. Muhametshina (Muhametshina, 2007), V. Aminova (Aminova, 2010) and others. In this article, using the playwriting of a prominent Tatar drama writer Tufan Minullin, we focused on putting the changes and the literary bonds of other nations in the context. Although the playwriting in Tatar science of language has been studied in reasonable details (Ahmadullin, 2012; Gabashi-Salihova, 2010), there are only few publications of the subject. For example, A. Sattarova who studied modern Tatar drama, related to the era concept and personality, reckons that among other dramatists T. Minullin carries on traditions and outputs the achievements of eastern and western literary ideas. He succeeds in depicting “the stand of spiritual and spiritless, search for the truth, overcoming oneself, conflicts with own mistakes, illusions, weakness and also philosophical depth, outlook on life in a spirit of impressionism” (Sattarova, 2003: 132). In the article of A. Shamsutova “Mifologema sudbi v pjesah T. Minullina” analyzing the plays “Yesli net luni, to yest zvezdi” and “Kolibelnaya” it is stressed out that T. Minullin’s point of view in the conflict of a hero’s destiny is common with Greek philosopher Plutarch (Shamsutova, 2010).

1.3. The author's heritage on stage

T. Minullin (1935-2012) is one of the established literary writers who contributed a crucial role to the march of Tatar drama in the mid-to-late XX century, giving strong momentum to its marching in aspects of topic, genre variety, philosophical and esthetic searches, artistic devices enrichment, becoming the leader, the pioneer and front-line activist on the chosen way. It is impossible to imagine Tatar stage literature and theatre art in the past 30-40 years without the rich heritage of this dramatist. Particularly today, the interest to his art heritage is growing. The dramatist came into literature in the early 1960s and during the period of his playwriting he created more than 70 plays, a variety of stories, an adventure story and hundreds of journalistic articles. His literary works were staged in fifteen Russian theatres and also in national theatres of Bashkortostan, Mari El, Udmurtia, Buryatia, Kalmykia, Dagestan, Osetiya, Chechnya, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia that were staged on his repertoire. The decade of T. Minullin dramatic plays onstage in Tatar State Academic Theatre of G. Kamal related to the festival marking the 80th anniversary of Tufan Minullin, and the participating of republican Tatar theatres as well as Volga region theatres is a strong proof of that. Analyzing all the play stages and giving a high rating to each, M. Habutdinova writes: "Each play was still sparking debates between audience members. In each play stage there is a particular view of the dramatist- fighter, ardent patriot of Tatar nation and it is easy to read the signs of Tufan Minullin patterns" (Habutdinova, 2015a).

2. THE AUTHOR'S CREATION IN THE CONTEXT

Each talented writer has his own appropriate world creation, and in the world image of T. Minullin's works there is a strong effect of literary writers of East and West and their philosophical esthetic ideas. However, it is doubtless clear that the great literary writer as a matter of priority, is particularly a national dramatist who was shaped in his native habitat revering the traditions of Tatar drama. The rumour says that a writer writes just one only book during his life. So did T. Minullin in his various works based on rich historical experience of Tatar nation, doing everything in his power, glorifying the present and the future, exploring the new and improving the qualities and features of the nation that he served to. Therewith, the works of literary writer are inseparable from age. Based on historical changes in the country and in the society, the works of T. Minullin are to be explored according to two big periods: 1960-80s and 1990s of XX century – the beginning of XXI century.

If 1960-80s of XX century are considered as the period of literal backing to its national base, so in the works of T. Minullin this can be observed, generally becoming the era of quantified and qualitative changes in Tatar drama. The reasons for the changes during the period were firstly due to democratic events called "Khrushchev Thaw", secondly, basing on native traditions of Tatar drama coming

from G. Kamal, G. Ishaki, F. Amirkhan, M. Faizi, K. Tinchurin, N. Isanbet and others, thirdly, giving back the works of repressed literary writers to the people, fourthly, the beginning of active acquisition of Russian (Soviet) and European literature achievements.

3. RESULTS

T. Minullin, developing the beautiful elements of modern dramatists' stage plays of H. Vahit, A. Gilyazev, S. Husainov and others, created his own plays that defined the art image of that era – “Den rozhdeniya Milyaushi” (1968), “Kamni dlya fundamenta” (1968). “Polya moi, luga moi”, (1972), “Zdes rodilis, zdes vozmuzhali” (1974), “Almandar iz Aldermisha” (1975), “Esli net luni, to est zvezdi” (1979), “U sovesti variantov net” (1981), “Mi uhodim, vi ostayotes” (1986). Although these plays are notable for the chosen commonlife material, artistic directions and tools, but all of them have the same motivation subjects that discover the main author's idea – the focus on a new type of a national hero; description of a Tatar country lifestyle as a base, defending national lifestyles and traditions, the genuine proof of conflicts in the works. The issues of spiritual connections between generations in the play “Kamni dlya fundamenta” the dramatist discovers by meanings of honoring moral laws, simplicity and routine, the purity of thoughts and in dramas “Den rozhdeniya Milyaushi”, “Sudba, kotoruju mi viberaem” (1973), “Kogda sobirajutsa druzya...” (1978), showing the way the young generation enters adult life, looking for its own way, looking for truth, mixing hard truth and bright thoughts and deep lyrics, he achieves the significant originality. The motives of “motherland”, “native basement”, “home”, generally piercing all the creation of T. Minullin get the wide call and get to the image symbol in the works. The concept of a strong personality is brightly depicted in a stage play “Esli net luni, to est zvezdi”, where it took the central place. It is important to discover the views of the literary writer towards his concept, and to get it across the footlights, the crucial female role was played by Madina Safina, spiritually strong, strong willed, but patient at the same time, stable and sacrificing in the name of common and espousing ideals – the image that contains all the best personality features.

The sad comedy “Almandar iz Aldermisha” is a piece of work that plays a great role in understanding the whole dramatist's art. In the play, the moral and national problems as cherishing one's motherland, interactions between parents and children, a man and a woman (a husband and a wife), devotion to national customs and habits are fused with the idea of philosophical perception of existence. The author's national image is appealing by its character peculiarity, life loving, putting value upon each moment of life, inventiveness in words and deeds, open spiritness. And the religious Sufi image of death and his moral battle with Almandar gives a special tone to the play, and is received as a particular view of literary esthetic overlap in literatures of East and West. The conflict resolution in the work

is when Almandar willingly decides to put his signature in a book of death, and it is a clear cause of action that is broadly spread in the literature of East and middle aged Tatar literature – those who lived according to conscience move to the outer world in positive spirits and even smiling.

In the works dated from 1960-70s the influence of Western as well as Russian literature in choosing of genre and its forms is notable. During this period the dramatist generates works in rarely used genre forms – sad comedy, pity comedy, social drama, lyrical drama, publicistic drama, intellectual drama. Therefore his stage plays “Almandar iz Aldermisha”, “Esli net luni, to est zvezdi”, “Kogda sobirajutsa druzya...”, “Bezzabotnaya junost moya” were broadly accepted in society not only on account of original forms, but also an ability of free stage interpretation. Esthetic views, common to Russian and European literatures and accepted by Tatar literature of the time period, doubtlessly affected the searches in art, content and poetry. To get the message to the reader and spectator fully and clearly, T. Minullin constantly searches for new forms and artistic conceptions. For illustrative purposes it may be noted that the dramatist uses “play” as aesthetic meaning of art image. This peculiarity, noted by Y. Nigmatullina, plays the key role to the understanding of the dramatist trilogy, consisted of three dramas – “Den rozhdeniya Milyaushi”, “Kogda sobirajutsa druzya”, “Proshajte” (1992) (Nigmatullina, 2002). The trilogy, in which different artistic people’s lives are depicted through recognizable true life collisions and situations, indicates that being public and socially influenced, the people’s relationships can change even between close friends; that moral, social values can get dismantled. Lies in relationships, suspicion, fear, existence tranquillity, carelessness to others – all this in drama “Kogda sobirajutsa druzya” is clearly and emotionally depicted through the fairy tale about evil spirits, assisting the myth dismantle about the Soviet society and making a new myth depicting the (homespun) truth.

In T. Minullin’s works of late XX – early XXI centuries, the traditions’ continuity and art originality are naturally integrated. The first of them is particularly obvious in such art layers as a form and plot. Successfully used by G. Kamal in “V tajnah nashego goroda” “composition box”, meaning a broadly used in literature of East “nesting” of actions, their division into separate actions was meaningfully prolonged by T. Minullin in “Lubovnica” and “Rodoslovnaya”. Coming from the literature of the East, the conflicts between reasons and affections were found in a well-known morality tale “Ilgizar+Vera”. In such a serious issue as family founding, the dramatist appeals to draw not on feelings only, but also on reason, wisdom and one’s experience, depicting his personal arguments in terms of three generations’ characters fate. Successfully using bright images and colors, country flavor, multiple-valued symbols and details, dating back to the literature of East, the author often leads them as the whole meaning of the play. The demonstrated broken poplar bole in the end of the play “Ilgizar+Vera” might probably mean that the old and

archaic was gone as well as the differences between the two nations, and their original habits and traditions were lost.

The ideals and values that were forming the general adoration in the past eras, however, being affected by ruling social-cultural conditions of people, hold the position in esthetic searches of T. Minullin unconditionally. Searching for society belonging, full of collisions, where dark colors dominate, the dramatist has recourse to newer and newer artistic devices, images and events. He, as well as other brothers of the quill, drawing on internal laws of Tatar drama march, nevertheless, faces the culture of East and West, giving preference to one or another achievement. Drawing on Eastern traditions in protecting and saving Islamic values was found in such dramatist's works as dramas "Lubovnitsa" and "Mulla". Here is the next peculiarity: unlike modern prose and verse, in Tatar drama there is almost no image of a man of faith, fully referring to Allah. Perhaps, this is due to personal belief and religious commitments of the authors themselves. The works of T. Minullin have not avoided this collision either. The fact that the works, mentioned above spark debates and arguments, that different theatres stage directors offer their personal reading of the play, occasionally making big changes evidences exactly that (Habutdinova, 2015a; Tarkhanova, 2013). As M. Habutdinova puts it: "In the play "Mulla", T. Minullin made his first steps in Islamic subject learning, as he realized that it is impossible to write about spirits of Tatar nation, not knowing about the nation's belief. The dramatist brought us hope, identifying the direction of further spiritual searches" [Habutdinova, 2015b].

In his last period works, T. Minullin actively appeals to apparently symbolic ("Dream") and "playing" ("Odin zhenih na shest' devushek") beginnings, intertextuality devices ("Galiyabanu, golubushka moya"), describing "borderline" or unconscious (insane) human being condition ("Zabluzhdenie" (2001), "Oderzhimyi" (2006), folksy humour ("Zyatya Grigoriya", 1995) and others. Developing our own traditions, the dramatist in his searches successfully intertwines the fruit of labor of Western artistic esthetic ideas into his works. Let us restate once again: as well as other dramatists, T. Minullin strives for using new devices or modify long-established figures of speech and also desires to renew the plot, bravely outputting with images loaned from Russian and European literatures. All this serves an idea in depicting life in its every aspect and disagreement, searching for new ways to get it across the footlights. In drama "Iskal tebya, dushechka moya" (2000), based on philosophy of "loneliness", getting into inward coeval's world, the disclosing of spiritual motivation fulfillment composes the key aspect of the work. The author uses image of "Milky way" that plays an important role for the characters who got into hard circumstances, becoming in a way a sign of hope and guide in self-acquisition, letting to put in context the work in mythopoetic plane (Zakirzhanov, 2015). In monodrama "Moya Tanzilya" the dramatist opens up Gazinur's destiny within the philosophy of existentialism. The author sort of

reminds us that there are still incomprehensible and unknown intelligence edges of existence. The man suffers a strong psychological tension, lives on the edge of reality and fiction, dream, being half unconscious, delirious. In turn, this is associated with categories defining the space between two extreme existences – love and hate, youth and old age, hope and desperation, belief and loneliness (Zakirzyanov, 2014).

4. DISCUSSIONS

T. Minullin is not a stranger to reception and devices of literature modernism. With this respect, the drama story “Zabluzhdenie” (2001) should be particularly noted. For the characters of differently evaluated work, there are no general or other behavioral norms. The meaning of happiness for them is rather relative. The actions and behavior of Guzel, who filed a lawsuit against her parents having a complaint: “Why did you give me a birth?” the author detects the threat of self-destruction. Due to V. Alasufyeva “Her human existence comes to a dead-end, the relations temperature is compared to an absurd zero. And it seems that hate is better than nothing. Explosion” (Alasufyeva, 2001). The characters suffer and take great pains being unable to find the right place in utterly dark, depressing and senseless; sort of fighting among invisible spider’s nets, having no chance to escape. Together with the characters, the dramatist is searching for remedies from these conditions as well. But all is in vain. From such an existence, there is no way to hide or escape. In such a manner, the philosophy of sufferings strikes all the play stage and its characters to the marrow. In the drama, realistic, romantic, modern events that are making the image of useless and torn apart life are intermitted.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Indeed, the works of T. Minullin are a particular entire world. We just made an attempt to lift the veil and offer a particular opinion. The dramatist is recognized as an elder of the people. And in his works he cared about their aspirations. With inviolate bravery he kept (and keeps) ward of Tatar nation, lifestyle, habits and traditions of his nation. Almost in each of his works the author with his strong will claims and upholds wonderful features and identities that determine the quality of national mentality – industry, respect for elderly, spiritual connection perpetuation between generations, centenary moral values’ commitments, love for the motherland and others. In the works of T. Minullin the country life, village, nature and the people play the major role. Not only in the works of an early period, but also in stage plays of the latest period, the literate man reckons the countryside as state and the spiritual basement of Tatar nation. Meanwhile, bringing up a question for discussion to Tatar reader and spectator, being a message to human values are saint and vital for all the nations. Such an active part we may observe during the play “Ya – zhenshina...” where Bashkir State Academic theatre played on a stage

of Kamal theatre. Creatively rewriting T. Minullin's play "Kolibel'naya", the stage director moved five women of different nationalities onstage, talentedly showing a Woman as an image of the world meaning of Mother – the existence of all the World living. Such a demonstrative approach leads to a simple truth that motherhood, labor continuation are the universal human values; each nation, people are somehow close and related to each other. T. Minullin's artworks arouse sincere admiration. Being devoted and following the traditions of Tatar drama, he was constantly trying to enrich his works with artistic and esthetic values of Eastern and Western literatures, drawing them with new content and sense. Thus, the bounds of Tatar drama were more and more increasing, leading to an understanding that Tatar literature is an essential part of world literature.

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