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G. R. Khusaynova

G. Ibrahimov Institute of Language, Literature and Art of the Academy of Sciences  
of the Republic of Tatarstan

## MAIN CHARACTERS IN TATAR ROMANTIC DASTANS: GENERAL AND INDIVIDUAL QUALITIES

*Abstract.* Since ancient times, every nation has been telling stories about eternal heroes, which are passed from person to person. Whereas in some legends, they accomplished significant heroic feats, in others, they left a mark in their nation's history. Among these heroes are some who knew how to love and were faithful to their beloved for the rest of their lives. People idealized these heroes, and enriched them with the positive qualities that they wanted to see. The love story of these characters has survived both orally and in manuscripts. In folkloristics, these tales or stories are called romance epics. Among the Turkic peoples who came under Persian influence, including the Tatars, they are called *dastans* or *kyissa*. Studying the worldview presented in romantic dastans world and the characteristic features of the main heroes provides the opportunity to learn about the spiritual values and ideals of the Tatar people. This study is relevant due to the insufficiency of current scholarship on the system of imagery in the Tatar romanic dastans. The research materials for this study are the texts of epics about love, which among the Tatars includes "Leila and Majnun," "Takhir and Zukhra," "Kuzy Kurpech and Bayansylu," "The story of Yusuf," "The Sayfulmuluk," and others. The purpose of this article is to identify the main qualities of the imagery used in dastans, as well as their characteristic features. To achieve this goal, we completed the following tasks: identified the main characters of the Tatar love epic, analyzed their behaviour in different situations, and compared the characteristic qualities of the main hero of Tatar folklore variants with heroes of Turkic and Persian poems. This study used comparative and historical-typological methods. This study allows us to conclude that, each variant has many of folklore variants and literary versions. As for the protagonists, although there are many variations, they are mostly similar to each other, their appearance and the role they perform in dastans remains unchanged. This type of permanence is preserved in literary works, but the basic imagery reflected in Tatar folk art is enriched by such qualities as patience and determination.

*Keywords:* dastan; hero; folklore; mentality; diversity; sufism; world view; motive; plot; image.

Г. Р. Хусайнова

## Главные герои в татарских романических дастанах: общие и индивидуальные качества

*Аннотация.* Издревле у каждой нации были истории про вечных героев, которые передавались из уст в уста. Если в одних сказаниях они были значимы героическими подвигами, то в других оставили след в истории народа. Среди них есть еще такие герои, которые умели любить и были верны к любимому человеку до конца своей жизни. Народ идеализировал этих героев, обогатил положительными качествами, которыми хотел увидеть в них. История любви этих героев сохранились в устных и рукописных формах. В фольклористике эти сказания или истории имеют определенное название-романический эпос. У тюркских народов, испытавших влияние персов, в т.ч. у татар, их именуют дастаном или кыйссой. В процессе изучения романических дастанов мировоззрение и характерные особенности главных героев дает возможность узнать о духовных ценностях и об идеалах татарского народа. Актуальность данного исследования

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ХУСАЙНОВА Гульнира Разифовна – аспирант отдела народного творчества обособленного структурного подразделения Академии наук Республики Татарстан «Институт языка, литературы и искусства им. Г. Ибрагимова», Казань, Россия.

E-mail: Gulnira2010@yandex.ru

KHUSAYNOVA Gulnira Razifovna – postgraduate student, Department of Folk Art, G. Ibrahimov Institute of Language, Literature and Art, Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan, Russia.

E-mail: Gulnira2010@yandex.ru

обусловлена недостаточностью изучения системы образов в татарских романических дастанах. Материал для исследования составляют тексты эпосов любовного характера, бытующие у татар, как «Лейла и Меджнун», «Тахир и Зухра», «Кузы-Курпач и Баян-сылу», «Сказание о Йусуфе», «Сайфульмулюк» и др. Цель статьи—определить главные качества героев, их характерные особенности в татарских романических дастанах. Для достижения поставленной цели решены следующие задачи: выявлены главные герои любовного эпоса татар, рассмотрены их поведение в разных ситуациях, сопоставлены характерные качества главного героя фольклорных вариантов с героями тюркскими и персидскими поэмами. В данной статье применяются сравнительно-сопоставительные и историко-типологические методы. Проведенное исследование позволяет сделать вывод о том, что, у каждого варианта довольно много фольклорных вариантов и литературных версий. Что касается главных героев, несмотря на наличие большого количества вариантов, в основном, они не изменяются, их внешний вид и выполняемая в дастанах роль остаются неизменными. Это постоянство сохраняется и в литературных произведениях, но основные образы, отраженные в татарском народном творчестве, обогащаются таким качествами как терпение и решительность.

*Ключевые слова:* дастан; герой; фольклор; менталитет; многовариативность; суфизм; мировоззрение; мотив; сюжет; образ.

## Introduction

Romantic dastans are works based on a well-known plot, sometimes existing in several versions, which describes love adventures. “Takhir and Zukhra,” “The story of Yusuf,” “The Sayfulmuluk,” “Leila and Majnun,” “Shahsanem and Garib,” “The buz eget,” “Kuzy Kurpech and Bayansylu,” and “Khurluga and Hamra” are dastans from this category. These dastans are closely related to famous poems of Ancient and Medieval poets like Jami, Fizuli, Nizami Ganjavi, A. Navoi, and Majlisi. The plots of these works are widespread and appear in different versions in different nations. These “nomadic” plots reached the Tatars who lived in the Volga region. Here they were imbued with national characteristics, and joined the literary and cultural process in the style of folk art. These dastans contain epic motifs that are popular in folklore.

When it comes to dastans that are based on love stores, outstanding scientists like E. M. Meletinsky [1, pp. 141, 143, 145, 167], P. A. Grintser [2, pp. 3 - 44], V. M. Zhirmunsky [3, pp.19, 643], and S. Y. Neklyudov [4, pp. 251 - 267] use precisely the term “romantic.” Folklorist L. Kh. Mukhametzyanova, who made a huge contribution to the study of tatar dastans, also draws attention to this term [5, pp.16-51]. In this work, based on the opinion of authoritative scholars, we also call these love creations “romantic dastans.”

Today, we can say that Tatar romantic dastans are well studied. As we know, there are many scientific works (concerning the love epic) by tatar folklorist. For example, let us take the huge work of F. I. Urmancheev, *Turkic Heroic Epic*. Here, the scientist, draws attention to some love dastans as well as heroic epics. In his opinion, the plots and motifs of romantic dastans date back to the Sumerian heritage and literature of Ancient Egypt [6, p.23].

In addition, the folklorist uses the term “book dastans” in relation to epic works about love such as “Yusuf and Zuleikha,” “Shahsanam and Garib,” and “Takhir and Zukhra.”

The famous archaeographer M. Akhmetzyanov translated love dastans in Arabic script that were found during an expedition (so that the modern reader could read them), and later checked the national and local characteristics of the heroes of the love epic, comparing them to characters from literary versions of the epic [7, pp.170-171]. The scientist also translated recently found dastans into cyrillic and published them in magazines [8, pp.179–186.] and in his book *Tatar Manuscript Book*(*Tarap kul'jazma kitaaby*) [9, pp.169].

The works of scientist L.Kh. Mukhametzyanova are also very significant, since she analyzed different versions of tatar romantic dastans, identified their features, and formed a general idea of the heroes of these works.

The folklorist devoted one large chapter to love dastans in her scientific works “Tatar epic: book dastans”[10, pp.266-353] and “Tatar dastans in world civilization”[5, pp.161-254]. Here the author has given, to some extent, a characterization of the systems of heroes.

The theme that we are analyzing is well studied by some scientists. But nevertheless, all the folk and literary versions of these dastans have not yet been fully studied and their systems of images have

not been sufficiently analyzed. No conclusions about them have been drawn yet. The novelty of this article is that for the first time, it presents a comprehensive characterization of the main characters, their main qualities are clarified, and peculiarities inherent in the national epic are revealed to also exist in romanic dastans.

From ancient times, the peoples of the world have created many love compositions based on the motifs of the Ancient and Medieval oriental epic. Among them there are those with known authors and some where the author is unknown. There are also verbal and handwritten versions. Passing from person to person, these love works became popular, and they acquired a folk style and folk motifs. This kind of creativity spread in both verbal and handwritten form. It should be noted that Tatar romanic dastans have been preserved in writing more than verbally. This fact proves that the Tatars' writing culture developed very early. In folklore, such dastans are usually called book dastans [10, p.380].

Having risen to a high level of art, the problems of beauty, love, friendship, family relations, patriotism, mutual understanding, and everyday life, this epic genre grew among common people for many centuries.

The heroes of love epics, demonstrating the highest qualities of humanity, were accepted as role models for the younger generation. Indeed, the main characters of Tatar romanic dastans are interesting because they are modest, patient, and have all the positive qualities that any person should have. It is important to emphasize that mythological representations of local residents and Islamic ideology played a significant role in the formation of the qualities of the main characters. In our opinion, the heroes of love epics possess qualities approved of not only by Tatars, but by the whole of humanity. Therefore they have not lost their original place among the people to this day.

The article utilizes historical typological and structurally descriptive methods of research.

#### **Dastans about love between a young man and girl who have innate beauty**

For a long time, Tatar romanic dastans were interesting because they were based on love stories. It is surprising that in these plots the images of lovers are supplemented with qualities that correspond to local ideals. It is these features that distinguish them from the literary versions that were written by oriental poets.

Before highlighting the distinctive qualities of the heroes in love dastans, one should consider their birth history. Such dastans often contain the epic motif of the miraculous birth of the hero. As P.A. Grintser writes, "In the epic, the miraculous birth of the hero means his unusual birth, that is to say, a baby is born miraculously and not according to the laws of nature [11, p.41]." Along with the heroic epic, such motifs are found in romantic dastans. As an example, let us familiarize ourselves with the dastan "Takhir and Zukhra" which was written by the scribe Akhmat Urazaev-Kormashi [12, pp.206].

The main characters of the work are a young man and a girl born as long-awaited children of their parents. The events, mentioned at the beginning of the dastan, indicate that their fates will differ significantly from those of other people.

Two fathers, deeply saddened by the absence of an heir, vow to engage their children if one is a boy and the other a girl. After a while, their wish comes true - a girl and a boy are born to the families of the khan and the vizier (in some versions, a second khan).

The appearance of these babies was amazingly beautiful. It should be noted that a similar scene is often found in the Tatar epic. These heroes, who since childhood differed from others in terms of beauty, as they grow up, begin to conquer the hearts of others.

The aforementioned version of Kormashi describes the beauty of the lovers: "*Әгәр гүзәллекләрен бәян кылсак, бу китап кадәре дәхи бер китапны галәхидә язсак кирәк*" [12, p.208].

*If we describe their beauty, you will have to write a separate book about it [author's translation].*

As another example, consider the story of the birth of Kais (the mad) in the story "Leila and Majnun":

*"Бер көн хак тәгалә рәхмәте белән хатыны хамилә булды. Вакыты тәмам булып, ай пәрасе кебек бер һилал (яңа туган ай) кашлы углан дөньяга килеп, атасы вә анасының күзләре айдын (күзләре нурлы булу, балку) булып, хакка күп шөкерләп итеп, куйлар вә дәвәләп корбан итеп, фәкыйрьләргә өләштеләр"* [12, p.174].

*Allah sent him a blessing, and his wife became pregnant. When the time came, a boy was born with sickle-shaped (curved) eyebrows, like a moonbeam. The father and mother's eyes were alight with joy,*

*they shouted their gratitude to God Almighty, they sacrificed sheep and camels and distributed them to the poor[author's translation].*

In Tatar romanic epics, the main female characters are presented as being surprisingly graceful and beautiful. Shahsanam, who conquered Garib's heart at the first meeting, Leila, who caused the madness of Kais (Majnun), Sahipjamal who fell in love with Saifulmuluk in a dream, all these beautiful girls are capable of great love and even sacrifice their lives for the sake of their beloved. Consider an example where love is born between Shahsanam and Garib:

*Замандин соң мәктәпкә килде, Шаһсәһәмгә бакты, чөн гәзари гәлдик ачылыбтыр. Шул заман гыйшык тыйре гөман Гарибнең нишанә күңелләрегә тикде. Әмма бу тыйрә гыйшык бер янә тигеб, бер янә тигмәй калмады, һәр икесе сүхтә һижран берлә мәбтәлә булды[12, p.249].*

*After a while, he came to school, looked at Shahsanam and she bloomed like a flower. Now, not only did love languish in one, but passed through the other. They were both embraced by this fire [author's translation].*

It should be noted that in folklore versions of this story, the appearance of the protagonist is described in one or two sentences, that is, accurately and concisely. Let us dwell once again on the handwritten versions of the epic "Takhir and Zukhra" found in the villages of Ishnarat and Menger.

These texts do not even mention the beauty of Zukhra, and the appearance of Takhir is mentioned only when he comes out of the chest. His beauty has been compared to "Royal quality" and he is called "the moon-faced young man" [8, pp.179-186]. Even the section where Kais fell in love with Leila, despite the wide use of comparative and metaphorical devices, ends with just one sentence [12, p. 176].

There are also literary versions in the above-presented versions of romanic dastans, that is, a certain author wrote a work based on this plot. Here, much attention is paid to the appearance of the main characters. This is due to the fact that, in love dastans, oriental dogmas and aesthetic techniques are often used. These works extol the ideals of free men, as well as the courage and beauty of the young heroes [12, p.87].

A similar example is found in the literary version of the dastan "Sayfulmuluk" which was written by the 16<sup>th</sup> century poet Mejlisi. He devotes ten lines of poetry to describe the gracefulness of the young girl, and he divides these lines into one section and calls them "Sayfulmuluk's love when he saw a picture of a girl" [13].

As mentioned earlier, each nation has certain ideals associated with how men and women look. These ideals are capable of penetrating folklore and literary creations through the consciousness of the people. The heroes of Tatar romanic dastans have characteristic qualities corresponding to the mentality of the Tatar nation. To understand this better, let us look at Nizami Ganjavi's handwritten literary version of the epic "Leila and Majnun." In the tatar version, Leila's beauty is described as follows:

*Көннәрдән бер көн Кайс Ләйләгә ала күз (зур, матур күз) илә бактыкта күрдә кем, рәхләре(бит, йөз) гул, саче сөмбел, бәге гамбәр(хуш исле), кашы камәр(ай), гамзәсе(керфек кагу) хәнжәр, күзләре мähмүр(сөрмәле), сим (көмеш), тәне кафур (камфара), бәдәне бер маһитантыр(ай нуры) ки, көннән-көн чибәрлеге артмакта" [12,p.17].*

*One day, Kais looked up at Leila and opened his eyes, and saw a face comparable to a flower, blonde hair, fragrant scent, crescent eyebrows, shooting eyes as if shrouded, a body as white as camphor and silver, all shining like the moon and day by day it is more beautiful [author's translation].*

While Nizami describes Leyli's beauty like this:

*Арабская луна красой лица  
Аджамских тюрок ранила сердца.  
В кудрях полных лик ее миял,  
Казалось-ворон в когти светоч взял [14, p.67].*

*Arabian moon with red face  
Ajam Turks wounded hearts.  
In the curls of midnight her face shone,  
It seemed like a raven took a beacon into its claws [author's translation].*

We draw your attention to the fact that in the tatar manuscripts Leila's hair is compared to "sumbel." Translated from persian, this word corresponds to the meaning of "ear" or "geranium" [12, p. 533]. Comparison of thin and silky hair of a girl with a sumbel was used as a traditional means of expressing in the folklore and literature of the turkic peoples [10, p. 279]. Even today, Tatars often call girls "Syumbel," or "Syumbelya." Thus, for this area, it is quite natural to use this term to describe a female protagonist.

But in Nizami's poem, Leila's appearance is very different. Her hair is not yellowish, but dark, which corresponds to the meaning of her name. This means that Leila in Nizami's version is a black-haired girl.

As we have seen, the means of expression used to describe images make the work even more artistic and influential. In addition, there are dastans in which beauty has a great influence on the fate of the protagonist. These are works based on the plot of the "Book of Yusuf."

Yusuf, who was religious from childhood and distinguished from his other brothers in his upbringing, also stood out due to his pleasant appearance. The beauty of the main character is reflected in the admiration and love of the inhabitants of the cities whom he meets along the way, when he moved to Egypt in a caravan of slaves. Moreover, in some cities people create idols and worship them. These qualities begin to create trouble for the pious Yusuf. His excessive beauty makes Zuleikha fall in love and plot against him. In order to avoid committing a great sin, Yusuf finds a prison and stays there for 12 years. Despite his difficulties, the patient young man goes through all his ordeals with dignity. It is his nobility that leads him to a happy ending.

Based on the above examples, the reader views the main characters as beautiful and capable of falling in love with others at first sight. In verbal and written versions, their appearance is rarely described thoroughly, but after reading the text, it is easy to guess that the characters really have a pleasant look.

Emphasizing the ideals of beauty of the Tatar people, these poetic monuments not only raise dastans to an aesthetically high level, but also show that beauty is a strong quality that positively or negatively affects a person's fate. In Tatar folklore versions, as in oriental poems, the glorification of the beauty of the young man and girl in love occurs due to the fact that folk art, on the one hand, is closely related to literature, and on the other, the people of the Volga region, based on their own ideals, contributed additions or changes to how the character's were represented. The descriptions of Takhir, Zukhra, Leila, Mejnun, Yusuf, Sayfulmuluk, main characters of Tatar romanic dastans, prove that this is exactly the case. If the innate beauty of these characters came from ancient literary traditions, then it was also found that the specific attributes of the representations of these characters were changed by the local inhabitants of these territories.

#### **The quality of fidelity in the characters of romanic dastans**

A feature of characters in love dastans is their faithfulness to their beloved until the end of their days. As mentioned in the previous section, many fell in love with them, as they were very beautiful. Despite the difficulty of their ordeals and the long distance between them, the heroes are able to maintain loyalty to each other. First, consider the example of dastans based on the plot of Takhir and Zukhra. Takhir is the epitome of fidelity. He meets a lot of incredibly beautiful girls. The young man is forced to marry a girl who in folklore is called "the daughter of the padishah," and in the "Dastan of Babakhan" («Бабахан дастаны») is called Mahym. Even after their wedding, Takhir does not approach her, but always thinks about Zukhra. If in sleep their bodies touch, then the sword that he placed between them reminds him of his love for Zukhra [15, p.314]. If we pay attention to other love dastans, we find similar examples. The archetype of a devoted lover who does not marry other girls is found in the dastan "Saifulmuluk," "Kuzu Kurpach and Bayansylu." Scientist H.G. Kurogly explains this as being related to the concept of monogamy, which was inherent in the ancient Turkic epic [16, p.106]. The orthodoxy of the Eastern Middle Ages was already playing a big role here. However, there is one indisputable fact, in Radlov's version, Takhir married both Zukhra and another girl (who saved his life) and became a ruler in his territory. As is known, in Siberian dastans, when giants win a war, they take away the wives of the losing party, as well as their wealth and property («Manas», «Earth»). They live at a time when patriarchal tribal society is beginning to disintegrate. During this period, it was considered normal to inherit other people's property and women via military conquest. Therefore, in Radlov's version, Takhir is as a typical character in Siberian dastans and fairy tales [17].

The image of Saifulmulyuk, who is the main character in “Saifulmulyuk” admires the seriousness of the notion of fidelity. A young man dreams of a girl named Sahipjamal and falls in love. In search of his beloved girl, he falls into the hands of the evil Ghost ruler, and his daughter immediately falls in love with Saifulmuyuk. Seeing that the boy has not accepted her love, she threatens to kill and punish him, but the brave, devoted young man was not shaken by threats of death.

The loyalty of the protagonist to his beloved remained in literary variants of dastans. As an example, consider the literary version of the dastan “Saifulmulyuk” by Maljisi:

The Monkeys have a great king. He orders Saifulmulyuk to take his daughter as a wife. The boy is helpless. The girl approaches him. Here the author skillfully describes Saifulmulyuk’s despair and his desire to remain true to his feelings:

*Күреңез Сәйфелмөлекнең хәлене сез,  
Кутерделәр аның алдыга бер кыз.  
Бакар шаһзадә бу кызның йөзенә,  
Киек дип сискәнеп һәрдам үзенә.  
Күрер бу кыз мәликзадә йөзене,  
Киек дип эт мәгәр текте күзенә[18, p.416].*

*Look at the state of Syfulmoulouk,  
They brought him a girl.  
The Khan's son looks at her face,  
He told himself not to look.  
Seeing the beauty of that girl's face,  
He lowered his eyes again [author's translation].*

In romanic dastans, the heroines also remain faithful to their beloved. We'll look at the example of Leila. In the dastan, Leila is admirable because she understands and loves Majnun even if he has become a mad man. On the one hand, it seems that Leila and Majnun fall into the abyss. After all, fate brings her together with the reasonable, authoritative person, Ibn Salam. But Leila, even after the wedding, remains loyal to Majnun, she does not let Ibn Salam touch her. This is also observed in the plot of dastans based on the story of Yusuf. Zuleikha wants to be faithful to her beloved and for this purpose she sends her slave to her husband's bed. The character's devotion to their beloved enhances the tragedy in the composition.

It is difficult for a reader to understand the actions of the protagonists who are loyal to their beloved while married to another person. It also seems strange that they end their lives by suicide. But the central idea of a romanic dastan is to portray love as the highest feeling. Nothing is stronger than love, not even death. Therefore, the actions of the main heroes who devote themselves entirely to love are quite obvious, for them it is the meaning of life.

Sufi ideas which have penetrated the Volga region where the Tatar people live also play a big role here. Sufi literature is characterized by earthly love but the love of God. This phenomenon is also reflected in romanic dastans, but the connection with the world view of the Tatar people has changed. These changes include the quality of loyalty in Tatar book versions, which share a common plot. Here the feeling of love for God replaces feelings for Man. It is impossible to consider that in Tatar romanic dastans these substitutions were included fully. Due to the interaction of folklore and Sufi ideas, these monuments have semi-folklore and semi-literary properties.

### **The world view of the protagonist of the romanic dastan and his belief in God**

The positive attitude of the main heroes of the love epic towards Islam and the religious way of life can be considered a new epic motif which made its way into the Tatar book epic. That would be a fair assessment. Here religious motifs are prominent. In works about love, heroes are devout. When trouble comes they pray to Allah. Otherwise, this phenomenon can be called begging for help.

In romanic dastans, the protagonists have a close relationship with Allah. They pray to defeat the cruel rules of society. Takhir's prayer before execution, Majnun's request for help for Leila, the help of the religiously mythological character Khuzur all prove the crude faith of the main heroes in Allah. If in a traditional epic the hero hopes only for himself, in a romanic epic he relies on Allah.

It has already been said that Yusuf was excessively beautiful. This character has not only a pleasant appearance, but also a deep faith and spiritual wealth. It is natural, because Yusuf, in the poem “Kul Gali” he consults with Allah in all matters. Jabril transmits all information about him to God [19, p. 221]. Here, Yusuf’s every move is under control, for he is a prophet and messenger. He shows his religiosity through his good deeds and nobility. The prophet does not commit the slightest sin, he pays great attention to each of his acts. The greatest patience, the honesty, and the chastity of the young man in the end will make him happy. As is known, this plot is recalled in the Sacred Book of the Koran and earlier in the Bible. The Tatar people were already familiar with this story through the Koran, so the poem “Kul Gali” became even more popular in these territories. Later in the Volga-Ural region new folk variants of the plot under the name “Book about Yusuf” and “Story about Yusuf” appeared. Therefore, it is not surprising, that the religious devotion of the main heroes appeared in Tatar romanic epic.

Let us look at the popular versions of this story. Their oral and handwritten forms are widespread. Even today, manuscripts dedicated to Yusuf are still being discovered by archaeologists. If we pay attention to folk and literary variants of this love epic, the beautiful young man does not suffer from love as other heroes. Yusuf, a prophet of God, through his actions, portrays the religion of Allah. In other dastans, usually, the boy rushes to meet his lover, but Yusuf avoids the woman who is in love with him [20]. He fears that Zuleikha will tempt him to commit sin. In literary versions, there is also the angel Jabril, who is Yusuf’s advisor. The angel informs that if the young man is patient and God-fearing, he will be with Zuleikha. Indeed, the words of the angel turn out to be correct, after a few years Zuleikha renounces her idols and begins to worship a single God.

In our opinion, in a romanic book epic, the connection between the protagonist and the Creator is represented for a reason. Here the lovers are devout, so because of their God-fearing nature and sincerity, God always hears their prayers. But, unfortunately, these love stories end in tragedy. This phenomenon is the continuation of the Tatar book tradition. In almost all love epics, the main characters of romanic stories die in the end.

#### **National features of the protagonists**

In the previous sub-themes, we have addressed the main properties that are common to all the heroes of these dastans. In this part, on the contrary, let’s focus on the individual, special qualities of the lovers.

As is known, in Tatar folk art the main heroes are brave and strong. Romanic works do not pay special attention to this, but in some variants the young man in love behaves like a strong man and warrior. For example, let us analyze episode where Takhir fights the forces of Zukhra’s ruler-father:

*“Гаскэрлэр килеп Таһирны уртага алдылар. Таһир, моны күреп, нэгьрә орып (каты тавыш белән кычкыру) бу гаскэр эченә кереп, каһарман шикелле сугышып, ахырлы-әмер биш-алты йөз адәмне һалак кылды”* [12, p.243].

*The army surrounded Takhir. Takhir rallied his strength, uttered a war cry, broke into the thick of the warriors, and, fighting like a hero, smote another five or six hundred people [author’s translation].*

Here, Takhir could be put in the same category as in rich folk tales. Indeed, the young man deeply in love with Zukhra does not stop or fear anything. There are also episodes where Kuzy Kurpech is portrayed as a strong, courageous man:

*Кузы Көрпә әнисе белән ятып кала. Таза гына үсә. Көчле санайчы була, иптәш малайларының суккан берен үтерә суга* [12, p.146].

*Kuzy Kurpech was left to live with his mother. He grew strong. He became a strong archer and killed his comrades with one blow [author’s translation].*

From the above examples we learned that hyperbole is used in these passages to portray heroic feats more emotionally and colorfully. So there are heroes in romanic dastans who are distinguished by courage and strength. It is worth noting that in Tatar folklore variants, the character of Takhir appears not only brave and fearless, but also talented in the field of art. For example, the version of Sh. Mannur that was recorded in the Mamadish district in the village of Tulbay recalls Takhir’s ability to play a musical instrument in harmony (21). This beautiful quality makes the viziers of the khan jealous. After seeing him play in harmony near Zukhra’s window, they report it to the ruler.

It should be noted that in this variant Takhir’s character is not accidentally enriched with the talent of playing the harmonist. As is known, the Tatar people highly appreciated the ability to play. The

people wanted to see this talent in their beloved hero. Takhir plays in harmony near Zukhra's house. Among the Tatars, this tradition has continued since ancient times. If a boy liked a girl, he played a tune near her window. Thus, the boy and the girl demonstrated their love for each other.

In the version of A. Urazaev-Kormashi, Takhir is also able to play a musical instrument. One day he heard a very beautiful melody and was delighted. Soon he learns to play the instrument himself. Zukhra, too, will want to copy her lover. The couple play the whole day long looking at each other [12, p.211].

The trope also draws attention to the image of Majnun, who has unusual feelings for his beloved. This is not the earthly love that arises between a man and a woman. Of course, he pays attention to her beautiful appearance and falls in love. But over time, those feelings will grow stronger, and eventually, the girl becomes perfect for him.

Majnun's image of her is so idealistic that he can no longer accept ordinary earth Leila, because she's a normal person and she has human needs that are inherent to all living things. But Majnun doesn't need Leila anymore. [7, p.170] The image of the perfect Leila becomes an object of worship for him. This situation shows that Sufi ideas are present in the work. Sufism is a direction that emphasizes the purity of the soul, the freedom of man in the philosophical dimension [22]. For Muslims, spiritual purity is an important quality. In all literary and folklore versions of the poems and dastans based on the story of Leila and Majnun, this idea is reflected in the portrayal of Majnun.

The presence of Sufi ideas in Tatar romanic dastans is not an accident. In the 10th century after the adoption of Islam in the Volga region, Sufi thought gradually makes its way to the Tatars. These ideas have shaped the world view of the people and greatly influenced literature.

In the works of the Medieval poets Kotb, S. Sarai, H. Kyatib, Harazmi and then Umami Kamal, Muhammad'ar, M. Koly, G. Kandaly, A. Kargaly, and H. Salikhov there are Sufi ideas to different degrees. The heroes created by these poets appear before us as ascetics or people who forget about worldly life. They worship only one God and fear sin.

It is worth noting that the form of Sufism widespread in the Volga region differs from Sufi thought in other localities. The Sufi ascetic always tries to preserve the purity of his soul and the truth of his actions [23, p.43]. He always tries to do good things and fights his own desires, not people. For him to worship Allah is to avoid bad deeds, excess wealth, and bad thoughts. As it has been said before, these ideas are reflected not only in the individual works of poets, but also in the dastans that we have addressed in this article. Majnun's abdication of worldly goods and caring only for his state of mind is otherwise impossible to explain.

Romantic dastans also include portrayals of female characters that differ from other folk variants and literary versions. For example, in Tatar variants, Leila is a brave, freedom-loving, and loyal girl. Here the heroine does not immediately reveal her feelings for Majnun, but gradually gets close to him. Her feelings are strong, she understands Majnun even without words. She goes out into the empty fields just to see him.

The main character of the dastan "Takhir and Zukhra" could be considered a girl who has all the positive qualities a woman could have. She is beautiful, feminine, respectful of her parents, and devoted to her beloved Takhir. These qualities are characteristic of all folklore and literary versions of Zukhra. But there are some peculiarities in the character of Zukhra in folklore variants of the story. Archaeologist M. Akhmetzyanov believes that Zukhra is peculiar in the 18th century Tatar version of the dastan [9, p.178].

For the love of Zukhra, Takhir is brutally murdered. Zukhra, barefoot, with her hair down, with tears in her eyes, runs to her lover. First she kills Karamuch with a knife, then herself. This picture shows the penetration of political ideas into the composition. Society is moving from feudalism to capitalism. Through this dastan one can understand that people try to live according to new rules and exclude old world views.

The arrival of Zukhra barefoot, without her head in her arms, shows dissatisfaction with what is happening in the country. Literary versions say that Zukhra suffered the death of her lover and soon left this world herself. In these works, Kara Bahadur (an Arab) ends his own life by suicide.

In this section, we looked at the qualities of the protagonists. It is important to know that some characteristics of certain figures are assessed as individual, unique properties. These features are

peculiar to all folklore variants of dastans. Others refer only to Tatar-speaking variants. It is these dastans that retain national elements, color, and style of the people. Therefore these monuments are very valuable and important for the Tatars.

### **Conclusion**

Tatar romanic dastans, which have a close connection with Eastern poems, cover the spiritual heritage, the history of the Tatar people.

The heroes of these dastans possess all the positive qualities of mankind, these character portrayals serve as role models in the education of the younger generation. On the one hand, oral and handwritten dastans contributed to the spiritual development of the Tatar people, and on the other hand they themselves were strongly influenced by local mentalities.

Takhir and Zukhra, Leila and Majnun, Sayfulmuluk, Yusuf, Shahsanam and Garib and other love stories are eternal compositions reflecting the pure and strong love of two young people.

In the characters of the young men who left this world very early, the people wanted to see the courage, the piety, the devotion, and the nobility that were considered the ideal qualities of mankind. Here the reader is acquainted not only with the history of love, but also with ideas of freedom, striving for aesthetic beauty. In these dastans the unfair laws of society characteristic of the Middle Ages are criticized, but religious ideas are approved. The protagonists are God-fearing, so when trouble comes to them, they pray to the one God and ask for help. This shows that the romanic dastans were strongly influenced by Islam.

The main characters of Tatar romanic dastans are charming, slim, strong, loyal, devout, and at the same time principled in their actions and beliefs. They cannot stand to be separated from their beloved, so they only see meaning in love, in loyalty to their beloved.

Although Tatar romanic dastans are based on one single idea, they are interesting in that the conflict arises in different ways and therefore the characters and abilities of the heroes are revealed in different ways.

Moreover, the use of expressive means by comparison, metaphor, and hyperbole in Tatar dastans proves the relationship between folklore and literature. It is important to note that dastans differ from each other due to their multivariability and literary versions. Here, mentality plays a significant role. The reflection of national ideals and the color of these compositions make them special and original.

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