

# The theme of muhajirlik in Tatar prose

**Marat F. Safin<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Kazan Federal University, Kazan, Russia  
Email: info@ores.su

**Milyausha M. Khabutdinova<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>2</sup> Kazan Federal University, Kazan, Russia  
E-mail: [mileuscha@mail.ru](mailto:mileuscha@mail.ru)  
Tel. 89178847542

**Aidar Ju. Khabutdinov<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>3</sup> Kazan Federal University, Kazan, Russia  
Email: russia@prescopus.com

## Abstract

The article discusses the reception of the muhajirun as a phenomenon in the Tatar literature of the XX century. The methodological basis of the research is based on theoretical works on literary studies and history devoted to emigration. As a result, Tatar writers try to convince readers that each of us in his turn is destined to hear the call of blood and to feel the blood connection with his native land. In conclusion, most of the works affirm the absolute value of the native land in human life and the need to return home.

**Keywords:** Tatar Literature, Muhajirism, Emigration, Prose.

## *El tema del muhajirlik en la prosa tártara*

### Resumen

El artículo discute la recepción del muhajirun como un fenómeno en la literatura tártara del siglo XX. La base metodológica de la investigación se basa en trabajos teóricos sobre estudios literarios e historia dedicada a la emigración. Como resultado, los escritores tártaros intentan convencer a los lectores de que cada uno de nosotros, a su vez, está destinado a escuchar el llamado de la sangre y sentir la conexión de la sangre con su tierra natal. En conclusión, la mayoría de las obras afirman el valor absoluto de la tierra nativa en la vida humana y la necesidad de regresar a casa.

**Palabras clave:** literatura tártara, muhajirismo, emigración, prosa.

## **1. Introduction**

The term Muhajir (Muhajirun in plural) is usually understood to mean the mass migration of Muslims from non-Muslim countries to a Muslim country, so as not to be in the position of a religious minority. Translated from Arabic, the word means settlers derived from the word Hijra – resettlement. Initially, the Muhajirun was the term used for the companions of Muhammad, who moved with the Prophet from Mecca to Yasrib (then Medina). The prehistory of muhajirlik (i.e. the process of Hijra in Turkic languages) in the Russian Empire dates back to the era of mass migrations during the Caucasian war (1817-1864) and after it. Muslims of the North-Western Caucasus, the Black sea steppes and the Crimea were actively involved in this process. Thus, more than 90% of the Adyghe (Circassian) people were forced to choose the fate of the Muhajirun. However, since the end of the 1930s, i.e. the period of great terror, Soviet scientists avoided this topic by silence. The flash of interest in this subject was observed only from the 1990s. We found no works devoted to the studying of an originality of interpretation of the muhajirun theme in the Tatar literary tradition of the XX century. This is the novelty of our study. We analyzed literary texts belonging to different historical and cultural periods of the twentieth century as examples, accumulating the reception of time,

## **2. Methodology**

The methodological basis of the research is based on theoretical works on literary studies and history devoted to emigration. The system-comparative and comparative analysis allowed us to find repeated plots, motives and images in the texts of different Tatar writers, which indicates the formation of certain trends in the disclosure of this topic in the Tatar literature.

## **3. Results and discussion**

The theoretical basis of our research is the works devoted to the problems of studying identity, the specifics of the national ideal. The theme of the muhajirun came to the orbit of the research of Soviet scientists in 1975; the historian Amineva (2014) considered this problem on the material of the Circassians and Abkhazians. Since the 1990s, among Russian scientists, there has been a strong interest in the history of the migration of the Caucasian peoples to the Ottoman Empire after the end of the Caucasian war of the XIX century. The mass resettlement of the Crimean Tatars after the Crimean war (1853-1856), Muslim Tatars from the Volga-Urals region in the second half of the XIX century to the Ottoman Empire is less studied.

Tatar literary critics until the 1960s preferred to gloss over this issue, although Tatar writers appealed to her in the early twentieth century, Dzidzariya (1975) responded to this phenomenon by poetic pamphlet *Kitmibez!* (We will not leave!). The researchers only casually touched on this topic. A huge contribution to the understanding of the muhajirun problem was made Galyau (1982) duologue *Mut* (The Dregs), *Muhajirun*. Zagidullin (1918) makes this theme a part of his autobiographical myth in the novel *Let us pray!* In the course of the study, we found that the theme of muhajirun in the Tatar literature is related to the problem of choice and division of the family. The ploys of the works develop in a dramatic way; the fate of emigrants is shown against the broad

historical background of the transformation of Russian society at the turn of the XIX-XX centuries. In the works, the foreign country -- the Muslim state is presented as a place of non-return, as a border situation that fundamentally changes people's lives.

Zagidullin (1918) responded with a We will not leave! Poem on the proposal of deputies from the right faction: Go to Turkey. It happened on May 4, 1907 at the II State Duma session during the discussion of the Rules of the Ministry of People's Education On the printing of educational books and manuals in Russian and national transcription. The poet resorts to the antithesis of Holy Motherland - foreign land. The land of the Sultan is negatively characterized as a foreign land, the fire ... alien, and the space of unfreedom. Zagidullin (1918) believes that the native land was connected by God with the Tatars, and the purpose of his contemporaries should not be in escape from the problems in the bitter Motherland, but in creative activities to turn Russia into a free country.

Mahmut Galyau (1982), in his novels, *The Dregs*, *Muhajirun*, was thinking about the fate of the Tatar village of the late XIX - early XX century, showed the tragedy of the muhajirun as a phenomenon in the history of the Tatar people. Safarova et al. (2016) in his novels talks about two waves of muhajirlik: 1) after the uprising of 1878-1879.; 2) on the eve of the all-Russian population census of 1897. In *Muhajirun* he historically reliably recreated the atmosphere of alarming expectations before the census in 1897, disclosed in detail the causes of the Tatar environment in unrest, identified the motives of resistance to the authorities, as well as the prerequisites for the forced resettlement of the Tatars in Turkey. The policy of resettlement was sometimes supported by the authorities of the Russian and Ottoman empires. The latter used Muslim Muhajirs to counter national movements of non-Turkish peoples. At this time, the Muhajirun were primarily the mountaineers, forced to leave the Caucasus after the end of the Caucasian war, giving their land to the Cossacks and Russian settlers.

The author of the dilogy, having behind his shoulders the experience of teaching and social activities in Astrakhan, Kazan, Orenburg, represented the nature and content of discussions within various layers of Tatar society in the late XIX – early XX centuries from within. Based on Safarova et al. (2016) tradition, a clearly negative assessment of emigration was given in *Muhajirun*. Safarova et al. (2016) convincingly proved by a number of examples that the loss of the homeland turns out to be a loss of national identity, deterioration of the quality of life, and sometimes even death of immigrants. The author describes in detail the tragic fate of the spouses: Safa and Sajida. The reason for the emigration of the Tatars was the rumors about baptism, which provoked resistance from the Muslims and turned the subsequent repression. Regina et al. (2017) reliably reproduced the tactics of the authorities, focused on repression: the confiscation of cattle and grain, the execution, sent to hard labor in Siberia (katorga), the death penalty. Desperate people began to hope for a pious Sultan in Turkey – the only guarantor of a quiet life in these tragic circumstances, who will defend the faithful Muslims! The writer reveals in the novel the provocative role of two-faced local clergy and bourgeoisie supported the people in this quest for the sake of their self-interest. Historian Chernyshev (1927) in his research notes that the bourgeoisie and the clergy in 1878-1879 did not refute the rumors of forced baptism. Since 1894, under the instruction of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ganiyeva (1964), the mufti of the Orenburg Mohammedan spiritual Assembly (OMDS), conducted among the imams an explanatory work on the absence of the threat of violent Christianization. He was supported by the richest representatives of the national bourgeoisie and public figures (Aliev, 2001).

Injustice on the part of the authorities served as the trigger of the process of muhajirlik. In some cases, the authorities did not prevent the receipt of passports. Galyau (1982) describes how hypocritical rich (kustans) bought the property from departing villagers for a song. After Mingazova et al. (2014), Galyau (1982) denounces the unfair way of life in Russia and Turkey. Muhajirun in the eyes of their tribesmen turn into sheep. Galyau (1982) credibly shows how migrants in Turkey were met by officials (obtaining of passports and land plots with the help of bribes). The writer shows the economic difficulties experienced by the Ottoman Empire during this period due to the dominance of foreign capital resulted in mass poverty of the population (the village near Eskişehir). Galyau (1982) writes that the majority of men were involved in the ongoing wars of the Ottoman Empire. The writer in dilogy raises the theme of the uprisings of 1878-1879, as the new Muhajirun from Maul-Koly village meet in Anatolia immigrants who left the region of Kazan for 20 years before them. Gafiyat Haji recalls how in 1878 there were rumors that all Muslims will be taxed on the maintenance of Russian churches. Kazan Governor personally traveled to the villages. For calm flogged people mercilessly. This prompted many to leave their homeland and seek salvation from injustice in Turkey. Galyau (1982) shows that the muhajirun from the end of the 1870s were much closer to the true ones, because not only the poor but also the rich were leaving. The latter was much easier to arrange a fate in Anatolia. At that time, the level of poverty of the Ottoman Turks exceeded the poverty of the Russian Empire, which has been successfully industrializing since the second half of the XIX century. The brother of Sabirzyan mullah, merchant Mustafa in his letter writes about the need to build factories, open Jadid schools. He sends his three sons to study in three possible areas of business development: Tashkent, Kazan and Istanbul, but does not indicate what business can be developed in Turkey.

Galyau (1982) describes the pluses of fertile land of Anatolia in comparison with the loamy soils of Kazan region: The words... about the blessed land, where even the stake blooms, suddenly justified. The Tatars, who came to the South, were faced with dangerous diseases that threatened their lives. Thus, the wife of Safa died here from typhus, and he, fulfilling the covenant of his wife, returned to his homeland. Muhajirlik in the fate of Safa turns into a personal drama: the former hero and wealthy owner become a landless shepherd, and the remaining at home his brother Wafa, meanwhile, goes into growth and becomes an elder of the village. Thus, Galyau (1982) in his novel describes the muhajirlik like a real drama in the life of the Tatar people. In the 1940s, and 1950s this topic was not developed in the Tatar literature, as the Hajj was banned by the authorities, except for a very limited number of persons. We can learn about the negative reaction of the authorities to this topic from the autobiographical novel, the memories of Ganich (2007) let us pray! Who was a prisoner of Stalin's camps, serving a term under article 58 of the Criminal code of the RSFSR as an enemy of the people? So, describing the interrogations in the Black lake prison in Kazan, the writer recalls how the investigator charged him that he was a descendant of the Mullah Sahabettin shot in Elabuga prison, who came from a family, whose representatives moved to Turkey in the late XIX century.

In the 1960s, during the thaw period, the citizens of the USSR began to search contacts with the departed relatives, as the attitude to emigration in the country begins to change. A number of Tatar intellectuals, who for the first time in several decades had the opportunity to visit Turkey, were making similar attempts. Gilyazov in the article we have reached the center of Turkey bitterly recalls how in 1970, when he was in Turkey, he was afraid to inquire about his relatives. Ancestors of Gilyazova, belonged to the leaders of the Bashkir-Mesheryak troops. After its liquidation in 1865, its lands were redistributed among the former members, but many lands passed to officials and persons close to them, i.e. to non-Muslims. Only in the Ufa province, it concerned more than 2

million tithes (desyatina) of the earth. The father of the family founder Gilyazetdin, Kurbangali was the head of the 19th Canton-based in Nurkeevo of the Menzelinsk district of Ufa province (now Sarmanovsky district of Tatarstan) who largely controlled the land fund of a canton. This loss of status and land caused the emigration of a part of the elite. Koni (1989) writes that Gilyazetdin, the imam of the mosque in Sarmanovo, emigrated with the whole family, except Sahabuddin, who served in the army in the Caucasus. Sahabuddin, who became Imam in Sarmanovo, died in Elabuga prison in 1930, and correspondence with relatives was interrupted in 1938. The writer visited Turkey for the second time in 1999, but even then he failed to find his relatives. Turkey in the memoirs of Gilazov, being a blessed Muslim area, turns into a foreign land for him, where contacts with relatives disappear. The writer understands that his ancestors in the foreign country were given the opportunity to survive in the years of Stalin's repressions. However, in the article I was looking for my traces Gilyazov calls immigrants and internal migrants fugitives who did not want to shoulder responsibility for their native land, were afraid of difficulties and went to a foreign country in search of an easy life. The writer considers this step as a moral betrayal to the ancestors.

#### **4. Summary**

In the Tatar literature of the XX century a body of literary texts where the theme of muhajirlik finds its refraction was created. During the analysis of literary texts of the beginning and the end of the XX century, we were able to identify that the theme of muhajirlik is multidimensional. Khalit's (1956) poem *we will not leave!* Has the character of a political statement, created in response to discrimination against the rights of non-Russian peoples in Russia, which was reflected in the style and poetics of the work. In the novels *The Dregs*, Muhajirun Galyau (1982) described two waves of the muhajirlik: after the uprising of 1878-1879 in the Kazan region, in connection with the all-Russian census of 1897. The writer realistically examines the causes of this phenomenon: religious (the preservation of religion in a Muslim state), social (the need to ensure a decent lifestyle for their loved ones). Galyau (1982) describes in detail the tragic consequences of the decision to leave the country: poverty, disease, communication problems. Galyau (1982) tells about the successful options, when the emigrants' departure was carefully thought out, they owned enough money to get a plot of fertile land in the Ottoman Empire and to settle down there. Guseva (2007) in his novel, *Let us pray!* and articles wrote about the third wave of mukhajilik, associated with the elimination of the Bashkir-Mesheryak troops in 1865 and the confiscation of his lands.

The theme of the muhajirun in Tatar literature throughout the twentieth century was a peripheral one. In USSR by the 1930s the figure of oblivion had become the main rhetorical figure of time in relation to the emigre world. Tatar writers, if they turned to this topic, then drew images of people knocked out of their destinies to the sidelines of life. They caused pity and sympathy among the readers. Ibragimova (2000) and Galyau (1982) adhere to the accusatory approach in the opening theme. This approach was not caused by the state ideology (as, for example, in the case of Russian literature, but rather with national ethical values (national myth of the umbilical cord). Soviet Tatar writers again return to the topic of emigration mainly in the years of perestroika. In his works Ibragimov et al. (2016) observed a transition from an accusatory position to compassion. The artist of the word has tried to restore the unity of the family, divided by emigration. The theme of muhajirlik becomes the part of his autobiographical myth. Tatar writer on the examples of his characters' fate has shown the whole ambiguity of the phenomenon of the muhajirun. A realistic

trend dominates in the disclosure of the theme. The foreign land is shown as a disastrous place in these works of Tatar writers within the framework of the thousand-year tradition. Tatar writers try to convince readers that each of us in his turn is destined to hear the call of blood and to feel the blood connection with his native land.

## **5. Conclusions**

The theme of the muhajirun in the Tatar literature has a history of centuries. It is closely intertwined with the theme of Tatar emigration. Tatar writers draw portraits of heroes, forced to live in a foreign land with sympathy. Most of the works affirm the absolute value of the native land in human life and the need to return home. Along with this, the real reasons for muhajirlik, the pros and cons of life in Turkish Anatolia are explained.

## **6. Acknowledgements**

The work is performed according to the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.

## **References**

ALIEV, B. 2001. **The North-Caucasian Diaspora in the Countries of South-West Asia: The History and Modern Processes (the Second Half of the 19th-20th Centuries)**. Makhachkala: Novy Den, p. 296. Russia.

AMINEVA, V. 2014. **Universal and Unique as the Categories of Comparative Literature**, Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research, Vol 20, N° 12: 2094-2098. UAE.

CHERNYSHEV, E. 1927. **Disturbances of the Kazan Tatars in 1878**. The Herald of Scientific Society of Tatar Studies. N° 7. pp. 181-186. Germany.

DZIDZARIYA, G. 1975. **Mahajirism and the Problems of Abkhazia of the 19th Century**. Sukhumi: The Alashara Publisher, p. 526. Russia.

GALYAU, M. 1982. **The Dregs, Muhajirun**. The Tatar Publishing House, p. 460. Kazan: Russia.

GANICH, A. 2007. **The Circassians in Jordan: The Peculiarities of Historical and Ethno-Cultural Development**. ICAA MSU, p. 269. Moscow: Russia.

GANIYEVA, R. 1964. **Satirical Works by G. Tukai**. The KSU Press, p. 84. Kazan: Russia.

GUSEVA, Y. 2007. **Emigrant Movement of the Muslims of the Samara Province to Turkey at the Turn of 19th - 20th Centuries: Towards the History of the Problem.** The Faizkhanov Readings. The Materials of the Fourth Theory and Practice Conference. N. Novgorod: Medina. pp. 171-174. Russia.

IBRAGIMOV, B., YUSUPOVA, N., and ZAKIRZYANOV, A. 2016. **Ideological myth and archetypes intatar poetry of years 1920-50s.** Journal of Language and Literature. Vol. 7. N° 3: 228-231. USA.

IBRAGIMOVA, Z. 2000. **The Emigration of the Chechens to Turkey (The 60-70s Years of the 19th Century.** M.: The Institute of Oriental Studies of the RAS, MAKS Press. p. 69. Russia.

KHALIT, G. 1956. **Gabdulla Tukai and the Tatar Literature Movement of the Beginning of the 20th Century.** The Tatar Publishing House, p. 232. Russia.

KONI, A. 1989. **The Memoirs of the Case of Vera Zasulich.** The Selected Works. M. Pravda, p. 656. Russia.

MINGAZOVA, L., GALIMULLIN, F., GALIMULLINA, A. 2014. **Folk Heroes in the Poetry of the People of the Volga and Ural Regions,** Journal of Language and Literature, Vol. 5, No 4: 252–255. USA.

REGINA, R., KAMALIEVA, M., IBRAGIMOV, A., and GALIMULLINA, E. 2017. **The Image of the Garden in the Creativity of Ravil Bukharaev and Lydia Grigorieva in the Context of Dialogue of Cultures,** Journal of history culture and art research. Vol. 6, N° 4: 1063-1070. Turkey.

SAFAROVA, A., GALIMULLIN, F., GALIMULLINA, A. 2016. **The Modern Tatar Literature in the context of the Cultures of Peoples of Russia,** Journal of Language and Literature, Vol. 7, No 3: 240-243. USA.

ZAGIDULLIN, I. 1918. **The Movements of Population Transfer to the Ottoman Empire.** Ancient History of the Tatars in 7 Volumes. Sh. Mardzhani Institute of History of the AS of the RT. Vol. 6. pp. 585-589. Kazan: Russia.