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**Individuality of the persona
in the poem «The Balcony»
by Olzhas Suleimenov and
homonymous movie by Kalybek
Salykov**

The main objective of this article is to examine peculiarities of representation of the persona by Olzhas Suleimenov in his autobiographical lyric poem «The Balcony» and interpretation of its plot by makers of the homonymous movie. The author of this article investigates compositional and structural peculiarities of the Suleimenov's poem drawn up as reminiscence of the persona narrating about events twenty five years ago at the center of Almaty in first person. «The Balcony» is perceived by scholars as a minor lyric genre or lyric essay. From the author's point of view, the poem presents clear signs of elegy and *tolgau* philosophic genre, the roots of which go back to Kazakhstan folklore. This very idea is an initial one when analyzing common points in plots of the poem by Olzhas Suleimenov and the movie by Kalybek Salykov. The article describes the problems of implementation of the poem plot, main actions of characters, movie motifs representing the spirit of the generation in the 60s of the 20th century.

Key words: lyric poem, reminiscence, prosaic verse, persona, the Sixties.

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**Олжас Сүлейменовтің «Балкон»
поэмасы мен Қалыбек
Салықовтың аттас фильмдегі
лирикалық кейіпкер**

Мақаланың негізгі мақсаты – «Балкон» атты өмірбаяндық поэмадағы Олжас Сүлейменовтің лирикалық кейіпкерді бейнелеудің ерекшеліктерін және аттас фильмде поэма желісін түсіндіруін қарастыру. Мақала авторы Алматының орталығында жиырма бес жыл бұрын болған оқиғалар туралы баяндаушы лирикалық кейіпкердің ретро естелігі ретінде жазылған Сүлейменов поэмасының композициялық және құрылымдық ерекшеліктерін талдайды. «Балкон» зерттеушілермен шағын лирикалық жанр, лирикалық этюд ретінде қабылданады. Автордың тұрғысынан поэмада элегияның және түп-тамыры қазақ фольклорынан шығатын философиялық толғау жанрының іздері айқын көрінеді. Мақалада поэма сюжетін жүзеге асыруының мәселелері қарастырылады, ХХ ғасырдың 60-жылдар замандастарының рухын жеткізетін фильм мақамы, кейіпкерлердің негізгі әрекеттерін талдайды.

Түйін сөздер: лирикалық поэма, ретро естелік, лирикалық кейіпкер, прозостих, алпысыншылықтар.

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**Лирический герой в поэме
Олжаса Сулейменова «Балкон»
и в одноименном фильме
Калыбека Салыкова**

Основная цель статьи – рассмотреть особенности изображения Олжасом Сулейменовым лирического героя в автобиографической лирической поэме «Балкон» и трактовки его сюжета создателями одноименного фильма. Автор статьи анализирует композиционные и структурные особенности сулейменовской поэмы, построенной как ретро-воспоминание лирического героя, повествующего от первого лица о событиях двадцатипятилетней давности, происходивших в центре Алма-Аты. «Балкон» воспринимается исследователями как малый лирический жанр, лирический этюд. С точки зрения автора, в поэме явственно видны следы элегии и философского жанра толғау, корни которого уходят в казахский фольклор. Именно эта мысль является отправной при анализе точек соприкосновения сюжетов поэмы Олжаса Сулейменова и фильма Калыбека Салыкова. В статье рассмотрены проблемы реализации сюжета поэмы, рассмотрены основные поступки героев, мотивы фильма, передающие дух поколения 60-ых годов ХХ века.

Ключевые слова: лирическая поэма, ретро-воспоминание, прозостих, лирический герой, шестидесятники.

**INDIVIDUALITY OF THE
PERSONA IN THE POEM
«THE BALCONY» BY
OLZHAS SULEIMENOV
AND HOMONYMOUS
MOVIE BY KALYBEK
SALYKOV**

Olzhas Suleimenov included «The Balcony» into «The Book of Clay» and qualified it together with «The Cactus» as a poem, though the majority of literary critics believe with good reason that it is a minor lyric poem, rather a lyric essay, a part of a larger literary work. Mukhamedzhan Karatayev mentions autobiographical nature of the plot where apparent nostalgia for the past is seen. This gives him the ground to refer to «The Balcony» as a psychological poem and compare it with a water-color sketch, «where lyrics and elegy are adolescence, fellowship, love, music, mathematics, friend's father – uncle Borya» [1, 365]. It tells about an ordinary daily routine without drama and tragedy; about the fact that «life may be so simple, with boyish afflictions which are forgotten and even seem to be sweet afterwards». In the leading motif the poet shares the Pushkinian idea that «what is gone will then be pleasant» which makes everything clear in the end of this lyric and elegiac depiction:

«And here I draw a vile chance,
Then stepping near the balcony,
I know –,
My uncle Borya's gone all thence,
But still –
This calmness is so welcoming» [2, 22].

The artistic individuality of «The Balcony» also lies in the fact that it is structured as a combination of prosaic and poetic fragments, while the extent of prosaic discourse prevails over the extent of verses that gave the scholar A. S. Ismakova a reason to call it «prosaic poetry». Olzhas Suleimenov tried out this structural form in the poem «The Book of Clay» for the first time. But the text framing the discovered ancient manuscript which is fully written in verses is prosaic in «The Book of Clay», whereas we observe improvised alternation of prosaic and poetic fragments in «The Balcony». Most probably, the roots of this versicular structure should be sought in poetry of the Sixtiers who undoubtedly had a great influence on the Kazakh poet, particularly in poems of Evgeny Evtushenko and Andrey Voznesensky. Both readers and critics referred to this poem as an autobiographical one and «revealed» Olzhas Suleimenov of the 60s of the 20th century in the main persona. It is not by chance that in the movie «The Balcony» by Kalybek Salykov produced after the latter poem, one of the main characters, Aidar, a young

man standing out from other people for his traits of leadership and independence played by Ismail Igilmanov resembles young Olzhas Suleimenov. The speaker narrates (recalls) in first person about events of his school years: «Here I stand under that balcony again. It belongs to strangers now, but I still come by from time to time. Seems like it is the way how novellas about the first love begin. The whole movie afterwards is a flashback. I do not intend to break the rules» [2, 24]. Olzhas Suleimenov offers the possibility for a reader to perceive his work as a movie script. Speaking about retrospective composition of the poem, one should bear in mind that it entails not only discrepancy of described events with timeline of the very description. On one hand, this is surely a poetic reminiscent sketch of lyric nature, an attempt to recall the good old days. However, it is far from being an elegiac reflection. Objectively, memories of the persona comprise three school time episodes about him and his class fellow Zhenya divided by several years. The first two of them are dedicated to nostalgic description of events from the childhood and growing-up. In the first fragment the narrator recalls bad marks in his grade book:

«My father, person of a great wit,
did make us run a little bit.
He slapped us, silly lads,
with strong and heavy hands.
So we gave up
and ate our soup,
while he solved tasks in festive mood...» [2, 25]
In the next minor plot:
«The mark of «three» occurred more often,
since then his screams had really softened.
But we were cheerful!
The pudgy oldster was my father then,
the quieter, melancholic man.
Into the final grade we passed,
and fell in love:
He – with the new Jazz,
I – with my Physics mistress [2, 26].

The themes of these fragments, namely, elegiac memories about «adolescence, fellowship, love, music, mathematics» are shown fully, but the plot is continued, therefore one shall turn attention to prosaic text given before the abovementioned second patch of poetry: «Here one is supposed to make the pause and declare: days, months, year had passed». «Is supposed» is some kind of genre format where the narrator describes the situation happened from the third party, now he is outside this life, at least he is not involved in it entirely. But Suleimenov introduces the third event where the persona suffering from one-way love to the teacher continues with his recollections:

Degraded Father appeared from kitchen,
obedient and sleepy:
«Well, classman, how is going? ...»
I've told what it's about,
My things turn ugly.
Uh-oh! Father burst with flame
Like live volcano;
He whack me one
And lightly to his son,
I ran as an idiot
With their idiot son.
Again he tore to shreds the tasks
conflagrant!... [2, 27].

Thus, all genre expectations are broken: the persona who is ready to refer to Father as to the character of nostalgic elegy («The pudgy oldster was my father then, the quieter, melancholic man», «obedient and sleepy») by the beginning of the conventional third event, suddenly gets into the situation which he considered to be the water under the bridge. «Degraded Father» again provides him with just another life lesson as always reasoning it with slaps in the face. He shows to grown up character that melancholy because of heart-related circumstances in adolescence is as blameworthy as bad marks in school. His arguments are physically feelable: the young person depressing and suffering from love deserves beatings as the former student with only the lowest grade «two» in his record.

And such no joking lesson, more correctly recollections about it, adds to this poem elegiac character:

... I will recollect him
in my misfortune minutes.
Indeed, we can rescue,
But as my uncle Borya did
Nobody could cry,
Abuse me for misfortune [2, 27].

That is why critics qualify «The Balcony» as «the novella about first love» not coincidentally.

The character recollecting down many years what happened to him and his friends in ordinary Almaty yard comes to the idea that overcoming of certain problems is only the prologue to new ones which are more difficult; that depression whenever high-minded reasons it was originated from, in any event, is sin, and person not understanding it certainly deserves to be immediately punished. Such an idea allows some researches, particularly M. M. Auezov, to find in the poem the elements of *tolgau* genre. In our opinion, such peculiarity of *tolgau* as thoughts about life purpose was implemented in the screenplay written by Shakhimardan Kussainov based on poem by Olzhas Suleimenov. The director Kalybek Salykov recreated the genius of «defrosting» after Stalinism era, time of poets and artists, love and romantic in the

movie [3]. Events happened in one of the yards in the center of Almaty are described in the plot. Just as in Suleimenov's poem the recollection method is used: surgery is in process, surgeon Aidar recognizes in the patient the fellow from his yard by the tattoo on his hand. Thinking about who among these fellows he can be, he recollects the events of twenty-five-year ago. He recollects the life of his yard in 60s when they were adolescents, attended school, fought with fellows from another district, fell in love, smoked on the balcony, tried to play jazz.

But the movie was absolutely innovative even for the end of the 80s because it tells about the Stalin era as about time of the most severe repressions. Aidar doesn't remember the father, mother forbade to speak about the father to avoid a fate to be a family of the political repression. The face of the father is cut out from the only saved family photo. Long time the family of the political repression was considered as derelicts of society, this subject and has been closed after a Stalin era, and Kalykbek Salykov was the first who told about it openly. He shows that the shadow of the past soars over the Sultanovs' family all the time, the sister Zhanna is called to the KGB, the neighbor Hakeem writes the complaint on her and Aidar to take away their room in a communal flat.

Aidar, the prototype of which is the author of the poem, is shown as a normal yard boy in the poem, but, on the other hand, he is the observer and the recorder of everything that happens, it means that he is a reflector of the age. He often meets Solntselov, the strange artist who wanders around the city and paints in his Brodovskiy District. He embodies the features of the real person of Almaty artist Sergey Kalmykov (1891-1967), who was a significant figure of his time. Aidar is watching the men in his yard, who play dominoes and drink, doing nothing else. He sees a policeman in a sozzled state, who shouted words of the opera «Prince Igor», «Oh, give, give me liberty! I'll be able to redeem my shame!»

The balcony is a space of Aidar and his friend Zhenka. They sit and listen to the music, reason about the life, dispute there. A balcony is a special space, it is a little over all what occurs below. The movie authors represent it as a symbol of exclusive culture. The plot about Aidar and Zhenka's fellowship is completely taken from the poem and the events which are taking place in the yard, below,

are recreated by the screenwriter Shakhimardan Kussainov. Aidar who can realize the leadership skills not only on the Balcony, but also in space of the Brodovskiy District streets combines these two spaces– high culture, education and low culture (crime, alcoholism, household quarrels).

The screenwriter Sh. Kussainov and the director K. Salykov «read» the biography of men of the sixties to whose lot has fallen to live during a critical period in his own way. The opposition of the main character Aidar to the Demon group has come to the end with beating, but in this minute, difficult for him, there was an artist Solntselov who has bandaged his head, has taken him away in hospital and has told him the words that can be considered as main in the whole movie:

There is a despot who tyrannizes the body.

There is a despot who tyrannizes the soul.

There is a despot who tyrannizes both the body and soul.

The name of the first tyrant is the powers that be, the name of the second is a pastor.

The despot, who tyrannizes both soul and the body is the crowd.

Man, be afraid of the crowd! [3]

The motive of tyranny lifted by Suleimenov in the poem «Balcony» becomes the basic in the movie: people from People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs, militia, the system, in which the Yard living in a drunk and charcoal rhythm, the crowd of addicts and criminals of the Almaty Brod have real force. But there is also another force in this life, presented by the world of Aidar enduring death of the artist Solntselov as the greatest tragedy in the life. The operator Aubakir Suleev has transmitted a condition of the character through the run upstairs accompanied by music by Sofia Gubaidulina whose melody is literally broken off in crying. All this scene is a peculiar symbol: the intellectuals of the 1960s pass on baton of life to the younger generation in the person of Aidar who is not alone, the children not only from his group, but also the Demon's group and absolutely unfamiliar children from the Almaty yards join him gradually. Creators of the movie of 1988 could express in this symbolical scene «a binding thread of times», having shown time of formation of men of the sixties who in the person of Olzhas Suleimenov have played a historical role in acquisition of independence by Kazakhstan.

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