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LITERARY RECOLLECTIONS OF SAMAD VURGUN IN TURKIC CULTURAL CONTEXTS

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Abstract

The article examines the image of the Azerbaijani national poet Samad Vurgun in the memoir literature of the Turkic peoples. Special attention is paid to the recollections, essays, and memoirs written by prominent Turkic writers and poets who personally knew Samad Vurgun and reflected his personality, moral character, and artistic influence in their works. These memoirs not only enrich the understanding of Vurgun's creative legacy but also serve as valuable historical and literary documents that testify to the strength of cultural and spiritual ties among the Turkic peoples. The study highlights the role of memoir literature in preserving the living image of the poet and strengthening interliterary dialogue within the Turkic world.

Keywords: Samad Vurgun, Turkic peoples, memoir literature, literary relations, cultural memory

Introduction

Samad Vurgun occupies a distinguished place among world literary figures not only because of his poetic heritage but also due to the deep personal impressions he left on his contemporaries. Numerous writers and poets from different nations transformed Samad Vurgun into a literary figure within their own creative works, portraying his vivid personality in poems, essays, sketches, and memoirs. These writings reflect not only admiration for his artistic talent but also sincere affection for his human qualities.

Russian, Ukrainian, Belarusian, Central Asian, Caucasian, and Baltic writers – among them A. Fadeyev, N. Tikhonov, M. Sholokhov,

M. Rylsky, P. Brovka, G. Gulyam, M. Auezov, R. Gamzatov, and others – created literary portraits of Samad Vurgun. Particularly valuable among these works are memoirs, which provide firsthand accounts of the poet's character, worldview, and interpersonal relationships. Through these recollections, readers gain a deeper understanding of Samad Vurgun's creative individuality and his role in fostering intercultural dialogue.

Samad Vurgun and the Memoir Tradition of the Turkic Peoples

Grounded in national and spiritual ideals – humanism, patriotism, and devotion to moral values – Samad Vurgun exerted a pro-

found influence on the literary consciousness of the Turkic peoples. His artistic personality inspired many Turkic writers to depict him not only as a poet but also as a symbol of cultural unity and brotherhood. As a result, Samad Vurgun's name became associated with a distinct literary process within Turkic memoir literature.

The memoirs dedicated to Samad Vurgun go beyond poetic representation. They preserve the living memory of the poet, affirming his moral authority and spiritual longevity. These recollections form a collective narrative that reflects different stages of his life, each memory completing another "page" of his life story. In this sense, memoir literature functions as both an artistic and historical medium, reinforcing the poet's enduring presence in cultural memory.

One of the most illustrative memoir episodes concerns the renowned Turkish poet Nazim Hikmet. Initially unfamiliar with Samad Vurgun's works, Hikmet later encountered him during joint literary events. A memorable episode took place during an official reception at the French Embassy, where Samad Vurgun transformed a rigid diplomatic gathering into a lively and sincere celebration by reciting poetry and initiating a dance. This act deeply impressed Nazim Hikmet, who later described Samad Vurgun not only as a poet but as a heroic personality capable of rebelling against outdated conventions.

This memoir is particularly significant as it reveals unknown literary facts and underscores the symbolic role of Samad Vurgun in strengthening cultural ties and mutual admiration among Turkic and non-Turkic intellectuals. It also highlights literature as a medium of human freedom and solidarity (Hikmet, 1957).

The legacy of Turkmen literary scholarship contains especially rich memoir material about Samad Vurgun. Prominent Turkmen writer Berdy Kerbabayev described him as "the pride of Soviet poetry" and recalled their close friendship marked by humor, sincerity, and mutual respect. In his memoir, Kerbabayev presents a vivid psychological portrait of Samad Vurgun – his powerful gaze, principled nature, emotional intensity, and unwavering optimism (Kerbabayev, 1956).

Literary scholar Akbar Ruhi also documented numerous encounters with Samad Vurgun, emphasizing his simplicity, sincerity, and respect for national heritage. Particularly noteworthy is the episode related to the debate over the ownership of the *Koroglu* epic, during which Turkmen writer Ata Govshudov passionately defended its Turkmen origins. Samad Vurgun's reaction to this episode – admiration for such devotion to one's people – demonstrates his deep respect for national identity and historical consciousness (Ruhi, 1976).

An important dimension of Samad Vurgun's presence in the literary recollections of the Turkic peoples is his role as a unifying cultural figure. The accounts of Turkic writers consistently portray him not merely as a prominent Azerbaijani poet, but as a representative of a broader Turkic cultural identity. His participation in literary congresses, jubilees, and international meetings created a space where shared historical memory, folklore, and artistic values were actively discussed and reaffirmed.

The recollections emphasize that Samad Vurgun possessed a rare ability to transcend formal boundaries and establish sincere, human connections. His behavior in official settings, as illustrated in the episode narrated by Nazim Hikmet, reveals a personality capable of transforming rigid ceremonial environments into spaces of genuine communication. Such moments are not anecdotal details alone; rather, they reflect the poet's broader cultural mission – to humanize literature and to restore its emotional and ethical foundations.

In the recollections of Turkmen writers, especially Berdy Kerbabayev and Akbar Ruhi, Samad Vurgun emerges as a figure deeply respectful of national traditions and historical consciousness. His reactions to discussions surrounding the *Koroglu* epic demonstrate his understanding of folklore as a shared spiritual heritage rather than a subject of rivalry. By valuing devotion to one's people and respect for ancestral memory, Samad Vurgun implicitly promoted a model of cultural dialogue based on mutual recognition and dignity.

Another recurring theme in these recollections is Samad Vurgun's mentorship of

young writers. Accounts by Anna Kovusov underline his attentiveness to emerging literary voices and his willingness to engage critically yet encouragingly with their work. His advice was not limited to technical aspects of poetry; it often addressed the broader responsibility of the writer toward society, language, and cultural continuity. Such interactions reinforced his image as a moral guide within the literary community of the Turkic peoples.

The recollections also reveal that Samad Vurgun's influence extended beyond artistic matters into the realm of personal ethics. Writers repeatedly stress his generosity, loyalty in friendship, and emotional openness. These traits contributed significantly to the lasting impact he made on his contemporaries. In literary memory, these human qualities often become inseparable from artistic achievement, forming a holistic image of the poet as both creator and individual.

From a literary-historical perspective, these recollections function as an alternative narrative source, complementing official biographies and critical studies. They preserve emotional truth, everyday detail, and spontaneous impressions that are often absent from formal scholarly discourse. Through such narratives, Samad Vurgun's life acquires depth and immediacy, allowing future generations to perceive him not only as a canonical author but as a living presence within the cultural history of the Turkic world.

Ultimately, the literary recollections of Turkic writers confirm that Samad Vurgun's legacy is not confined to national borders. His image occupies a shared cultural space shaped by collective memory, artistic solidarity, and ethical values. This enduring presence underscores the power of literature to unite peoples through mutual respect, shared experiences, and a common commitment to humanistic ideals.

Turkmen poet Anna Kovusov's memoirs shed light on Samad Vurgun's pedagogical and mentoring role. Recalling her first meeting with the poet at the Maxim Gorky Liter-

ature Institute in 1952, she describes how his visit became a major cultural event for students. Samad Vurgun not only shared his poetic insights but also read his works, answered questions, and provided constructive criticism to young writers.

Kovusov emphasizes his attentiveness and generosity, noting that he carefully read students' books and offered valuable advice, encouraging them to broaden their creative horizons. Her later recollection of Samad Vurgun's influential speech on poetry at the Second Congress of Soviet Writers further confirms his authority as a thinker and literary theorist (Kovusov, 1979).

In the memoir writings of Tatar author A. Minsky, Samad Vurgun appears as a deeply compassionate and supportive figure. Minsky acknowledged that Samad Vurgun once helped him overcome a serious personal difficulty and expressed admiration for the poet's sincere love for all nations. According to Minsky, Samad Vurgun frequently spoke with warmth and respect about Tatar literature and culture, both in Moscow and Kazan, reinforcing his image as a true advocate of intercultural harmony (Minsky, 1966).

Conclusion

The memoir literature of the Turkic peoples presents Samad Vurgun as a multidimensional figure: a great poet, a moral authority, a cultural ambassador, and a sincere human being. These recollections are invaluable literary and historical sources that illuminate not only his personal qualities but also the broader context of inter-Turkic literary relations in the twentieth century.

Through memoirs, Samad Vurgun's life and spirit continue to live on, affirming the unity of the Turkic world and the enduring power of literature to foster friendship, understanding, and shared cultural memory. His image in memoir literature stands as a testament to the strength of artistic brotherhood and the timeless relevance of humanistic values.

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