

Gulshan Malik BAGHIROVA,

orcid.org/0009-0002-9818-1067

Lecturer at the Department of World Literature and Theory

Azerbaijan University of Languages

(Baku, Azerbaijan) gulsenbagirova0202@gmail.com

THE EXPERIENCE OF WAR AND RESISTANCE IN THE NOVELS OF R. GARY AND Z. GARAYEV

The article is devoted to a comparative literary analysis of the experience of war and resistance in the novels of two significant twentieth-century authors: the French writer Romain Gary and the Azerbaijani prose author Zaman Garayev. The relevance of the study stems from the enduring importance of World War II in the collective consciousness of different nations and the fact that literary works of this period continue to form cultural memory, ethical values, and historical perspectives. Special attention is given to how national traditions, personal experiences, and narrative strategies shape the artistic image of the Resistance movement.

*The introduction situates the topic within the broader field of war literature, emphasizing the dual orientation of this corpus: it reflects both individual psychological experience and the collective struggle of peoples. In this framework, Gary and Garayev represent two complementary approaches to the same historical phenomenon. The first part of the article focuses on Romain Gary, who not only participated in the French Resistance as a Free French pilot but also transformed this biographical experience into an artistic philosophy. In works such as *European Education* and *Promise at Dawn*, resistance is presented less as a sequence of military operations than as an existential journey of moral growth, psychological endurance, and the shaping of human dignity. Gary employs poetic imagery, symbolic motifs, and introspective narration, through which the Resistance acquires a universal meaning—beyond political or strategic considerations—becoming a metaphor for spiritual maturity and the defense of humanistic values.*

*The second part analyzes the works of Zaman Garayev, especially the novel *Khargo*, which centers on the legendary Azerbaijani partisan Ahmadiyya Jabrayilov. Garayev's narrative method is rooted in historical realism and close attention to factual detail. Resistance here is not primarily an existential metaphor, but a concrete historical and strategic process: partisan operations, tactical maneuvers, and the collective unity of the struggle against fascism. The novel emphasizes the importance of solidarity, courage, and tactical skill, thereby highlighting the contribution of Azerbaijani fighters to the broader European theater of war. The focus on real events and figures grounds the narrative in a documentary spirit and expands the international scope of Resistance literature.*

In the conclusion, the article draws on Paul Ricoeur's philosophical theories of memory and Robert Paxton's historical studies of the French Resistance to synthesize the two perspectives. Gary embodies the introspective, symbolic, and poetic dimension of resistance, while Garayev expresses its historical, factual, and strategic nature. These approaches are not contradictory but complementary: together they provide a multidimensional picture of heroism, freedom, and human dignity. The comparative analysis reveals that the juxtaposition of Gary's and Garayev's works enriches our understanding of wartime literature, illustrating how different cultural traditions interpret the same historical experience through distinct but interrelated lenses.

Thus, the article contributes to the comparative study of war literature, expanding the dialogue between Western European and Azerbaijani cultural contexts. It demonstrates that the representation of resistance in literature not only preserves historical memory but also generates new ethical and philosophical meanings relevant for subsequent generations.

Key words: Romain Gary, Zaman Garayev, war, resistance, experience, comparison.

Гульшан Малік БАГІРОВА,

orcid.org/0009-0009-6742-8996

викладач кафедри світової літератури та теорії

Азербайджанського університету мов

(Баку, Азербайджан) gulsenbagirova0202@gmail.com

ДОСВІД ВІЙНИ ТА ОПОРУ В РОМАНАХ Р. ҐАРІ ТА З. ҐАРАЄВА

Ця Стаття присвячена порівняльному літературному аналізу досвіду війни та опору в романах двох значних авторів ХХ століття: французького письменника Ромена Ґарі та азербайджанського прозаїка Замана Ґараєва. Актуальність дослідження випливає з незмінного значення Другої світової війни в колективній свідомості різних

народів та того факту, що літературні твори цього періоду продовжують формувати культурну пам'ять, етичні цінності та історичні перспективи. Особлива увага приділяється тому, як національні традиції, особистий досвід та наративні стратегії формують художній образ руху Опору.

Вступ розміщує тему в ширшому полі воєнної літератури, підкреслюючи подвійну спрямованість цього корпусу: він відображає як індивідуальний психологічний досвід, так і колективну боротьбу народів. У цьому контексті Гарі та Гараєв представляють два взаємодоповнюючі підходи до одного й того ж історичного явища. Перша частина статті зосереджена на Ромені Гарі, який не лише брав участь у Французькому Опорі як пілот Вільної Франції, але й перетворив цей біографічний досвід на художню філософію. У таких творах, як «Європейська освіта» та «Обіцянка на світанку», опір представлений не стільки як послідовність військових операцій, скільки як екзистенційна подорож морального зростання, психологічної витривалості та формування людської гідності. Гері використовує поетичні образи, символічні мотиви та інтроспективну оповідь, завдяки яким Опір набуває універсального значення – поза політичними чи стратегічними міркуваннями – стаючи метафорою духовної зрілості та захисту гуманістичних цінностей.

У другій частині аналізуються твори Замана Гараєва, особливо роман «Харго», у центрі якого – легендарний азербайджанський партизан Ахмадія Джабраїлов. Метод оповіді Гараєва ґрунтується на історичному реалізмі та пильній увазі до фактичних деталей. Опір тут – це не перш за все екзистенційна метафора, а конкретний історичний та стратегічний процес: партизанські операції, тактичні маневри та колективна єдність боротьби проти фашизму. Роман підкреслює важливість солідарності, мужності та тактичної майстерності, тим самим висвітлюючи внесок азербайджанських бійців у ширший європейський театр воєнних дій. Зосередження уваги на реальних подіях та постатях ґрунтує оповідь у документальному дусі та розширює міжнародний масштаб літератури Опору.

На завершення стаття спирається на філософські теорії пам'яті Поля Рікера та історичні дослідження Роберта Пакстона про французький Опір для синтезу двох перспектив. Гері втілює інтроспективний, символічний та поетичний вимір опору, тоді як Гараєв виражає його історичну, фактичну та стратегічну природу. Ці підходи не суперечать один одному, а доповнюють один одного: разом вони створюють багатовимірну картину героїзму, свободи та людської гідності. Порівняльний аналіз показує, що зіставлення творів Гері та Гараєва збагачує наше розуміння літератури воєнного часу, ілюструючи, як різні культурні традиції інтерпретують один і той самий історичний досвід через різні, але взаємопов'язані призми.

Таким чином, стаття робить внесок у порівняльне дослідження воєнної літератури, розширюючи діалог між західноєвропейським та азербайджанським культурними контекстами. Вона демонструє, що репрезентація опору в літературі не лише зберігає історичну пам'ять, але й породжує нові етичні та філософські значення, актуальні для наступних поколінь.

Ключові слова: Ромен Гарі, Заман Гараєв, війна, опір, досвід, порівняння.

Introduction. The wartime literature of the 20th century is notable for its rich examples of artistic analysis of historical events and the merging of individual experience with collective memory. The novels of Romain Gary and Zaman Garayev are important literary events in this regard. Although the work of both authors is set against the backdrop of World War II and the Resistance movement, their artistic approaches, presentation of images and development of events differ in many aspects. R. Gary's novel is based on an introspective, spiritual and poetic approach, while Z. Garayev's work focuses on historical-realistic, factual events and strategic context.

Romain Gary, a participant in the war and one of the leading figures of the French Resistance, was drafted into military service in Salon-de-Provence in 1938, and after some time was accepted into a one-year flight school in Avord, but upon graduation he was not given the rank of officer. Researchers associate this fact with his recent admission to French citizenship. In August 1939, he served as an instructor at the Avord school, and at the same time participated in the teaching process at the Bordeaux-Mérignac school.

A supporter of General Charles de Gaulle R. Gary flew to Algeria in 1940, from there by car to Casa-

blanca, and then by cargo ship to Glasgow. He joined the Free French forces organized by de Gaulle and served as a pilot in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, Libya, Kufra, Abyssinia, Syria, and the Palestinian coast guard. Romain Katsev took the pseudonym "Gary" when he was included in the group of pilots assigned to bomb Lorraine.

Lieutenant R. Gary along with the pilot and radio operator-gunner, was sent to bomb German factories on a Boston bomber on January 25, 1944, but the plane was hit by anti-aircraft fire, and Gary and the pilot were injured. R. Gary managed to land the plane at his airbase after the third attempt, directing the control system to the pilot who had lost his sight. This incident was recorded in the history of the French air force as the first example of a blind pilot landing a plane on the instructions of the navigator. R. Gary flew a total of twenty-five combat flights on the Western Front and participated in more than sixty-five hours of combat operations. At the end of the war, he was recognized as an active member of the Resistance movement and was retired from the army with the rank of captain in the reserve.

After the war R. Gary, who returned to France and was accepted into the diplomatic service, gained international experience in this field.

The description of the French Resistance Movement in Romain Gary's literary activity. The writer's work "European Education", which tells about the life of partisans in Poland and Lithuania during the German occupation, is actually evaluated as a philosophical and social manifesto exposing the paradoxical nature of European civilization. R. Gary notes in the work that "European universities were the cradle of civilization; it was in their bosom that the ideas of freedom, human dignity and fraternity were born and inspired our greatest creative examples. But there is another form of European education that we now receive: shootings, slavery, torture... European education... This is a lesson that is given to you when you shoot your father, kill someone or die of hunger. This is a good school; you really get an education" (Gary, 1972: 31).

The work which combines the horrors of war with idealism, art, culture and humanistic values, begins with a description of a local doctor Tvardovsky digging a shelter for his son in the forest during the German occupation. In the following years, Yanek joins a partisan group, falls in love with a girl named Zosha, and, learning to kill, receives a "European education", which is reflected in the title of the work: "Europe has the oldest churches, universities, rich libraries and a high level of education. But in the end, this European education teaches you to find the courage to shoot a man with his head down..." (Gary, 1972: 31).

The novel "The Colours of the Day", which acts as an important expression of symbolism in R. Gary's work combines a love story with a political and social context, highlighting the disappointment arising from political ideologies and the search for meaning in the post-war world. These symbols which were used by the crew members of the French air force to recognize each other during the war and were called "colors of the day" in the British Royal Air Force, have become, in Gary's poetic imagination, a colorful symbolism of human existence and historical consciousness in a universal context.

Although the novel "The Roots of Heaven", dedicated to the story of the salvation of African elephants, is considered by literary critics as the first "ecological" novel, the meaning of the work, built on a detective line, has an extremely deep philosophical content. R. Gary who fought against fascism all his life, considered the extermination of animals an example of fascism that had spread into everyday life.

The novel "The Life Before Us" is considered one of the most brilliant examples of modern French prose. At the center of the events unfolding in the Belleville district of Paris is the elderly, now forgotten, frivolous Madame Rosa of Polish-Jewish origin, a former

survivor of Hitler's death camp. She takes the children of the owners of the "oldest profession" under her care and provides them with shelter. Among the children under her care is a boy of Arab origin named Mohammed (Mo-Mo). The novel is narrated from the perspective of this boy. The relationship between the elderly Jewish woman and the Arab child forms the magnificent plot of this work, which is considered the culmination of Gary's work.

In R. Gary's retrospective novel "The Promise at Dawn" written in 1960, real events and characters are reinterpreted. In the novel, he transforms into artistic memory not only his personal fate and the path of spiritual formation, but also the complex political-historical processes of 20th-century Europe, especially the Resistance movement during World War II. Throughout the work, the love of freedom of the French people, the Free French movement that arose during the occupation, R. Gary's participation in the Resistance movement, and his strong commitment to national identity and French belonging become one of the main motifs.

R. Gary repeatedly emphasizes in the work that he had adopted the idea of fighting for France since childhood and that this national idea, instilled in him by his mother, constituted the essence of his whole life. The images formed in his imagination about heroism are tested in the realities of the Second World War and intersect with real historical events. Throughout the plot of the novel, both the ideological foundations of the Free French movement and the moral state of its soldiers come to life.

The main character of the work and the author's alter ego, R. Gary, believes that the meaning of his life is to join the Resistance movement and fight for France. He evaluates the occupation of France as not only a political but also a moral disaster. His sympathy for the Free French movement that emerged under the leadership of Charles de Gaulle is clearly visible. The author presents Charles de Gaulle not only as a military leader, but also as the embodiment of the revival of the national spirit: "Charles de Gaulle was a spark born from the ashes of our extinguished hopes; he reminded us of a spirit that lives forever in a dream, a deed called France" (Gary, 1980: 121).

The novel describes in detail the author's days at the front, his military operations as a pilot, and the harsh realities of front-line life. He summarizes his experience in the Resistance movement with his creative potential, presenting it not only as a historical episode, but also as a test of individual heroism and moral maturity. The novel, which also reflects the motives of courage, self-confidence, and moral purity inherent in the participants of the Resistance move-

ment, attracts attention on the one hand as a collection of confessions arising from the author's personal memory, and on the other hand as an artistic document preserving the collective memory of a people.

In the novel "The Promise at Dawn", the idea of resistance creates the impression of both a symbol of individual psychological maturity and a carrier of collective national memory. Based on P. Ricoeur's understanding of memory and identity, we can say that the autobiographical narrative model created by R. Gary shows that the individual's moral resistance is intertwined with the history of the nation (Ricoeur, 2004: 142).

In "The Promise at Dawn", personal memory and moral formation are the main themes. Through the image of the author's alter ego, R. Gary, the occupation of France, the Free French movement, and the ideals of the Resistance are depicted through the prism of personal memory. In the novel, the Resistance is not limited to political and military activity, but also reflects the formation of national identity and moral maturity. Mother-son relationships, childhood influences, and poetic images create an emotional and symbolic manifestation of the spirit of the Resistance. R. Gary has absorbed a sense of belonging to France and a desire to fight for freedom since childhood, his mother's inexhaustible love and high expectations guide his actions and moral development, R. Gary perceives the defense of France as his personal moral mission; this approach reflects the synthesis of both personal memory and collective historical memory. The author's poetic images – a mother's embrace, the French flag, a child's dream – are an aesthetic and creative manifestation of the Resistance against the backdrop of historical trauma (Ricoeur, 2004: 142). For R. Gary the Resistance is not only military heroism, but also individual psychological development and the preservation of national identity. At the same time, the depictions of childhood and adolescence in the work form the initial contours of the idea of the Resistance, indicating the beginning of spiritual processes that will later develop into a political and moral struggle.

The description of the French Resistance Movement in Azerbaijani literature. The description of the French Resistance Movement in Azerbaijani literature is reflected, especially in war memoirs, journalistic writings, novels and short stories. The description of the Resistance Movement in our national literature has been carried out mainly in two directions. The first of these is the historical-realistic description of the theme of war and resistance, and the second is the expression of the humanistic and ethical aspects of the spirit of resistance through literary images.

In works dedicated to the ideas of resistance, heroism and human dignity, which have been the focus of attention of Azerbaijani writers at different times, the symbolic and concrete aspects of the struggle for freedom are artistically presented. The description of the resistance movement in Azerbaijani literature was widespread, especially in the 1960s–1980s. In memoirs and journalistic texts, authors highlighted the selflessness, heroism and high moral qualities of the resistance participants. One of the main figures who illuminated the French Resistance Movement in Azerbaijani literature is the partisan Ahmadiyya Jabrayilov. A. Jabrayilov has passed a courageous combat path as a brave son of the Azerbaijani people, who rendered great services in saving humanity from the terrible threat of fascism and in the victory over Nazism in the 20th century (Əhmədova, 2020: 3). Ahmadiyye Jabrayilov's real participation in the French resistance movement in World War II can be learned from the letters of his close friend and comrade-in-arms Rene Chambar. In these letters, R. Chambar talks about his joining the French resistance movement, the struggle of French partisan groups against fascist Germany and the Vichy regime led by Philippe Pétain, and the participation of Soviet soldiers in this struggle. He specifically provides extensive information about the military path of his subordinate, Armed Michel, his capture by the Germans and escape from captivity, joining the partisans, his high military skills, and his sacrifices for the freedom of France (Məcidova, Əhmədova, 2020: 12).

In his memoirs, A. Jabrayilov artistically reflects the spiritual dimensions of the struggle for freedom during the war years, and shows the protection of human dignity and beliefs through heroic images. In addition, in the journalistic writings of Mirza Ibrahimov and Suleyman Rahimov, it is possible to find the motifs of the French Resistance Movement, general anti-fascist ideas and ideas of freedom. Although the spirit of resistance and the idea of freedom were presented to the Azerbaijani reader in scientific-academic language in the articles written by Mirza Ibrahimov, Suleyman Rahimov described the daily life, worries and heroism of the resistance participants in his narratives and stories in a realistic style. These literary descriptions act not only as an artistic embodiment of historical facts, but also show the universal importance of the spirit of resistance, the spiritual and moral choices of man. In the works of Azerbaijani writers, the French Resistance Movement is presented both as a symbol of the people's struggle for freedom and as an artistic-aesthetic model. The analysis based on literary examples shows that these descriptions have strengthened anti-fascist and humanist traditions in

our literature by emphasizing themes such as heroism, the struggle for freedom, and the protection of moral values.

The French Resistance movement was also reflected in the artistic style in the work of Zaman Garayev, who is known in 20th century Azerbaijani literature as a writer, publicist, critic, and literary scholar. In the novel "Khargo", which describes the life and fighting path of the legendary partisan Ahmadiyya Jabrayilov, Z. Garayev not only spoke about Khargo's bravery, but also once again exposed the ruthless and oppressive nature of the fascist and Armenian usurpers. The plot of the novel is based on the tragic realities of World War II. In the work, where the author describes the hunger, cold, and cruelty that separates people from each other, both front-line scenes and events taking place in the rear are presented sequentially. The writer describes the events not only as an outside observer, but also as if penetrating the depths of human destinies from the cradle of war.

The novel, consisting of forty chapters with various titles, begins with a description of who Khargo is and ends with a description of his son's return to his homeland after the partisans' victory. Ahmadiyya, who was seriously injured in one of the first battles, is captured along with her commander Fazil Jafarov, and experiences difficult days. After Fazil Jafarov is shot in front of her eyes, Ahmadiyya Jabrayilov sets herself the goal of pretending to obey the fascists' words and running away to join the partisans at the first opportunity. Madame Jeanne, who is cleaning the rooms of the German officers, takes pity on Ahmadiyya, puts her in her son's place and helps her recover, escape from captivity and join the partisans. After Sarah and Bessing introduce her to other partisans, new combat missions await Ahmadiyya. First, she blows up the bridge that the Germans will cross with the partisans, and "eliminates" several high-ranking German officers using special methods in the barbershop where she works as a barber. Ferdinand, who led Ahmadiyya to death while in captivity, became Khargo's closest friend and comrade-in-arms after joining the partisan group, fed up with the unjust cruelty of the Germans.

Having received news that the Nazis would attack the village of Noan, the partisans secretly entered the village and set themselves the goal of protecting the local population. Although they cleared the village of fascists, Pierre and Khargo could not escape. Pierre fell into the hands of the fascists, while Khargo rode his motorcycle into the ravine to avoid surrender. Although he was seriously injured, fortunately, Bessing's cousin found him, healed him, and informed the partisans. The difficulties he experienced and the

wounds he received could not turn Khargo from his path, and he sought ways to destroy the enemy with even greater courage. He entered the prisoner-of-war camp wearing the clothes of the worker Albert, encouraged the prisoners to join the partisans, and in the uniform of an Oberlieutenant, he walked among the Germans and conducted reconnaissance: "The partisans had multiplied everywhere, they had covered all of France. The Hitlerites, who became even more deranged, were looting everything good in the country and sending it to Germany. One day, the turn came for the museum where Grandfather Forestier worked. The looters turned the museum upside down, packed all the exhibits in boxes, loaded them into cars and sent them to the railway station" (Qarayev, 1998: 76).

After the news was conveyed to the partisans by Eliza, the granddaughter of Forestier, Ahmadiyya immediately took action and headed to the station with the partisan group. Although the partisans achieved their goal and managed to separate the carriage containing the prisoners and museum exhibits from the train, Khargo was shot in the throat and fell into the ravine. Their comrades-in-arms were unable to go to Khargo's aid so that the prisoners would not fall into the enemy's hands and said goodbye to him from afar. The partisans, who could not recover from this shock for a long time, spoke loudly about Khargo's bravery and courage, and considered themselves guilty of his untimely death. Although Ferdinand's capture later disappointed the partisans, it did not break their resolve. With the help of Bessing, Ferdinand escaped from captivity and then an event occurred that surprised everyone – the partisans learned that the newly appointed commandant of the city of Albi was Khargo. Convinced that Khargo was not a traitor, the partisans later learned what had happened from him. It turns out that after Khargo was wounded in the throat at the railway station, General von Dribrih saw him in a ravine while passing by and mistook him for a German because he was wearing a German officer's uniform and took him to the hospital. Khargo, who opened his eyes in the hospital, observed what was happening for a while and, after making sure that everyone mistook him for a German, made intelligence plans. "When he recovered and was released from the hospital, they sent him to the Albi city commandant's office. Since the city commandant had disappeared in those days, Hoffmann, who was General von Dribrih's "trusted man", was appointed commandant. This was an unexpected coincidence. Khargo would never have dreamed of becoming a commandant. He remembered Mirza Fatali's work "The Deceived Kevakib"" (Qarayev, 1998: 89).

Using his commandant position and seizing the necessary documents, Khargo gave instructions and incited the soldiers in the prison camp to revolt, directly led the increase in the number of partisans and the defeat of the fascists. Finally, after the capture of Major Gottfried, the Germans were completely weakened and the partisans managed to liberate France, and after some time the Second World War ended. After the victory, Khargo was given an apartment in one of the most beautiful places in France and was awarded five of the highest orders and medals of France. However, he lived with the desire to return to his homeland, and Khargo, saying goodbye to his comrades-in-arms, returns to his homeland, promising not to forget them.

Z. Garayev's novel "Khargo" presents the events in a historical-realistic and military-strategic context. The hero of the work Ahmadiyya Jabrayilov is presented to the reader through his actual partisan life, capture, injury, and participation in partisan operations. Khargo's heroism is not based only on individual courage, it serves strategic thinking and the collective goals of the partisan movement. The work extensively describes the cruel reality of war, the persecution of the fascist and Vichy regimes, as well as the military and moral difficulties of the partisans. Khargo and his comrades-in-arms carry out planned operations, neutralize German officers, and organize the partisan movement in prison camps. This reflects the strategic and realistic manifestation of the war, while also bringing to the fore the col-

lective spirit of Resistance. Ahmadiyya Jabrayilov demonstrates true heroism in partisan operations, acting as the embodiment of both individual and national resistance.

Conclusions. The partisan characters in both R. Gary's "The Promise at Dawn" and Z. Garayev's "Khargo" novels reflect various aspects of the Resistance motif. In "The Promise at Dawn", R. Gary is tested as a pilot on the front line, and participation in the Resistance movement demonstrates his moral maturity. Z. Garayev's Khargo, on the other hand, highlights the strategic aspects of battles, captivity, and covert operations, showing the collective aspect of the partisan struggle. R. Gary's introspective approach emphasizes individual memory, while Z. Garayev's realistic approach emphasizes collective and historical memory.

Researchers Paul Ricoeur and Robert Paxton note that the French Resistance movement was both a form of political and moral resistance and embodied a synthesis of individual heroism and collective ethics. Robert Paxton's research describes in detail the strategic planning, intelligence activities, and active resistance of the movement's participants to the fascist occupation (Paxton, 2001). This perspective more clearly shows the parallels and differences between R. Gary's poetic interpretation and Z. Garayev's realistic description. However, both works successfully present different aspects of the war and the Resistance movement on a literary level and make an important contribution to 20th century war literature.

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