The theme of modernity in the Bashkir dramaturgy of the 1930s

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Abstract. The present study is an attempt to reveal features of the Bashkir dramaturgy of the 1930s when Bashkir literature was seeking to solve the problem of a new hero. The comprehensive analysis of the Bashkir dramas was carried out. In analyzing the principles of reflecting reality, researching genre and style features, determining the range of topics and problems, the nature of the conflict of dramatic works of these years, the study revealed a trend of gradual transition of Bashkir drama from diverse musical and ethnographic plays on the historical past to a realistic depiction of modernity, the dramas of characters, the psychological depiction of the spiritual world of heroes. The relevance of the study is due to the growing interest in the multidimensional study of the features of Bashkir literature, in particular, the dramaturgy of the 1930s, when a socio-psychological drama was first created in the works by S. Miftakhov, B. Bikbay, K. Dayan. The musical and ethnographic works by M. Burangulov, Kh. Gabitov, Kh. Ibragimov, S. Mirasov, F. Suleymanov and others dominated the Bashkir drama of the 1920s. Poetics, style, action development were predetermined by the customs and mores of bygone antiquity, inter-clan and family relations. The spirit of renewal that accompanied the development of Bashkir poetry and prose in the 1930s also captured the dramaturgy of those years; the young Bashkir stage literature gradually moved from folklore to professional theatrical art, came close to depicting modernity.

Keywords: Bashkir dramaturgy, socio-psychological drama, conflict, problems, image of a contemporary

1 Introduction

The playwrights of the 1930s, who depicted people's life at the new historical stage, needed new means of artistic expression, new forms. Most playwrights opted for the stage sketch. The first stage essays by S. Miftakhov "In the Land of Pans" and A. Tagirov "Urnyak" were literary montage, but they fixed the interest in the present in both the audience and playwrights. In the dramas "Sakmar" by S. Miftakhov and "Siberian Gilman" by A. Tagirov, instead of the abstract opposition of "good-evil", generalized folklore humanism, the authors posed the problem more specifically: "man-people", "personality-social environment" to diversify public relations. Thus, from the sphere of moral abstraction [1], the question was transferred to historical and social ground, which makes it possible to come to a realistic synthesis of disparate facts and events.

2 Problem Statement

The Soviet period of Bashkir literature, including the 1930s, has been quite thoroughly studied in works on the development of national verbal art [2]: the fundamental seven-volume "History of Bashkir Literature" (1990–1996), the works by R.N. Baimov, M.F. Gainullin, T.A. Kilmukhametov, G.B. Khusainov, M.G. Khamidullin. They provide an overview of the evolutionary development of literature. The present article analyzes the stage works of the 1930s, the topic of modernity in dramas in the ideological and aesthetic perspectives, genre and style aspects, skills of writers, features of conflict, creation of typological characters, etc.

3 Research Questions

In the early 1930s, A. Tagirov and S. Miftakhov were seeking to renew the repertoire and to professionalize the theater. The entire theatrical community took part in the struggle for the creation of dramas on current problems. In a short time, topical playssuch as "Urnyak" by A. Tagirov, “In the Land of Pans" by S. Miftakhov and others were represented. By the mid-1930s, many new dramas were created: “Siberian Gilman” by A. Tagirov, "Sakmar", "Friendship and Love", "Daughter of the Steppes" by S. Miftakhov, "Karlugas" by B. Bikbay, "Tansulpan" by K. Dayan and others [3].

In the drama "Siberian Gilman" Tagirov seeks to create the image of a Communist, the leader of people, who was exiled for his beliefs during the First Revolution of 1905–1907. Tagirov aims to show the development of the first communes into collective farms, when the heroes are grouped into two irreconcilable camps. The first camp headed by Gilman includes poor working people – the old Galyau, the collective farmer...
Shakir, the former laborer Shaikhi. The second camp is made up of opponents of the new government.

Recreating the image of the people with historical roots and national traits, Tagirov organically links their actions with the flow of life, with the natural course of events, which made it possible to trace the life path of the main character Gilman, and some second characters. This was a new and important factor in the work of the playwright and in the Bashkir dramaturgy.

The drama is constructed in such a way that its main collision contributes to a more complete disclosure of various links in the overall struggle, the concentration of plot development. In the first act, events unfold in the old house of the poor Shakir. From a small house, the action is transferred to the board of the collective farm, then to the street and collective farm fields. With each new phenomenon, the tension grows, the role of the collective farm system becomes evident.

In the drama by S. Miftakhov “Sakmar”, the theme of collectivization is covered through the family. When depicting the social struggle in the countryside, Miftakhov, like Tagirov, brought to the fore the problem of social rift. But in contrast to previously created stage works, in “Sakmar”, this problem is described as moral, the development of events and actions of the characters are determined by the socio-psychological conflict. In the 1930s, the struggle in almost all dramas on collective farming in the countryside. Being a communist, a staunch fighter for Soviet power, he pursues the policy of the Communist Party in the countryside. Like his father, he protects all the weak and disadvantaged, leads the advanced rural youth in the struggle for new relationships between people, for moral and ethical issues, describes a conflict between husband and wife – Aikhilu and Yulai – due to differences in views on the participation of women in social work.

In the second part of the trilogy, Yulai is the same skilled manager, a smart leader. He opposes “drawing up plans without leaving his office”, solves economic issues, taking into account modern trends. For this reason, he comes into conflict with the director of MTS Altayev. He appoints the old fidget Kului as a quality inspector. He controls those who work carelessly. These features characterize him as a person who does not recognize stagnation, laziness in thinking and work.

In his views on family life, on the role of a wife, he adheres to the old patriarchal canons: “Fed, dressed, what else do you need?” – he says to Aikhil who dreams of social work. Having become a husband and father, he believes that he has to support his family. He cannot understand Aikhil’s desire to work on an equal footing with him. Contrary to his husband’s will, Aikhilu works at the collective farm, thereby undermining his authority. Accidentally hearing how the tractor driver Yarkey confesses to Aikhil in friendly feelings, Yulai accuses her of debauchery.

At the beginning, Aikhiludoes not notice that she has been captured by narrow family interests. At first glance, she is satisfied with her life: she loves Yulai, raises her son. But over time, her heart begins to ache. Aikhilu thinks whether she should serve only her husband, or she should participate in public life. Aikhilu's monologue, especially in her reflections on the child, her idea of happiness manifested.

Before establishing a new relationship in the family, Aikhil has to overcome a difficult psychological barrier. The words of Yarkey who calls on Aikhilu to work in the countryside. Being a communist, a staunch fighter for Soviet power, he pursues the policy of the Communist Party in the countryside. Under the beneficial influence of Yulai, the ideals and dreams of Aikhilu acquire real outlines. Secretly from her father, she joins the Komsomol and leaves the village to enroll the tractor driver courses.

The character of Aikhilu combines traditional and new traits, eventually winning over new ones. In the finale, Syrlybay reconsider his life positions, his attitude towards his daughter, when she returns after completing the course [1, p. 205]. In overcoming social and everyday difficulties, the character of Yulai, who became the chairman of the collective farm, is tempered.

Unfortunately, the living dialectic of character remains behind the scenes, does not organically merge with the dramatic action. The transition of Aikhilu’s character from a spontaneous protest against the old everyday customs to the position of an active fighter for a new life, like the changes that happened to her father, is not psychologically substantiated, remains behind the scenes. It is a simple jump from one psychological state to another.

Despite these shortcomings, Yulai and Aikhilu were the most significant images of their contemporaries in the Bashkir dramaturgy of the early 1930s. The innovation of Sagit Miftakhov was due to the new nature of the dramatic conflict.

The next drama – the drama of Sagit Miftakhov’s characters “Friendship and Love” is a continuation of “Sakmar”. The author shows new traits that have appeared in the characters over the past five or six years, how their behavior and views have changed. If in “Sakmara” the main attention is paid to class contradictions, in “Friendship and Love” he describes family relationships in a new society through the psychological analysis. “Friendship and Love” raises moral and ethical issues, describes a conflict between husband and wife – Aikhilu and Yulai – due to differences in views on the participation of women in social work.

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Before establishing a new relationship in the family, Aikhil has to overcome a difficult psychological barrier. The words of Yarkey who calls on Aikhilu to work in order to become an example for other women hurt both civic feelings and pride of the former female tractor driver.
The return of Aikhil to social work exacerbates the tense relations between Yulai and Aikhil. This conflict is further intensified by the fact that Yarkey begins to show his tender feelings for Aikhil, his readiness to replace her son with his own father.

The traditional love triangle in Miftakhov's drama finds a new resolution [4]. The playwright shows that the characters are becoming freed from the old prescriptions, old morality, old views on the family, love, friendship between man and woman, the relationship between husband and wife. This external and internal struggle of the characters caused a new type of conflict, a new type of drama – the drama of characters. Accumulating life experience, heroes conquer more and more peaks of spiritual development. Miftakhov shows new types of heroes who are ready to overcome spiritual barriers.

Attentive to the modern trends, the spiritual development of the people and personality, Miftakhov, presented changes in the characters of Aikhylu, Yulai, Yarkey, Kulai as a socio-political and individual psychological process. The innovative nature of the work is predetermined by the participation of characters in socially useful work in accordance with the norms of new morality, morality of the new society.

The drama “Friendship and Love” was created by Miftakhov working on the play “Daughter of the Steppes”, which raises the same problem of the collective and the individual. In this socio-psychological drama, the development of the conflict takes place on a spiritual plane, moral relationships between people are put at the forefront, which makes it possible to describe the inner world of the characters [5].

The protagonist of the work is eighteen-year-old Gulshat. Her mother gave birth to her in the steppe, when she was carrying food to her husband, who worked for a rich man grazing cattle around the clock. Yarulla raised his daughter alone. She grazed herds with her father in the endless steppes, “she absorbed purity from the sky, breadth from the open spaces, and inexhaustible energy from the sun.” The author presents her as a real daughter of the steppes, sincerely loving nature. During a snowstorm, she carefully wraps and warms a newborn lamb in her breast. Miftakhov emphasizes a new, conscientious attitude of the heroine to collective farm property. In conversations with her daughter, Yarulla recalls her bleak life before the revolution, hunger and cold, humiliation and insults. Comparing his old life with the present, Yarulla rejoices at the respectful attitude towards the working man under the Soviet regime, emphasizes the striking contrast between life in grief and poverty and life full of happiness and pride.

The dramatic action is developing around one incident – the search for two collective farm herdsmen Yarulla and Gulshat lost in the early spring blizzard, and the attempts of the kulaks to take advantage of the natural disaster. The dramatic action reveals the individuality and relationships of the characters. The author focuses on how different characters behave in the search for the lost people. Depicting how Farrakh, beloved Gulshat, the secretary of the collective farm board turns out to be a coward, helps the former kulaks Allayar and Aukhadi to steal the collective farm flock, supplies them with a permission so that they can sell the stolen cattle “legally”. The playwright reveals the relationship of weakness, cowardice and crime. In difficult circumstances, modesty, real humanity and masculinity are manifested [6].

4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this article is to reveal features of the Bashkir dramaturgy of the 1930s and to analyze the concept of a new hero.

5 Research Methods

The study used the methods such as the comparative-historical, hermeneutical, and content analyses.

6 Findings

Bashkir literature of the Soviet period went through a difficult and thorny path [7]. The 1920–30s can be considered a period of intense ideological and aesthetic searches for young Soviet drama, a period of the formation of theatrical art. Kh. Ibragimov, M. Burangulov, M. Gafuri, A. Tagirov, S. Miftakhov, N. Karip, B. Bikbay, K. Dayan and others made invaluable contributions to the development of stage works and theater. In the 1930s, high-level historical dramas were created. In the 1920s, the development of historical problems was still in progress. Therefore, many works relied on folk art, historical works replaced dramas based on the motives of historical folk songs. This determined the genre of dramas. Folklore and ethnographic plays dominated in the works by M. Burangulov and Kh. Ibragimov.

By the mid-1930s, many new dramas were created. They entered the golden fund of Bashkir literature [8]: “Siberian Gilman” by A. Tagirov, “Friendship and Love”, “Daughter of the steppes” by Miftakhov, “Karugas” by Bikbay, “Tansulpam” by Dayan [9]. Writers paid attention to the characters with their complex contradictions. The young playwright SagitMiftakhov, for example paid attention to the new nature of a dramatic conflict. Bashkir dramaturgy stepped forward from “works of events” to works of “characters”. The heroes had individual traits; in the conflict, the class struggle of two hostile camps gradually turned into clashes of characters. This confirms the development of writers’ skills in mastering complex genres such as drama, stage work.

7 Conclusion

In the 1930s, the desire to depict important contemporary phenomena, develop an acute, tense conflict, recreate realistic characters, achieve artistic generalization, and take advantage of the psychological analysis increased in Bashkir literature [10]. In this decade, the Bashkir dramaturgy went through an
accelerated path from musical and ethnographic plays and stage essays to a realistic drama of characters.

References


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