

THE MARI STORY OF THE 1920-1930TH YEARS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE VALUABLE PARADIGM AND POETICS OF ENLIGHTENMENT REALISM

**Raisia A. Kudryavtseva¹, Tatyana N. Belyaeva^{2*}, Marianna V. Ryabinina³,
& Galina E. Shkalina⁴**

¹Prof, Mari State University, RUSSIA, kudsebs@rambler.ru

²Asst. Prof., Mari State University, RUSSIA, sokolova_beljaeva@mail.ru

³Asst. Prof., Mari State University, RUSSIA, mari.riabinina@yandex.ru

⁴Prof, Mari State University, RUSSIA, galina_shkalina@mail.ru

*Corresponding author

Abstract

The purpose of the article is to reveal the manifestation of the content-value attitudes and features of the poetics of enlightening realism in the Mari story of the 1920-1930th years.

The article deals with the post-revolutionary stories of M. Shketan and Y. Elexseyn in the context of the general features of the educational stories of the Volga region peoples in the first third of the twentieth century, it reveals the distinctive features of the Mari story (the using of direct forms of expression of the didactic idea, an open author's position, the simplest plot construction and a minimum set of events and heroes). The forms of the artistic embodiment of the didactic idea followed both from the peculiarities of the writer's creative individuality and from the national specificity of the people's aesthetic thinking. The comparative analysis of the Mari and Chuvash moralizing stories are presented in this article (M. Shketan's «They separate» and I. Thti «Hello, Okitaro, hello!»). They are united by the educational moral idea and differed in ways of its disclosure.

In these Thti's and Shketan's stories the idea is revealed through the study of private human lives, through the reproduction of family and household scenes. There is no directly expressed social content. However, the life of the nation, people and society, the fate of culture and traditions, human life in general are highlighted through private in them. Shketan's generalizations of its kind are direct and through the figurative images. It makes his work sketch story, a synthesis of the essay (with strengthening the effect of authenticity of the represent and publicistic beginning in the content level and the form) and the humorous story (with bright images of comic characters – Petra and Corey – and dynamic comic situations). Thti's generalization is based on the allusion, the allegory, which turns his work into a story-parable, in which the universal, philosophical principles are strengthened.

Having the identical form of the narration (Shketan's, and Thti's stories have the first-person narrative); they embody two different compositional principles (montage and opposition).

It is proved, that broadcast of the enlightening value paradigm in the Mari story has been connected also with the art reconstruction of the people's moral experience, pedagogics and philosophy. In this context Yk. Elexseyn's stories of the 1920s are analyzed. The basis of the author's understanding of life and people in them is just the moral values of the Mari people, among them the industriousness, will and endurance are in the first flight and form the basis of spiritual and moral culture of the Mari people. The deficiency of them, in the author's opinion, is the cause of the tragedy of Chopay, the main character of the «Birch Box» story, and the emotional stresses of his parents.

In the art structure of the story «Peter, who lives on the edge of the ravine» semantic ideas in the author's

concept and formal trait of the main character are hard-working nature, pragmatism, frankness, contumacy and will, in all this is some kind of «perseverance of life» that allows people to survive in any household, social, historical situation.

In the Mari literature, which was focused on the valuable paradigm and poetics of educational realism, the predominant place was occupied by the essay story and «story-character». In the first case, the publicistic form of expression of the didactic idea has been noted, in the second case, the author's attention was focused on the ethno-moral component of the person and the character's behavior, for what the material of the Mari folk pedagogy was actively involved.

Structural-semantic and comparative-typological methods of research are used in the article.

Keywords: Mari literature, enlightening realism, story, valuable paradigm, poetics.

1. INTRODUCTION

The educational value paradigm and the art system are characterized by the penchant for «direct social action», the ideas of «common sense, rational perfection» (Borev, 2003, p. 331), the instructive (didactic) principle, the philanthropic orientation of the writer's words. This was the most brightly manifested in the pre-revolutionary creative work of the Mari people. However, the elements of the poetics of Enlightenment realism, as well as the philosophy of enlightenment, remain relevant in the first post-October decades of the twentieth century. This was largely due to the fact, that the peoples of the Volga region, which at last have got rid of the fetters of social oppression and have gained national freedom, by and large continued to remain illiterate in their mass, not ready for a harmonious arrangement of their own and social life. In these conditions the literature, which is initially connected with requests for time, has been aimed at active intervention in life, writers were fully aware of their philanthropic mission, awareness-raising work and educational importance of their creativity.

The purpose of this article is to reveal the manifestation of the content-value orientations and signs of the poetics of enlightenment realism in the Mari story of the 1920-1930th years.

2. DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

Enlightenment poetics after October was reflected in the stories of the best representatives of national literatures of the Volga region: Chuvash – I. Thti, S. Fomin, M. Trubina, S. Elger; Mari – S. Chavain, M. Shketan, N. Ignatyev, Jak. Elexey; Mordovia – Z. F. Dorofeev, F. M. Chesnokov, A. D. Kutorkin, I. P. Krivosheev, F. I. Zavalishin, etc. Writers, each in their own way, either directly or indirectly, in the art subtext called their fellow countryman readers to self-perfection, talking to them at ease, in a language they understand, mastering at the same time different forms of expression of the author's consciousness and enriching the arsenal of art means and literary techniques.

The forms of the art embodiment of the didactic idea followed both from the peculiarities of the writer's creative manner and from the national specificity of the aesthetic thinking of people, that is easily confirmed by the comparative and typological study of the moral tales of classics of the Chuvash and Mari prose of one literary era. We take for example the stories «They separate» (1926) by M. Shketan and «Hello, Okitaro, hello!» (1934) by I. Thti, which are united by an author's idea about how it is important to live together, friendly, organically, to organize life together.

The story «Hello, Okitaro, hello!» is written by Thti in Russian language and belongs to the mature period of his creative work, when his «handwriting» has been already formed and readers easily recognized the writer's style, his characteristic compositional techniques, including in the Russian language texts of the author. Having ddistracted from the purely specific features of the Thti's wordplay in the native Chuvash language, when we compare his story with the Shketan's work, we will fix attention on the singularity of their plot-composition structure, which is called to realize enlightenment semantic strategy.

The story of the Mari writer «They separate» is written at a time when his art predilection and creative trajectory, which will make him one of the unsurpassed classics of Mari literature (we are talking about

Shketan, first of all, as about the master of humorous story) are indicated.

In these Thti's and Shketan's stories the idea are revealed through the study of private human destinies, through the reproduction of family and household scenes, where there is no directly expressed social content.

However, the life of the nation, people and society, the fate of culture and national traditions, and human life in general are highlighted in them through the private. Shketan's generalizations of its kind are direct and through the figurative images. It makes his work sketch story, a synthesis of the essay (with strengthening the effect of authenticity of the represent and publicistic beginning in the content level and the form) and the humorous story (with bright images of comic characters – Petra and Corey – and dynamic comic situations). Thti's generalizations are based on allusion, allegory that turns his work into a story-parable, in which the universal, philosophical principles are strengthened. The moral and philosophical opinion of the author is expressed in the story «Hello, Okitaro, hello!».

At the same time both stories are written with the aim of direct instruction of the reader in the matters of human and social behavior. But, if Shketan's didacticism is direct, then Thti's it is hidden and is manifested through the correlation and conjugation of the external actions and internal movements, which are presented in the story.

Both works have the first-person narrative. It «strengthens the illusion of authenticity of the narration» and «focuses attention on the image of the narrator» (Esin, 2003, p. 122), which differs from the author. In the story «They separate» by M. Shketan there is a personal storyteller, who in many ways precedes the narrator of his humorous works of the 1930th years. This subject of speech is called «I», but he hasn't strongly pronounced speech manner. However, there are some elements of expressional stylistics, some kind of syntax, that will later lead Shketan to the narration pasticcio: «Let's *utter rapidly* about what it is now» («Тенийысым *тототлен* пуэна») (Shketan, 1991, p. 465); «Such a rich man!.. *Oh, and don't say...*» («А поянже!.. *Ой, утат ойло...*») (Shketan, 1991, p. 465).

At the same time, Shketan's narrator nevertheless is very close to the author, what is proved by the direct (publicistic) expression of the moral idea already at the beginning of the story: «Probably, the Mari can't live in a large family: albeit he is poor, albeit he is peasant of average means, albeit he is rich – they live for a time and nevertheless start a war in the family» (Shketan, 1991, p. 465). All further narration is intended to prove the harm of this «war», to strengthen and to sharpen the moral meaning of the story.

Thti's first-person narrative is presented as an imitation of the letter. Nonidenticalness of the author and storyteller here is more distinct, than at Shketan's works. The Thti's narrator has the attributes of the literary identity: a name, which is differs from the author's (Upamsar Vasyi) and as well as age, nationality and a social status, which are opened in a situation of the extension representation: «...I have honor to introduce myself, I am Chuvash by nationality; the son of the middle peasant of the village Tugay by a social status; I study in the fifth form of Hormalin junior secondary school. And I am fifteen years old» (Thti, 2006, p. 67. The italic here and further is mine – R.K.). It is the personified storyteller, the participant of the action, in particular, the main character of family and household scenes.

In the Thti's story we find out peculiar to the writer the installation principle of constructing a work, when two types of paintings, «located in a work nearby two images give birth to some new, third meaning, which appears precisely thanks to their neighborhood» (Esin, 2003, p. 130). This principle is quite in harmony with the genre nature of the story parable. Event numbers in their logical sequence become insignificant in it, messings, associatively arising thoughts, images, pictures come to the fore. A similar nature of the narration is emphasized also in the text by the narrator's words, for example: «Oh, yes, again I am apologetic for the inconsistency» (Thti, 2006, p. 68).

There are two «layers», two groups of images and pictures in the story «Hello, Okitaro, hello!»: 1) the way of life and psychology of the Chuvash family with its worldly pleasures and problems, familiarization with knowledge, with some ethnographic details, 2) the life of the Japanese monkeys macaco, who are afraid of water and for transition through the river used their own way of collective, accurately organized saving action.

The story begins with the narrator's treatment to the Japanese boy Okitaro, whose address he read in the newspaper «Pioneer truth», with the request to confirm the authenticity of the story of his school teacher about the way of monkeys' moving cross the river. This method is described in details in the last part of the letter.

The conversation about the Japanese macaques appears in the story as the beginning and the end of the

thinkings' chain, as a kind of «landmark» from which the narrator constantly distracts («Oh, yes, macaques. I keep turning aside from them» (Thti, 2006, p. 69)), is leaving in the world of his family, school, Chuvash, his and public interests. And the image of the last forms the central part of the story.

The Chuvash world, with which the narrator is closely connected, is represented by pictures, scenes, situations, which are associatively, replaced each other. Images of parents and the little sister – clever, friendly, honest («My father is an honest collective farmer» (Thti, 2006, p. 68)), decent, bitter ender, hardworking, living in harmony with the nature, grow from all this narrator's speech, which is motley in matter. And the narrator Upamsar Vasyi is alike them, in spite of the fact, that he pretends to be clueless and ill-bred. In all household situations there is a moral-evaluative reflection, namely, the narrator's assessment of himself and others on the principle of «good / bad». The nature of this assessment approaches him to other heroes and the «moral voice» of the Chuvash family and the Chuvash people. Examples of these reflections: «I am very uncomfortable in front of my father and mother»; «I'll never smoke again», «I's still difficult for me to forgive her, although she, in fact, was right» etc. (Thti, 2006, p. 67)]», – the narrator respectfully says about his younger sister.

On the basis of internal pairing of two «layers» of the text – Japanese and Chuvash – the third meaning arises in the work, which is correlated with the author's instructive idea, and is significant in sociohistorical, national and ethical, panhuman, philosophical plans: it is very important to live in peace and friendship, your organizing life together. It is relating to the renewed society, to the Chuvash people and to human beings in general.

The principle of composition in Shketan's story is the opposition «old / new» («before / now»). It is declared already at the beginning of the narrator's speech and consistently penetrated the whole structure of the work: now (the statement of the destruction of family traditions, the abnormal condition of Mari's modern life), before (the words of the local historian that before the Mari lived a large family are given), now (the narrator's reflections about how the poor and medium peasant separate; a brief description of five-year strife concerning the partition of property of two rich «offsprings» – Potyr and Cory).

The chain of similar humorous situations-dialogues, with a minimum of narrator's direct speech, is also connected with new life. The counting and sharing of property, pulling of the iron accounts, drunken brawls, daily proceeds form the basis of the comic situations, which make up the central part of the story. Dynamism and acuteness are given by elements of expressive stylistics, a peculiar syntax of the narrator's speech: «How can't you get a scare?» («Кузе от лүд?»); «Look – Cory goes having got drunk. Bibacious...» («Теве ончет – Кори йўын толеш. Руштшо...»); «What will it happen if they will rage like that even unto death?» («Колымешкыштат тыгак толашаш тўналыт гын, мо лиеш?»); «Brlyop!..» («Брльоп!..») (echoism, what is very customary for the Mari prose of the first two decades of the twentieth century, and which has no analogues in the Russian language).

Only at the end of the story through the stylistics of the narrator's speech the serious tinge of irony is brought into the general comic orientation of storyline situations: «How can't you fight?.. You cry and fight <...>. Oh, what ... it turns out, the life of a rich man is so hard!..» (Shketan, 1991, p. 467).

Both writers have a game. Shketan uses comic household situations, where the humorous effect is created not only by their content, but also by the nature of their conjugation in the general chain of situations. As a result, the story combines a dramatic (arising from reasoning about the departure from important national traditions) and a comic (a mixture of humor and irony) narration. Thti uses literary techniques, heroes, situations, words. The game is also enclosed in the form of the work itself – this is a letter from 15-year-old peasant Chuvash boy, who is receiving an education in reading or writing.

As we can see, these Thti's and Shketan's works are united by a didactic trend. Having the same narrative form, they are like two different genre forms of the «moral tale» (parable story and sketch story), embody two different compositional principles, which are in harmony with these genre formations (montage and oppositeness).

The translation of enlightening ideas in the Mari story was also connected with the art reconstruction of the people's moral experience, its pedagogics and philosophy. In this sense, it is not without interest the stories of Yakov Elexey'n's «Birchbark pannier» («Кўмыж эртне») and «Peter, who lives on the edge of the ravine» («Коремтўр Пётр»), written in 1925. They are similar in composition and linked ideologically. Both stories have a biographical discourse, through which, in the former case, it is revealed the fate of a person, who has stepped back from the paradigm of the people and destroyed the «main tradition of life» (Asylbaev, 1990, p. 113), in the latter case, the fate of a person, who was true to it and received in reward for it personal happiness and material wealth.

Moral values of the Mari people are the basis of author's understanding of life and people. Of these industriousness, volition and endurance are in the first flight. They form the basis of spiritual and moral culture of the Mari people.

The absence of them, in the opinion of the writer, is the cause of Chopay's tragedy (he is the main character of the story «Birchbark pannier») and the emotional experiences of his parents.

In this story the author also calls attention to such a side of the Mari ethnic worldview as feel ashamed of derogation from the spiritual bonds of the life of the nation. It is embedded in the concept of the temper of the main character. However much Chopay justified his desertion, remembering the army's difficulties, the words of the mill's owner, which were addressed to deserters («Lay down your arms, the communists destroy the peasants, and you help them» (Elexeyn, 1990, p. 5)), doesn't keep on the alert yet.

The techniques of the psychological narrative, which is used by the author («inner gesture», experienced speech), give an insight into Chopay's mental world, reveal that how it isn't easy for Chopay to enter his own home («after a little *embarrassedly standing* in the middle of the yard, he knocked quietly, coming to the window» (Elexeyn, 1990, p. 3)), it is shameful to ask for food and linen, the beauty of nature does not thrill the soul («Indeed, the forest gladdens only when you walk with a calm soul, but it agitates the deserter's heart » (Elexeyn, 1990, p. 6)).

Shame for son, who separated himself from his congeners (they were firmly connected with the traditions of peoples education), «put his life above the life of the nation, his work» (Asylbaev, 1990, p. 113) is the core of the characters of his father and mother. Chopay's father announces to the village inhabitants, who have gathered around his son's corpse, that he abandons to bury him, because his son was not industrious before the army, and he became the bad egg in the military. The same shame for Chopay is experienced by his former bride, Roskoviya, and she refuses him.

Elexeyn proves that sense of shame is a comprehensive, all-encompassing feeling that protects the race from the hardships of life, from spiritual death. This feeling is higher than motherly love and pity for her child. Love, care, self-sacrificing readiness to protect the son – these strong instinctive feelings are emphasized in the character of Chopay's mother at the beginning of the story: she does not sleep at night, thinks about her son, she knows his weakness and tries to warn him from trouble, she feels his approach to home not even seeing him, she feeds him and hides from father, hopes to calm somehow from husband's anger when he meets his deserter son, and finally, she doesn't hope for his indulgence, but wanting to save her son, she marches away from the house, carefully bids farewell. In the final scene, the motif of a tragic farewell to her son is replaced by the motive of a tragic renunciation of him, which, of course, is dictated by the moral principles of the national consciousness. She sat for a long time beside the murdered son, with a deep sorrow she took from his back a knapsack with a birch pannier, which was prepared for her as a gift, but he didn't managed to present. But also Chopay's mother expressed regret, that her son could not live like everyone else, and then, turning away from her son, she left, having obeyed the general moral law of the people,

In the story «Peter, who lives on the edge of the ravine» the writer describe the history of young boy, who lived in alien family since eight years. The dramatic situations and descriptions are detailed with the actions of the hero, which give evidence of his strong will and the labor nature of character, thus, they add to the narration light and hope, gradually remove the dramatic intonation.

Thus, in the art structure of the story «Peter, who lives on the edge of the ravine» semantic ideas in the author's conception and formal traits of the main character's behavior are the main moral values of the Mari people, such as diligence (almost as an existential state), pragmatism, which has nothing to do with cunning, frankness, stubbornness and will, in all this is some kind of «perseverance of life» that allows people to survive in any household, social, historical situation. The main motive of the work (the motive of frantic labor) is emphasized by the forcing of similar situations, speech patterns: «*The whole winter* Peter looked after the cattle...»; «*All summer* he took care of the cattle: pastured herself, and bayed them from the field, gave to drink, closed...» (Elexeyn, 1990, p. 10).

Also the author constantly pays attention to the fact that the hero is stubborn in achievement of the goal. He wants to become a full-fledged resident of the Shopkeryal village, to settle in it, to «gel with» the land, the house and the housekeeping. Howsoever they hindered him, the writer notes, but nevertheless before the army he learned to read and write; thanks to his serious attitude to work and dedication, he establish himself as a happy man, as a husband, a host. This is evidenced by the end of the story. The optimistic outcome of the hero's dramatic life, thus, is implicitly binded by the author with his fidelity to the system of national values, the reward of which is personal happiness and material wealth.

Peter is characterized by restraint in feelings, thoughts, words, which is recognized by many researchers as a national feature of the character of the Mari people. It is «restraint, which does not infringe human feelings, but is able to respect relative, neighbor and just an unknown person», verging «with a sense of proportion» (Shkalina, 2003, p. 104). So, it becomes clear the restrained laconic phrase (without any reproaches and insults, but firm and intelligible) of the hero, addressed to his cruel master: «I will live in this Shopkeryal village» (Elexeyn, 1990, p. 11). Also it's clear the restraint of the hero in expression of his feelings to the girl, who has attracted to him.

In the center of Elexeyn's «Peter, who lives on the edge of the ravine story» is the most likely story of an orphaned boy, who was in someone's care. The people's consciousness did not allow the cruel treatment of orphans. If person offend the orphan, he will come to the inevitable burst-up, punishment, financial losses. Quite so, the author draws the fate of the self-congratulatory Kavriy, who offended the poor and rightless.

Thus, Elexeyn's two stories, representing different versions of the characters and the fates of the characters in the dramatic vital space, are closely connected among themselves in the conceptual and axiological fields. The didactic content of them can be understood to the end only in the context of the moral traditions of the national consciousness, which are artistically expressed in these works (Look about it in more detail: Kudryavtseva, 2015).

3. CONCLUSION

Thus, in the Mari literature of the 1920s-1930s under the influence of the aesthetics of enlightenment realism a «moralizing» («didactic») story appears. The valuable substantive paradigm, didactic and educational orientation of the main idea of the work, some «experimentality» of the represented circumstances was its genre signs. The forms of the art expression of the didactic idea stem from both the peculiarities of the creative manner of the writer and the national specificity of the aesthetic thinking of nations. In the Mari literature, a sketch story and a «story-character» occupied a dominant position. In the first case, there was the publicistic form of expressing the didactic idea, in the second case; the author's attention was focused on the ethno-moral component of the personality and the character's behavior, for which the material of the Mari folk pedagogics was actively involved.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The reported study was funded by RFBR according to the research project № 18-012-00086.

REFERENCE LIST

- Asylbaev, A. A. (1990) With Ya. A. Elexeyn / Elexeyn Ya. A. Ermek: short novel, story, legend. Yoshkar-Ola: The Mari book publisher. pp. 104-123.
- Borev, Yu. B. (2003) Aesthetics. Literature theory: encyclopaedical dictionary of terms. M.: OOO «Publishing house Astrel»: OOO «Publishing house of AST». 575 p.
- Esin, A. B. (2003) Principles and methods of analysis of a literary work. Moscow: Flinta, Science. 248 p.
- Kudryavtseva, R. A. (2014) Ethnovaluable paradigm of the artistic structure of the Mari story / *Philological sciences. Questions of theory and practice*. No. 7. Part 2. pp. 111-114.
- Tkti I. (2006) Iptesh. Hello, Okitaro, hello! / *Face*. No 2. pp. 64-69.
- Shkalina G. E. (2003) Traditional culture of the Mari people. Yoshkar-Ola: The Mari book publisher. 208 p.
- Shketan M. (1991) Collected works: in 3 volumes. Vol. 2: story, joke, novelet, sketch, article, correspondence, satirical article. Yoshkar-Ola: The Mari book publisher. 608 p.
- Elexeyn Ya. A. (1990) Ermek: novelet, story legend / comp. A. E. Kitikov. Yoshkar-Ola: The Mari book publisher. 128 p.