

Chekhov's Traditions in the Dramaturgy of A. Vampilov

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ABSTRACT

Mid 1950s became a turn to a new stage in the history of Russian drama. She entered a period of creative diversity, overcoming the cliches developed in previous years, broke into life and returned to the theater the role of the pulpit, from which words were heard about topical problems, about a contemporary hero. In a report on dramaturgy at the Second Congress of Soviet Writers (1954), A. Korneichuk urged playwrights and theater workers to "write the truth of life", "to see its difficulties, its contradictions, its conflicts, truthfully and clearly reflect them in their works ...", to improve artistic skills, relying on the best traditions of Russian classics, to return to the audience "excitement, passion, political sharpness".

KEYWORDS: tradition, dramaturgy, literature, cliché

In the genre and style directions of drama in the 1960s-1980s. the socio-psychological play, traditional for the Russian theater, prevailed. A. Arbuzov and V. Rozov, A. Volodin and S. Aleshin, V. Panova and L. Zorin reflected the character of a contemporary, referring to his inner world, delving into the processes of moral trouble in society. Playwrights were looking for an answer to the question: "What is happening to us?" Rozov in the late 1970s. in the form of his usual "family scenes", he created the sharp tragicomedy "The Capercaillie's Nest", as well as the grotesque image of the new "arbiter of fate", the porter, "guarding the entrances" to the restaurant in the one-act comedy-farce "The Boss", which is not characteristic of his poetics. Even the lyrical playwright Arbuzov in the early 1980s. wrote rather tough plays - "Evening Light", "Cruel Intentions", "Memories", "Guilty", "Winner".

In these plays, the growing cruelty, rudeness, deformation of ideas about moral values were shown mainly in the sphere of family and domestic relations, while the authors, referring to the experience of the classics, rose above everyday life, recreating the entire unfavorable social atmosphere of the era of stagnation. These motifs became pervasive in the unique theater of A. Vampilov, which took shape precisely at that time.

The childhood and youth of Alexander Valentinovich Vampilov (1937-1972), the future playwright, a native of the Irkutsk hinterland, were not easy. His father was shot as an "enemy of the people" but accused of involvement in a counter-revolutionary pan-Mongolian sabotage and rebel organization (rehabilitated in 1957). Having overcome many difficulties, A. Vampilov entered the Irkutsk University at the Faculty of History and Philology. In 1958 he publishes stories and until 1964 he works in the regional newspaper "Soviet Youth". In 1961, his first and only book of humorous stories "Coincidence" was published under the pseudonym "A. Sanin". In 1964, Vampilov took part in two collective collections of stories by Irkutsk writers and made his debut as a playwright: in the magazine "Theater" his play "The

House with Windows in the Field" is published. A year later, Vampilov makes a fateful acquaintance for him with A. Arbuzov, who highly appreciated his play "Farewell in June", which soon comes out in three editions and first appears on stage - in the Klaipeda Drama Theater. In 1972, the audience saw three plays by A. Vampilov at once: "Last Summer in Chulimsk" at the Theater named after M. N. Yermolova, "Farewell in June" at the Theater named after K. S. Stanislavsky and "Provincial Jokes" - in the Bolshoi Drama Theater named after M. Gorky (now the Bolshoi Drama Theater named after G. Tovstonogov) in Leningrad. In the summer of the same year, Vampilov tragically died on Lake Baikal - at the peak of his popularity, full of hopes and creative plans. before its first premiere in the capital.

Despite the small volume written by the playwright, there is every reason to speak of Vampilov's theater as an established, very peculiar and striking phenomenon, about a single cycle of biased social and moral studies of life, formulated from high civic positions. The young playwright managed to feel and skillfully convey how feelings of kindness, trust, mutual understanding, selflessness can be imperceptibly lost in everyday bustle. In his opinion, if this process is not resisted, then lack of spirituality and cynicism will reign.

Not everyone accepted the work of A. Vampilov, the author was accused of pessimism, but his plays did not leave and do not leave the stages of domestic and foreign theaters. Disagreeing in particulars, critics are unanimous that Vampilov's dramaturgy has deep roots in Russian stage classics. Infrequently in relation to the playwrights of the XX century. one can hear that in the author's talent there is "something from Chekhov's complex stage simplicity, something from Gogol's satirical chimera, something from Saltykov-Shchedrin ... but also a difference from Chekhov, from Gogol, from Saltykov-Shchedrin ... its young, contemporary"[2].

The protagonist of the Vampilov Theater is a middle-aged man who feels moral discomfort, dissatisfaction with his way of life and "early fatigue from it." The village teacher Tretyakov ("House with Windows in the Field", 1963), students Kolesov and Busygin ("Farewell in June", 1964; "Elder Son", 1967), engineer Zilov ("Duck Hunt", 1968), investigator Shamanov ("Last Summer in Chulimsk, 1971) are shown in dramatic moments of their lives, in a situation "on the threshold" that needs to be crossed, to take a decisive step in order to part with their spiritual "suburb". Their entire future fate depends on how they act: to wake up having overcome the "threshold" or to continue their existence-hibernation; rush into battle with injustice or stand aside and indifferently leave others to "achieve the impossible", "beat their heads against the wall"; recognize their way of life as a mediocre burning through it, resolutely break with the past or continue to take the whole existing nightmare for granted - Vampilov's heroes think about all

this for the first time in their lives. Student Kolesov from Farewell in June must choose one of two things: a university degree by giving up love, or love at the cost of losing his future career as a biologist. The hopelessness of the situation is that the choice conditions are put forward by a person on whom the fate of the hero depends in all cases: the rector of the institute, Repnikov, who is also the father of his beloved girl. By the end of the play, the hero makes a choice, rejecting the previously declared philosophy of life "with the flow" ("Either to live, or to think about life is one of two ... There is not enough time for both"), taking instead of "either-or" more wise "and-and" - and live and think. The author makes you feel the dramatic struggle of Kolesov - a successful, carefree student, Fortune's favorite - with Kolesov, who is entering an independent life. He prefers simply conscience to a deal with conscience.

Vladimir Busygin also receives a lesson from life, impersonating, without thinking about the consequences, the eldest son born out of wedlock in the family of an unknown musician Sarafapov and his children ("Elder Son", 1967). The cruel joke is justified by an insult to everything callous, in his opinion, humanity: "People have thick skin, and it's not so easy to break through it." He easily accepts the hoax invented by his friend Silva: "You have to lie properly, only then will they believe you and sympathize." The anecdotal undertaking turns for Busygin into an acquaintance with a different, sublimely poetic view of this "crazy world". This is exactly how Sarafanov looks at the world, "blissful", "abnormal", "not able to live", from the point of view of his soberly reasoning wife who left him. Communication with Sarafanov frightens Busygin, they see lies with Silva as a crime ("this dad is a holy man"; "God forbid to deceive someone who believes your every word"), hypnotizes with the reckless gullibility of a person who believes that "the elder son" will help solve family problems. And it is not easy for Busygin to leave the game. Silva's warnings ("Look, old man, you will smoke in this business. I speak to you in a friendly way, I warn you: we tear our claws before it's too late") sound for Busygin like the "tongue-tied tongue" of another, somewhere receded world. He gets used to a role accidentally assigned to himself and at the same time receives satisfaction from the fact that someone has become needed in his life, that they believe him and expect help from him. Vampilov managed to create in the genre of everyday comedy "passions for" the spiritual closeness of people, for kindness and mutual understanding. Each next play by Vampilov is an argument in the dispute about a contemporary hero. "Duck Hunt" (1970) - the most mysterious of them - a kind of study of a devastated soul. Several times in the play there is a remark that is directly related to the main character, Viktor Zilov: "If you look at it, life, in essence, is lost." Passing a test for filial feelings, for love, friendship, civic maturity, the hero fails in all respects. The most virtuoso method of existence and communication worked out by him is lies, inspired scoffing, a game of honesty, sincerity and offended "supposedly feeling". Even in the game-memory of a former love, he is pathetic, helpless in the role of a lover. "You forgot everything. Everything! .. It was not at all like that. You were worried then ..." - his wife Gatina sums up the failed performance about the first meeting of the spouses and leaves Zilov forever, giving him a terrible diagnosis: "Stop pretending ... You have not been worried about anything for a long time. You don't care. All in the world. You don't have a heart, that's the point. There is no heart at all ..." "There is one monologue in the play, which

Zilov, according to the author's remark, says "sincerely and passionately", addressing his wife: "Listen! I want to speak frankly with you. We haven't spoken frankly for a long time - that's the trouble... It's my own fault, I know. I brought you to this myself ... I tortured you, but I swear to you, I myself am sick of such a life ... You are right, everything in the world is indifferent to me. What is happening to me, I don't know... I don't know... Do I really have no heart? Yes, yes, I have nothing - only you, today I understood it, do you hear? What do I have besides you?.. Friends? I don't have any friends... Women?.. Yes, they were, but why? I don't need them, trust me... What else? My job, right? My God! .. I am alone, alone, I have nothing in my life but you. Help me! Without you, I'm covered ..." "In terms of intonation, discontinuity of phrases, the monologue could well correspond to the "convulsive" reflexive consciousness of the tragic hero, if not for one circumstance: instead of Galina, who quietly left in the middle of the revelation of her husband, Galina, the mistress Irina, expected by Zilov, appears on the stage, and the hero, not in the least embarrassed, without interrupting, "redirects" the last phrases to her. What remains is a feeling not of sincerity and passion, but again of an intoxicated game of a martyr and a lonely sufferer. The author leaves the play's ending open. "Zilov cried or laughed - we will never understand by his face," but his "smooth, businesslike, somewhat upbeat voice" speaks volumes in a telephone conversation: "Dima? .. This is Zilov ... Yes ... Sorry, old man, I got excited ... Yes, everything went ... I'm completely calm ... Yes, I want to hunt ... I'm ready ..." Zilov is a bad and not very enthusiastic hunter, his constant hunting fees take on special significance in the context of the play. Vampilov's last work was the drama Last Summer in Chulimsk (1972). According to critics and directors, this is his most "Chekhovian" play. The confession of the director G. A. Tovstonogov is indicative: "When I was working on it, it seemed to me that even a comma could not be removed there, I treated it as, say, the plays of Chekhov and Gorky." In the play, the expectation of good, simple human participation collides dramatically with indifference and callousness. An interesting find by Vampilov, an image-symbol, his "cherry garden" - the fence of the front garden, which is repaired throughout the play by Valentina, a tea house worker, it is destroyed by visitors, "without bothering to take an extra step."

One of the methods of self-disclosure of characters in Chekhov's dramas is an internal monologue, spoken aloud to himself, although there may be other characters on the stage, unwitting witnesses to such a revelation. Vampilov successfully demonstrates the great possibilities of this technique. At the beginning of the play, in such a monologue, one of the heroines, Zinaida, reveals her suffering, addressing the words of reproach to her beloved investigator Shamanov, who is not visible on the stage. How lonely and unhappy in her unrequited love she appears in this scene! Later, Shamanov will force her to listen to his enthusiastic words about "awakening" in him the desire to live in a new way. In essence, this is also an internal monologue, although it has an addressee. Intoxicated by the novelty of feelings in himself, excited, Shamanov speaks more for himself, analyzes his condition, selfishly seeking empathy from a woman and not noticing how hard his every word hurts her. Alas, she is not the cause of rebirth: "Today is an amazing day! You can laugh, but it seems to me that I really start a new life. Honestly! I find this world anew, like a drunkard who comes out of a binge. Everything comes back to me: the evening, the

street, the forest ... "On the one hand, delight, on the other, a sentence to shaky hopes for happiness. Vampilov's emotionally saturated pauses occupy the same important place in revealing the psychological subtext. They give the scene a kind of electrification. Such a pause plays an important role, for example, in the finale of the play *Last Summer in Chulimsk*. Almost all the characters gathered at the teahouse. The morning of the next day dictates their daily affairs and worries; each is immersed in the future, but they are all experiencing what happened the day before, although not a word is dropped about it. Valentina appears, the most charming heroine of the play, the drama of yesterday is connected with her, everyone turns to her and falls silent. In general silence, Valentina walks across the yard and starts repairing the front garden gate again. Life goes on... Her appearance at the end is perceived as a reminder to everyone of the need for active kindness and attention to people. In the entire content of the play, one can feel the author's position - a protest against indifference, callousness. "*Last Summer in Chulimsk*" is a vivid example of the penetration of a talented director into the secrets of Chekhov's skill, primarily into the famous overtones of the classic. The simplicity of Vampilian poetics is an apparent simplicity. It is precisely the "complex simplicity" of Vampilov's plays that can explain a number of failed productions. Theater critic T. Shah-Azizova noted with good reason that in none of the theaters the riddle of Vampilov has been completely solved, that it takes time for the actors to get used to "this difficult dramaturgy". Innovative art is always puzzling. Suffice it to recall the absurdity of critical assessments of almost every new play by Chekhov; later innovatory playwrights were not immediately understood. Vampilov's dramaturgy went through the same difficult path - from critical accusations of pessimism and pettiness (during the life of the author) to "enthusiastic misunderstanding" (after his death). V. Rozov's reflections on the "mystery" of Vampilov are widely known: "... almost every play by Vampilov begins as a vaudeville and even a farce, and then reaches the ultimate dramatic tension... The theater, as it were, is lost in front of a play in which there is ice and fire, they play water. It's good if hot water. But well, this is not the author's misfortune, but his fate.

Those who knew Alexander Vampilov recall how he suffered when art officials demanded that something be changed in the text in order to "emphasize the topic of the day." At the same time, they came across a "half-smile, kind, a little mocking", covered with "a haze of some thoughtful sadness." He seemed to make it clear that it was impossible to change what was experienced by each nerve, written with the "blood of the heart". The most sensitive critics noted the "personal beginning" in his dramaturgy. The hero of his theater is a man of his generation, a peer, a searching, restless soul whose soul is close and understandable to him. External plausibility does not prevent the author from rising in the content of the plays to the heights of philosophical, parable sounding, to deep reflections on always topical universal problems, among which are the search for the meaning of life, the lack of mutual understanding, kindness - which especially worried the playwright, worried and excites the viewer.

Recommended reading

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