

## M.O. Auezov's contribution to the historical and cultural landscape of the Semipalatinsk Cisirtysk Area: revisiting the issues of the modern local literary history

Farida Akhmetovna Gainullina<sup>1</sup>, Raushan Muratkhanovna Muhazhanova<sup>1</sup>, Talgat Bolatovich Kabyshev<sup>1</sup>, Nurlan Oralbaevich Baigabylov<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Kazakh Humanitarian Juridical Innovative University, Abai street 94, Semey, 071400, Republic of Kazakhstan

<sup>2</sup>L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Mirzoyan Street, 2, Astana, 010000, Republic of Kazakhstan

**Abstract.** This article deals with the problems of studying the local literary history as one of the important aspects of the national culture, and the features of the social, political and literary activity of Mukhtar Auezov while living in the city of Semey. A strong emphasis is on the problem of preserving and reproducing the literary heritage of the artists who lived and worked in Semey at different times. The authors suppose that studying the literary history of the native land will contribute to the better understanding of the culture as a spiritual treasure of the nation.

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### Introduction

It is known that a culture is defined as a product of the human activity, arising under the certain historical conditions in the particular territory. We consider the local literary history as an important aspect of studying the regional culture.

The local literary history - is a time requirement, a reference to it is dictated by the current changes in the society. Nowadays the modern school is given a difficult task - of bring up a young man as an active citizen, what is closely related to the patriotic education, and includes the love of the small motherland, the place where you live, the history of your region, its culture and literature.

It is our invincible belief that the local literary history plays a significant role in reproducing the regional culture. The relationship between the local literary history and the development of the domestic cultural tradition is obvious. As the literature with its quest for the main reason to live has in particular embodied the experience of the historical nation formation based on the high moral principles and spiritual values. But the point is that the historical mechanism of the social reproduction based on the basic domestic traditions of bringing up suffers serious troubles nowadays. Thus, sometimes the rapid industrial and economic development gives a lower priority to the cultural values. This has become a problem which goes outside the bounds of a country. The arguments of the researcher Gaskell, who complains about the opposition of the historical topos of "north" and "south" are like these: "opposition between the topos of 'north' and that of 'south'" appears as another, albeit innovative, move in "an endless rhetorical battle between civilization and culture, industry and nature, mechanism and

organicism, invented society and immediate community, historical progress and origin, city and country, organization and kinship" [1]

Returning to the country's problems, we should note that, in our opinion, the local literary history, drawn into the strategic program of the regional culture development should fill the emerging spiritual "emptiness" and "gaps" in it, what corresponds to the Concept of the Strategic National Program "Cultural Heritage". [2]

As for the Semipalatinsk region the integrated approach to the problem of *preserving and reproducing* the culture of the Semipalatinsk Cisirtysk area, which is a part of the national culture, the scientific rationale for the important role of the local literary history in this process is necessary.

It should be reminded, that the local literary history is a specific field of the science of literature, the same literary history, contrasted in the special selection of the material and the particular aspect of its consideration. While perceiving, reflecting, evaluating the reality in its living historical dynamics, the fiction appeals to the historical spatial section having the special, unique character, which is called the territory (broadly defined as - the region), aesthetically "discovers" and cultivates it. The human everyday behaviour, the history and nature, transferred to the literary context, get in this case not only the aesthetic value. At the same time the need for extending the knowledge of the culture and literature of the other countries occurs. Thus, the possibility to "penetrate" the cultures is pointed out in the work of R. Abazov. [3]

The relation between the literary scene and the samples of the everyday behaviour is specified in the cultural context of the region through the local

literary history. In this case the cultural tradition becomes its semantic determinant. Memoirs, epistolary novels, non-fiction help to restore the features of creating and occurring the fiction works in the context of a particular culture.

As it is well known, there is a subtle and complex relationship between the fiction work and the place which has inspired the writer to its creation. The academician D. Likhachev argued that "to understand the literature in ignorance of the places where it has been created, is not less difficult than to understand the alien idea, not knowing the language in which it is expressed. Neither poetry nor fiction exist in themselves: they grow up on their native soil and could be understood in connection with the whole native country..." [4, 41]

Thus, studying the history of Kazakhstan, one should take into account the social, political and literary activity of Abai Kunanbaev and Shakarim Kudaiberdiev who evoked the human social consciousness and contributed to establishing the cultural ties of the Russian and Kazakh nations were the agents of the Russian culture in the region.

The reflections of Mukhtar Auezov - the another writer of the world reputation, who is also a native of our region, on such social vices, as the inter-clan conflicts, the women tight situation and others, it is the evidence of the pain for his nation, is not it? As it is well known, the articles of M.O. Auezov written in the Semipalatinsk up-country, have found a broad response in the different regions of Kazakhstan. Thus, his fiction works and political and social essays extend the readers' notions of the social and historical, cultural image of our nation.

#### Methods

Since this article covers a wide range of issues, the research methods are multidisciplinary in nature. Thus, while writing this article we used *the historical and theoretical method*, which allowed considering a literary work as a reflection of the reality by the historical consciousness in the historical forms. In the work *the dialectic method* is applied because of which the authors have studied a phenomenon in the process, in this case - the local literary history. In the article quite a large part is taken by *the biographical method*, which allows investigating the direct ties between the literary texts and the writers' biographies. *The analysis and description methods* have been also applied.

It is a review article, since it has been intended to identify and make actual the key issues of the modern local literary history.

#### Body

The local and All-Kazakh, individual and universal things in the classical works of the Russian, Kazakh, and broadly defined as - world fiction,

interpenetrate, constitute the harmonic whole, lead to the common goal of translating the large-scale problems into the living and specific images. The domestic literary traditions associated with the unique features of any given region, organically form the nation-wide literature. The issue of regionalism is interpreted in a holistic context of the literary history as an integral aspect of the national historical and literary process.

What trends in including the local literary history in the program of the nation-wide culture development could be effective, in our opinion?

One of the fields of such work is studying the relationship between the writer and the region. In the context of such field it is necessary to study the presence of the famous writer in the region and the importance of this fact for his oeuvre. If the writer was born and has evolved as an artist in a particular place, the multifaceted study of the cultural, economic and social environment, determined the writer's creative development becomes particularly important. The issue of the social context is important, as the writer's community and immediate surrounding is often perceived as a keeper and a transmitter of the certain cultural values. This trend in the local literary history has a special meaning for the contemporary regional culture as it involves practical participation in its implementation by the possibly wide audience. The activity on distributing the writer's works in the region, studying and memorizing could be attributed to this. Schools, universities, libraries, publishers, literary and cultural societies, etc. could be involved in such kind of activity. As a result, the creation of a large project for preserving the regional literary heritage as a condition for reproducing its traditional culture could be suggested. Let's consider it in the case of the Semipalatinsk period of Mukhtar Omarkhanovich Auezov's life and oeuvre.

It is known that at the beginning of the twentieth century the cult of enlightenment and deep knowledge was rapidly spread all over the steppe. To a great extent it was due to the Abai's oeuvre. The transforming power of his poems and songs, the intellectual power of Abai's and then Shakarim's philosophical edifications have determined the intensity and activity of the spiritual quest of their followers. The 20s of the Kazakhstan social life - are some kind of the Renaissance era, marked by the names of the prominent people. The coordination of their actions is evident. All together, complementing each other, they mastered the most important fields of the humanities and scientific knowledge, the scientific and technical practices. They collectively created a new spiritual and creative, social and political situation on the land, understood by them as the motherland, which required from them the civil acts.

Akhmet Baitursynov, Alikhan Bukeikhanov, Mirzhakip Dulatov Mukhamedzhan Tynyshpaev, Khalel Dosmukhamedov, Turar Ryskulov, Sanzhar Asfendiyarov - are the dozens of names of the educators, journalists, word-painters, scientists, public figures and politicians, who became the members of the famous social and political movement "Alash". A brilliant constellation of intellectuals, which has had an impact on not only Central Asian Turkestan, but the entire intTurkic world. The intellectuals who have also left an indelible imprint on the history of our region.

According to the undisputed leader of this generation A.Baitursynov the main weapon of the enhanced national identity should be the literature. That explains a lot in the attitude of the Kazakh intellectuals' spiritual leaders of the 20s towards young, but from the outset confirmed his unique talent, Mukhtar Auezov. Not only the recognition of his talent, respectful cooperation with him, but also the well-considered measures allowed saving exactly him for the future. Repressions were also repeatedly discharged upon Auezov. The archive documents indicated that he decently bore the two-year confinement in the Stalin's prisons in the 30s and persecution in the 50s, forcing him to leave his motherland. And he lifelong held true to the ideals of his youth. The main weapon in the dialogue with the violent century was his literary, as well as humanities and research activity. He was memorized by his contemporaries and descendants as the great Kazakh writer, scientist, educator, public figure, a man of encyclopaedic knowledge and erudition. He created more than twenty plays, a lot of short stories and novellas, wrote librettos to operas and screenplays. The crown of his labour was the four-volume epic of Abai. Driven by the love of truth and his long-suffering Kazakh people, he led it to self-affirmation on the path of the profound spiritual quest and continuous improvement. He spoke almost all Turkic languages, the Russian and Farsi ones, raised the Kazakh literary and humanities and research language to its highest pitch. The national traditions in the Auezov's works were described even in the 70s of the last century by the foreign researches [5], [6] and others.

It is known, that Mukhtar Auezov early buried his parents: his father Omarkhan died in 1900, his mother Nurzhamal - died in 1912. Firstly he had been put to the Semipalatinsk Russian five-class city school, the record from his autobiography indicated his attendance of it: "When I was eleven years old I lost my father and my uncle Kasymbek, who in his young days switched from the Muslim madrasah to the Russian school, ignoring the curses of his mentor, Khazret Kamaledin, took care of me. Uncle placed

me in the Semipalatinsk five-class city school, on the land scholarship of the Chingissky district..."[7,18]

Mukhtar was awarded for the 1912-1913 academic year of the normal school and finished studying at the Semipalatinsk normal school only in 1919.

The seminary teachers Abikei Satpayev, I.V. Malakhov, Nikolai and Viktor Beloslyudovs, N.E. Konshin, Nazipa and Nurgali Kulzhanovs, V.I. Popov, N. Sulima - Gruzinsky, V.M. Morozov incultivated in him the taste for the Russian and Kazakh folk literature and languages, the classics of the world literature, laid the ground for knowledge in many fields. According to the teachers, young Auezov excelled in the impeccable diligence, extraordinary talents, noble appearance and sophisticated manners. It is also known, that M. Auezov played in "Yarysh", the first football team in his city.

An important role in Auezov's formation as a writer was played by Abai's oeuvre: "... The other fact in my early childhood when I was 7-8 years old, was a handwritten book - the book of poems by the Kazakh classic Abai Kunanbaev. Our famous kinsman from the Tobykty family - Abay - was the beloved and revered poet in our mountain villages. Nowadays, after Abai's death in 1904 the female kinship and the personal friendship with my grandfather have made his name and works incomparably valuable ... "[7,14]

Mukhtar Auezov was closely related to the future main character of his future novel by many circumstances. Abai himself honoured the family celebration, arranged by the writer's grandfather Auezov with his presence on the occasion of the grandson's birth. Nurganym, one of the wives of old Kunanbai the father of Abai was the sister of Auezov. Later on Mukhtar became friends with the son of Abai Turagul and married Camila, the granddaughter of the great poet, the daughter of his son Magaui. Auezov saw Dilda the first wife of Abai. Much information on Abai was given by Aigerim, deeply devoted to his memory and survived her husband for more than a decade. "I read about the past - according to M. Auezov himself - from the eclipsed, elusive memory of my elderly companions. I had to revive a lot by my guesses, to decrypt it by the comparison with the story of another informant. With these memories I had to handle carefully and cautiously: thus, a belated traveller, finding embers in the fire ashes left by the gone caravan, carefully and gently blows the fire while breathing". [8, 73]

An indelible impression on M.Auezov was made by his contemporaries' stories about the impact on Abai of the Russian political exiles, including the presence in Semipalatinsk of the American traveller, scientist - historian J. Kennan, who in his book "Siberia" spoke about the Kirghiz Abai's visit of the

city library and his awareness in the field of the contemporary literature and science with ecstatic wonder. [9]

While still studying at the seminary, M. Auezov actively collected the materials for his first play "Enlik - Kebek". Written in 1917, it was heartily welcomed by the audience who had not then seen any theatre. The play was represented in a double yurt of the beloved Abai's wife Aigerim as a gift on the occasion of Akysh's marriage and farewell event, who is the granddaughter of the poet. For more than 90 years, this first writer's play has held the stage of the republic theatres.

In 1918, Mukhtar Auezov and Zhusupbek Aimaurov published the journal "Abai" in Semipalatinsk. It should be noted, that by that time young Mukhtar Auezov had had the experience of writing for the press. Moreover, his early publications attracted the readers' attention by the topical nature of the raised issues. Closely related to the people, he wanted to change this life, to make it kinder, happier, freer. These ideas had defined the beginning of the M.O. Auezov's career. His first works created in the watershed year of 1917, were addressed to the people. The play "Enlik - Kebek", the stories and novels "Fate of the Helpless Thing", "Who Is to Blame?", "The Orphan," "At Syban's Tomb", "In the Shadow of the Past", "Barymta", "The Beauty in Mourning" and others are imbued with suffering and pain for the people. The young writer acutely highlights the contradictions and vices of that time in it. But they were created by the author not just for exposing the moribund patterns and norms of life. He wanted to bring the reader to the idea that the vices and remnants in the social life would not disappear by themselves, but there were the need for everyday social work on them. The same idea pervaded most of the first research and feature articles of the author published in various periodicals of that time: "The Basis of a Life - is a Woman", "The Science", "The Research Language," "What Are the Causes of the Stratification in the Kazakh Society?", "Some Properties of the Kazakh Character", "How to Be Guided?" and others. The social and philosophical, aesthetic issues raised by M. Auezov in these articles were related to the basic issues of that life: the education of the people, their enculturation.

In 1919 Auezov joined the Communist Party and later was promoted in the party line to the post of the Chairman of the Semipalatinsk Provincial Executive Committee, while having a shot at the drama and journalism.

The years spent by M.O. Auezov in Semipalatinsk (1924 -1925) - and it was on the eve of the 20th anniversary of the Abai's death, became the most fruitful, the period of creating the important

works on the great poet's oeuvre. He worked at the Kazakh Teachers College and actively involved future teachers to the participation in preparing the anniversary. The teachers recited Abai's poems, sang his songs, participated in all the concerts and events organized, in particular, by the Semipalatinsk section of the Russian Geographical Society (RGS). As it is well known, this Geographical Society, was organized on the basis of the East Siberian Imperial Russian Geographical Society, which was established in 1902 and had its branch in Semipalatinsk. M.O. Auezov took an active part in its organizational consolidation. The writer actively worked in this Committee, published research articles, and held various events.

Another M.O. Auezov' visit to the Semipalatinsk region was in the 30s. Thus, it is known that while preparing the novel "Abai" in 1935 M. Auezov met the elders of the Kazakh Tobykty family from which he originated. He listened to their memories of Abai, had long conversations with them. The writer himself notes: "Collecting the materials of Abai had its interesting features which are not familiar to most of the historical novel authors. The case is that there are no printed and written information on Abai's life, work, appearance and character: neither the personal archive, diaries or letters, memoirs, nor even just recorded memories of the poet. All the data on his biography, all the events of the novel I had to collect for long time while interviewing the people who knew Abai, while conversing with them ... "[8,75].

During his visit to Semipalatinsk Mukhtar Auezov laid the grounds for the literary translation, referring to the works of the Russian and foreign classics. Thus, the writer translated he story "Buddha" by Leo Tolstoy and published it in 1918 in the first issue of the journal "Abai". In Tashkent a separate book "The Stories of the Origin of the Earth," by the scientist Yury Wagner was issued in his translation in 1924. Later on the works of William Shakespeare [10], Nikolai Gogol, Ivan Turgenev, Jack London [11], Leo Tolstoy, Nikolai Pogodin, Constantine Trenev and others were in the translator's creativity repertoire.

The exceptional strength of the protestant humanism marked Auezov's speech in Tokyo at the International Conference for the Prohibition of the Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs in 1957.

The last time he visited his native land was in September 1957. He was already 60 years old. The writer met his old friends and acquaintances. "If I am alive, I will come again" - promised the writer. Alas, this desire has remained unfulfilled. The news of his death was quickly spread all over the world. In their articles the scientists of the world marked the original nature of his oeuvre, the humanism of his aspirations,



the exceptional writer's contribution to the spiritual treasure of the people, [12], [13], etc.

Studying Auezov's heritage - is one of the crucial tasks of the modern Kazakh literary criticism. Now the study of Auezov has 50 - volume collection of the writer's works at its disposal. In 2006 the book of the Moscow scientist Nicholai Anastasyev "Mukhtar Auezov. The Triumphant's Tragedy" came out published in the series "The Life of the Remarkable People". The famous Russian writer Anatoly Kim tried to make the new Russian translation of the novel "Abai's Way". All this - is the evidence of the unceasing interest in the life and oeuvre of the great writer.

Thus, the Semipalatinsk Cirttysh area has a rich literary history. As we could see, it is related not only to the names of Abai Kunanbaev, Shakaria Kudaiberdiev, Mukhtar Auezov, but also to equally well-known poets and writers Wice Shondybaeva, Kalikhan Altynbayev, Nurlybek Baimuratov, Kayum Mukhamedkhanov, Michael Balykin, Semen Anisimov and many other prominent Kazakh and Russian writers, including the great classics of Russian literature, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, whose name is given to the local museum and the Russian theatre, Polish researcher Adolf Janushkevich and famous active participants in the contemporary literary process (Medeu Sarseke, Edil Asylbek, Eugene Titaev, Alexander Kuznetsov and others). Studying the features of the literary process in the Semipalatinsk Cirttysh area, the local literary history could intensify the modelling possibilities of the national culture in it.

It should be noted, that the scientific basis of the local literary history in the Semipalatinsk Cirttysh area is associated with the social and cultural activities of the well-known scientists - I.Y. Konshin, E.P. Michaelis, G.P. Potanin, B.G. Gerasimov, V.N. and A.N. Beloslyudovs brothers and others who, as the members of the Semipalatinsk section of the West Siberian branch of the Russian Geographical Society, contributed greatly to the study of the geography, geology, ethnography, archeology, animal husbandry, administrative management and other sectors of the region.

The further study of the region (the history, culture, literature, education) is associated with the names of S. Kudaiberdiev, M. Auezov, A. Bokeikhanov, A. Baitursynov, Kulzhanov and others.

In the works of the contemporary researches M.Kasymbaev, V.Kashlyak, M.Karimov, A.Isin and others there is an attempt to investigate the Semipalatinsk Cirttysh area from the perspectives of the historical and political changes which occur in the country. [14]

The literary researches on the oeuvre of U. Shondybaev, K. Altynbaev, K. Zhanataiuly and other poets which restore the cultural, historical and literary landscape of the Semipalatinsk Cirttysh area have been accumulated. There are quite enough examples, which the local literary history could provide now. Thus, for example, the fact that the famous Russian writer F. M. Dostoevsky was in communication with C. Valikhanov, acquainted with the Russian ethnographers, who lived in Semipalatinsk and wrote about our city, is very important for the regional culture.

Studying the literary history of the region contributes to a better understanding of the national culture. This could be supported by the second trend - studying the regional features, according to its representation in the fiction. Here the research material is the works of the writers, which depicted the life of the region in its spatial and cultural characteristics. The importance of considering even the small things which shed light on understanding the local colour is indicated by the researcher Josephine Donovan: "depict[ing] authentic regional detail, including authentic dialect, authentic local characters, in real or realistic geographical settings." [15]

It is known that the fiction has a great experience in extracting the cultural concentration, focusing on the best features of the people, its historical commitment to the "truth of life". The correlation between the moral ideal and the local history will allow the modern audience not only to feel their involvement in the literary heritage of the region, but also to feel responsible for preserving and restoring the domestic cultural tradition.

Finally, the third trend carried out within the interaction between the regional culture and the local literary history - is the study of the regional literary life. Here the subject of the study is not only the literature, but also the forms of its modern social existence. The writers' associations, newspapers, magazines, almanacs, publishing activities, and various forms of the direct communication with the readers are intended.

### Conclusion

A "Literary Life" - is a historical concept. It occurs under the certain social and historical conditions and develops in accordance with the specifics of the region and the logic of the nation-wide development.

It is known, that many poets and writers originated from the local intellectual fold. Nowadays the provincial culture is given a large-scale task - of restoring the institution of the local intellectuals. The presence of the highly spiritual centre in the regional cultural life, which has also a possibility to find a wide audience, could be itself a model of the everyday

behaviour and the attitude towards the social problems. Here the potential of the cultural activity is so high that it deserves the separate consideration and discussion.

The authors of this article have set themselves a low task to draw the readers' attention to the great possibilities of the local literary history, which is an important source of the patriotic education, extending the living experience of the younger generation, the development of the fruitful creative thinking and different trends in the research activities on preserving and reproducing the culture of our region.

In the case of analysing the Semipalatinsk period of Mukhtar Auezov's life and oeuvre the writer's place in the nation-wide literary and cultural process has been determined.

### Conclusions

Thus, the knowledge of the literary history of the region creates the necessary cultural context, the involvement in which it is a key tool for modelling the cultural activity in the region.

Studying the oeuvre of M.O. Auezov and other writers and poets of the Semipalatinsk Cirrtysk area allows comparing the real facts and their reflection in the classic art. Their works could be a useful material for specifying the spiritual and cultural interests of the Cirrtysk area in the 19 - 20th centuries, as well as those specific conditions under which the local literary life originated.

The advanced study of the life and career of the most important novelists, poets, playwrights of our region will allow researchers to develop the ability of analysing the integrated patterns and trends in the regional and broadly defined as nation-wide, cultural process.

Thus, due to its geopolitical position, the Semipalatinsk Cirrtysk area has made an invaluable contribution to ensure the organic intertwining of the Russian and Kazakh cultures, laying the groundwork for its further mutual enrichment and development. These processes were widely reflected in the Kazakh and Russian literature, both in those of the past ages and in the modern one.

Even at the end of the 19th century, the famous English poet R. Kipling wrote in his famous "The Ballad of East and West" as follows:

OH, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,  
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat;  
But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,

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When two strong men stand face to face, tho' they come from the ends of the earth! [16]

But now we might say that there are no limits for the cultural ties. Thus, preserving and building the spiritual treasury has become a task for all who care about the Word.

### Corresponding Author:

Dr. Gainullina Farida Akhmetovna  
Kazakh Humanitarian Juridical Innovative University  
Abai street 94, Semey, 071400, Republic of  
Kazakhstan

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