



The Plot-Compositional Structure of the Play by M. Gorky of the 30s Of the Xx Century (“Egor Bulychov and Others”, “Dostigaev and Others”)

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Annotation: The article deals with the plot-compositional structure of the plays of the 30s of the XX century. The dramaturgy of this period bears all the hallmarks of a new European drama. The depiction of historical events is combined in them with in-depth attention to the inner world of a person; acute social and moral problems destroy the usual stereotypes of family and everyday drama. The voice of the author sounds in the works simultaneously with the voice of history, creating a carefully hidden background.

Key words: Gorky, dramaturgy, theater, play, stage, innovation.

In the early 30s of the twentieth century, in connection with the emergence of new plays by Gorky, a number of articles were published in which the innovative nature of his dramaturgy was emphasized. This innovation, however, was seen in "the ultimate violation of all traditions existing in dramaturgy," and this violation was considered to be the rejection of unity of action, a sharp plot, a complete composition and other "obsolete" principles of dramatic art. The fact that Gorky called many of his plays "scenes" was enough to declare the main innovative feature of Gorky's dramaturgy "plotlessness".

This point of view was not very different from the views of those pre-revolutionary critics who, after the appearance of the first Gorky plays, reproached them for "inactivity" or "ineffectiveness". The only difference was that this feature, allegedly inherent in Gorky dramaturgy, was no longer declared epigony, but innovation, not weakness, but strength.

Arguing with this kind of views, Soviet bittermen showed the closest internal connection of Gorky's dramaturgy with the best dramatic traditions of the great Russian realistic dramaturgy.

It is known with what delight Gorky met Chekhov's plays, seeing in them a new stage in the development of dramaturgy: "a new kind of dramatic art." It is known, finally, that the young Gorky was greatly impressed by the "vitality, naturalness, mirror truthfulness" of the art of the Maly Theater and that he wholeheartedly welcomed the appearance of a new wonderful realistic theater—the Art Theater, on the stage of which his first plays were staged.

This was the creative ground on which Gorky's dramaturgy grew and from which it did not break away in its further development.

What was the originality of Gorky's dramatic principles, what was the artistic innovation of Gorky the playwright?



To talk about the originality and innovation of the artist means to talk about the foundations of his creative principles, connection with his predecessors. True continuity in art (as opposed to imitation) comes in the form of innovation.

Decisive in determining a playwright is the question of what conflicts he develops in his plays and how he develops them. That dramaturgy should take the most acute conflicts from life and that it should always be "relevant, plot-driven, saturated" [2, 187 p.] Gorky especially spoke and wrote a lot in the last years of his life. In the 30s, the sprouts of the theory of conflict-free were already breaking through.

It is characteristic that in the same years Gorky very actively defended the need for "plot" in a dramatic work, critically overestimated his own creative practice in this regard. Gorky was not completely satisfied with the "technique" of plot-compositional organization developed by him before, he had previously claimed that he could not cope in his works with the development of action, with architectonics, etc. This to a greater extent (although not only this) explained the fact that he usually called his stories essays, novels - novels, and plays - scenes.

In one of his old days, K.S. Stanislavsky criticized plays whose characters are devoid of truly typical and vital features and therefore cannot interact with the surrounding world in all their versatility. "Often the characters of the play come to the stage, involved in the will of the playwright, and not by the circumstances of the action," the director emphasized, "I often do not feel that behind the scenes there is still a large, vast world and that what is happening on the stage is only part of the big thing that happens behind the scenes and determines the stage events." In cases where all this is felt, Stanislavsky pointed out, the playwright expands the "stage" picture to the picture of the era" [6].

Gorky's dramaturgy meets this requirement, and Gorky, the heir of the realists of the past, and Gorky the innovator, who continued the path to the creative growth of many Soviet playwrights, equally affects here.

This is accurately written in a small, but very capacious article by I.A. Revyakina, which shows the perspective of the movement of Gorky's dramatic poetics, which emphasizes, in particular, the "special role" played in the play by the "events of the street" taking place behind the scenes. It is they who give a broad political scale to everything that happens on the stage" [5, p.26].

The big world felt beyond Gorky's plays is a world of class struggle, political clashes, and fundamental historical changes. Of course, the reflection of the dynamics of history played a big role in the plays of many of Gorky's predecessors. But in Gorky, because he reflected the era of revolutionary explosions, and because he reflected it from a new ideological angle, the political incentives for the behavior of the characters were revealed with their historical concreteness. The play "Yegor Bulychov and Others" is indicative in this regard.

The story in this play is not just von-she incessantly invades the action, ultimately guiding all the thoughts and actions of her characters, not even going beyond, it would seem, personal and family interests. This feature of Gorky's dramaturgy of the 30s is rightly noted by V. Novikov: "M. Gorky sought to reproduce the era in all its colorfulness, variegation, in all its historical originality. That is why mass scenes reflecting the shifts in the life of the country during the revolution play a huge role in the development of the play' action" [4, p.237.].

Deep historicism (more and more concrete over the years) is one of the most important features of Gorky's dramaturgy. And the main thing here is not in the richness of historical realities,



not in the "local" attachment of the depicted events to the exact historical dates, but in the deep understanding of the logic and direction of historical development penetrating all conflicts and images, in a deep understanding of the place and role of heroes in this process.

One of the most important consequences of this understanding is that Gorky's positive heroes, the bearers of revolutionary ideas, are on the offensive, and their opponents are on the defensive, in a state of self-defense. And even if the play depicts only the opponents of the revolution in close-up, it is still possible to judge by their reaction to the growth of revolutionary forces where the history directed by these forces is going.

It is necessary to dwell on such an important quality of Gorky's plays as their multi-conflict nature. The general basis of multi-conflict in realistic drama is realistic characters, from the collision of which the action of the play is formed. These characters have a wide typical content and at the same time a distinct individual nature. Characters of this kind should be able to freely express their essence without any "violence" on the part of the author.

Gorky says this in the article "On Plays": "A play-drama, a comedy—the most difficult form of literature, is difficult because the play requires that each unit acting in it be characterized by both word and deed by itself, without prompting from the author" [3, p.211.].

Does this mean that the main conflict in a realistic play is determined only as a result of the interaction of all private conflicts, that it is nothing more than their "equivalent"? No, it does not mean, because the very choice of characters is determined by the theme of the play, its ideological design, which already contains the germ of the main conflict of the play, its end-to-end action.

Gorky taught: "If only there are firmly defined characters, their collisions are inevitable" [2, p. 262].

What kind of conflicts did Gorky develop most of all in his plays and with which aspects of reality were these conflicts connected?

In Gorky ("Yegor Bulychov and Others"), as well as Chekhov ("The Cherry Orchard"), the clashes of property order play a subordinate role, but in Gorky's play they were subject to precisely those conflicts that remained little affected in Chekhov's dramaturgy: political conflicts.

The peculiarity of Gorky's construction of dramatic collisions was also reflected in his last plays "Yegor Bulychov and Others", "Reaching and Others".

In the first of these plays, Gorky, in the spirit of the traditions of Shchedrin and Ostrovsky, focuses the plot "interest" around the struggle for the Bulychov inheritance. But this dynamic storyline does not get a conclusion in the play: we will never know who managed to win this struggle.

These features of the plot composition of the play gave rise to the version of Gorky's rejection of the "finished" plot and the complete composition, about his fundamental installation on disparate "scenes", etc. Meanwhile, there is a clear, sharp plot, and a clear surprisingly harmonious composition associated with the specifics of Gorky's skill.

The struggle of Melania, Pavlin, Bashkin and others against Bulychov is a struggle for the preservation of faith in the "wolf law of capitalism", for the preservation of those illusions without which the capitalist system cannot exist. This conflict—it is the main conflict of the play—is revealed with all its consistency, breadth and poignancy, having a clearly defined beginning and an equally clear ending, and representing one of the greatest examples of the unity and versatility of the plot action.



The process of reevaluation of values, but no longer associated with an attempt to push away from the bourgeois class, but to save it, not with self-denial, but with self-defense, determines the main conflict in the play "Reaching and Others".

The noted features of the plot-compositional structure of Gorky's plays of the 30s - the focus on the processes of ideological self-determination of the characters, the verification by life practice of the strength of ideological and moral principles - these features do not mean in the least that the issues of plot and compositional mastery were of secondary importance for Gorky-the playwright, that he did not achieve or even avoided the completeness, "roundedness" of the plot and composition, that the author's definition of the genre of plays was of secondary importance to Gorky-the playwright as "scenes" served as a kind of cover for their shortcomings and so on.

On the contrary, Gorky's plays are distinguished by both the unity of the plot and the harmony of the composition. In Gorky's dramaturgy, complex ideological and philosophical problems give rise to a complex, polyphonic, carefully thought-out composition. In the play "Yegor Bulychov and Others", it is not by chance that every action begins with scenes when Bulychov himself does not yet appear, but others act, but ends with scenes that reveal Bulychov's state of mind with the greatest sharpness.

Gorky's plays therefore seem to be "pieces" of living life, that their form is so perfect, so harmonious is their composition.

Of course, Gorky's dramatic principles are primarily due to his individual identity as an artist. But there are also features, if I may say so, "typological", inherent in him as an artist of socialist realism.

This is the deepest historicism, associated with the understanding of the decisive role of the masses in history, with the image of the advanced, revolutionary class as a class that realized its historical mission and led a victorious offensive against the old world. It is the ability to portray reality in its revolutionary development. This is the optimism of a proletarian writer, for whom the imminent bankruptcy of bourgeois ideology and the spiritual collapse of its defenders are obvious.

Thus, the Gorky dramaturgical work of the 30s demonstrated an artistically convincing example of the deepening of realism, the growth of interest in collisions of broad historical significance and, at the same time, in internal conflicts that play out in the mental world of man. Through the aggravation of attention to the problem of responsibility, the awareness of which opens the way for a person to genuine freedom of the individual, the creative thought of Gorky, the playwright of the 30s, developed in this direction.

B. Bialik, comprehending the innovation of Gorky's dramaturgy of the 30s, writes: "The new hero was born together with the radical breakdown of the former, centuries-old foundations, and this put him in a modern new relationship with a hostile environment ... Gorky felt this, understood it and reflected it in his plays, revealing the unprecedented conflict of the environment with the environment" [1, p.391].

In this "conflict" of the "environment with the environment", the author depicts people at that turning point when ideological self-determination becomes the main thing for them, the reassessment of all human values, when the choice of a clear social class position becomes a matter of life and death for people.



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