

History of Mansi literature

Every nation has its own face. It's a complicated spiritual world that is centuries-old and is embodied in words. Speaking of the development of Mansi literature and its current state, it is necessary to recall those factors that preceded the beginning of literature, and of course, determined its ideological and literary originality. We are talking about the importance of oral folklore and mythology as the source of cognition and self-expression of a nation. Today, folklore is one of the main riches of the Mansi people. Oral traditions of a nation recreate a complete and original picture of the vision of the world, the spiritual and the material world, the uniqueness of which is revealed in the image system of poetics, taking listeners into the world of folk life, beliefs and customs. We should emphasize the idea that in non-literate period the Mansi people created wonderful works of folklore, which reflected a system of moral and philosophical values had been establishing over the centuries.

The first literary works written by original Mansi writers appeared in the 1930s. The unity of the writers-northerners to folk roots, folklore and mythological traditions encouraged them to use the rich heritage of their nations. Folklore was the basis of their literary activity.

The first literary works belong to the representatives of the Konda Mansi. The earliest writers were Pantelejmon Kirillovich Chejmetov with his work "Dva ohotnika" (*Two hunters*), 1940; Mikhail A. Kazantsev with his work "Rasskaz o sebe" (*The story about myself*), 1949; Matrena Pankratjevna Vakhrusheva with her poems in the collection "Khantyjskaya i Mansijskaya poezija" (*Khanty and Mansi poetry*), 1940 and the story "Na beregah Maloj Jukondy" (*On the banks of the Small Jukonda*), 1949. Their works is a necessary link in the history of the native literature. Having incorporated in their works the aesthetic achievements of the nation, writers expressed a new level of artistic thinking.

In the earliest stages of national literature, writers-northerners' works (translations of poems into Russian) due to the loss of certain traditional features looked poor. A Russian-speaking reader became acquainted with their works only

through translations. For this reason, northern literatures in the early stages written under the influence of Russian versification and presented in translations have often been the subject of unfair criticism.

Despite this, one of the regularities of the Northern literary process was the fact that many nations standing on the verge of extinction have managed to raise great masters of the pen. Their works have enriched world literature with "the new heroes, new colors, and a new vision of the world" [1, p. 73].

We should note also that spirit of the time influenced into the contents of literary works. So we can say that formation and development of Northern literatures obeyed general regularities of development of literature in Russia and in the whole world. For example, in the 1920s multinational literature of the Soviet Union praised the ideals of the October Revolution. It was filled with enthusiasm about the Revolution, joy of labour and glorification of mass activity. Literature in the 1930s was characterized by increasing the number of characters involved in the seething stream of history; fullness of feelings and experiences about person's attitudes to the changes in social life.

Literature in the 1940s expressed patriotism of Soviet writers: their closeness to the people, love for motherland and hatred of fascism. It told the people the truth, inspired confidence in the victory over the enemy. Literature of the post-war period (ending about the mid-1950s), along with joy and gladness of victory reflected the sorrow of millions of dead, missing and injured people. Spiritual basis of literature was a worldview which came through suffering and being conquered in the World War II. It determined the ideological perspective, pathos and artistic features. In the post-war years, when the world was under the shadow of the "cold war" there was "a need in the art synthesis of new processes of modernity" in the literature [2, p. 116]. Political lyrics, based on the traditions of Vladimir Mayakovsky, became a military weapon. From year to year, there appeared cycles of poems calling for peace between peoples and to the struggle for freedom and independence. The main features of the literature in the late 1950s are "deepening process of typification, consolidation of the

social analysis of artistic thinking. The diversity in national literatures determined the significance of the literary process of the Soviet Union" [3, p. 152].

Critics call 1960s – 1980s as the "time of flood" of long-form prose. The development of the novel is connected with the common aspiration of art with the understanding of global, essential problems of the epoch associated with the fate and existence of all humanity; to the widest setting of moral and ethical issues, including the entire range of issues concerning the relationship of man and society.

Learning from the experience of the older literatures, literatures of Russia's Northern peoples, including Mansi literature, had several stages in their development. Since the very beginning, and during the formation of the Northern literatures, next to the first writers-northerners there always were linguists, philologists and folklorists Valerij Nikolayevich Chernetsov, Aleksej Nikolajevich Balandin, Nikolaj Ivanovich Tereshkin, Wolfgang Shteiniz, Viktorija Vyacheslavovna Senkevich (Gudkova), Ilya Sergejevich Gudkov, Mikhail Grigirjevich Voskoboynikov.

During the first period of the late 1920's to 1940's most of the works were created on the principle of "before and now". Writers compared how their nations lived before and after the October Revolution. Literature was educational in nature; it carried the knowledge, talked about benefits of a new life, and actively participated in the development of the literary language. One of the works of this time was the story of Pantelejmon Chejmetov "Dva ohotnika" (*Two hunters*) which is translated into Russian by V. Naumova. Although the work is created under the influence of socialist realism and highlights the subject according to the scheme the past is bad, new is good, the works of Pantelejmon Chejmetov are full of folklore sources. For example, the description of the ceremony of worshipping and "appeasing" of the sacred beast, bear, which is conducted by Mansi Trofim. Chejmetov revealed a national type of a person of the North. Eva Toulouse rightly notes that "the whole story is permeated with the Mansi mentality mixed with his personal life experience" [4, p. 105]. B.L. Komanovski believes that Pantelejmon Chejmetov managed "to outline the living figure of the old Mansi with his prejudices, hunting skills and independent mind" [5, p. 22].

Matrena Pankratjevna Vakhrusheva is better known in literature as the author of the story “Na beregah Maloj Jukondy” (*On the banks of the Small Jukonda*). It is a lyrical story. Unlike her predecessor, she was more attentive to artistic details. The poetry of the story is connected with the national folklore poetics.

Another work in Mansi literature was published in 1949. It was the story of Mikhail Kazantsev «Rasskaz o sebe» (*The story about myself*). The story is written in Russian and built according to the traditional schemes of literatures of the peoples of the North of the late 1930s – beginning of the 1950s. In his story, the author convinces the reader that during the empire of Russia’s Tsar smaller nations were oppressed, and Bolshevism brought happiness to the North. In this regard, the ideological and artistic originality of the work is more in line with the initial stage of formation of the Northern literatures, but folklore scenes, highlighting modern problems, taking into account its chronological frame, allow us to consider the story of M. Kazantsev to the second period of Mansi literature development.

The 1950s – 1970s were the period of maturation of Khanty and Mansi literatures. Yuvan Shestalov, Andrey Tarkhanov, Anna Mitrofanovna Konkova came to the literature. They were familiar with the works of their predecessors and with folklore heritage of their people. Folk poetry gave them the peculiarities of national thinking and imaginative vision of the world. The writers were also familiar with the classical Russian, Soviet multinational and foreign literatures.

At first, Yuvan Shestalov created works in his native language and immediately showed large lyrical talent. The Mansi didn’t have such a poet as Yuvan Shestalov before him, though we need to remember literary experiences of shamanic rites, which being in unwritten form belonged to the authors-shamans. We can consider the lyric Shestalov as the founder of Mansi poetry. Autobiographism in his lyrics acquires the features of historicism and national character. The lyrical "I" of Yuvan Shestalov incorporates not only the world of feelings and experiences of a particular person, but in the whole the soul of entire nation in historical space and time. Paradoxically, this explains Yuvan Shestalov’s further transition to Russian prose. He needed a wider range of readers, lyrics has gone into epic keeping lyrical

autobiographism as the source and the basis of large epic forms. Each of his numerous novel characters could be considered as the lyrical hero. However, peculiar polyphonism of his lyrical works has its core and the center, which has been the Author. Thus, as the founder of Mansi poetry, Yuvan Shestalov brings his fundamental beginning into prose. This is the difference of his experience not only from his predecessors, but also from his contemporaries. Their works do not have such unique synthesis. Andrej Tarkhanov remains within the Russian lyric poetry. Anna Mitrofanovna Konkova may already be considered as a follower of Yuvan Shestalov and she develops his tradition in the story "I lun medlitelnyh potok..." (*Flow of the slow moons*), (1982).

The name of Anna Mitrofanovna Konkova which is usually called as *Grandma Anne* is widely known (1916-1989). Her work written in collaboration with G.K. Sazonov in 1982 (1934-1988) "I lun medlitelnuh potok..." (*Flow of the slow moons*) is not traditional for literatures of the peoples of the North. It is an autobiographical chronicle. In this novel-legend authors acquainted the readers with the historical past of the Mansi of the Eastern region, with their life and culture in a figurative manner. The wedding ceremonies, births, funerals, different customs, household relationship and a lot of other episodes of Mansi national life give the reader a visual representation of the culture of the nation. The fictional structure of the work is dominated by historical time and space. The life of a small village Evry is represented as a composite particle of the whole nation, as the eternal universal process. This world is nationally original and mythical. The movement of life is shown as a natural change of generations of the Kartins. The authors have identified the genre of their work as a novel-legend. Yuvan Shestalov called this work as "surprisingly original". He said following words about the creativity of his other contemporary, "Soul, open, as the vastness of the North, able to take all the pain and joy, is well-expressed by Mansi Andrey Tarkhanov" [6, p. 3].

Andrey Semenovich Tarkhanov is a lyricist. In his poetry we can see the richness of his soul; he poeticized many of its state – from ecstatic, exalted to a state of loneliness and philosophical reflections on faith, space, friendship and love.

Tarkhanov's career as a writer as well as Yuvan Shestalov's counts more than half a century. Unlike his fellow writers, his works are only in Russian. Building on the achievements of the Russian classical poetry, the poet has managed to create a superb, full of ideas and sense national poetry. Andrey Tarkhanov denied Fet's pessimistic prediction about fatal inability of the smaller peoples of Russia to master the subtle and sophisticated forms of poetry. Origins of Tarkhanov's works are in his nation; he takes power in inexhaustible Mansi folklore and brings his own verses to the original shape. Russian poetry classics largely contributed to the improvement of his creative skills.

So, Mansi literature as other literatures of the peoples of the North has gone "accelerated" development. Non-literate peoples standing on the brink of extinction put forward first-class writers in the twentieth century. Their works have enriched world literature with new characters, new colors and a new vision of the world. The peculiar historical path of Mansi literature development is that since its origin it has taken the path of truthful reflection of people's life.

Russian authors made indispensable contribution to the Mansi literature. These were Valerij Nikolayevich Chernetsov with his collection of tales "Zemlanoj brates" (*Earthern brother*), Mikhail Plotnikov with his poem *Jangkyl-Maa*, 1933, Ivan Ivanovich Avdeyev with his collection of translations of Mansi songs performed on bear festival "Pesni naroda Mansi" *Songs of the Mansi people*, 1936. We also must mention Mansi authors Nikolay Mikhajlovich Sadomin with his poem *Pasya, ruma*, 2001, Anastasija Iljinichna Sajnakhova, Marija Tikhonovna Dvinyaninova, etc.

Modern Mansi literature, when Yuvan Shestalov was with us, was a complex, unique, and a very interesting phenomenon. When the writer passed away, literary inheritance has remained, and it will be in demand by readers and researchers. As Peter Domokosh noted in the book "Formirovaniye literature malyh uralskih narodov" *The formation of literatures of small Uralic peoples* (Yoshkar-Ola, 1993) Shestalov's works will be in demand in his homeland in 50 years, i.e. it will be relevant for many, many years.

Today writing Mansi authors are Andrey Tarkhanov and Svetlana Dinislamova. In recent years there were published books by Andrey Tarkhanov "Videnije prorokov" (*The vision of prophets*), Svetlana Dinislamova "My jest..." (*We are...*), the last book of Yuvan Shestalov "Shamanskije tajny otkrovenija slova "Rus'" (*Shamanic mystery revelation of the word "Rus'"*). We believe that since literature is published, it is in development. As prospects we must note that more over in the pages of Mansi newspaper "Luima seripos" distinctive literary works of authors began to appear. These authors are Marija Dvinyaninova, Galina Larionova, Tatjana Bakhtijarova (young author). Books of Nina Georgiyevna Rukova are published in Russian. Young authors Irina Turgacheva and Sergey Remezov please us with their works. The works of each author play a role in the development of native literature, and in general, Mansi literature takes a worthy place in the constellation of multiethnic literatures.