

Issues of Drama Criticism in Karakalpak Literature in The Independence Period

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Abstract: This article examines the role and significance of critical reviews in the development of drama criticism within Karakalpak literature during the independence period. Based on a comprehensive analysis of published reviews, critical portraits, and scholarly articles, the study identifies both achievements and persistent challenges in drama criticism. The study reveals that while the independence period witnessed increased critical activity, drama criticism in Karakalpak literature remains underdeveloped relative to criticism of poetry and prose due to both objective and subjective factors, including scarcity of critical materials, insufficient specialists, quality variations, and tensions between literary and theatrical criticism. The article concludes that effective drama criticism plays an essential role in literary development by evaluating artistic quality, contextualizing historical and ideological influences, facilitating multi-perspectival analysis, identifying social and moral dimensions, and providing constructive guidance for playwrights.

Keywords: Drama criticism, Karakalpak literature, independence period, literary criticism, theater criticism, critical reviews, dramatic works.

Introduction: Drama occupies a distinctive position in the literary landscape, serving as a bridge between written literature and public performance, and the critical examination of dramatic works plays an essential role in their development by influencing both playwrights and theatrical productions. As literary critic Professor Q. Kamalov observed, the low development of literature inevitably leads to the decline of criticism—a principle that extends to drama criticism specifically, and the symbiotic relationship between creative output and critical evaluation forms the foundation of this study [3, 46].

The significance of studying drama criticism in Karakalpak literature lies in the genre's unique position as both a literary and theatrical art form, requiring critics to possess knowledge of textual analysis, performance practice, and audience reception, and the development of a robust critical tradition is essential for nurturing playwrights, improving dramatic works, and contributing to cultural development.

Furthermore, research on the independence period has examined the development of Karakalpak stories and chronicles while noting the emergence of new thematic and stylistic directions, but the role of critical reviews in shaping dramatic development has received insufficient attention.

This article aims to examine the role of critical reviews in the development of drama criticism in Karakalpak literature during the independence period, identify key issues facing the field, and assess the contributions of major critics including S. Allayarov, Q. Kamalov, O. Satbaev, K. Kurambaev, J. Esenov, B. Tursinov, T. Allanazarov, and Q. Sultanov.

METHODOLOGY

The research employs a qualitative research design to examine the role of critical reviews in the development of drama criticism in Karakalpak literature during the independence period. This approach is particularly suitable for analyzing textual materials, interpreting critical discourse, and identifying patterns in literary

criticism, thereby providing a comprehensive understanding of the field. The study is primarily historical-comparative in orientation, as it examines how drama criticism has evolved from the Soviet period through the independence era, while also adopting a descriptive-analytical approach to evaluate the contributions of major critics and the characteristics of their work.

The primary data consists of critical reviews, literary portraits, and scholarly articles published during the independence period, specifically including works by prominent critics such as S. Allayarov, Q. Kamalov, O. Satbaev, K. Kurambaev, J. Esenov, B. Tursinov, T. Allanazarov, and Q. Sultanov. Moreover, the study examines reviews and articles by other critics and critical responses to translated plays. The collected data were subjected to thematic analysis, focusing on the content and methodology of critical reviews, treatment of dramatic works, relationship between criticism and theatrical production, quality and depth of critical analysis, and the role of reviews in drama development. Furthermore, the analysis examined how critics addressed historical and ideological influences, formal and stylistic characteristics, character development, theatrical production elements, and social and moral dimensions. A comparative analysis was conducted to compare critical approaches across different critics and time periods, compare drama criticism with criticism of other literary genres, and compare reviews of the same work by different critics. Drawing on principles of critical discourse analysis, the study examined how language and rhetoric are used in critical reviews to construct meanings, evaluate works, and influence readers.

To evaluate the quality of critical materials, a framework was developed based on depth of analysis, methodological rigor, theoretical literacy, multi-perspectival approach, engagement with production, objectivity, and originality. To enhance validity, methodological triangulation was employed through multiple data sources and cross-checking findings. The study acknowledges limitations including the limited scope of materials available, potential for subjective interpretation, and the focus on published materials. Despite these limitations, every effort was made to maintain objectivity and rigor in the analysis, thereby

producing reliable findings that contribute to understanding Karakalpak drama criticism in the independence period.

RESULTS

The analysis of critical reviews and scholarly materials from the independence period reveals that drama criticism in Karakalpak literature has experienced both notable developments and persistent challenges, with the role of reviews proving essential yet inconsistent across different works and critics. The findings demonstrate that the most significant critical contributions during this period came from S. Allayarov's analysis of M. Daribaev's "Koklen Batir," which stands out for its comprehensiveness, depth of thought, and broad coverage of material, as Allayarov compared written and oral sources about the historical Koklen Batir with the dramatic images and plot events, thereby revealing the peculiarities of the images, plot details, and the playwright's creative imagination. Furthermore, Allayarov's analysis of multiple versions of the play demonstrated that the second version featured a tragic finale where Koklen Batir is hanged along with his nephew and disciple Artik, while Aypara stabs herself with a dagger at the foot of the gallows, and his examination of the play's formal characteristics revealed that it is written in both prose and verse with organic connections between these forms and masterful use of poetry as a reinforcing element of style [2, 100].

Similarly, Q. Kamalov's critical article on the revival of "Garip-ashiq" demonstrated the importance of addressing both literary and theatrical dimensions, as he noted that in the new production directed by B. Baimurzaev the realistic orientation in the plot was strengthened, while also examining the artistic aspects of staging including the use of realistic and romantic depiction elements in stage design and composer Q. Zaretidinov's incorporation of song elements arranged for symphony orchestra that progressed from single-voiced dutar to polyphony. Moreover, O. Satbaev's review of Q. Xalmuratov's "Kewil kóleńkesi" revealed the spiritual and moral tragedy of the main character Majit who finds his son in a hospital, with the son having not recognized him as a father but eventually doing so, creating what Satbaev described as a real spiritual tragedy, and his incorporation of views from composer N. Muhametdinov, theater critic J. Khojanov,

and poets M. Jumanazarova and H. Aymbetov demonstrated the value of multi-perspectival analysis in enriching critical discourse [5].

The reviews of M. Nizanov's comedy "Eki dúnyanıń áweresi" by K. Kurambaev and J. Esenov highlighted the author's use of creative fantasy to expose greed, gluttony, bribery, and generally vile spiritual traits, with Esenov describing the methods as exaggerating, amplifying, and overstating through dreamlike and hallucinatory phenomena, and his comparison of the play's hyperbolized methods with Gogol's "The Inspector General" and E. Vohidov's "The Golden Wall" proved effective in demonstrating both the skill of the work and the critic's theoretical literacy. The critics' analysis of the main character Artik and his wife Otexan revealed how the comedy functions as social critique, with Artik's dying instructions about his funeral and his subsequent complaints in the other world showing his persistent greed and selfishness, while Kurambaev noted that Artik's complaints to Adam-Ata about those in this world who are even worse than him in chasing wealth reflect the truth about human behavior despite being born of the author's imagination [4].

The critical portraits of playwrights published during this period further demonstrated the development of drama criticism, as B. Tursinov examined J. Aymurzaev's work especially "Aygul-Abat" in connection with theater life and staging, noting that this musical drama is the only play that creatively connects Karakalpak drama with Shakespeare's tragedies "Romeo and Juliet" and "Othello," while T. Allanazarov's memoir-article revealed S. Xojaniyazov's work as composer, director, and leader in addition to his playwriting, emphasizing his qualities of seriousness, strong endurance, and ability to prioritize societal interests over personal ones. Additionally, Q. Sultanov's portrait article on T. Allanazarov used essayistic features beginning with a lyrical prologue-digression, noting that Allanazarov is considered the best actor and director and presenting vivid strokes related to his integral personality, with Sultanov discussing how Allanazarov's understanding of analyzing and staging works began during his work on "Aygul-Abat." [1].

The comparison with criticism of other literary genres reveals that drama criticism in Karakalpak literature still lags behind criticism of poetry and prose in terms of

volume and quality, with the relative underdevelopment attributed to the unique demands of the genre requiring knowledge of both literature and theater. Overall, the results indicate that while the independence period has brought new opportunities for drama criticism with notable contributions from several critics, much work remains to be done to realize the full potential of this essential literary and cultural practice.

DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrate that critical reviews play a central role in the development of drama criticism in Karakalpak literature by evaluating dramatic works, providing historical context, analyzing theatrical performance, and offering constructive recommendations for playwrights. The most influential critics, particularly S. Allayarov and Q. Kamalov, combined literary interpretation with theatrical analysis and historical perspectives, showing that drama criticism requires knowledge of both literature and stage performance. Allayarov's study of Koklen Batyr illustrates how criticism can reveal the relationship between artistic creativity and ideological influence during the Soviet period.

The study also highlights the importance of interdisciplinary and multi-perspectival criticism. O. Satbaev's review of *The Shadow of the Heart*, which incorporated the views of composers, theater critics, and poets, demonstrates that diverse perspectives enrich literary evaluation. In addition, critics such as H. Ayimbetov and M. Jumanazarova emphasized the social and moral significance of drama, showing that Karakalpak plays often address questions of identity, responsibility, and cultural values.

Despite these achievements, the research identifies several persistent challenges. Drama criticism remains underdeveloped because of the limited number of specialists, the scarcity of critical publications, and inconsistencies in analytical quality. Some reviews rely on general observations rather than detailed literary and aesthetic analysis, indicating the need for stronger methodological and theoretical foundations. The debate between critical judgment and audience reception, reflected in K. Rakhmanov's observations, further suggests that critics should balance artistic evaluation with public response.

These findings indicate several priorities for future development. Expanding specialist training in drama criticism, encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration, improving methodological standards, and strengthening institutional support would contribute significantly to the field. Greater attention should also be given to audience reception and contemporary theatrical practice.

Overall, the study confirms that critical reviews are essential for the growth of Karakalpak drama criticism. Although the independence period has produced important critical contributions, continued progress depends on increasing scholarly activity, improving critical quality, and creating stronger links between literary analysis, theatrical practice, and cultural development.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the role of critical reviews in the development of drama criticism in Karakalpak literature during the independence period. The findings show that critical reviews are essential for evaluating dramatic works, interpreting their historical and ideological background, analyzing theatrical performance, and providing constructive recommendations for playwrights. They also encourage broader literary discussion by incorporating different critical perspectives and highlighting the social and moral significance of drama. The works of S. Allayarov, Q. Kamalov, and O. Satbaev demonstrate that effective drama criticism combines literary analysis with theatrical interpretation and historical context, producing a deeper understanding of dramatic texts and their cultural importance.

At the same time, the research identifies several challenges that continue to limit the development of drama criticism. These include the scarcity of critical publications, the limited number of qualified specialists, inconsistencies in the quality of reviews, and insufficient literary and aesthetic analysis in some critical works. The study also highlights the continuing debate between critical evaluation and audience reception, as well as the tendency of some critics to rely on rigid theoretical approaches rather than examining dramatic works within their own artistic context. Compared with poetry and prose criticism, drama criticism remains less developed because it requires

expertise in both literary studies and theatrical practice, while also receiving limited institutional support.

The findings suggest that the future development of Karakalpak drama criticism depends on strengthening specialist training, encouraging interdisciplinary research, improving methodological standards, and expanding opportunities for scholarly publication and professional discussion. Greater attention to audience responses and theatrical practice would further enhance the quality and relevance of criticism.

In conclusion, critical reviews remain a vital force in the development of Karakalpak drama criticism. Although important progress has been achieved during the independence period, addressing existing challenges through stronger academic, methodological, and institutional support will further promote the growth of drama criticism and contribute to the continued development of Karakalpak dramatic literature and theatrical culture.

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