

ANNOTATION

**to the dissertation of Doctoral Student Akimbek Askar for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) on the educational program 6D040600 -
“Directing” on the theme: “The process of stage staging of works by Mukhtar
Auezov: tradition and innovation”.**

Relevance of the research topic

Each era has its own approach to the development of national theater and culture, each new generation forms its own vision of these processes. It is important, relying on the spiritual heritage created by previous generations, to comprehend the evolutionary changes and innovations occurring in the public consciousness, civic position, worldview of a person, in the political guidelines of society, to evaluate them, to determine their impact on the present and to predict possible directions of further development. At the intersection of literature and art, which are material manifestations of the system of spiritual values of the nation - the main attribute of its identity - the work of M.O. Auezov, possessing a multifaceted talent, marked the path of development of the Kazakh theater. His works, which have become classics of national dramaturgy, with a wide gallery of diverse characters, are immortal spiritual heritage of both previous and future generations. These works not only contributed to the development of the national theater, but also serve as a criterion to determine the current state of Kazakh stage direction. Such works as “Abai”, “Kenesary Khan”, “Koblandy”, “Aiman - Sholpan”, “Enlik - Kebek”, “Karagoz”, “Syrym” and others, filled with national color, unique traditional features, deep content and rich meaning, still resonate with the modern audience, affecting both producers-directors, performers-actors and the general public.

The close relationship and mutual influence of these works with contemporary theatre directing make them highly deserving of special scholarly study. The continuity and conflict between the established traditions and the innovative directorial searches, which have embraced modernity in the staging process of Auezov’s works, require scientific analysis, comparative review, and critical reflection to adequately meet the demands of today’s era.

Furthermore, in the years of independence, the spiritual significance of Auezov’s works has greatly increased, while their ideas have become even more relevant in response to the socio-cultural demands of the present day. Therefore, the features of staging Auezov’s dramatic works during the years of independence necessitate special scholarly research and analysis within the framework of postcolonial discourse. For more than a quarter of a century, such masterpieces as “Enlik-Kebek,” “Karagoz,” “Aiman-Sholpan,” “Abai,” “Karakypshak Koblandy,” “The Day of the Defenseless,” and others have not received professional evaluation, comprehensive scholarly consideration, or systematic analysis. Determining their ideological and artistic value, as well as analyzing the directorial styles applied in staging Auezov’s works from the perspective of critical realism, constitutes the pressing relevance of this research.

In any country, theatre art reflects, to a certain degree, the aesthetic and artistic ideas of its time and responds to the demands and expectations of its era. However, in the century-long history of Kazakh theatre, the post-dramatic and experimental directorial interpretations of Auezov's plays and prose, as well as their fundamental genre-specific features, have not been thoroughly investigated from a scientific perspective.

Indeed, with every social and formational change, various fields of art constantly undergo stages of renewal and development, requiring timely scholarly analysis. Especially in the sphere of theatre directing, which is distinguished by its syncretic and synthetic structure, continuous study and performance analysis are necessary. This research, with its focus on such tendencies, is the first comprehensive scholarly examination of its kind. This fact also underscores the significance and relevance of the present scientific work.

Object of the Research – the process of staging Mukhtar Auezov's dramatic and prose works on the theatre stage across different historical periods.

Subject of the Research – the harmony and contradictions in the interpretation of Auezov's works within the frameworks of traditional and modern directing innovations and scenic artistic solutions; the evolution and transformation of directorial searches.

The aim of the research is a comparative study of the continuity of directorial traditions and creative innovations (socialist realism, ethnosymbolism of the independence period and experimental forms of postdrama) in the stage interpretation of M. Auezov's works in the context of world theater art.

In accordance with the goal set in the thesis the following tasks are defined:

- to systematize the historical stages in the formation and development of Auezov's dramaturgical mastery from a chronological perspective;
- to identify the theoretical paradigms of the creative and innovative development processes in Auezov's dramaturgy as a means of strengthening the national theatre repertoire;
- to conduct a comparative and analytical study of the evolution and transformation of directorial searches in the staging of Auezov's dramaturgy during the Soviet-Kazakh theatre period;
- to assess the artistic and expressive means by which the works of the writer, who has become part of the national classics, have served as a school for developing the skills and mastery of domestic directors and actors;
- to analyze, through directorial interpretations, the role of Auezov's works staged during the years of independence as a key driving force behind the country's processes of spiritual revival and renewal;
- to identify new prospects for modern theatre forms and directing approaches in the staging of the writer's prose works, and to reveal the growing significance of Auezov's plays in the era of rapidly developing multimedia technologies.

Degree of research of the topic

During the century-long creative path of Kazakh professional stage art many scientific works devoted to the history of formation and development of the national theater have been created. The works of Mukhtar Auezov, including his plays, which

have become classics of the national dramaturgy and constitute the “golden fund” of the national dramaturgy, have received deep coverage in the fundamental works of famous scientists-philologists of Kazakhstan - researchers of the Kazakh literary science, who paid special attention to the dramaturgical heritage of the writer.

These include monographs by specialists who have paid particular attention to dramaturgy as a distinct field and to the writer’s literary legacy: S. Ordaliyev [4], A. Tazhibayev, R. Nurgaliev, A. Nurkatov, Sh. Eleukenov, Z. Kabdolov, G. Piraliyeva. In addition to these works, modern encyclopedic publications and electronic resources have also contributed: the 50-volume Complete Works of M. Auezov, the "Mukhtar Auezov. Encyclopedia" [13], and the electronic library "Mukhtar Auezov Alemi".

The unique works of the playwright, which have adorned the repertoire of Kazakh theatre from its origins to the present day, along with their stage adaptations, have been examined in the monographs and scientific collections written by senior professional experts in the field of theatre studies. These include the scholarly works of K. Kuandykov, B. Kundakbauly, L. Bogatenkova, A. Sygai, S. Kabdieva, B. Nurpeis, A. Mukhan, A. Erkebai, M. Zhaksilykova, Z. Islambayeva, and others.

In addition, the memoirs, essays, and portraits written by stage practitioners – directors and actors – combining performance artistry with personal reflections, are also noteworthy. While these works may not provide a thorough scholarly analysis of Auezov’s dramaturgy and its stage interpretations, they nevertheless inspired the directorial and acting creativity of each period. Such contributions include the works of distinguished Kazakh theatre directors and actors such as A. Tokpanov, S. Kozhamkulov, K. Badyrov, Kh. Elebekova, B. Rimova, K. Zhandarbekov, K. Baisseitov, M. Baiserkenov, I. Shostak, A. Rakhimov, among others.

Furthermore, materials related to stage productions – including critical articles, reviews, interviews, as well as surveys dedicated to individual creative figures and various national, regional, and international theatre festivals – have provided valuable insights. In addition, numerous media publications concerning directorial interpretations have been used as sources. The creative output of theatres that staged Auezov’s works during the years of independence, along with books, reviews, critical opinions, and interviews about performances and directors’ searches published by cultural experts and journalists such as A. Bopezhanova, A. Akhanbaikyzy, and others, have also been utilized as necessary. Archival footage of director B. Atabayev’s production of “Karagoz” filmed by the Khabar Agency in 2009; information on the production of “Karagoz” staged by Natasha Dubs at the German Theatre, presented by Alexey Azarov; and interviews with theatre scholar Nazerké Zhumabay regarding Gulnaz Balpeisova’s staging of “Karagoz” entitled “There are no borders in classics, only infinity” have also been incorporated.

Research Methods

In the process of studying the topic of this dissertation research, a set of comprehensive scientific methods and approaches was applied in order to fulfill the set goals and objectives, as well as to confirm the accuracy and reliability of the results from a scientific point of view. These include:

– **Theoretical analysis** – to determine the theoretical foundations of the selected research topic and to systematize the scientific-theoretical aspects of the relationship between national dramaturgy and theatre art;

– **Empirical analysis** – to collect specific data related to the author-dramatist and the theatre, and, based on these data, to evaluate the contemporary state of Kazakh stage art in connection with the creative legacy of M. Auezov;

– **Comparative analysis** – to compare the stage productions of Auezov's works in Kazakh theatre, identifying the unique features and common similarities of various directorial interpretations;

– **Performance analysis method** – to study the form, artistic structure, dramaturgical and directorial solutions of stage productions based on Auezov's plays;

– **Postcolonial discourse analysis** – it allows us to understand Auezov's work in a deeper historical, cultural and political context in dramaturgy and directing, to study the influence of the colonial period, the preservation of national identity, and the distortion of national-historical issues within the framework of "socialist realism."

The appropriate application of these and other methods ensured the accuracy and comprehensiveness of this research. These approaches made it possible to conduct a complete analysis of the relationship and close creative connection between Kazakh theatre art and dramaturgy, to identify their historical and cultural background, and to substantiate the prospects for the future development of national dramaturgy and theatre.

Methodological basis of the research

Realization of the goals and objectives set in the process of studying the director's searches in stage productions of M. Auezov's works, is based on the studies of foreign and domestic theater historians, devoted to the aesthetic principles and artistic directions of playwrights, stage directors and creative teams of the theater.

As methodological foundations for studying the formation and development processes of professional theatre schools of the 20th century, the research was guided by the scientific works on theatre theory and practice, as well as stage aesthetics, published at different times by Russian-Soviet and foreign theatre scholars, theorists, and practitioners such as K. S. Stanislavskiy, Vl. I. Nemirovich-Danchenko, L. Hans-Thies, A. D. Popov, G. Tovstonogov, A. Artaud, J. Grotowski, P. Brook, E. Fischer-Lichte, among others.

In addition, the conclusions and theoretical concepts derived from the works and directorial practices of domestic theatre scholars such as B. Kundakbaiuly, A. Sygai, A. Kadyrov, S. Kabdieva, B. Nurpeis, A. Erkebai, A. Mukhan, M. Zhaksilykova, Z. Islambayeva, and renowned practitioners such as A. Tokpanov, A. Mambetov, M. Baiserkeuly, A. Rakhimov, and others were also taken into account.

Scientific novelty of the research

There is no systematic study of dramatic and prose works of M. Auezov in Kazakhstan theater studies from the position of professional analysis, allowing to evaluate the heritage of the past and to identify the achievements of domestic directing in the years of independence.

In the process of dissertation research the author obtained the following scientific results:

1. The significance of the playwright's plays in enriching the national theater repertoire was revealed, and it was determined that performances based on his works, highlighting cultural and social aspects, rose to an artistic height that determined the artistic and conceptual depth of theatrical art;

2. It was determined that M. Auezov's dramaturgy directly influenced the development of professional directing and acting in the national theater, especially through his first productions "Enlik-Kebek", "Baybish-Tokal", "Karagoz", "Ayman-Sholpan", "Tungi Yul", "Kobylandy" and "Abai" the foundations of Kazakh theatrical art were laid.;

3. The internal unity of creative searches in the staging of Auezov's dramaturgy during the Soviet-Kazakh theatre period has been analyzed, with a focus on the prerequisites and development models of relying on traditional epic methods in revealing the inner world of characters;

4. The symbolic-metaphorical interpretations of Auezov's works in domestic theatre directing, which demonstrate professional skill and mastery and serve as a school for honing acting abilities, have been studied;

5. The evolution and dialectics of Kazakh theatre directing have been examined through the example of the "Karagoz" performance, comparing the interpretations of director A. Mambetov and those of contemporary young directors, and identifying the differences in their staging solutions;

6. On the basis of Auezov's prose works, the development of post-dramatic theatre forms and innovations in directing have been evaluated, revealing the relevance of the national theatre art's creative pursuits in accordance with the requirements of time and modernity.

Main Provisions Submitted for Defense

In the course of this research on the creative legacy of the great thinker, writer, and playwright M. Auezov, his dramaturgy and prose works intended for stage interpretation were analyzed within the context of the national drama theatre of Kazakhstan. This study revealed that his works serve as a guiding model for combining established traditions with innovative tendencies. M. Auezov's role in the formation and development of national dramaturgy is exceptional. His timeless plays, which continue to meet the aesthetic and cultural demands of audiences, have had a positive impact on the development of national directing and acting, as well as on the growth of creative searches within these domains. Based on this comprehensive scholarly analysis of Auezov's contribution to the evolution of national theatre directing, the following main provisions are submitted for defense:

1. The formation of Mukhtar Auezov as a distinguished playwright and the artistic quality of his plays laid the foundation for the national theatre's repertoire policy. The mutual creative relationship between theatre and the writer contributed to elevating the professional level of domestic stage art. Auezov's development as a dramatist began with "Enlik – Kebek" and continued with classical works such as "Karagoz," "Baibishe – Tokal," "Tungi Saryn," and others. These plays fully met the repertoire needs of the national theatre. The writer courageously defined the

artistic direction and spiritual content of national theatre, fearlessly risking his safety under the Soviet totalitarian regime. He faced persecution for raising national issues in theatre, with his "Abai" epic novel, especially the historical drama "Khan Kene" and the play "Karagoz," receiving severe criticism. The Soviet ideology considered "Khan Kene" and "Kily Zaman" dangerous historical dramas, which were banned from the stage for 70 years. These productions are regarded as milestones that elevated Kazakh theatre to remarkable artistic heights.

2. Auezov's stage legacy is regarded as a creative phenomenon that laid the foundation for the formation and flourishing of national theatre dramaturgy. The research confirmed that the writer's plays enhanced the artistic level of the national theatre repertoire and stimulated the professional development of national directing and acting. These findings offer new insights into Auezov's historical role in domestic theatre and his masterful artistic contributions. The study proved that Auezov's significant input into domestic dramaturgy remains relevant in modern directing and stage interpretation, and his works have become exemplary models that harmoniously combine tradition and innovation.

3. During the Soviet era, theatre directors staged Auezov's plays in ways that reflected the aesthetic demands of their time. Through these interpretations, they contributed to the development and elevation of the national theatre school. The influence of Auezov's works on directors such as A. Mambetov and other domestic theatre practitioners was evident in their productive searches, which adhered to the principles of "socialist realism." These productions blended the classical text with contemporary directorial solutions, serving as stage innovations of that period.

4. The staging of Auezov's dramatic works became a crucial stage in the creative and professional growth of domestic theatre troupes. The writer's plays served as an important educational school for directors and actors, enhancing their artistic thinking, historical-cultural awareness, and stage craftsmanship. Every staging of Auezov's national classics became a testing ground for the professional skills and mastery of Kazakh directors and actors. Notably, the achievements of directors such as Askar Tokpanov, Azirbayzhan Mambetov, Kadir Zhetpispayev, Baiten Omarov, Esmukhan Obaev, Zhanat Khadzhiyev, and others were analyzed and summarized.

5. The evolution and dialectics of Kazakh theatre directing were traced through the example of the play "Karagoz." The analysis covered various interpretations by directors such as Azirbayzhan Mambetov (1981) – traditional Soviet realism; Bolat Atabayev (2005) – directorial sensation and aesthetic dissonance; Natasha Dubs (2018) – stage performance form; Farkhat Moldagali (2021) – sound drama and conceptual deconstruction; Gulnaz Balpeisova (2022) – modern form and figurative plasticity; Yelik Nursultan and Gulsina Mirgaliyeva (2024) – symbolic-verbal poetics; Dauren Sergazin – mythological archaeo-epic ethno-mythodrama. These productions illustrated modern directorial solutions based on Auezov's text.

6. The experience of staging Auezov's prose works was successfully realized during the years of independence. Domestic theatres paid special attention to his prose, creating stage productions that served as sources of new trends and artistic

forms in modern directing. The philosophical depth of Auezov's prose and the complexity and psychological richness of his characters allowed contemporary Kazakh directors to develop symbolic, plastic, and technological interpretations, thereby elevating stage art to new aesthetic heights. The innovative searches in modern theatre forms and directing continue to evolve through Auezov's prose works.

Theoretical and Practical Significance of the Research

The results, conclusions, summaries, and findings of the dissertation can be used by students of specialized secondary and higher educational institutions who are being trained in the field of stage art, as well as by master's and doctoral students majoring in acting, directing, and theatre studies.

The outcomes of the research can serve as supplementary educational materials for such courses as "History of Kazakh Theatre," "Contemporary Global Theatre Processes," "Acting Mastery," "Modern Directing and Acting Art," among others. They can also be applied in special courses like "Mukhtar Auezov and Theatre Art," as well as in advanced training courses and seminar lectures aimed at enhancing the professional skills of directors and actors.

Overall, the research results have methodological significance for the fields of art studies, cultural studies, and specialized education.

Approbation and Publication of the Research

The dissertation was discussed and recommended for public defense at the extended meeting of the Department of Acting Mastery and Directing at the Temirbek Zhurgenov Kazakh National Academy of Arts.

The main theoretical issues and conclusions of the research were published in five scientific articles – four in national journals recommended by the Committee for Quality Assurance in the Sphere of Education and Science of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan, and one in an international journal indexed in the Scopus database with a non-zero impact factor.

Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation consists of an introduction, three main chapters (each divided into two subsections – six subsections in total), a conclusion, a list of references, and appendices.

The first chapter, "Mukhtar Auezov's Creative Legacy and the Formation of National Theatre," examines Auezov's path as a writer and dramatist, his development as an artist, and the refinement of his craftsmanship. It describes the young author's striving for professionalism from his earliest works, his choice of themes, the world of his characters, and his depiction of Kazakh village life and public life. The artistic features of his debut plays are analyzed.

The second subsection focuses on the role and influence of Auezov's dramaturgy in the formation and development of the first national theatre repertoire. The importance of his plays in the repertoire of the early modern Kazakh drama theatre is revealed.

The second chapter, "Issues of Directorial Interpretation in the Staging of Auezov's Plays," investigates the successful directorial searches of the Soviet-Kazakh period in staging Auezov's plays. It covers milestone productions in the

history of Kazakh theatre, such as the 1940 production of the tragedy “Abai” staged by young director A. Tokpanov, and the heights achieved by national directing under A. Mambetov, analyzing the directorial and acting features of these performances. The second subsection, “The Role of Auezov’s Plays in the Development of National Directing,” considers the playwright’s legacy as part of the national drama’s golden fund, analyzing productions that presented new directorial interpretations and solutions. These innovative readings of Auezov’s plays are interwoven with the successful years of Kazakh theatre history, and the artistic solutions of these productions are evaluated.

The third chapter, “The Influence and Innovation of Auezov’s Works in the Development of Modern Kazakh Theatre,” analyzes the transformed stage versions of Auezov’s works during the period of independence. It assesses the best productions based on his staged plays and prose, which contributed to the development of modern domestic theatre, and examines the directorial interpretations of productions that introduced innovation to the Kazakh stage.

The second subsection explores new theatrical forms and innovations in Auezov’s stage system, analyzing the original directorial ideas and projects created by domestic theatres in their attempts to master new stage forms. It reviews the innovative productions staged in line with the trends of modern and post-dramatic world theatre and considers the new stage productions created based on Auezov’s prose works.