

Filozofia literatury i iskusstva

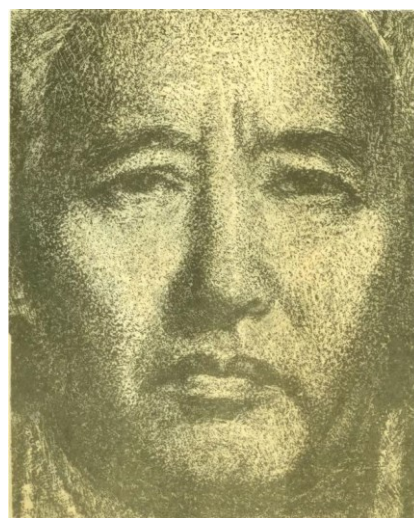
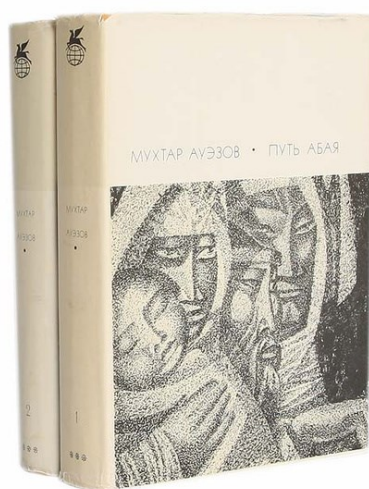
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Mukhtar Auezov – Evgeny Sidorkin: to the 50th Anniversary of the epic novel «Abai's Way»

The 2021 year has become significant for the entire humanist community thanks to a significant date – the 50th Anniversary of the epic novel «Abai's Way» from the «Library of World Literature» series in 1971 with illustrations by Yevgeny Sidorkin, Soviet graphic artist, honored worker, laureate of the State Prize of Chokan Valikhanov, People's Artist of the Kazakh SSR.

The epic novel «Abai's Way» has an important place in the world fame of Mukhtar Auezov; this novel became the content of the writer's life. The epic «Abai's Way» is the pinnacle of Kazakh literature. «It's incredible, amazing! The steppe came to life and went to you, with all the splendor of its pristine nature, its gesture and solid characters... You feel the era...», – wrote Alfred Kurella, a German writer and translator.



The famous Kazakh scientist K. Satpayev characterized this work as a novel about the life and fate of the Kazakh people in the second half of the 19th century.

If all the books of the epic «The Way of Abay» in their unity recreate the half-century life of the Kazakh people, then each book on the development of events and on the artistic structure reflects a certain stage in the spiritual and moral development of Abai Kunanbayev.

Abai is one of the significant pages in the history of the culture of Kazakhstan. The fate of Abai-akyn, educator and philosopher, is original and significant.

The image of Abai, his life and work have served as the theme of their works for many cultural workers of Kazakhstan. With great inspiration they create the image of Abai in painting, graphics and sculpture. It is difficult to work on it, since there are no drawings from nature. Therefore, recreating the image of a great man is the transmission of his vision of Abai.

Abai has passed away at the turn of two centuries, in 1904, when the contradictions between the new and the old were already quite clearly revealed, when the beautiful wife Aigerim was crying her inspired song of sorrow at the very grave of Abai: «Ahead, at the heavenly line, the dawn dawned... and your light, you will also shine in it! There is a spirit over which death has no power... You have such a soul!...». So in the song-cry of the faithful wife Aigerim Abai entered immortality... Auezov at that time was seven years old, and he was just beginning to peer into the world around him. The most remarkable thing is that the future writer managed to see the living Abai, who began to fade away under the weight of longing and grief... The future writer was brought up and matured in the twin cradle of his great predecessors – Makhambet and Abai – in the same aul, not far from Chingistau, where for centuries the steppe did not subside truly Shakespearean passions... And more than twenty years later, an artist appeared whose imagination was also imperiously captured by the personality and fate of Abai – Evgeny Sidorkin, illustrator of the epic novel «Abai's Way» [1, Vol.1, 13 p.]. In 1960 he began to create the first version of illustrations for the novel «Abai's Way», made in the technique of black and white linocut. It was a solid, recognized work, but even then it did not satisfy the artist.

Returning ten years later to the epic, he solved a more difficult task, creating a work of graphic art, not only generated by the content of the novel, but also consonant with its artistic images.

The dust jacket of the first book introduces the atmosphere of the novel, the atmosphere of the folk life of the partiarchal-tribal Kazakhstan. A stream of people passes in front of the viewer, filling the entire surface of the sheet. According to E. Sidorkin himself, the dust jacket should contain the main meaning of the book. She must convey her «spirit, mood», so he does not depict a single specific character. The reader should not recognize the portraits of the characters in the book. These people are a part of the Kazakh people of the historical era, which the writer tells about.

The artist created twenty-three sheets of illustrations and four sheets of a dust jacket using the lithographic technique. The undisputed creative successes include the sheets «Kunanbai», «Tekezhan», «Jute», «Female Images», «Bride», «Melody», «At the Grave».



An interesting sheet where the artist depicts Abai himself (the first illustration for the second part of the first book). Abai is depicted in the moment of a pensive state, creating. The transfer of the state is facilitated by plastic techniques: the

viewer guesses the pose of the sitting Abai; an expressive gesture of the thinker's raised hand holding a pen. «...The night passed without sleep. Only at dawn did Abai lie down for a short time, not feeling tired. Soon he returned to the table heaped with open books...» [1, Vol.1, 353 p.].



E. Sidorkin. Dust jacket for Mukhtar Auezov's novel «Abai's Way».1970

For each illustration E. Sidorkin found an individual compositional solution, relying on the plot basis of the work. Realism is achieved through a simple, full of power and emotional expressiveness, form. When you look at the illustrations as a whole, they, like fragments of a canvas, reveal the general picture, capture the enormity of the masses of people acting in them, the scale of events. E. Sidorkin's auto lithographs, like a novel, can be called a folk epic. They are a valuable contribution to the history of Kazakh art and literature [2].

«Abai's Way» is an encyclopedia of the life of the Kazakh people.

References:

1. Auezov, M. (1971). *Abay's Way* (Vols. 1–2). Khudozhestvennaya literatura.
2. E. Sidorkin's illustrations for the novel of Auezov M. «Abay's Way». The world of Mukhtar Auezov. https://auezov.kz/page.php?page_id=54&lang=1