WALT WHITMAN AND RAUF PARFI: THE ARTISTIC EXPRESSION OF DEMOCRATIC THINKING AND SPIRITUAL INDEPENDENCE IN THEIR POETRY

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Abstract. This paper offers a comparative-typological analysis of how the American poet Walt Whitman and the Uzbek poet Rauf Parfi express democratic thinking and spiritual independence in their work. In the poetry of both writers, the dignity of the human being, free thought, inner freedom, and responsibility toward society occupy an important place. In Whitman's work, democratic thinking is manifested through the ideas of human equality, individual freedom, and universal unity, whereas in Rauf Parfi's poetry spiritual independence is interwoven with national self-awareness and fidelity to personal conviction. The study examines these shared and divergent features using comparative-typological, historical-literary, and poetic methods of analysis.

Keywords: Walt Whitman, Rauf Parfi, democratic thinking, spiritual independence, freedom, human dignity, national identity, comparative-typological analysis.

Introduction

In the history of world literature, the artistic expression of human freedom, personal independence, and democratic values is one of the most significant themes. In the work of Walt Whitman, a leading figure of nineteenth-century American literature, and Rauf Parfi, a distinctive voice of twentieth-century Uzbek poetry, the human personality, its inner world, and its relationship with society acquire a special artistic and philosophical meaning. Whitman's collection Leaves of Grass is of particular importance as the literary expression of American democratic thought. In this work, the poet asserts that every person is equal and valuable, regardless of social standing, origin, or profession. In Whitman's work, individual freedom is interpreted not as separation from society but as inseparable from unity and solidarity among people [5]. In Rauf Parfi's poetry, by contrast, freedom is closely tied, first of all, to a person's spiritual independence, self-awareness, and capacity for independent thought. In the poet's lyrics, inner experience, freedom of conscience, national identity, and spiritual liberation occupy a leading place. In this respect, freedom in his work appears not only as an external social condition but also as an inner spiritual need of the individual [6]. The aim of this study is to compare how democratic thinking and spiritual independence are expressed artistically in the poetry of Walt Whitman and Rauf Parfi, and to identify the shared and divergent features of the two poets' worldviews.

The study employed comparative-typological, historical-literary, hermeneutic, and poetic methods of analysis. The comparative-typological method is used to identify similarities and differences in how the two poets treat freedom and democratic thinking. The historical-literary approach makes it possible to take into account the social and cultural conditions that shaped the poets' worldviews. Hermeneutic analysis is used to interpret poetic images, symbols, and philosophical content. Poetic analysis serves to examine the role of free verse, repetition, parallelism, metaphor, and other artistic devices in conveying ideological content. The methodological views of R. Wellek and A. Warren, as well as S. Bassnett, on literary theory and comparative literature were taken as the theoretical basis for the comparison [1; 4].

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One of the main features of democratic thinking in Walt Whitman's poetry is the recognition of human equality and of each individual as a unique value. In Song of Myself, through the "I" of the lyrical hero, the poet seeks to express not only the individual person but humanity as a whole. In it, personal experience merges with universal meaning. For Whitman, a person's self-expression is inseparably linked to recognizing the existence and freedom of others [5]. Whitman's democratic views are also evident in his choice of poetic form. His departure from traditional meter and rhyme patterns in favor of free verse is an important expression of poetic freedom. The poet's broad panoramic images, his use of catalogues, and his repetitive and parallel constructions unite diverse people, professions, and life experiences in a single artistic space. These features strengthen the democratic spirit of his work [3]. In Rauf Parfi's poetry, questions of democratic thinking and freedom acquire a distinctive spiritual and philosophical content. For the poet, human freedom is manifested above all in remaining faithful to one's own thought, conviction, and conscience. His lyrical hero is not a mere observer of external reality but a person who reflects independently on life, society, humanity, and truth. The notions of national self-awareness and spiritual independence also play an important role in Parfi's work. In the poet's artistic world, questions of spiritual freedom, historical memory, and national values appear in close relation to one another. For this reason, in his poetry the concept of freedom goes beyond the realm of personal spiritual experience and takes on a broader meaning connected with the spiritual life of the nation [6]. In the poetry of both writers, the exaltation of human dignity, free thought, and the striving for spiritual independence emerge as shared features. However, whereas in Whitman's work these ideas are linked more closely to democratic equality and universal unity, in Rauf Parfi's poetry they are interwoven with national identity, freedom of conscience, and inner spiritual independence.

A comparative study of Walt Whitman and Rauf Parfi shows that both poets interpret freedom as an important spiritual value of human life. In their poetic worldviews, the ideas of a person's self-awareness, independent thinking, and the defense of human dignity are predominant. Whitman's democratic thinking is based, above all, on the idea of the equality of all people in society and their mutual belonging. In his poetry, the voice of the individual merges with the voice of humanity as a whole. The poet's lyrical hero, while preserving his individuality, strives for spiritual unity with other people. This aspect defines the democratic and universal essence of Whitman's work [2; 3]. In Rauf Parfi's work, spiritual independence is connected with the individual's inner views, conscience, and national self-awareness. His lyrical hero seeks his own truth, free from external pressures or social prejudices. In this sense, the concept of freedom in Parfi's poetry is closely bound to the person's spiritual world and moral position. Certain differences are also observed in the two poets' poetic styles. Using free verse, broad syntactic structures, repetition, and catalogues, Whitman expresses the diversity of democratic life. Rauf Parfi, in turn, reveals the complex spiritual world of the individual through symbolic images, metaphors, philosophical reflection, and lyrical experience.

It should be emphasized that there is insufficient basis to interpret the similarities between the two poets' works as the result of direct literary influence. It is more appropriate to compare them as writers who formed in different historical and cultural conditions but who share artistic and philosophical features in their treatment of human freedom and dignity. In comparative literary studies, such an approach makes it possible to identify typological affinities between different national literatures [1].

Conclusion

In the poetry of Walt Whitman and Rauf Parfi, the ideas of democratic thinking and spiritual independence find artistic expression on the basis of the principles of exalting human dignity, thinking

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freely, and achieving self-awareness. In Whitman's work, democratic thinking is defined by the ideas of human equality, individual freedom, and universal unity. The poet's free poetic form also serves to express this ideological content. In Rauf Parfi's poetry, spiritual independence, national identity, freedom of conscience, and fidelity to personal conviction occupy the leading place. Thus, although both poets interpret freedom as an important spiritual need of the human being, their artistic expression of it reflects different priorities: in Whitman's work, democratic equality and universal unity are especially significant, while in Parfi's poetry, spiritual liberation and national-spiritual independence are. A comparative-typological study of these aspects helps to give a deeper understanding of the distinctive features of the concept of freedom in world and Uzbek literature.

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