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WALT WHITMAN'S POETIC HERITAGE IN THE LIGHT OF GENDER INTERPRETATION

Walt Whitman is one of the most influential poets of the American canon, often called the "father of vers libre" and his collection "Leaves of Grass" occupies a prominent place among the poetic heritage of the American and world literatures in general, because his works, except those written with the unusual for that time rhyme, namely blank verse, were also very controversial so Whitman's collection considered obscene one because of its unconcealed sexual subtext. Therefore, the study of the art world of Walt Whitman is a multi-faceted problem, and then in the scientific studies there is a considerable interest in the gender context of its artistic heritage, and feminine and masculine and androgynous elements of creativity interest deeper modern scientists interpreting differently and revealing unknown before the artistic world of the famous poet. Our study aimed specifically at gender analysis of poetic worldview of Walt Whitman, the poet, "burst" in world literature with violent, unpredictable, but the pleasant wave of upgrades, great talent and a kind of attitude, such unexpectedly appeared on the literary horizon of the American literature.

Although, as you know, "Leaves of Grass" is the only collection of the author, but the poet's name glorified forever. Throughout the life with each following edition the writer added it adhering the symbolic name "Leaves of Grass". Works of the collection were divided by the author into 15 major cycles, each of which included poetry, united with the same theme, and therefore each cycle had appropriate names, one of which is "Children of Adam" showing the harmony of physiological and spiritual in man; chanting beauty of the human body, physical and platonic love. The cycle of Walt Whitman's poems "Children of Adam" is entirely dedicated all-triumphant passion, in which a constant cross-cutting themes and binary oppositions present : man – person, woman – man, life – death, body – soul etc.

Therefore, the topicality of the article is provoked by the necessity to open new possibilities, new methods and approaches to understanding and elucidation of complex and diverse in its manifestations the artistic heritage of Walt Whitman. The need for research of this kind is quite obvious, because one can hardly deny the fact that the perception of creativity of the American bard depends on reading the latest methodology and the development of a model of the gender analysis and the interpretation of the art world of the artist will contribute to opening new opportunities for the study of historical and literary and theoretical problems, the formation of modern gender approaches to reading not only Whitman's works and achievements of the world literature in general.

Therefore, the work is an attempt to create a model of gender analysis of Walt Whitman's art world; to analyze the specific display of femininity and masculinity, rethinking, bringing them to a new androgynous quality in the works by American artist based on the author's gender identity, identity of the structure creative process and his artistic style.

Despite the fact that the American poet, journalist and essayist even in the last century was recognized as a mentor by various European literary groups, but in gender aspect in the light of gay and lesbian studies the investigation of Whitman's works started relatively recently, namely in the works of foreign scholars, a shining example of which is, for example, the critic Peter Barry, who tried to consider the lyrics of the American artist in the light of gay and lesbian studies mostly. British researcher stresses the homoerotic poetry of Walt Whitman's poems, especially during the Civil War, emphasizing that the poetry of World War I the wounds, the wounded, and hospitals acquired "erotic connotations as enable sensual erotic contact between men" [1, 182].

Gay theory in the works of the American writers and poets (including Whitman) Judith Butler and Eve Sedgwick also developed.

Turning the debate about gender issues of Walt Whitman's creativity, we consider that it will be appropriate to involve in the article the exploration of the term "gender" with the following definition: gender in this study considered a priori as something inhering in man id est it is a "set of effects that occur in bodies, behaviors and social relations as a result of complex political involvement of technology in the field of action of cultural assessments and benefits through linguistic practice" [4, 381].

So poetical works of Walt Whitman through the light of gender studies contributes to rethinking and new interpretation and new reading of his works because different in the chronological aspect of literary texts represent specifically the evolution of the understanding of the nature of each cultural era of female and male principles. It is not surprising that the artistic heritage of the American poet draws attention to contemporary scientists-genderologists.

Namely from these positions Whitman's achievements can be considered during the interpretation of the gender of the art world. However, to implement comprehensive gender analysis of the works of the American bard the necessity to clarify the nature and features of the concepts of "feminine", "masculine" and "androgenic" as a criteria for analyzing of poetic works of the American artist is also appeared.

The concepts of "feminine" and "masculine" are not always clearly perceived. E. Siksu delineates the femininity / masculinity more clearly (gender, that social and cultural differences) and wife / husband (sex, biological differences) [6]. In the 90-s of the twentieth century, most Ukrainian scholars began to use a more specific, free from emotional layers the terms "feminine" and "masculine" as culturally meaningful differences between women and men. This confusion disappears biological aspect. In the absence of the latter, it is considered appropriate to use the terms "male" and "female" as synonymous to the notions of "feminine" and "masculine" to avoid that confusion.

It should be noted that in addition to the problem of "masculinity – femininity", and eventually there is a very fast-paced and androgyny theory: a man is considered in terms of dispersed integrity of the man-woman, half-creature as seeking amendments in the person of the other sex and seeks angry with him. According to the researcher A. Zavgorodnia "creativity as a constructive transformation of "I" and "not – I" is neither an attribute of masculinity and femininity nor androgyny" [2, 51]. The same are the views of the Russian scholar N. Konopleva, who provides that "a gifted man carries a predominance of female characteristics while maintaining male. A woman capable to create is also androgynous, but

she has dominated men's personal qualities. The confrontation of these principles is also necessary, which, despite its relentless antagonism, as if glued together, are called to peaceful cooperation and coordination. It is that the gifted person is androgynous, that spiritual sex is difficult, but each person is a combination of male and female elements it's a cause of creative tension, gender sources of creative activity" [3].

Thus, any creative person, regardless of sex, is characterized psychological and existential androgyny that clearly reflected in the artistic heritage of Walt Whitman. Poet decentered a man, while trying not to center women, so our focus is on a dialogue between male and female in the art world of Walt Whitman.

The concept of femininity and masculinity are dependent on cultural and historical situation and changing with the development of society. For example, S. Okhotnikova writes: "As you know, the categories of poetics are movable, and from period to period, from age to age, they change their form, enter the new connections and relationships, each consisting of unique, different from one another scheme. The nature of each of these systems is due, in our opinion, not only to the literary consciousness of the era, but also gender identity, characteristic for the period. That gender identity, which reflects the historical content of an era, its ideological needs and views, relevant literature and reality, defines a set of principles of literary works in their theoretical and practical development of the art world" [5, 273].

Walt Whitman loved America, praised its democracy, but that did not stop him of criticizing lots of phenomena of the American life. "Never before, perhaps, it has there been such a wasteland in the heart, as today we have in the United States – he wrote in "Democratic perspectives". It seems that we have left the true faith. Nobody honestly do not believe in the basic principles of the state <...>, or in humanity <...>. In business, there is only one goal: to achieve profit by any means. In one tale a dragon swallowed all the other dragons; greed – that's our dragon, which devoured all the others" [8].

So, be aware of the extreme state of contemporary society, the American poet felt the need of humanity in a new philosophical approach for understanding and perception of reality, awareness of its dependence on the historical development of the nation, interconnectedness of each individual with nature and the universe, creating new ways of developing nations and humanity in general, because the nineteenth century for America was marked by global historical changes (wars, sharp changes in the social, economic, political and cultural life, etc.) that qualitatively affect the overall spiritual development of the American people. Tangible complexity and drama of the situation intensified ideological taboo of literature, and in spite of this, the American literary process was characterized by the richness of genre and style searches, expanding the ideological and thematic boundaries of literature and originality of creative thinking.

Therefore, given the saturation of creativity of Walt Whitman's categories such as "femininity" and "masculinity", the source of their gender identity in his works should look at the symbolic and material relations that surrounded him, that the material and spiritual culture, and therefore, for an adequate understanding of the American bard's poetry should be seen in the context.

Gender consideration of the artistic world of Walt Whitman in the context of the American Romantic tradition, depicting a woman primarily as a contemplation or self-admiration allows to determine the originality of the artist's worldview. In the works of the American poet as a national poet concepts of masculine and feminine is not just reflected but the poet comes to highly human idea of gender balance, in essence, becomes the creator of the main ideas for America. So it is not surprising that in the art world of Walt Whitman ideological ideal of gender appears as a harmonious unity formed by the dialectic of male and female.

Thus the cycle "Children of Adam" by Walt Whitman is a summary of the program of radical restructuring of consciousness in a man and a woman, discovering and deification of a man, which combines both male and female. This required a qualitatively new imagery and poetic language. The main character is the poet himself who becomes the embodiment of a new, free, androgynous personality, "love for the body of a man or woman's body needs no excuses – / body itself does not need excuses. / Perfect body of a man is and woman's body is as perfect" [7, 41].

It should be noted that the cycle of poems "Children of Adam" caused particular fury of puritans and hypocrites, because it was totally devoted to all-triumphant passion. Such poetries as "The body Electric I Sing", "Time of Madness and Happiness", "Once, when I Went through the Cities", "When I'm Like Adam" sang the beauty of the human body, free love, the physical relationship between a man and a woman: "Look for me, where I go, listen to my voice, come / to me / Touch me, touch his hand to my body when / I pass by you / Do not be afraid of my body" [7, 53].

Images of male and female body in this cycle of poems by Walt Whitman symbolize a new approach to understanding gender relations between men and women, on the basis of which there is no classification in accordance with biological principles, but is presented as something unique, inherent, complementary. The desire of the poet to harmoniously combine feminine and masculine fundamental principle solve gender splitting of the society through the feminine and masculine and androgynous marked syncretism emphasizing the artistic world of Walt Whitman.

Whitman's androgyny is his constant creative genius that is not only national but also international recognition of him. Absorbing the ethnic heritage experience of the previous generations and passing it through the prism of their own world view, the American poet announces unusual for that time, namely the idea of gender equality, synergy which bore the opinion of the author, nation-formed character for America. This idea has been quite relevant in the context of the development and establishment of America as a nation, and it was important due to the growing need for tolerance in terms of multiculturalism. So in this case, the harmony of the masculine categories and the feminine as vital necessary component of the national idea of America was very appropriate.

Then in the cycle "Children of Adam" the American poet tried to create a world in which men and women would live in accordance with single and equal laws of existence: "I see in them and me the same eternal law" [7, 46]. By combining numerous images of people and their characteristics Whitman uses one of his most beloved artistic methods – "catalogue" and declares the harmonious existence of men and women on the Earth: "And

all of them flow into me, and I flow into them , / And my essence somewhere is such as in all of them. / From all of them and each one of them I am weaving Song of myself" [7, 47].

It should be emphasized that it is namely in the name of "Leaves of Grass" the central idea of the American poet's world-view and a sense of community and unity of all that exist in the universe, including the male and female principles are hidden. There is a perpetual cycle, the transition of matter from one state to another (converting a man into a woman and vice versa, their fusion in particular, etc.) and if so, then everything in the world is connected with a definite string of "infinite community": "Are you fond of the female body? / And did you love man's body? / Do not you know that it is always all the people who in all / peoples, at all times, throughout the vast land?" [7, 47].

The whole cycle "Children of Adam" soaked with the idea of world love and this love, according to Walt Whitman's opinion is a universal law of life, and it can not be reduced to a purely biological relationship. The author of "Leaves of Grass" refers to the primordial themes of love of a man and a woman with a strange courage of his time. Without a shadow of asceticism and hypocrisy the poet says in his poem about how natural and pure is the physical side of love as a wonderful human body that merges love of spiritual and bodily principle in man: "Is the body is less than the soul? / And when the body isn't a soul, so what the soul is itself?" [7, 41] – the author interested readers in his poetry "The Body Electric I Sing".

The reader faced the problems of beauty of the male and female body, the coexistence of the body and soul. The author tried to show not only a perfection but male and female body in comparison. Therefore, in Walt Whitman's works as a national poet the concepts of feminine and masculine reinterpreted and presented as a harmonious combination of these ones. The main quality of the male body is its strength, then Whitman describes the male body as follows: "In his head all-embracing brain is. / Look at the arms and legs they are white, black, red, they are / tendons and nerves skillful; / They must expose all you could see them. / Sensuality developed, eyes are shiny, sharp, courage and commitment, / bundle of muscles in the chest, neck and spine flexible, elastic flesh / strong physique. / And there, inside, also there are wonders. / There, inside the blood is seething, / The same age-old blood! The same fiercely red blood! / ... It is not one man – the father of future parents; / Inside him there is a beginning of early states, overcrowded and rich republics; / Inside him there is a countless everlasting life, their countless implementation / and joy" [7, 46].

Feminine in gender paradigm primarily embodied tender in the poet's lyrics (if you feel "divine halo" of female body, "so all books, art, religion, time, fear of hell – all disappeared"). A woman, according to Whitman had only advantage over the man: it is the beginning of all the factors: "The auction sales woman's body! / And she's not alone – there is a prolific mother of new mothers inside her; / She shall bring children, and after their maturing they will become husbands for new mothers" [7, 46]. It should be emphasized that initially Whitman's poetry was characterized by simultaneous crossing femininity and masculinity presence.

Rejecting any hypocrisy or bigotry, the poet admires the beauty of the human body. He finds his perfect in everything, for example in joints, smooth grace of thighs, flexibility of figure, "knees in the whole physique, which can not hide clothing", "strength and joy of life results in

rows: / person goes – and you delighted with him as with a poem, and even more ...” [7, 41]. Whitman delighted with “sweet children’s awkwardness, breasts and heads of women, the folds of their dresses, the shape of feet”, “tilt forward and backward of rowers in boats and a rider in the saddle; girl , mother, hostess busy with household cares”, “young man with a hoe in the box, the driver that governs group of six black horses”, “playing of two teenagers, ugly, healthy, cheerful”, “firefighters travel in shining helmets, playing powerful muscles ...” [7].

In the cycle “Children of Adam” of Walt Whitman’s collection “Leaves of Grass” poetic portraits of workers are represented who have traced the existing masculine identity, masculine element of creativity, masculine image of the democratic era of the American writers, such as 80-year-old farmer who is a strong, wise and handsome father of five sons: “He was extremely efficient, quiet, beautiful. / His head, his wheat-white hair, beard, eyes of deep dark, breadth and generosity in dealing, / who knew him, loved him not by accounting, but honestly ...” [7, 42]. In his years he lives as an active farmer, he was “an inveterate fisherman, a hunter, he rowed himself”. Similar his sons are – “tall, stocky, bearded; tanned and beautiful”. The poet describes his father with admiration, “older than eighty years”: “When he left with five children and many grandchildren for hunting or fishing, / he semmed the strongest and most beautiful in the midst of them” [7, 43]. Such semantic features in the context of gender sensitivity, desire for harmony of masculine and feminine principles, overcoming gender splitting of the world give us some reasons to speak of androgynous characteristics of the cycle “Children of Adam”.

Whitman genuinely loves people, is happy to communicate with them; for him as for his lyrical hero, happiness is “to be with someone who likes”, he enjoys sitting “twilight among others”, surrounded by “beautiful, smiling, quivering flesh ...” and then his only desire is only “touch, cover lightly with a hand his or her neck for a moment” [7, 43].

Thus, the problem of the cycle “Children of Adam” is very broad. In Whitman’s poems the problems of cultural, aesthetic and social nature, such as the equality of men and women, the beauty of the human body; harmony of physical and spiritual in a man; relationship, the interaction of a man and nature were arised. Overall, on the basis of gender analysis of Walt Whitman’s poetic process, author’s self-reflectiveness it should be concluded that his creative identity labeled as androgynous with some advantage of the feminine component. It is proved that the result of a combination of Walt Whitman’s talent art canvas of femininity and masculinity is his ability to perceive unlimited power of human memory, comprehend deeply symbolic meaning and the desire to bring them to the active people in the unique individual author’s interpretation.

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