

**THE CONCEPT OF TYPOLOGICAL CONVERGENCE: ITS
PLACE IN COMPARATIVE LITERARY STUDIES**

Mamarasulova Mokhisitora

Email: mokhisitoram@gmail.com

Abstract: The present article considers the idea of typological convergence and its importance for comparative literature. Typological convergence means the emergence of similarities in terms of themes, concepts, and methods of writing in the national literature independently of each other due to the lack of mutual knowledge between authors. This paper analyzes the theory of this concept and its difference from such concepts as influence, tradition, and dialogue in the literature. A special emphasis will be placed on the role of similar socio-historical background for the emergence of similar literary phenomena. It is important to point out the methodological value of typological convergence for the analysis of similar and unique features of national literature. Typological parallels can be found in the structure, description, characterization, themes, and ideas.

Keywords: typological convergence, comparative literary studies, literary influence, reception theory, social-historical development, literary typology, artistic techniques.

Introduction

The two main patterns in the analysis of the mutual connections between national literatures which have emerged in contemporary comparative literary research are the theory of literary influence (reception theory) and the theory of typological convergence. The former explores the direct impact of one literary work on another; that is, it considers works by authors who knew,

read, or were consciously influenced by another author's work. The latter looks at similarities among literary phenomena which had no knowledge of each other.

The goal of this thesis is to explain the theoretical aspects of the concept of typological convergence, its status in comparative literature research and its practical use in specific research. This question is particularly relevant for the research on European literature in the 19th century, i.e., literature of writers from various countries, in various languages, and with similar socio-historical environment. The study of the mutual influence of national literatures is steadily gaining in importance in modern philology and the study of common developmental trends is acquiring even greater relevance.

Main part

Typological convergence means the occurrence of common motifs, ideas, or artistic devices in independent literatures of different countries by writers who do not know about each other's literature. The main reason for such convergence is not the interaction of literatures but rather the likeness in the process of social-historic development. Social problems are caused by similar historical processes and may result in similar artistic solutions.

The theoretical origins of the phenomenon under discussion date back to the very beginning of comparative literary scholarship. Georg Lukács was especially interested in the pan-European nature of the realist novels of the nineteenth century, primarily from the thematic and ideational point of view. Erich Auerbach showed in “Mimesis” that the depiction of the real world occurred similarly in different eras and in different countries. Wellek and Warren, in “Theory of Literature”, made a distinction between the study of influence and the study of typology.

During the mid-nineteenth century, England, France, and Germany saw some parallel social and historical developments like the Industrial Revolution, urbanization, and the emergence of the bourgeois society. This led to the independent development of the same themes and aesthetics by such writers as Charles Dickens, Victor Hugo, and Gustav Freytag, respectively. These parallels can neither be considered as a product of literary influence nor be attributed to coincidence alone, since they are quite systematic and multifaceted.

The actual value of typological convergence consists in the possibility to analyze national literature not only from the viewpoint of "who influenced whom," but also based on more general literary-historical phenomena. In this way, it is possible to understand both the general and the specific features of the national literatures. Typological convergence can occur not only in themes and ideas but also in artistic techniques, such as the structure, methods of building characters, and description. Analysis of such elements allows understanding deeper structural similarities in the national literatures and is a promising area for further research.

The first essential requirement of methodology when applying the concept of typological convergence consists of the necessity to find not just a similarity but its scientific ground as well, otherwise there will be a risk of conducting a superficial comparative study that does not meet scientific requirements. That is why typological studies should always be conducted taking into consideration the biography of authors, the era they lived in, the society they were a part of, and the literary traditions they belonged to.

Moreover, it is worthwhile to distinguish typological convergence from the concepts similar to it such as "literary tradition" and "literary dialogue." The literary tradition means continuity in one literature, connection of generations of writers. The literary dialogue means conscious interaction of

literatures. As for typological convergence, it means an independent similarity in the absence of any one-directional contact. Such distinction makes it possible for a researcher to choose a proper methodological approach: in case of documented contact of authors – the reception theory can be used, and in case of the absence or impossibility to prove it – the theory of typological convergence is a more scientifically justified way.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be said that the typological convergence principle represents a good methodological approach which will enable scientists to make an objective scientific foundation of the profound intrinsic connection between literatures of various nations through their spatial and linguistic difference. This approach helps to explain literary phenomenon not as an influence effect, but rather as the result of joint historical development of societies, while highlighting the specific nature of the national literature at the same time. Using this principle in application to concrete artistic methods, such as characterization, description, and composition, can bring better research results in the future.

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