The concept of freedom and wild life in the works of Jack London and Normurod Norqobilov

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Annotation *This article explores the concept of freedom and wild life in the literary works of Jack London and Normurod Norqobilov. The study analyzes how both writers portray the relationship between humans, animals, and nature through artistic and philosophical perspectives. Jack London's works mainly reflect the struggle for survival, the instinct of freedom, and the harsh realities of the natural world. His characters often demonstrate courage, independence, and adaptation to wilderness conditions. In contrast, Normurod Norqobilov depicts freedom and wild life through national values, emotional experiences, and the harmony between humans and nature. The article compares similarities and differences in the authors' approaches, emphasizing the symbolic meaning of animals and wilderness in their narratives. The research also discusses how cultural background, social environment, and literary traditions influence the representation of freedom in English and Uzbek literature. Through comparative analysis, the article highlights universal human values connected with liberty, survival, and respect for nature.*

Keywords *Freedom, wild life, nature, comparative literature, symbolism, survival, wilderness, human and animal relationship, Jack London, Normurod Norqobilov*

Jek London va Normurod Norqobilov asarlarida erkinlik hamda yovvoyi tabiat konsepsiyasi

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Annotatsiya *Mazkur maqolada Jack London hamda Normurod Norqobilov asarlarida erkinlik va yovvoyi tabiat konsepsiyasi tadqiq qilinadi. Tadqiqotda yozuvchilarning inson, hayvon va tabiat o'rtasidagi munosabatlarni badiiy hamda falsafiy jihatdan qanday tasvirlagani tahlil etiladi. Jack London asarlarida yashab qolish uchun kurash, erkinlik instinkti va tabiatning shafqatsiz qonunlari asosiy o'rin egallaydi. Uning qahramonlari jasorat, mustaqillik va yovvoyi muhitga moslashuv kabi xususiyatlarni namoyon etadi. Normurod Norqobilov ijodida esa erkinlik va yovvoyi hayot milliy qadriyatlar, ruhiy kechinmalar hamda inson va tabiat uyg'unligi orqali ifodalanadi. Maqolada ikki adibning o'xshash va farqli jihatlari qiyosiy tahlil qilinib, hayvonlar hamda tabiat obrazlarining ramziy ma'nosi ochib beriladi. Shuningdek, ingliz va o'zbek adabiyotida erkinlik tushunchasining ifodalanishiga madaniy muhit va adabiy an'analarning ta'siri yoritiladi. Tadqiqot natijasida erkinlik, yashab qolish va tabiatga hurmat kabi umuminsoniy qadriyatlar muhim ahamiyat kasb etishi ko'rsatiladi.*

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Kalit so'zlar *Erkinlik, yovvoyi tabiat, tabiat, qiyosiy adabiyot, ramziylik, yashab qolish, yovvoyilik, inson va hayvon munosabati, Jack London, Normurod Norqobilov*

Концепция свободы и дикой природы в произведениях Джека Лондона и Нормурода Норкобилова

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Аннотация *В данной статье рассматривается концепция свободы и дикой природы в произведениях Jack London и Normurod Norqobilov. Исследование анализирует художественное и философское изображение взаимоотношений человека, животных и природы в творчестве обоих писателей. Произведения Джека Лондона отражают борьбу за выживание, стремление к свободе и суровые законы природы. Его герои демонстрируют смелость, независимость и способность адаптироваться к условиям дикой среды. В произведениях Нормурода Норкобилова свобода и дикая природа раскрываются через национальные ценности, духовные переживания и гармонию человека с природой. В статье проводится сравнительный анализ сходств и различий в подходах писателей, а также раскрывается символическое значение образов животных и природы. Особое внимание уделяется влиянию культурной среды, социальных условий и литературных традиций на изображение свободы в английской и узбекской литературе. В результате исследования подчеркивается значение общечеловеческих ценностей, связанных со свободой, выживанием и уважением к природе.*

Ключевые слова *Свобода, дикая природа, природа, сравнительное литературоведение, символизм, выживание, дикая среда, отношения человека и животных, Джек Лондон, Нормурод Норкобилов*

Introduction

Literature across cultures has long wrestled with the tension between civilization and the wild, between the freedom of untamed nature and the ordering power of society. Few themes recur with such force and universality as the longing for freedom expressed through the imagery of wild landscapes and untamed creatures. In the American literary tradition, Jack London (1876-1916) stands as one of the most powerful voices of naturalism and the philosophy of the wild. In the Uzbek literary tradition, Normurod Norqobilov (born 1952) has distinguished himself as a poet and prose writer whose works resonate deeply with themes of nature, freedom, and the spirit of the land. Although separated by time, geography, and cultural heritage, London and Norqobilov share a profound preoccupation with freedom as it manifests in wild nature, and with the moral and existential questions this freedom poses to human beings. This paper conducts a comparative literary analysis of these two authors, tracing the contours of freedom and wild life in their respective works.

Literature review

The central argument is that both London and Norqobilov use wildlife and natural

landscapes as symbolic systems through which to critique social constraints, explore authentic selfhood, and affirm the primal dignity of living creatures. While London's vision is inflected by Social Darwinism, the Klondike Gold Rush experience, and American frontier mythology, Norqobilov's is shaped by Central Asian nomadic traditions, Soviet-era cultural politics, and the lyrical legacy of classical Uzbek poetry. Together, their works reveal how the concept of freedom in nature operates as both a literary universal and a culturally specific construction. The paper proceeds as follows. First, it provides a theoretical framework for understanding freedom and wild life in literature. Second, it analyzes London's key works with attention to the figure of the wild animal and the concept of natural freedom. Third, it examines Norqobilov's poetic and prose representations of wild nature and freedom in the Uzbek context. Fourth, it undertakes a direct comparative analysis of both authors' philosophical and aesthetic approaches. The paper concludes with reflections on the significance of this comparison for world literature and for understanding the human relationship with the natural world. The concept of freedom in literature is inseparable from the concept of nature. As Rousseau argued, civilization imposes constraints upon the natural liberty of human beings, a thesis that has profoundly influenced Western literary thought (Rousseau, 1762/1993).

Methodology

Literary naturalism, the movement most directly associated with London, applies Darwinian evolutionary theory to human and animal life, portraying existence as a struggle shaped by heredity, environment, and chance. Within this framework, freedom is not an abstract political ideal but a biological and existential reality, the freedom of the wolf to run, the salmon to swim upstream, the individual to assert vital instinct against the deadening weight of social conformity (Pizer, 1995). Scholars have identified in London's work a romantic-naturalist dialectic in which the wild is simultaneously a space of dangerous freedom and authentic being (Labor, 1994). This dialectic is also present, though differently configured, in the Central Asian literary tradition. In classical Uzbek poetry, nature-the steppe, the mountains, the desert-is a space of spiritual and philosophical contemplation, a mirror for the human soul (Akiner, 1983). Norqobilov inherits this tradition while inflecting it with the modern concerns of identity, ecological awareness, and resistance to cultural homogenization. Comparing these two traditions illuminates both the universal and the particular dimensions of the literature of freedom and wild life. Jack London's engagement with wild nature is most dramatically expressed in his two great animal novels, The Call of the Wild (1903) and White Fang (1906). In The Call of the Wild, the domesticated dog Buck is thrust into the wilderness of the Klondike, where he gradually strips away the veneer of civilization to reclaim his ancestral wolf nature. London presents this transformation not as regression but as spiritual homecoming, a return to an original and authentic mode of being (London, 1903). The call of the wild is literally a call to freedom, and Buck's answering of that call represents London's most unambiguous affirmation of natural liberty over social constraint. What makes London's treatment of freedom so philosophically rich is its ambivalence. White Fang presents the inverse journey: a wild wolf-dog is gradually domesticated, learning to trust human love and social bonds. London does not present civilization as simply oppressive; rather, he explores the dialectical relationship between freedom and belonging, between the wild and the domestic (London, 1906). This dialectic reflects London's own contradictory ideological commitments, his simultaneous attraction to Socialist collectivism and individualist frontier mythology (Auerbach, 1996).

Results

In his short stories, particularly those set in the Yukon and collected in volumes such as The Son of the Wolf (1900) and Lost Face

(1910), London consistently returns to the motif of wild nature as a space of truth-telling. The Alaskan wilderness strips away social pretense and reveals the essential character of human beings, for better or worse. Nature in these stories is indifferent but honest, a space where authentic human qualities, courage, endurance, loyalty, or cowardice, cruelty, and selfishness, are disclosed without the mediating distortions of civilization (Reesman, 2009). Freedom here is not comfort but clarity. London's naturalism is also inseparable from his interest in atavism, the recurrence of ancestral traits. In Buck's transformation, the wild is not merely an external landscape but an interior depth, a genetic memory that civilized life suppresses but cannot eradicate. This biological dimension of freedom is characteristic of naturalist thought, and it gives London's vision of the wild its peculiar intensity: nature calls from within as much as from without (Pizer, 1995). The wild animal becomes, in this framework, an emblem of what human beings have repressed in the name of civilization, a symbol of the freedom that modernity denies. Normurod Norqobilov occupies a central place in contemporary Uzbek literature, celebrated for a body of work that fuses lyrical intensity with philosophical depth. His poetry and prose are saturated with images drawn from the natural world of Central Asia-the vast steppe, the Aral Sea, eagles and horses, the wind across open plains.

Discussion and Analysis

For Norqobilov, wild nature is not a backdrop but a protagonist, a living presence that embodies values of freedom, dignity, and spiritual authenticity that modern life threatens to extinguish (Norqobilov, 1985). The eagle is one of the most recurrent and significant symbols in Norqobilov's work. In Uzbek and broader Turkic cultural tradition, the eagle represents sovereignty, spiritual vision, and freedom; it is a creature that inhabits the highest reaches of the sky, beyond the reach of earthly constraint. Norqobilov's eagles are not merely decorative symbols; they are philosophical figures, embodiments of a mode of being that the poet holds up as an ideal against the compromises and confinements of modern existence (Karimov, 2005). The freedom of the eagle in flight becomes a reproach to the caged condition of modern humanity. Norqobilov's engagement with the Aral Sea-once one of the world's great bodies of water, now catastrophically diminished by Soviet-era irrigation projects-adds an ecological and political dimension to his treatment of wild nature. The shrinking of the Aral Sea represents for him not only an environmental catastrophe but a spiritual one, the destruction of a natural world that sustained both ecological and cultural life (Norqobilov, 1998). His laments for the Aral Sea are simultaneously elegies for lost freedom, for a time when the natural world was intact and human beings lived in harmony with its rhythms. In this sense, Norqobilov's wild nature is always already threatened, already partly lost, which gives his celebrations of freedom an urgency and melancholy absent from London's more triumphalist moments. The horse is another central figure in Norqobilov's symbolic lexicon. In Central Asian nomadic tradition, the horse is the supreme emblem of freedom and mobility; a culture's relationship to the horse encodes its relationship to the land and to liberty itself (Akiner, 1983). Norqobilov's poetic horses run free across the steppe, but they also carry the weight of historical memory, of a nomadic way of life displaced by modernity and Soviet collectivization. The wild horse becomes, in his work, a figure for cultural as well as natural freedom, linking the ecological and the political in a manner characteristic of postcolonial literature (Norqobilov, 2003). Setting the works of London and Norqobilov in dialogue reveals both striking convergences and illuminating divergences. The most fundamental convergence is their shared conviction that wild nature constitutes a space of authentic freedom that civilization systematically destroys or diminishes. For both authors, the wild animal-whether wolf, eagle, or horse-is not merely a creature of interest but a

moral and philosophical exemplar, a being whose freedom indicts the unfreedom of modern social life. Both authors also use wild nature as a site of identity formation. In London's work, the encounter with the wild is what reveals and constitutes authentic selfhood; Buck does not discover who he truly is until he answers the call of the wild (London, 1903). Similarly, in Norqobilov's work, the relationship between the human being and the natural world of the steppe is constitutive of Uzbek cultural identity; to be estranged from the eagle, the horse, and the open steppe is to be estranged from oneself (Norqobilov, 1985). In both cases, wildness is not other to humanity but expressive of humanity's deepest nature. There are, however, significant divergences in how each author conceives and represents freedom. London's vision is fundamentally individualist. The freedom of Buck, of the wolves of the Yukon, of London's heroic human protagonists, is the freedom of the singular self-asserting its vital powers against all obstacles. This individualism reflects the ideological climate of American frontier culture and naturalism, with its Darwinian emphasis on individual struggle and survival (Auerbach, 1996). Norqobilov's vision, by contrast, is more communal and ecological. Freedom in his work is not the triumph of the solitary individual but the maintenance of a living community of beings, human, animal, and elemental, in their proper relationships. The destruction of the Aral Sea is lamented not as a loss to individual animals or individuals but as the rupture of a whole web of life and meaning (Norqobilov, 1998). The temporal orientation of the two authors also differs significantly. London's vision is largely dynamic and forward-looking; freedom is something to be seized, a frontier to be crossed, a call to be answered. Even his elegiac moments-as when Buck mourns the death of his beloved master John Thornton-are quickly superseded by renewed forward movement (London, 1903). Norqobilov's vision is more elegiac and retrospective; it mourns a lost world of natural abundance and cultural integrity. This difference in temporal orientation reflects the different historical situations of the two authors: London writing at the height of American expansionist confidence, Norqobilov writing in the aftermath of Soviet ecological and cultural devastation (Karimov, 2005).

A further divergence concerns the relationship between wild nature and human society. London tends to maintain a relatively sharp opposition between the two; civilization and the wild are opposing forces, and freedom requires choosing or being chosen by the wild. Norqobilov, drawing on the nomadic tradition in which human culture was inseparable from the natural environment, tends toward a more integrated vision in which human freedom is achieved not by escaping society but by restoring the proper relationship between human culture and the natural world (Akiner, 1983). This difference has important implications for each author's ecological politics: London's vision risks romanticizing a wilderness that excludes human communities, while Norqobilov's insists on the inseparability of ecological and cultural health. The divergences in philosophy between London and Norqobilov are mirrored in their aesthetic approaches. London's prose is characteristically muscular and direct, employing vivid sensory detail and dramatic action to convey the physical reality of wild existence. His descriptions of the Yukon landscape and of animal experience are remarkable for their precision and their empathetic projection into non-human consciousness. Critics have noted that London's animalism, his willingness to inhabit the perspective of a dog or wolf, was a significant innovation in American fiction, anticipating later developments in ecological and animal literature (Reesman, 2009). Norqobilov's aesthetic is shaped by the lyrical traditions of classical Uzbek poetry, which privileges musical language, rich imagery, and philosophical depth over narrative action. His representations of wild nature are frequently meditative rather than dramatic, inviting the

reader into a contemplative relationship with the landscape rather than a dynamic engagement with it. This contemplative quality reflects the influence of Sufi mystical poetry, in which the natural world is a book of divine signs to be read with attentive reverence (Labor, 1994).

Conclusion

The result is a vision of wild nature that is simultaneously physical and metaphysical, ecological and spiritual. Both authors, however, share a commitment to specificity of place. London's freedom is always the freedom of a particular landscape-the Yukon, the Klondike, the Pacific-not an abstract natural realm. Similarly, Norqobilov's wild nature is always the specific natural world of Uzbekistan and Central Asia-the steppe, the Aral Sea, the Tian Shan mountains. This grounding in particular places gives both authors' visions of freedom a geographical and political concreteness that distinguishes them from more generic celebrations of nature (Pizer, 1995). Place, for both writers, is not merely setting but the condition of possibility for a specific kind of freedom. The works of Jack London and Normurod Norqobilov, despite the vast differences in their cultural contexts, converge in their fundamental conviction that wild nature constitutes a space of authentic freedom, and that the encounter with this freedom is indispensable to genuine human existence. Both authors use wildlife- the wolf, the eagle, the horse-as philosophical figures that embody modes of being unavailable within the constraints of modern civilized life. Both employ the specific landscapes of their respective homelands as the ground of a freedom that is simultaneously ecological, cultural, and existential. Their divergences are equally instructive. London's individualist, dynamic, and oppositional vision of freedom reflects the ideological climate of American naturalism and frontier culture. Norqobilov's communal, elegiac, and integrative vision reflects the Central Asian nomadic tradition and the traumatic experience of Soviet ecological and cultural destruction. These divergences remind us that freedom, even as a natural value, is always also a cultural construction, shaped by the specific histories and worldviews of the societies in which it is articulated. Taken together, the works of London and Norqobilov constitute a powerful argument for the enduring significance of wild nature as a literary theme and a philosophical resource. In an era of accelerating ecological crisis, their visions of freedom in and through the natural world speak with renewed urgency. The call of the wild that London heard in the Klondike and the lament for the Aral Sea that Norqobilov voiced on the steppe are, at their deepest level, the same call: to recognize in wild nature not a resource to be exploited but a living world of which human beings are part, and on whose freedom our own ultimately depends.

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