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RFC: ATII20618V12

Revista Dilemas Contemporáneos: Educación, Política y Valores.

<http://www.dilemascontemporaneoseduccionpoliticaayvalores.com/>

Año: VI

Número: Edición Especial

Artículo no.:10

Período: Julio, 2019.

TÍTULO: Poesía de W. Whitman en la interpretación literaria-crítica de K.I. Chukovsky.

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RESUMEN. El artículo considera la crítica literaria específica de K.I.Chukovsky de la poesía por W.Whitman. En el proceso de análisis, utilizamos métodos de investigación histórico-literarios, socioculturales, histórico-culturales, comparativos-tipológicos, histórico-genéticos y biográficos. K.I.Chukovsky fue uno de los primeros críticos nacionales en responder a la obra de W.Whitman, primero con los artículos en «The Odessa News» (1904), en el periódico «Freedom and Life» (1905), en la publicación literaria y periodística, colección «Mayak» («Lighthouse») (1906), y luego con una revisión de las traducciones rusas, publicada en «Libra» (1906) bajo el título «Russian Whitmaniana».

PALABRAS CLAVES: Lazos literarios e históricos y culturales ruso-americanos, traducción, evolución, cósmica, transformación, tradición, comunicación intercultural.

TITLE: Poetry of W. Whitman in the literary-critical interpretation of K.I. Chukovsky.

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ABSTRACT: The article considers K.I.Chukovsky's specific literary criticism of poetry by W.Whitman. In the process of analysis, we use historical-literary, socio-cultural, historical-cultural, comparative-typological, historical-genetic and biographical methods of investigation. K.I.Chukovsky was one of the first domestic critics to respond to the work of W.Whitman – first with the articles in «The Odessa News» (1904), in the newspaper «Freedom and Life» (1905), in the literary and journalistic collection «Mayak» («Lighthouse») (1906), and then with a review of Russian translations, published in «Libra» (1906) under the title «Russian Whitmaniana».

KEY WORDS: Russian-American literary and historical and cultural ties, translation, evolution, cosmism, transformation, tradition, intercultural communication.

INTRODUCTION.

American poet and publicist Walt Whitman (1819–1892) was one of the most complex and contradictory figures in the history of world literature and culture. His poetry expresses the most radical aspirations of his time, being the embodiment of both the Enlightenment and the rise of Romantic art.

The Russian readers of the 20th century first of all took interest in the ideas of the international brotherhood, which the poet praised, in his appeal to the topic of developing industry, in the image of a man of labor. The focus on these issues presupposes the perception of W. Whitman as a realistic poet. But such an assessment, being predominant, was not unanimous. Numerous studies on W. Whitman reflected contradictions in the interpretation of his legacy.

DEVELOPMENT.

Literature review.

Theoretical studies that determine the place and role of W.Whitman's creativity in the world literary process are presented in the works of A.V.Lunacharsky [1925], M.O.Mendelson [1965] and

D.P.Mirsky [1935]. A significant part of the works is devoted to the study of the cultural and historical context, which determines the vector of creative searches of W.Whitman, and the comprehension of the whole set of meanings of his poetry; these are the studies of E.Ya.Batalov [1982], T.D.Venediktova [1982], A.V.Mulyarchik [1980], A.I.Startsev [1981] and D.Vinterich [1985]. In American critical literature there are also observations on the creative method of W.Whitman. Researchers G.W.Allen [1970], Ch.R.Metzger [1961], E.Fred Carlisle [1973], P.Smith [1932] и G.Shmidgall [1988] focus on issues and problems raised in the poet's works, and analyze the manner of expressing thoughts and ways of formulating utterances.

Along with the above works, which made a significant contribution to the literary interpretation of the work of W.Whitman, the literary critic works of K.I.Chukovsky played an important role in viewing and evaluating the works of the American poet in Russia. In his book «My Whitman» [1969] the writer conducted a system analysis of the poet's creativity, studied the set of art tools W.Whitman used to fully realize his ideas, as well as the forms he chose for these purposes. In this and other works of the writer various forms of reception of W.Whitman's creativity were synthesized, which contributed to the promotion and popularization of his works.

Materials and methods.

The material for analysis was the literary criticism of K.I.Chukovsky dedicated to the work of W.Whitman, as well as the work of researchers in which the literary interpretation of the artistic heritage of the American poet is presented.

The research methodology combines the principles of historical, literary, socio-cultural, historical-cultural, comparative-typological, historical-genetic and biographical methods of analysis. According to the principle of historicism, certain facts and circumstances are considered in connection with others, taking into account historical, literary and cultural experience.

Results.

The period of 1904 – 1914 can be considered as the time of awakening interest in the works of the American poet in Russia, largely due to the activities of K.I.Chukovsky. His articles on W.Whitman appeared one by one: «On the road to reconciliation» (in «Odessa News» on November 26, 1904), «Revolution and Literature: Wat Whitman Poet-Anarchist» (in the newspaper «Freedom and Life» on September 25 (October 8), 1906), «Wat Whitman: The Personality and Democracy of His Poetry» (in the first issue of the literary and journalistic collection «Mayak», which was published in St.Petersburg in 1906), «World Delight» (in the newspaper «Rech» («Speech»), July 18 (31), 1909), «The Poetry of Democracy» (an analysis of K.D.Balmont's translation of «The Stem of Grass» (edition of «Scorpio», 1911), published in «Rech», on May 21 (June 3) in 1911), «Joke» (newspaper «Rech» («Speech») on February 22 (March 7), 1914). K.I.Chukovsky's interest in W.Whitman was reflected in following publications, which were coming out throughout the whole life of the Russian writer, in particular, «Rozanov and Walt Whitman» (in the newspaper «Petrogradskoe Echo» of March 29, 1918), «Walt Whitman (in «The Literary Gazette» of June 10, 1939), «L.Tolstoy about Walt Whitman» (in «The Literary Gazette» of August 25, 1940), «Mayakovsky and Whitman» (in No. 2 of the magazine «Leningrad» dd. 1941), «Walt Whitman in the USSR. Bibliographical Notes» (in No. 1/2 of «The International Literature» dd. 1942), Turgenev and Whitman (in «Literary Russia» on July 28, 1967), «The Poet of the International Brotherhood» («Izvestia», No. 1 dd. June 1969). For K.I.Chukovsky, W.Whitman was one of the key figures in the world of literary process, the importance of which was not lost with the years.

In 1906, in No. 10 of the journal «Libra», there appeared the article by K.I.Chukovsky entitled «The Russian Whitmaniana» [Chukovsky, 1906], which was the first experience of a critical review of W.Whitman's reception in Russia. The value of this article was that, having summed up the previous critical-biographical publications, it raised the question of some unreliable information, reported in

the press about W. Whitman. K.I. Chukovsky considered W. Whitman his idol, he got acquainted with his creativity in 1901, when he bought the book of an American poet in the Odessa port sold by an unknown sailor.

His impressions of what he read were described by Chukovsky in the following words: «It was the book of a giant, detached from all the little things of our ant life. I was shocked by the novelty of his perception of life and began to look at the surroundings with new eyes – at the stars, and the women, the blades of grass, animals, the sea horizon, and at the very mode of human life. All this arose before me, against the backdrop of countless thousands of centuries, illuminated by millions of suns» [Chukovsky, 1969, p. 5].

By putting a separate personality, his generalized poetic «Self» at the center of his original poetic system, W. Whitman glorified the beauty of the human body and the human soul, stressing harmony in nature and discord in human society. The poetry of W. Whitman did not fit in any one of the creative methods: the features of romanticism and realism were quite often contradictory, but at the same time organically combined in it. W. Whitman was a true innovator, who was boldly destroying the established traditions and norms.

K.I. Chukovsky was interested in various ideological trends in the poetry of W. Whitman: «His calls for ecstatic friendship, his light hymns of equality, labour, democracy, his joyful intoxication with his living, and his bold speech for the glory of the emancipation of the flesh, which frightened so much the then prudes, has found the most sympathetic response in my youthful heart» [Chukovsky, 1969, p. 5]. The writer points to the romantic orientation of W. Whitman's poetry in this characteristic, which consists in depicting the highest spiritual principle, the independence of the human personality, in the breadth of the author's «ego» definition, his emotionality and lyricism, in his impulse towards the unlimited and craving for metaphor and symbol. But the romantic aesthetics of the poet was not a far cry from the reality, which he strived to recreate in full details of everyday life. In the opinion

of K.I.Chukovsky, the ideas of utopian socialism and reference to R.U.Emerson's doctrine of self-confidence are also essential for W.Whitman.

The listed features of W.Whitman's poetics turned out to be close to K.I.Chukovsky, who aspired to attach as many people as possible to the work of the American author: «... I began to ineptly, helplessly translate the poems of Whitman that most of all excited me. Excerpts from these translations appeared a few years later (1907) in my first book dedicated to Whitman and published in "The Youth Circle" (at the University of St.Petersburg)» [Chukovsky, 1969, p. 5]. Note that we are talking about the book «Poet <-> anarchist Wat Whitman: Translations in verse and characterization», published in 1907; the translations of K.I.Chukovsky from W.Whitman have been already published in the periodical press by this time (early 1905), in particular, in «Theatrical Russia», «Narodny Vestnik», «Thoughts», «Niva», «Monthly literary and popular scientific application to the journal "Niva"», «Russian Thought».

The publication attracted the attention of the public to the American poet, prompting the appearance of a large number of reviews in newspapers and magazines (in the journals «Niva», «Russian Thought», «Conversation», in the newspapers «Russ», «Today», «Companion» and etc.), which was its great merit. Later, K.I.Chukovsky translated W.Whitman again, already closer to the original, «without sweetening and decorating it», in accordance with the principle of the poetic translation, which presupposes the greatest correspondence to the original [Chukovsky, 1969, p. 6]. K.I.Chukovsky's collection «My Whitman», in addition to essays on the life and work of the American poet, contains selected translations from «Leaves of Grass», distributed in the order, in which K.I.Chukovsky met with them, rather than according to the time of their publication or to their genre features.

According to K.I.Chukovsky, one of the main directions of the poetry of W. Whitman, promoting its popularity in Russia, was the theme of space: «Now that we are conquering outer space, the great

transatlantic poet, who has felt and praised the boundless breadth of the universe in his original verses, is becoming closer and closer to us with an extraordinary poetic force» [Chukovsky, 1969, p. 10].

K.I.Chukovsky as a reader was attracted by the idea that mankind could not limit itself to the Earth's borders, that going out into space was a prerequisite for general renewal and resurrection. It was this idea that embodied, in K.I.Chukovsky's thought, the essence of Whitman's personality, in it was «the source of his inspiration and literary victories» [Chukovsky, 1969, p. 10].

Since the early XX century, the ideas of the religious thinker and philosopher-futurist N.F.Fedorov (1829–1903), called «Moscow Socrates», the founder of Russian cosmism, have been disseminated in numerous circles of self-education; they were superimposed on knowledge, obtained from natural science books, and on the spreading principles of Marxism, making the poetry of W.Whitman to be understood as a poetic reflection of the thoughts of N.F.Fedorov.

Prevailing in poetry of W.Whitman sense of the infinite breadth and singularity of the universe is in harmony with the eternal feeling of variability and the contrasts of life phenomena. According to K.I.Chukovsky the whole work of the poet is imbued with the «sensation of the infinity of time and space», with the «alive, real feeling, which is constantly accompanying his thoughts» [Chukovsky, 1969, p. 11]. W.Whitman was looking at every man and everything «against the background of cosmic space» [Chukovsky, 1969, p. 11].

Projecting the idea of unity with the cosmos on the whole mankind, W.Whitman expressed the same attitude to the world in the following words: «I'm just a dot, just an atom in the floating desert of the worlds...»; so K.I.Chukovsky matched his poems with the astronaut's verses, confirming his idea with the lines from the poem «Song of Myself»: «I visit the gardens of the planets and see if the fruits are good. / I look at the quintillions of ripe and quintillion immatures» [Whitman, 1970, p. 81].

Applying astronomical figures for humanity, W. Whitman was seeking to show the continuity of ancestors and descendants, where each of us occupies an intermediate link. Therefore, life in the poet's works is a non-stopping cycle, a constant movement in time, endless transformations and metamorphoses. K.I. Chukovsky called W. Whitman a man, measuring everything from the standpoint of eternal development: «I have not yet met anyone who is so keenly aware of the variability, fluidity, and running of things and who would be so receptive to the eternal dynamics of cosmos» [Chukovsky, 1969, p. 11].

Thus, the idea of immensity and infinity of everything that happens is reflected in the image of the central image of Whitman's poetry – the universal human personality. The lyrical hero of «Leaves of Grass» is a generalized portrait of a person with his democratic views, unabashed optimism, the ability to establish close relations with the people, who he met on the path, and to delight in life in all its forms.

According to K.I. Chukovsky, the feeling of kinship with all people and all phenomena of the world is expressed in W. Whitman through the picture of the continuity of generations: «Being aware of his involvement in this eternal cycle of matter, he senses behind him the millions of centuries and an endless chain of prehistoric ancestors, starting with the simplest amoeba» [Chukovsky, 1969, p. 12].

The idea of the cosmic unification of everything that exists in the universe is so encouraging to W. Whitman, that he perceives even the flowers on a hat a product of centuries; they are so much dear to him that the poet feels «How much immensity is embodied in them» [Chukovsky, 1969, p. 12].

The theme of the circulation of matter was the prevalent in the works of W. Whitman due to discoveries of scientists in the field of the natural sciences in the middle of the 19th century, which influenced the outlook of advanced young people. But his reference to this topic and the affirmation, that the law of evolution was the only way of understanding the world, did not fit into the framework of romanticism. While remaining a romantic, W. Whitman, nevertheless, departed from many

aesthetic canons of romanticism. The interest in reality, the richness and diversity of life, the description of the fluidity and variability of the world in W. Whitman's works were based on realistic poetics. The poet found support for the cosmic theme in all evolutionary theories, especially since the space in the 1850s–1860s was already open for research. And though, in the opinion of K.I. Chukovsky, W. Whitman did not consider the available theories in their scientific depth, «their breadth was felt by him through to the end, because here he was, like everywhere else, the poet of breadth <...> the first great singer <...> of new space» [Chukovsky, 1969, p. 13].

Comprehending the scientific theme in the works of W. Whitman, K.I. Chukovsky analyzed the poem «This Compost», which he called the scientific poem on the chemical transformation of matter: «If the scientists who are talking about it in their books, at least Justus Liebig, the author of “Chemical Letters”, and Jacob Moleschott, author of the “Life Cycle”, so popular in Russia then – were gifted with poetic talent, they would have written this poem exactly as it was written by Whitman» [14, p. 13].

The meaning of the transformations described is that all living things on the planet will eventually break up into inorganic compounds that will be consumed for a new synthesis of organic matter. The poem by W. Whitman narrates about a phenomenon that is basically a circulation of matters in nature. The poet praised the bacteria that ultimately created the world around him. This process was lasting a long time, during which many plants and animals were dying, thus creating organic matters in the ground. The same processes, in the opinion of K.I. Chukovsky, concern people for whom the Earth is a cemetery. In this respect, W. Whitman's words, by which he «materialistically» describes human life on earth as a continuous chemistry, are indicative: «Look at this land! See it well! / Maybe every particle of the ground was once a particle of the sick – and yet look! / Prairies are covered with spring grass, / the noiseless bursts of beans grow on the beds, / and the gentle spears of onion, piercing the air, make their way up. / Every branch of apple trees is strewn with clusters of buds ... / And the

summer greenery looks proud and innocent over these layers of the dead / What kind of chemistry!»
[Whitman, 1970, p. 237].

In such poems, K.I.Chukovsky saw the influence on the poet's work of those popular science books, that shaped the ideology of the Russian realists of the 1860s, led by their ideological inspirer D.I.Pisarev: «Sometimes, in his <W.Whitman> verses one can even feel the smack of vulgar Büchnerian materialism of «Matter and strength» [refers to the work of the German philosopher L. Büchner «Matter and Strength»], with the help of which raznochinets Bazarov tried to attach the old Russian “feudal lords” to nihilism in Turgenev's novel».

Accepting the achievements of modern science, being one of its loyal followers, W.Whitman at the same time believed that the human soul was the greatest value. In this connection K.I.Chukovsky understood the artistic originality of W.Whitman's creative work as the synthesis of such incompatible worldviews as materialism and idealism: they both help him to express «even in vague and foggy words “cosmic enthusiasm” inherent in him, regardless of any scientific and philosophical doctrines».

It should be noted that W.Whitman's worldview is characterized by a very specific materialism that was formed under the influence of not only the poet's fascination with natural scientific discoveries, astronomy, but also of his surprisingly sensual, «material» experience of the world of colors, forms, and movements. This understanding does not imply the presence of any philosophical system in the poet, but in many respects characterizes his worldview.

W.Whitman admits that a separate human life represents a dot in terms of eternity, and the cycle between birth and death is a short moment in the cosmic existence of mankind. In his works the poet transfers the ideas of this doctrine into the sphere of high sensations. K.I.Chukovsky admitted these transitions to be natural to W.Whitman, for the ideas of time and space were inherent in him from his youth, and he himself was a cosmist by nature. But the cosmism of W. Whitman was not so much

based on the evolutionary theories of the natural sciences but on the basic statements of idealistic philosophy and other philosophical trends popular at the time: «... in “Leaves of Grass”, the echoes of the sacred mystical books of ancient India and the modern <...> transcendental teachings of Carlyle and Emerson are clearly heard. Minimizing or suppressing these influences means great deviation from the truth. One can feel this influence on hundreds of pages». W. Whitman is close to the idea that existence arises from non-existence – this idea can be traced in Indian books, the Bible, in ancient representations and in Taoism. That is why time, space and evolution, which are manifestations of the Absolute, originate in the root cause of the world.

In W. Whitman’s cosmism, the earth evolution is considered not only as the development of biological species, but also as the improvement of person. The views of the poet in this issue echo with the theory of Russian cosmism, the main provisions of which are presented in the writings of V.S. Soloviev and V.I. Vernadsky. According to this doctrine, man is the intermediate link in the long chain of creatures, while consciousness and life in their present form should be followed by super life and Superman.

The theoretical positions of the Superman are presented in the literary-critical works of K.I. Chukovsky, estimating the theory of F. Nietzsche [Morozova and Zhatkin, 2017]. The writer draws parallels between the standard concept of the theory of Russian cosmism and the philosophical views of W. Whitman, presented in his works. The American poet considers this topic in the transcendental sense, as his poetry is directed to the future, revealing a new level of consciousness, a new stage of cosmic vision and worldview. That is why K.I. Chukovsky believes that Whitman’s whole poetry «is permeated with reverential delight of the divine harmony of the universe». This idea is presented in the poem «Reed» by W. Whitman, in which evolution is interpreted as the path of the Soul. This diverse interpretation of the world events testifies to a holistic vision of the life of the

universe, of the poet's deep understanding of cosmic processes. Therefore, achieving super-conscience for humanity in the works of W. Whitman becomes real and possible.

K.I.Chukovsky pays much attention to the political views of W. Whitman, also imbued with cosmic enthusiasm. According to K.I.Chukovsky, W. Whitman «became famous as a poet of democracy <...>, and democracy took a grand, universal scale in his poems». The views of the American poet were in many ways due to his way of life: he had to leave his school early, earning his living, working as a messenger, as a printer's apprentice, as a teacher in a rural school, and as an editor in several New York newspapers. It was his life, full of diverse interests and impressions, that paved his way to literature. Having radical political views, W. Whitman spoke against slavery, actively propagating the ideas of freedom, supporting the Democratic Party «Free Land».

But, according to K.I.Chukovsky, who compared the democracy of W. Whitman with the ocean and the starry sky, it did not fit into the framework of the program of the American Democratic Party: «Democracy is understood by him <W. Whitman> as an endless chain of generations marching along a thousand-year road. He perceives it, so to speak, in the planetary aspect». This scale is described in the poem «Pioneers! O pioneers!»: «The globe of the earth flies, spinning, / And sister-planets, clusters of suns and planets are around, / All the sparkling days, all the mysterious nights, full of dreams, / Pioneers! O pioneers! / This is ours and for us, / We clear the way for the embryos in the womb. / Those that are not yet born are waiting to follow us...» [Whitman, 1982, p. 209].

The complex and contradictory work of W. Whitman gives him the right to be called the American creator of epic poetry. K.I.Chukovsky confirms this idea with the own words of the poet, who believed that «only the rare cosmic mind of the artist, illuminated by Infinity, can comprehend the diverse oceanic properties of the people». W. Whitman believed that these properties would help to find a way of developing democracy in his native country, when he was describing a united, indivisible, unprecedented large and complex democrat nation. He thought that the United States was

the birthplace of a new, free, independent person, imbued with a sense of unity with all his compatriots, who «bubble, swirl around <...>, we are being inseparable parts of them». W. Whitman wanted to create works that glorified the American way of life and the ideals of the American democracy.

In fact, the contemporary to the poet America was divided into free and slavery states and «“sameness” of millions of American hearts was already an unmasked myth». In the mid-1860s, there was a rapid differentiation of classes in America, making the country, according to K.I. Chukovsky, «the arena of the fierce struggle between democracy of farm laborers and workers and the “democracy” of the rich and the money-grubbers». W. Whitman was invariably discrediting the existing shortcomings of the political structure of his country, speaking of them with merciless harshness, but «until the end of his days he remained at the mercy of illusions about the distant era, when he began creating his first songs».

W. Whitman outlined his socio-political views in the journalistic work «Democratic Distances». Analyzing this book, K.I. Chukovsky focused on the poet's attitude to material and technical progress. At that time the young country was developing rapidly. Significant advances were made in technical progress: there were invented steam engines, which gave impetus to the development of shipbuilding; there also appeared the discoveries of the talented inventor T. Edison. However, behind external prosperity W. Whitman saw the moral disintegration of society, which was «maimed, corrupted, full of gross superstitions and rottenness». Against the background of unfolding large-scale progress, the most important moral principles, like the keen, inquisitive mind of a person had been completely depreciated. K.I. Chukovsky used the texts of W. Whitman's angry accusatory speeches to explain the reasons for the social transformations taking place. The poet called several of them: «...the most important fundamental element of every personality and every state is missing or underdeveloped or severely weakened – i.e. conscience... There is no faith in the basic principles of our country; there is

no even faith in humanity <...>. Falsity, which is rooted in the spirit – the mother of all false acts – brought innumerable offspring».

At the same time, W. Whitman believed that every person in the new society has ample opportunities for development, self-knowledge and self-affirmation, having convincingly and profoundly reflected this in his collection of «Leaves of Grass», in which a characteristic joyful tonality could be felt. He believed that society was able to correct the said defects in the process of continuous and progressive reforms. This restructuring was possible with participation of «common people, working people, creator people», which should create the democracy of the future, which was much needed in all countries of the world.

The possible solution of the contradictions, arisen in the creation of democracy, can be the organization of a worldwide community, a worldwide brotherhood of peoples, which W. Whitman calls for in the poem «For you O Democracy». In the brotherhood of nations, enthusiastically portrayed by W. Whitman, K.I. Chukovsky sees a pledge of happy future not overshadowed with external threat; if people of different nations unite, no enemies would scare them. W. Whitman's perception of democracy as a selfless friendship of the peoples differs significantly from that of the American society about its own exclusivity, limited to the national framework.

Concerning the political views of W. Whitman, K.I. Chukovsky especially distinguishes those of his works, which speak of Russia. The fact that W. Whitman was not indifferent to Russia's theme is evidenced by his rough drafts, among which «there is a sheet where every line is about Russia»; «there are also a few Russian words written by Whitman himself in English letters». Poetry of W. Whitman was popular, having been often translated into Russian.

In the opinion of K.I. Chukovsky, the American poet believed that the work of translators was the pledge of world brotherhood, the realization of the dream that both poems and poets would become international, and could make «all the countries on the globe closer and stronger than any treaties and

diplomats». Calling Russia a great country, W. Whitman hoped to establish emotional contact with its peoples.

Discussion.

In the poetry of W. Whitman, one can clearly perceive the historical optimism, originated from the heroic era in the fate of America, full of hopes and illusions, born of the collapse of slavery. W. Whitman was inspired by the ideals of American democracy more than others.

According to K.I. Chukovsky, the poet's adherence to transcendental teaching contributed to the fact that he tried in his works to transfer the principles of democracy to the whole universe, to the whole surrounding world. His poetic dreams about the democratic future were embodied in the Utopian vision of the City of Friends, which he sang in the poem «I dream'd in a dream».

World equality, represented in the poet's works, also assumes an unusual interpretation of certain philosophical positions. In W. Whitman's works, the positive and negative categories are equal to human life in value. K.I. Chukovsky cites the paradoxical statements of the American poet that life is as good as death, that victory and defeat are the same: «you hear that it is good to win and overcome? I tell you that to fall is just as good! It's all the same: to defeat or be defeated! ».

The poet sees the closeness of things everywhere, and he often identifies himself with each of these things. Reincarnation is done not intentionally but arises as a natural feeling. In many of W. Whitman's works, K.I. Chukovsky notes his transformation into new people, which promotes the establishment of equality with them. The merit of W. Whitman lies in the creation of a lyrical hero of a new type. While the traditional romantic hero represents a rebellious, outcast, defiant individual, the hero of W. Whitman stays in a state of permanent spiritual union with all of humanity. Being part of the crowd, he is connected with everything that happens in the world.

In the opinion of K.I.Chukovsky, the highest degree of unity with all people for W.Whitman lies in the ability to experience their troubles and joys. The poet turns into a free shooter, an old artilleryman and a lover, coming to his beloved. He watches gently the baby, sleeping in the cradle; hides a runaway slave who has dropped into his house; gives praise to sciences, exact knowledge; admires the negro-driver, the picture giant. From these isolated cases, there emerges an important moral and aesthetic principle of art, noted by K.I.Chukovsky: «It is not necessary to describe people, but to identify yourself with them».

The poet thinks to be responsible for all human sins. «Song of Myself», which involves a description of personal feelings and experiences, has embodied the images of many people. K.I.Chukovsky notes that, when describing each of his characters, W.Whitman reincarnates into him, lives his life, completely merging with a stranger. Transformations occur on almost every page: the poet sees himself as a firefighter, died in putting out a fire, and then, as his wife, who mourns for her husband. A lot of successive portraits of American ordinary people symbolize the idea of equality. Their individual traits are vague, but all together they constitute a generalized image of a common American, with whom the poet identifies himself and on whose behalf he speaks.

According to K.I.Chukovsky, W.Whitman finds the images and rhythms for his work in this generalization, at the same time being convinced that love should be the highest triumph of poetry: «He dreams of infecting us with this sense of all-equality, all-identities. Embraced by this feeling, he repeats, that his counterparts live everywhere, that the world means his continuation: “I do not fit all between my shoes and my hat...”». Not only democracy but any social order is possible without love for each other, for everything, for the entire surrounding world. The poet above all appreciates in himself the ability of generous, active love, which is the basis for the general law of life. Equally passionately and sincerely does the poet chant the real essence and beauty of nature.

K.I.Chukovsky believes that for the poet there are no restrictions in time and space: «... lying on the sand of his Long Island, he, the Yankee, walks along the old hills of Judea next to the young and slender handsome Christ». The fantastic feeling of confluence, unity, when, according to K.I.Chukovsky, the poet «is rushing to everything with open arms, as if stroking it with his hand (after all, each of them is native to him!), and then immediately hurrying to another one to caress it too», makes the readers see his free meditations, which cause a variety of different pictures, semantically connected only by the power of artistic fiction. This work structure leads to piling up the images, which K.I.Chukovsky supplements with similar characteristics: «endless enumerations, lists of everything that flashes before him – the catalogs of things». This structure, designed to promote the emergence of new poetic images and inspiring feelings, evoked opposition from many critics. But this was one of the features of the innovative poetry of W. Whitman – the absence of not only a plot, but also a large image. The works were based on a general tonality, keenly rendered by the poet in brief and capacious images, each of which did not require additional characteristics and an event line.

Such is, in particular, W. Whitman's poem «Salut au Monde», in which K.I.Chukovsky drew attention to the fragment, where the American poet was answering his own questions. K.I.Chukovsky calls each answer a catalog listing everything that the poet considers necessary to call. For example, when answering the question of what W. Whitman hears, he writes the whole page with «a catalog of all kinds of sounds, characteristic of different peoples».

The poet gives the same answers to other questions: «What is it widening in you, Walt Whitman? », «What do you see, Walt Whitman? », – in both cases his reflections and answers take up several pages. When defending a poem that «no American magazine wanted to publish», K.I.Chukovsky called it a spiritualized work, demanding inspiration from the side of the reader too: «No wonder that Whitman was so often repeating that his poems were our poems». In order to feel this solidarity, the

reader should have a talent that helps to feel the «delight of being», and then, in the opinion of K.I. Chukovsky, «we will give up petty everyday worries and take off like cosmonauts».

K.I.Chukovsky also sees planetarism and cosmism in another poem by W.Whitman – «Crossing Brooklyn Ferry», where the lyrical hero is just a dot and an atom in the desert of the worlds. Each individual is followed by an infinite number of ancestors, while the future generation goes ahead. K.I.Chukovsky notes that W.Whitman transcends the time limits, addressing these people of the future, his future descendants, «who will still be moving from Brooklyn to New York many years after his death». W.Whitman shows the person included in the eternal cycle of cataclysms and shocks. The lyrical hero is free transiting from life to death and back. Any earthly shell is temporary for him, and therefore he is not afraid to lose one and try on another.

K.I.Chukovsky points out that when talking with unborn people, W.Whitman speaks of himself as of a long-dead. This identity allows the author to not only expand the boundaries of the possible and feel unity with the future generation, but also to declare that «there is no death, there is an eternal transformation of the matter». This statement, according to K.I.Chukovsky, blurs the boundaries «between the past generation and the future one». The poet is not afraid of death, because it brings confidence and peace of mind. It does not mean that W.Whitman treats equally the good and evil, being indifferent to all ethical categories. The poet does not avoid uncomfortable topics and straightly expresses himself like a person who is strong in spirit. According to K.I. Chukovsky, W.Whitman, «having detached himself from everything that is individual and personal, <...> also abandons the horror of death, while death appears before him as a wise and blissful force of nature, eternally renewing the life of the universe».

W.Whitman always believed in the ultimate victory of the forces of goodness, progress, and human happiness over the forces of evil, opposing them. The optimism of his works helps the readers to become involved in the process of the artistic mastering the world.

CONCLUSIONS.

As a literary critic and translator, K.I.Chukovsky contributed to the popularization of the work of the American poet W. Whitman in Russia.

Describing the creative manner of W. Whitman, K.I.Chukovsky has only analyzed the works from his heritage, which deserve, in his opinion, the readers' attention. The importance of K.I.Chukovsky's comments lies both in the theoretical substantiation of certain ideological trends in W. Whitman's work, and in the confirmation of each conclusion by the lines of W. Whitman's works, translated by him. Highlighting the main motifs of W. Whitman's poetry – his cosmism and his focus on democratic transformations, K.I.Chukovsky was able to emphasize the traits, which are most valuable and significant for the contemporary reader in his literary works.

K.I.Chukovsky's evaluation in many ways formed the image of W. Whitman in Russia as an innovator of American poetry.

Acknowledgments.

The article is made within the project # 17-18-01006 «The Evolution of the Russian Poetic Translation (the XIXth - the beginning of the XXth centuries) » of the Russian Science Foundation.

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RECIBIDO: 6 de junio del 2019.

APROBADO: 20 de junio del 2019.