

**COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF “POETIC ART” BY NICOLAS BOILEAU AND
“RULES OF LITERATURE” BY ABDURAUUF FITRAT**

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Abstract: This article provides a comparative-analytical study of two influential works in literary theory: Poetic Art by the French classicist Nicolas Boileau and Rules of Literature by the Uzbek intellectual Abdurauf Fitrat. Despite being produced in different cultural and historical contexts, these works reveal significant typological similarities. Both texts address fundamental literary issues such as the relationship between form and content in poetry, the theoretical basis of dramaturgy, and the role of the poet. Through detailed textual analysis, this paper identifies shared aesthetic principles and differences in approach, contributing to broader discussions on comparative poetics and universal trends in literary development.

Keywords: Poetic Art, Rules of Literature, typological similarity, tragedy, literary theory, comparative poetics

Introduction

In the modern era of comparative literature studies, identifying typological similarities among different literary traditions has gained increasing significance. Such parallels often arise not from direct influence or borrowing, but from the emergence of similar literary phenomena shaped by comparable socio-historical, cultural, and philosophical contexts. These typological similarities reflect universal patterns of human thought and creativity across national literatures.

This article examines the comparative and analytical dimensions of two significant literary treatises: “Poetic Art” by French classicist Nicolas Boileau and “Rules of Literature” by Uzbek enlightener Abdurauf Fitrat. Despite their distinct cultural and temporal contexts—17th-century French Classicism and early 20th-century Uzbek enlightenment—their theoretical reflections on poetry, form and content, drama, and the nature of tragedy reveal striking commonalities. The study aims to explore these shared principles and divergences through a typological lens, contributing to a broader understanding of how literary theory evolves within varying civilizational paradigms. Despite being separated by time, geography, and language, both authors articulate fundamental principles about poetry, aesthetics, and dramatic form. For example:

1. On Form and Content in Poetry

Boileau, writing within the framework of French Classicism, emphasizes that meaning must take precedence over form. He asserts:

Above all, let sense and meaning guide the pen.
(Kamol J., 2019)

Fitrat similarly underscores the primacy of meaning over formal features such as meter and rhyme. He contrasts Cho'lon's free-verse poem Kleopatra with traditional rhymed verses from Sufi Olloyor's Sabot ul-ojizin, concluding that true poetry derives its power from emotional and intellectual depth, not merely structural regularity:

"Cho'lon's Kleopatra lacks rhyme and meter, yet it is a poem. Sufi Olloyor's rhymed, metered lines may not qualify as poetry at all."
(Fitrat, 2009)

2. On Brevity and Expressiveness

Both authors value concise and meaningful expression. Boileau advises:
"Be brief, clear, and vivid in narration.

Prolonged stories breed boredom."
(Kamol J., 2019)

Fitrat echoes this, warning against excessive ornamentation that dilutes the essence of thought. He promotes clarity and cohesion, suggesting that description must not overshadow the intended message.

3. On the Nature and Role of the Poet

Boileau stresses that mediocrity in poetry is unacceptable. He asserts:
"In other professions, one may achieve fame despite mediocrity, but in poetry, such mediocrity is a form of incompetence."
(Kamol J., 2019)

Fitrat, too, elevates the emotional and spiritual sensitivity of the poet, stating:
"True poetry contains a spiritual power that stirs the blood, plays the nerves, shakes the mind, and arouses the senses."
(Fitrat, 2009)

According to Fitrat, poetic ability is closely tied to the emotional perceptiveness of the writer.

4. On Drama and Tragedy

Both authors also explore dramatic genres. Boileau narrates how tragedy, once considered vulgar, evolved into an esteemed form in French literature:

"A hundred hearings are not worth one scene viewed;
Tragedy once crude, now commands praise."
(Kamol J., 2019)

Fitrat classifies literature into three main genres: lyric, epic, and dramatic ("Tomosha"). He elaborates on the performative and collective aspects of drama, noting:
"Dramatic success depends not only on the writer's talent but also on the performers' skills.

Only through synergy can a dramatic work achieve greatness.”
(Fitrat, 2009)

He further contends that tragedy must be emotionally complex and evoke fear and awe.

Conclusion

The comparative analysis of Boileau’s “Poetic Art” and Fitrat’s “Rules of Literature” highlights the convergence of literary thought despite vast geographical and historical distances. Both scholars emphasize the primacy of meaning over form, the emotional and intellectual power of poetry, and the significance of structure and depth in dramatic works—especially tragedy. Their ideas underscore the necessity for harmony between content and artistic expression, and the role of the poet or playwright as a mediator of deep human experience.

Moreover, both Boileau and Fitrat offer insightful critiques of mediocrity in literary creation, advocating for artistic excellence rooted in emotional authenticity and technical mastery. Their shared views on poetic sincerity, dramatic construction, and audience engagement reaffirm the idea that certain aesthetic values transcend cultural boundaries.

Ultimately, this typological comparison not only enhances our appreciation of two great literary theorists, but also reinforces the universal foundations upon which literary art is constructed. It encourages further cross-cultural literary dialogue and comparative scholarship, opening new avenues for understanding global literary heritage.

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