

DIVINE AND HUMAN LOVE IN THE GHAZALS OF ALISHER NAVOI AND THE SONNETS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Yusupova Mahmuda Ahmadjon qizi

E-mail: mahmudayusupova0921@gmail.com

Abstract: this article explores the concept of love in the works of Alisher Navoi and William Shakespeare, with a focus on Navoi's ghazals and Shakespeare's sonnets. While Navoi portrays love as a divine, mystical force leading to spiritual transcendence, Shakespeare often presents love as a deeply human experience marked by constancy, passion, and the desire for immortality through poetry. By comparing the philosophical, symbolic, and cultural aspects of love in their works, the study highlights both the universality of love and the distinctive ways it is represented in Eastern and Western literary traditions.

Keywords: Alisher Navoi, William Shakespeare, love, ghazal, sonnet, mysticism, poetry.

Introduction

Love has remained one of the most enduring and universal themes in world literature. From mystical poetry in the East to Renaissance lyricism in the West, the concept of love has been shaped by cultural, spiritual, and social values. Alisher Navoi (1441–1501), a great representative of classical Turkic literature, often conceived of love as a divine path to spiritual enlightenment, reflecting the influence of Sufism (Schimmel, 1992; Karimov, 2015). In contrast, William Shakespeare (1564–1616), the iconic poet and dramatist of the English
SJIF:5.219

Renaissance, depicted love as a human passion marked by constancy, desire, and an aspiration for eternity through art (Greenblatt, 2012).

This article aims to examine how divine and human love are conceptualized in Navoi's ghazals and Shakespeare's sonnets, with the goal of highlighting both the universality of love and the cultural differences in its representation.

Literature Review

Scholarly interest in Alisher Navoi has often focused on the mystical and ethical dimensions of his poetry. Researchers emphasize that Navoi's ghazals employ symbolic imagery—such as the nightingale, the rose, and wine—to represent the lover's path toward divine union (Karimov, 2015; Schimmel, 1992). His treatment of love is deeply rooted in the philosophical framework of Sufism, where earthly affection becomes a metaphor for spiritual devotion.

On the other hand, Shakespeare's sonnets have been widely studied for their exploration of love, time, beauty, and mortality. Scholars note that Shakespeare presents love as constant and unchanging, even when faced with challenges (Greenblatt, 2012). His recurring theme of immortalizing love and beauty through poetry is especially prominent in Sonnets 18 and 116 (Shakespeare, 2005).

While extensive studies exist on both Navoi and Shakespeare separately, comparative research that brings their concepts of love into dialogue remains limited. This article seeks to fill this scholarly gap.

Analysis / Discussion

Philosophical Dimensions of Love

Navoi frequently conceives of love as a sacred journey toward truth. His ghazals reveal a spiritual understanding of affection, in which the human lover is

drawn closer to the divine (Navoi, 2000; Karimov, 2015). For example, he declares: “With love I sacrificed my soul, and my heart found boundless peace.” This line illustrates the transformative power of love, not as an earthly emotion but as a metaphysical force. Another verse—“A heart without love is ruined; with love the soul is revived”—emphasizes that love is the very essence of existence (Navoi, 2000).

Shakespeare, by contrast, treats love as a deeply human experience. In Sonnet 116, he insists: “Love is not love which alters when it alteration finds, Or bends with the remover to remove” (Shakespeare, 2005). Here, love is defined as constant, enduring, and steadfast. While Navoi elevates love to a divine principle, Shakespeare anchors it in human relationships, celebrating its resilience in the face of change (Greenblatt, 2012).

Imagery and Symbolism

The imagery employed by Navoi reflects the influence of Persian and Sufi poetic traditions (Schimmel, 1992).

His verses are rich with symbols such as the rose and nightingale, representing beauty and longing, or wine and intoxication, symbolizing ecstatic union with the divine. As he writes: “O Love, with you I found joy; without you, I was as if dead.” This image conveys love’s role as the source of spiritual vitality (Navoi, 2000).

Shakespeare’s symbolism, on the other hand, reflects the Renaissance concern with time, beauty, and mortality (Greenblatt, 2012). In Sonnet 18, he promises immortality through verse: “So long as men can breathe or eyes can see, so long lives this, and this gives life to thee” (Shakespeare, 2005). In *Romeo and*

Juliet, Juliet proclaims: “My bounty is as boundless as the sea, my love as deep; the more I give to thee, the more I have, for both are infinite” (Shakespeare, 2005).

These metaphors convey the depth and abundance of love while remaining rooted in human experience.

Thus, while Navoi’s imagery is mystical, Shakespeare’s is anchored in earthly reality.

The Ideal of Eternity

For Navoi, love is eternal because it unites the human soul with God (Karimov, 2015; Schimmel, 1992). Earthly separation, suffering, or even death cannot diminish its sacred essence. His ghazals suggest that love transcends the physical world, achieving permanence through union with the divine (Navoi, 2000).

For Shakespeare, love achieves eternity not through mystical transcendence but through poetry. Sonnet 18 concludes with the famous lines: “So long as men can breathe or eyes can see, so long lives this, and this gives life to thee” (Shakespeare, 2005). Here, Shakespeare presents art as the vehicle that grants love and beauty immortality. His sonnets highlight the fragility of human life, yet simultaneously assert the enduring power of poetic expression (Greenblatt, 2012).

Conclusion

The comparative study of Navoi’s ghazals and Shakespeare’s sonnets demonstrates how two great literary traditions conceptualize love in distinct yet complementary ways (Navoi, 2000; Shakespeare, 2005; Karimov, 2015; Greenblatt, 2012; Schimmel, 1992). Navoi frames love as a divine, mystical journey, while Shakespeare portrays it as a deeply human experience, eternalized

through poetry. Despite cultural and philosophical differences, both poets reveal love's capacity to transcend boundaries, whether spiritual or temporal. Their works affirm that love, in its many forms, remains a universal and timeless theme in literature.

REFERENCES

1. Navoi, A. (2000). Selected Ghazals. Tashkent: Gafur Gulom Publishing.
2. Shakespeare, W. (2005). The Sonnets. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
3. Karimov, H. (2015). Mysticism in Navoi's Poetry. Tashkent: Akademnashr.
4. Greenblatt, S. (2012). Shakespeare's Freedom. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
5. Schimmel, A. (1992). Mystical Dimensions of Islam. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.