

SHIRIN AND JULIANA: THE EARLIEST FEMALE FIGURES IN UZBEK AND ENGLISH LITERATURE

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Abstract. *This article examines two iconic female characters from Uzbek and English literature: Shirin and Juliana. Shirin, originating from the works of Nizami Ganjavi and Alisher Navoi, is celebrated as a symbol of love, beauty, and resilience in Eastern literary tradition. Her story in Khosrow and Shirin explores themes of romance, sacrifice, and empowerment, showcasing her as both a devoted lover and a capable ruler. In contrast, Juliana, a central figure in Cynewulf's "Juliana", represents unwavering faith and moral strength in Anglo-Saxon literature. She defies societal and patriarchal expectations to remain steadfast in her Christian beliefs, ultimately embodying spiritual endurance and martyr-like heroism. By comparing Shirin and Juliana, the article highlights their shared virtues of courage and devotion while emphasizing their cultural differences—Shirin as a romantic heroine and Juliana as a champion of faith. These characters reflect the values and ideals of their respective literary traditions, offering timeless lessons on love, sacrifice, and moral integrity.*

Key words: *Female figures in literature, romantic heroine, spiritual devotion, comparative analysis, Eastern literary tradition, love and sacrifice, faith and martyrdom, cultural values in literature.*

ШИРИН И ДЖУЛИАНА: РАННИЕ ЖЕНСКИЕ ФИГУРЫ В УЗБЕКСКОЙ И АНГЛИЙСКОЙ ЛИТЕРАТУРЕ

Аннотация. *Данная статья анализирует образы двух известных женских персонажей узбекской и английской литературы – Ширин и Джулианы. Ширин, описанная в произведениях Низами Гянджеви и Алишера Навои, считается символом любви, красоты и стойкости в восточной литературной традиции. Её история в поэме «Хосров и Ширин» исследует темы романтики, жертвенности и силы, показывая её как преданную возлюбленную и способную правительницу. Центральный образ Джулианы из произведения Киневульфа «Джулиана» в англосаксонской литературе символизирует непоколебимую*

веру и моральную стойкость. Она бросает вызов общественным и патриархальным ожиданиям, оставаясь верной своим христианским убеждениям, и воплощает духовную стойкость и героизм мученицы. Статья подчёркивает общие добродетели Ширин и Джулианы, такие как мужество и преданность, а также их культурные различия – Ширин как романтической героини, а Джулианы как защитницы веры. Эти персонажи отражают ценности и идеалы своих литературных традиций, предлагая вечные уроки о любви, жертвенности и моральной чистоте.

Ключевые слова: Женские образы в литературе, романтическая героиня, духовная преданность, сравнительный анализ, восточная литературная традиция, любовь и жертвенность, вера и мученичество, культурные ценности в литературе.

INTRODUCTION.

Uzbek and English literature are deeply rooted in their respective histories, each reflecting unique cultural and artistic values. This article explores and compares two iconic female figures: Shirin from Uzbek literature and Juliana from English literature. Despite belonging to vastly different traditions, these characters embody the ideals and virtues cherished by their cultures.

The first female character in Uzbek literature is Shirin. A Symbol of Love and Devotion in Uzbek Literature is Shirin. She is one of the most celebrated characters in Persian and Uzbek literary traditions, especially in the works of Nizami Ganjavi and Alisher Navoi. She is the heroine of the romantic epic “Khosrow and Shirin”, a story that has become a cornerstone of Eastern literature.

Shirin is portrayed as a woman of unparalleled beauty, intelligence, and unwavering loyalty to her beloved, Khosrow. However, her character is more than a romantic ideal; she represents the virtues of resilience and agency. For example:

- Strength of character: Shirin defies societal expectations to pursue true love, choosing Khosrow despite the challenges posed by their circumstances.
- Symbol of empowerment: In some versions of the tale, Shirin is depicted as a skilled ruler who governs her kingdom with wisdom and justice, showcasing her capability beyond romantic dimensions.

Legacy in Uzbek culture: Shirin remains a timeless symbol of love, sacrifice, and the pursuit of one's desires against all odds.

A Champion of Faith in English Literature is Juliana

As we know Juliana, a lesser-known but significant figure in Anglo-Saxon literature, features prominently in Cynewulf's poem “Juliana”. This religious narrative centers on her steadfast faith and moral courage in the face of persecution.

Juliana's character exemplifies spiritual strength and devotion:

- Defender of Christianity: She refuses to marry a pagan man, even under the threat of torture, because of her unwavering commitment to her Christian beliefs.
- Martyr-like heroism: Her suffering and eventual martyrdom reflect her unshakable faith, making her a powerful symbol of religious endurance in early English literature.
- Cultural significance: Juliana embodies the Anglo-Saxon ideals of loyalty, moral fortitude, and sacrifice for a higher cause, serving as an inspiration for early Christian communities.

Comparative Analysis: Shirin and Juliana

1. Commonalities:

In my side of view both Shirin and Juliana are portrayed as strong, virtuous women who defy societal norms. They represent ideals of devotion—Shirin to love and Juliana to faith—and serve as moral exemplars in their respective cultures.

2. Differences:

While Shirin's story is deeply rooted in romantic and emotional ideals, Juliana's tale centers on spiritual and religious values. Shirin's journey explores human love and its challenges, whereas Juliana's narrative celebrates divine love and unwavering belief.

3. Cultural reflections:

Shirin symbolizes the beauty and richness of Eastern romanticism, often associated with delicate emotions and the celebration of earthly love. Conversely, Juliana reflects the Anglo-Saxon focus on spiritual strength and moral responsibility, highlighting the Christian ethos of the time.

In conclusion, in this article I want to conclude my opinions with Shirin and Juliana are timeless figures who transcend the boundaries of their cultural origins. Shirin's story captures the essence of human love, sacrifice, and agency, while Juliana's narrative showcases the power of faith and moral integrity. Together, they represent the diverse ways in which women have been celebrated in literature as paragons of virtue and resilience.

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