

THE REPRESENTATION OF MORAL IDEAL, LOVE, AND TRAGIC MOTIFS IN THE SYSTEM OF CHARACTERS IN ALISHER NAVOI'S FARHOD AND SHIRIN AND WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S HAMLET

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Abstract. This article presents a comparative analysis of the artistic representation of moral ideal, love, and tragic motifs in the system of characters in Alisher Navoi's *Farhod and Shirin* and William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. The study examines how Eastern and Western literary traditions conceptualize love as a moral, philosophical, and social category. In Navoi's epic, love is portrayed as a force of spiritual purification and social responsibility, embodied in the images of Farhod, Shirin, Mehinbonu, and Shopur. In Shakespeare's tragedy, love becomes a site of inner conflict and existential struggle, reflected in the characters of Hamlet, Ophelia, Gertrude, Horatio, and Claudius. Using a comparative-typological, psychological, and aesthetic approach, the article identifies both convergences and divergences in the ethical orientation, narrative function, and tragic outcome of love in the two works. The findings demonstrate that, despite cultural and generic differences, both authors employ love as a key mechanism for revealing moral consciousness and tragic awareness.

Key words: moral ideal; love motif; tragedy; system of characters; humanism; spiritual struggle; power and conscience; Eastern and Western literature.

The concepts of moral ideal and love occupy a central position in world literature, functioning not merely as emotional categories but as ethical, philosophical, and aesthetic principles that shape human destiny. In both Eastern and Western traditions, love often becomes the medium through which writers explore spiritual purification, loyalty, conscience, and the tragic contradictions of human existence. However, the artistic realization of these concepts varies significantly depending on cultural, philosophical, and generic contexts.

Alisher Navoi's epic *Farhod and Shirin* represents a classical Eastern model in which love is inseparable from humanism, moral perfection, and social responsibility [1,52]. Navoi continues the philosophical tradition of Aristotle and al-Farabi, reinterpreting the concept of the "perfect human being" as one whose personal emotions are subordinated to ethical ideals and the common good. By contrast, William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* embodies a Western tragic paradigm in which love becomes a site of inner conflict, existential anxiety, and moral testing.

Shakespeare portrays love not as a harmonizing force, but as a catalyst for psychological crisis and tragic recognition [12,65]. Despite the extensive scholarship on Navoi and Shakespeare individually, comparative studies focusing specifically on the system of characters and the ethical-philosophical function of love remain limited.

This article addresses this gap by examining how moral ideal, love, and tragedy are artistically constructed through the major characters in *Farhod and Shirin* and *Hamlet*, and how these constructions reflect broader cultural and literary paradigms.

This study employs a comparative-typological approach combined with close textual analysis to investigate the representation of moral ideal and love in Alisher Navoi's *Farhod and Shirin* and William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. The research integrates three complementary methodological perspectives. First, the comparative-typological method is applied to identify structural, thematic, and conceptual similarities and differences between the Eastern epic

tradition and Western tragic drama, with particular attention to the artistic treatment of love, morality, and character typology. Second, psychological and ethical analysis is used to examine the internal motivations, moral dilemmas, and spiritual conflicts of the key characters—Farhod, Shirin, Mehinbonu, Shopur, Hamlet, Ophelia, Gertrude, Horatio, and Claudius—in order to demonstrate how love functions as a test of conscience and ethical integrity [10,94]. Third, aesthetic and contextual interpretation situates both texts within their respective philosophical and cultural frameworks: Islamic humanism and medieval Eastern ethical thought in Navoi, and Renaissance humanism together with elements of existential reflection in Shakespeare. This contextualization enables a nuanced interpretation of tragic meaning and moral significance in each work. The analysis is based on primary texts in original or authoritative editions and is supported by relevant literary criticism and theoretical scholarship on tragedy, ethics, and humanism.

The analysis demonstrates that in Navoi's epic, love is elevated from a private emotion to a moral and social principle. Farhod embodies the ideal of the "perfect human being": his devotion to Shirin is inseparable from his service to society, intellectual labor, and ethical responsibility [8, 75]. Love motivates constructive action rather than destructive passion. Shirin, in turn, chooses Farhod not for his status, but for his wisdom, craftsmanship, and moral integrity, which gives their relationship a distinctly social and humanistic dimension.

Female characters further reinforce this ethical model. Shirin represents independence, intellect, and moral agency, while Mehinbonu exemplifies wisdom and political responsibility. Shopur, as Farhod's loyal companion, embodies friendship as spiritual solidarity and ethical continuity. Collectively, these characters present love as a force of spiritual purification and social commitment. In *Hamlet*, love functions primarily as a site of psychological and philosophical tension. Hamlet's feelings for Ophelia are intertwined with his existential doubt, moral disgust, and distrust shaped by his mother's perceived betrayal. Ophelia's understanding of love remains bound to social norms and obedience, which leads to tragic misunderstanding and emotional rupture. Her eventual madness and death symbolize the collapse of personal emotion under social and patriarchal pressure. Gertrude and Claudius further expose the ethical ambiguity of love. Gertrude's emotional dependence and political weakness contrast sharply with Mehinbonu's wisdom, while Claudius's manipulation of affection for power illustrates the destructive consequences of subordinating conscience to ambition. Horatio alone represents moral stability and loyal friendship, preserving ethical continuity after Hamlet's death. The results reveal a fundamental divergence in the function of love. In Navoi, love leads toward moral elevation, humanistic fulfillment, and the affirmation of ethical ideals, even when it culminates in tragedy. In Shakespeare, love exposes inner contradictions and existential uncertainty, producing tragedy through moral disintegration and psychological conflict. Yet in both works, love remains the primary means through which the deepest layers of human consciousness and ethical responsibility are revealed.

The comparative analysis highlights how cultural and generic frameworks shape the artistic representation of love and moral ideal. Navoi's epic reflects an Eastern humanistic tradition in which individual emotion is harmonized with collective welfare and spiritual perfection. His characters transform love into a vehicle of ethical action and social responsibility.

Shakespeare's tragedy, rooted in Renaissance humanism and philosophical skepticism, presents love as a destabilizing force that reveals the fragility of moral certainty and the tragic complexity of human nature [12,24].

Despite these differences, both authors converge in their understanding of love as a profound moral испытание—a trial that exposes the essence of character, conscience, and destiny. In both works, tragedy emerges not merely from external conflict, but from the ethical and spiritual challenges posed by love itself. This convergence suggests that love, as a universal human experience, transcends cultural boundaries while acquiring distinct aesthetic forms.

The study demonstrates that in *Farhod and Shirin* and *Hamlet*, love functions as a central philosophical and ethical category that shapes the system of characters and the structure of tragedy [7,48]. Navoi portrays love as a path to moral perfection, social responsibility, and humanistic fulfillment, while Shakespeare represents it as a site of inner conflict, existential questioning, and tragic awareness. Through comparative analysis, the article reveals that both traditions employ love as a transformative force that uncovers the deepest dimensions of human morality and spiritual experience.

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