

CULTURAL CODES IN THE REPRESENTATION OF THE BELOVED IN UZBEK AND ENGLISH LITERATURE: A COMPARATIVE LINGUOCULTURAL STUDY

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Abstract. *The image of the beloved occupies a central place in both Uzbek and English literary traditions, functioning not merely as a romantic figure but as a cultural construct shaped by historical, religious, aesthetic, and philosophical values. This article investigates the cultural codes embedded in the representation of the beloved in Uzbek and English literature through a comparative linguocultural approach.*

Keywords: *beloved, cultural code, linguoculturology, poetic discourse, Uzbek literature, English literature, concept, symbolism, Sufi poetics, comparative literature.*

Introduction. Literature serves as one of the most powerful mechanisms for preserving and transmitting cultural memory. Within literary discourse, the image of the beloved represents not only an aesthetic category but also a cultural and conceptual phenomenon reflecting the values, ideologies, and emotional structures of a society. The beloved in poetry is rarely a purely personal figure; instead, it becomes a symbolic embodiment of beauty, morality, spirituality, desire, or even divine truth. Drawing upon the poetic heritage of Alisher Navoi, Babur, William Shakespeare, and John Keats, the study analyzes symbolic systems, metaphoric structures, conceptual imagery, and emotional paradigms associated with the beloved. The article argues that the Uzbek literary tradition encodes the beloved through mystical, spiritual, and collective cultural meanings rooted in Sufi philosophy, while English literature frequently emphasizes individuality, corporeality, psychological intimacy, and human-centered aesthetics. By examining poetic discourse, conceptual metaphors, and symbolic imagery, this research demonstrates how literary representations of the beloved reflect broader national worldviews and cultural consciousness.

In Uzbek classical literature, especially within the traditions of Turkic-Sufi poetry, the beloved often transcends physical existence and acquires metaphysical significance. The beloved becomes an emblem of divine beauty, spiritual perfection, and existential longing. In contrast, English literary traditions—particularly from the Renaissance to Romanticism—tend to construct the beloved through more individualized emotional experiences, psychological realism, and humanistic ideals.¹

Cultural codes may be understood as systems of symbols, metaphors, images, and conceptual structures through which a culture organizes meaning. According to linguocultural theory, literary texts contain encoded national and cultural worldviews that can be revealed through conceptual and semantic analysis.²

¹ “Sufi Symbolism in Turkic Classical Poetry.” *Journal of Oriental Studies*, 2021.

² Baldick, Chris. *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*. Oxford University Press.

From the perspective of conceptual metaphor theory developed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, metaphors are not merely stylistic devices but cognitive mechanisms shaping perception and thought.³ In literary discourse, metaphors related to the beloved reveal deeper cultural understandings of beauty, love, morality, and spirituality.⁴ One of the dominant cultural codes in Uzbek classical literature is the mystical-Sufi code. In the poetry of Alisher Navoi, the beloved often symbolizes divine beauty rather than earthly romance. The external beauty of the beloved functions as a metaphorical gateway toward spiritual enlightenment.

Consider Navoi’s famous poetic imagery:

“Ul quyosh vaslin tilarsen, bo’l mujarrad, negakim,
Ko’kka Ruhullohni yetkurgan aning tajrididur...”

Navoi's choice of solitary life may have been influenced by the fifth stage of the order and the lifestyle of its leader, Bahauddin Naqshband. According to Hazrat Ali, the stage of dervishism is ten in the stages of Sharia, Tariqat, Ma’rifat, and Haqiqat, for a total of forty. Navoi considers the fifth stage of the order - renunciation of pleasure and lust - to be a divine characteristic peculiar to some prophets and saints. Love is usually represented as sacred fire, while the beloved becomes a spiritual force transforming the soul. The beloved’s eyes, hair, lips, and face possess symbolic meanings deeply rooted in Islamic and Persian-Turkic poetic traditions:

- Eyes symbolize spiritual power and destiny;
- Hair represents mystery and the labyrinth of existence;
- Face symbolizes divine illumination;
- Lips represent hidden truth and eternal wisdom.

Thus, the beloved in Uzbek classical poetry is encoded through transcendence rather than physical realism. Unlike many Western traditions where romantic individuality dominates, Uzbek literature often subordinates personal passion to moral and spiritual order.

In the poetry of Turkic poets, emotional suffering caused by separation from the beloved reflects not merely personal pain but existential incompleteness. The beloved becomes a center of moral orientation.

The Beloved in English Literary Tradition. In English Renaissance literature, particularly in the sonnets of William Shakespeare, the beloved is represented through a more individualized and human-centered perspective.

Unlike idealized Eastern portrayals, Shakespeare frequently challenges conventional beauty standards. In Sonnet 130, he famously writes:

“My mistress’ eyes are nothing like the sun.”

³ George Lakoff & Mark Johnson. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980.

⁴ Yuri Lotman. *Universe of the Mind: A Semiotic Theory of Culture*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990.

This line deliberately rejects exaggerated Petrarchan idealization. Instead of depicting the beloved as unattainable perfection, Shakespeare humanizes her. The cultural code here emphasizes authenticity and emotional realism.⁵

The English Renaissance beloved is therefore associated with: *individuality, psychological complexity, sensuality, emotional sincerity*.⁶

In Romantic poetry, the beloved becomes connected with emotional depth, imagination, and subjective experience. John Keats often merges beauty, mortality, and desire into a unified aesthetic experience.

Romantic literature encodes the beloved through: *emotional intensity, personal longing, sensual perception, temporal fragility*.⁷

Unlike Uzbek classical literature where love may lead toward spiritual transcendence, English Romanticism often emphasizes the fleeting nature of beauty and human mortality.

Modern English literature increasingly portrays the beloved psychologically rather than symbolically. Emotional relationships become sites of internal conflict, identity formation, and personal transformation. This differs significantly from classical Uzbek literature, where symbolic conventions remain relatively stable and culturally regulated.

In Uzbek literature, the beloved often functions as a mediator between the human and the divine. In English literature, the beloved tends to remain within human emotional reality.

Comparison of cultural codes between English and Uzbek. Uzbek poetry relies heavily on stable symbolic traditions inherited from Persian-Islamic poetics such as a moon, rose, nightingale, wine, candle, desert. While English literature employs more flexible and individualized imagery like seasons, stars, eyes, memory, music, landscape.

The symbolic stability of Uzbek literature reflects collective cultural continuity, whereas English literature demonstrates evolving personal expression.

In Uzbek classical poetry, the beloved is often intentionally ambiguous. Gender ambiguity enhances mystical universality and symbolic openness.

In English literature, particularly after the Renaissance, gender identity becomes more explicit and psychologically detailed. This difference reflects broader cultural attitudes toward individuality, intimacy, and public emotional expression. For Uzbek classical poets, love is frequently portrayed as fate, trial, or spiritual mission. Suffering is meaningful because it purifies the soul. For English poets, especially Romantic writers, love becomes an emotional and existential experience connected with self-discovery.

Conclusion. The comparative study of the beloved in Uzbek and English literature demonstrates that literary images are deeply embedded within cultural systems of meaning. The beloved functions not merely as a romantic figure but as a linguocultural construct encoding national values, philosophical beliefs, and aesthetic ideals. Uzbek literary traditions,

⁵ Abrams, M.H. *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition*. Oxford University Press.

⁶ Middlebrook D. *Sweet my Love. A Study of Shakespeare's Sonnets*.—London: Penguin books, Cop. 1973. — 123 p.

⁷ Jackendoff R. S. *Foundations of language: Brain, meaning, grammar, evolution*. — Oxford: Oxford univ. press, 2002. — 477 p.

especially classical poetry, construct the beloved through mystical symbolism, spiritual transcendence, and collective cultural codes rooted in Sufi aesthetics. English literature, by contrast, emphasizes individuality, psychological realism, and emotional authenticity. Despite these differences, both traditions share a universal understanding of love as a transformative human experience.

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