



The Role of Love in Classical Uzbek Literature and Its Reflection of Persian Poetic Influence

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ABSTRACT: The role of love in classical Uzbek literature is a profound and enduring theme that has been deeply influenced by Persian poetry. This study explores the intersection of Persian literary tradition and its impact on the development of Uzbek literary expressions of love. By examining the works of key classical poets, such as Alisher Navoi, who synthesized Persian influences into his own distinct style, this paper highlights the cultural and artistic exchanges that shaped the literary landscape of Central Asia. The study also analyzes the ways in which themes of love in Persian literature were adapted, localized, and enriched by Uzbek poets, contributing to a unique and diverse literary tradition. The findings indicate that love as a theme in classical Uzbek literature serves as both a reflection of Persian poetic traditions and a significant force for cultural identity in the region.

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INTRODUCTION

Love is a central theme in both Persian and Uzbek literature, manifested in various forms ranging from earthly love to mystical love. Persian literature, with works such as Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*, Hafez's *Ghazals*, and Rumi's *Masnavi*, has had a profound impact on Uzbek literature. Prominent poets like Alisher Navoi have reflected this literary tradition, incorporating themes of love into their own works. This article, through a comparative approach, explores these influences and analyzes the role of mysticism and Sufism in shaping the romantic perspectives in both literary traditions. The study will also show how this cultural interaction has affected the style, language, and poetic concepts of Uzbek poets.

Persian and classical Uzbek literature have always been in a state of mutual influence and interaction, reaching their peak during the Timurid period. In this era, the cultural exchange between Iran and Central Asia was strengthened, and Persian literature, as one of the main pillars of the region's literary tradition, introduced specific literary structures, poetic styles, and mystical concepts into Uzbek literature, impacting its evolution. Among the notable poets of this period, figures like Jami and their influence on Uzbek poets, including Alisher Navoi and Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur, are particularly significant.

One of the most important aspects of this influence is the widespread use of Persian vocabulary and expressions in classical Uzbek literary texts. Uzbek poets and writers, especially Alisher Navoi, created innovative styles in their works by drawing on Persian poetic traditions, blending native and imported elements. Additionally, concepts such as mystical love, wisdom, and ethics, seen in the works of poets like Rumi, Saadi, and Hafez, are reflected in Uzbek literature, enriching it further.

This study, by examining selected examples of key works, demonstrates how Persian literature has influenced Uzbek classical literature in linguistic, conceptual, and stylistic dimensions. Furthermore, the comparative analytical approach allows us to comprehensively examine the trends of interaction between these two literary traditions and clarify the role of Persian literature in the formation and development of Uzbek literature.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is conducted using a comparative and historical analysis approach. The sources used include the original works of Persian and Uzbek poets, scientific studies, and reputable articles. Content analysis is also employed to closely examine the romantic verses and narratives used in the texts. Additionally, intertextual analysis is applied to assess the mutual influences between the two literary traditions. Stylistic analysis is also used to explore the structural impact of Persian literature on Uzbek literature. These analytical methods are applied in various sections of the paper as follows:

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Comparative and Historical Analysis: Examining the development of romantic themes in Uzbek literature and the influence of Persian poets on these themes.

Content Analysis: Analyzing romantic verses in the works of Navoi, Babur and comparing them with the works of Persian poets.

Intertextual Analysis: Evaluating the traces of the poetry of Hafez and Rumi in the works of Uzbek poets.

Stylistic Analysis: Investigating the impact of Persian linguistic structures and poetic style on Uzbek poetry, particularly in the realms of love and mysticism.

THE CONCEPT OF LOVE IN PERSIAN LITERATURE

Love in the Works of Rudaki, Ferdowsi, Saadi, and Hafez

Rudaki and Earthly Love

Rudaki describes love in its simplest and most tangible form. His romantic poems, dealing with longing, separation, and union, have had a profound influence on Uzbek poets. The fluent language and the imagery of love that Rudaki presents can also be seen in the works of Ali-Shir Nava'i and other Turkic-speaking poets. For example, this verse from Rudaki:

هر باد، که از سوی بخارا به من آید
با بوی گل و مشک و نسیم سمن آید
بر هر زن و هر مرد، کجا برونزد آن باد
گویی: مگر آن باد همی از ختن آید
نی نی، ز ختن باد چنو خوش نوزد هیچ
کان باد همی از بر معشوق من آید

This verse demonstrates Rudaki's simple yet profound depiction of love, a theme that would later appear in the works of Nava'i as well. His imagery, such as the breeze carrying the fragrance of flowers and musk from a beloved's land, presents love as a powerful and sensuous force. This style of expressing the emotional depth of love, based on natural imagery, would become a hallmark of romantic poetry, resonating through the centuries in both Persian and Uzbek literary traditions.

Ferdowsi and Epic Love

The *Shahnameh*, in addition to its mythological narratives, also contains romantic tales such as those of Bijan and Manijeh, Zal and Rudabeh, and Keykhosrow and Farangis. These stories explore love within the context of heroism and epic grandeur, and their influence can be observed in the epic literature of Uzbekistan, Sayfi Saroyi Сухайл ва Гулдурсун. For instance, the love story of Bijan and Manijeh bears many similarities to certain heroic tales in Uzbek literature, where love is intertwined with valor and bravery (Ferdowsi, 1387, vol. 3, p. 152).

In these tales, love is not only an emotional bond but also a driving force behind the heroic deeds of the protagonists. This fusion of love and heroism can be seen in the Uzbek literary tradition, where love stories often feature warriors or heroes whose personal sacrifices for love are emblematic of both their human vulnerabilities and their legendary courage. Ferdowsi's treatment of love as an epic, larger-than-life force has had a lasting impact on the depiction of love in the literature of Central Asia, including the classical Uzbek narrative tradition.

Saadi and Ethical Love

In *Golestan* and *Bustan*, Saadi intertwines love with moral and social teachings, a concept that is also reflected in Uzbek literature. Saadi's moral lessons on love are evident in the works of Ali Shir Navai, especially in his *Mahabbatnama* and *Khamsa*. Saadi's prose style had a significant impact on Uzbek prose literature as well. For example, Saadi states:

آورده اند صحبت خوبان چو آتش است
بر من به نیم جو که بسوزند خرمم

تو مگر سایه لطفی به سر وقت من آری
که من آن مایه ندارم که به مقدار تو باشم

This view of love, rooted in ethical considerations, is similarly reflected in the poetry of Navai and other Uzbek poets. Love, in this context, is not just an emotional or romantic connection but also a path to moral improvement and the cultivation of virtue. Navai's approach to love, which emphasizes the values of patience, humility, and sacrifice, can be seen as a continuation of Saadi's ethical perspective on love. The influence of Saadi's literary style and moral philosophy thus remains a foundational element in classical Uzbek literature, especially in the works of Navai.

Babur and the Influence of Hafez

Babur was not only a great ruler but also a gifted poet and writer. In his *Divan*, composed in both Persian and Chagatai Turkish, one can clearly trace the influence of Hafez. The themes of love, mysticism, and philosophical reflection that permeate Hafez's ghazals are echoed in many of Babur's poems.

In his autobiographical work, the *Baburnama*, Babur frequently references Hafez's poetry, using it to express his personal emotions and thoughts. He quotes verses of Hafez to convey his inner struggles, spiritual longing, and reflections on the ephemeral nature of worldly life. This reveals not only his admiration for Hafez but also the deep cultural and literary connection between Persian and Turkic traditions.

Much like Hafez, Babur's poetry reflects on the impermanence of power and glory, the vanity of material pursuits, and the enduring value of spiritual insight and love. For instance, in one of his poems he writes lines that resonate with Hafez's worldview, where the fragility of the world and the sincerity of the heart are central themes. Through this intertextual engagement, Babur emerges not only as a historical figure but also as a spiritual and poetic inheritor of Persian literary tradition.

Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur, in one of his verses, describes the true lover as someone who has freed themselves from the constraints of honor and reputation. He believes that genuine love is incompatible with preserving social appearances and status:

Тарки номус айлабон бадном бўлғил ишқ аро,

Ким сени ошиқ дегай номусу номинг борида.

ناموس را ترک کن و در راه عشق بدنام شو

چرا که تا وقتی نام و آبرو داری، کسی تو را عاشق نمی‌خواند

("Abandon your honor and become infamous in the path of love,

For as long as you cling to reputation and name, no one will call you a true lover.")

In this verse, Babur clearly shows that love, as a pure and absolute truth, can only be attained when one lets go of fame, social standing, and superficial attachments. This theme closely parallels the mystical perspective in Persian poetry, particularly in the works of Hafez, where the true lover is often portrayed as one who embraces disgrace in the pursuit of divine love.

Just as the foundation of existence and the universe is based on love, so too are sovereignty and eternity mere offshoots of love. According to Hafez, one who is without love is, in essence, already dead and worthy only of burial. For it is love that connects the tiniest particle of human existence to affection, thereby granting it perfection—a perfection that leads to excellence and immortality. There has never been a true lover who did not become part of legend, and no passionate heart has ever died in obscurity.

چو نره، گر چه حقیرم، ببین به دولت عشق

که در هوای رخت چون به مهر پیوستم

حافظ

Alisher Navoi and the Influence of Rumi

Alisher Navoi's *Khamsat al-Mutahayyirin* (Five Confused Ones), a deeply mystical work, clearly reveals the profound influence of Rumi's *Masnavi-ye Ma'navi*. In this work, Navoi delves into the core principles of Sufi thought, especially the concept of divine love, by employing allegories and stories strikingly reminiscent of Rumi's style.

One of the most notable references is Navoi's allusion to the tale of the "reed flute" (*ney*), which mirrors the opening lines of Rumi's *Masnavi*:

بشنو از نی چون حکایت می‌کند

از جدایی‌ها شکایت می‌کند

"Listen to the reed how it tells a tale,

Complaining of separations..."

In Sufi symbolism, the reed flute represents the human soul, which has been separated from its divine origin and longs for reunion with the Beloved (God). Its mournful sound symbolizes the soul's lament in the exile of the material world. Navoi adopts this metaphor to convey the spiritual pain of detachment and the aspirational journey toward divine union.

This shared imagery underscores the cultural and spiritual bridges between Persian and Chagatai literary traditions. Navoi, like Rumi, uses the language of poetry to guide the reader through an inner journey, where love is not merely a human emotion but the essence of existence and the path to the Divine. His emulation and adaptation of Rumi's teachings affirm the central role Persian mysticism played in shaping classical Uzbek literature.

Alisher Navoi and the Influence of Saadi

مراد خسرو از شیرین کناری بود و آغوشی،

محبت کار فرهاد است و کوه بیستون سفتن

(سعدی)

We also see the use of the same romantic allusive words such as "Farhad" and "Bisotun" in Navoi's love poems, which Persian poets have also employed. However, each poet uses them in their own unique and charming style. For example, when we read Navoi:

Бесутунҗаким сутун Фарход бўлди, қофи ишқ,

Ул сутунни Бесутун остидағи «нун» қилдило.

[1988, 16]

بیستون غمگم ستون فرهاد بولد، قاف عشق

أل ستون بی ستون آستی دغ <نون > قلدلا

مرا تو جان شیرینی به تلخی رفته از اعضا
الا ای جان به تن بازآ و گر نه تن به جان آید
(سعدی)

Бўлса жонон, бордурур жон ҳам, чу жонон қилди азм,
Жон кетиб жонон била, жондин манга ҳижрон эрур. [1988, 103]

بۇلسە جانان، باردوروجان هم، چو جانان قیلد عظم
جان کیتب جانان بلن، جان دن منگ هجران ایرور

Alisher Navoi and the Influence of Hafez

When Navoi follows the romantic ghazals of Hafez, he also uses the same key words that express the state of love, such as: the snare of a lock, the beauty spot as a bait, bait and snare, beloved, prey, friend, morning breeze, sweetheart, beloved, and heart-stealer.

Доми зулфу донаи холидин этса ёр сайд,
Йўқ халойиқким, малойик бўлғуси бисёр сайд. [1988, 53]

دام زلف و دانه خالیدن ایتن یار صید،
یوق خلیق کیم، ملایک بولغس بسیار صید
زلف او دام است و خالش دانه آن دام و من،
یر امید دانه ای افتادهام در دام دوست
(حافظ)

Navoi has been very successful in responding to and following Hafez of Shiraz, and at times he was inspired by Hafez's verses to create his own charming expressions. For example, where Hafez says "*gulzar*" (rose garden), Navoi says "*gul andam*" (rose-like figure). Where Hafez refers to the world as a "*golestan-e jahan*" (flower garden of the world), Navoi calls it "*bagh-e jahan*" (garden of the world).

Бизга жаҳон боғидин ул сарви гул андом етар,
Ул чу етар сояи сарву майи гулфом етар. [1988, 63]

بزرگه جهان باغ دن ال سرو گل اندام پتر
ال چو پتر سایه سرو می گلفام پتر

گلعداری ز گلستان جهان ما را بس
زین چمن سایه آن سرو روان ما را بس
حافظ

Love in the Works of Other Uzbek Poets

In addition to Alisher Navoi and Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur, other poets in classical Uzbek literature have also explored the theme of love and created valuable works in this regard. Among them is Muhammad Rizo Ogahi (1809–1894), whose romantic poetry is distinguished by its delicate language and poetic imagery. Mahlarayem Nadira (Nadira Begum), a prominent female poet of the 19th century, also contributed a feminine perspective to Uzbek love poetry by expressing romantic emotions in her verses. Another renowned female poet, Jahon Otin Oveysi, described love in a mystical and sometimes heroic tone. Baba Rahim Mashrab, a Sufi poet, viewed love not only as a human emotion but also as a spiritual path toward divine truth. Another notable poet, Zokirjon Xolmuhammad Forghat, addressed themes of romantic love and the subtleties of both human and spiritual affection in his poetry. These poets, each from different historical periods, viewed the world of love from their own unique perspectives and enriched Uzbek literature with a diverse and profound collection of love poetry.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that the concept of love in Persian literature is expressed through diverse dimensions:

- Rudaki depicts love in a tangible and earthly manner, a style that resonates in the works of Alisher Navoi.
- Ferdowsi integrates love into epic and heroic contexts, which is reflected in the heroic narratives of classical Uzbek literature.
- Saadi combines love with ethical and social teachings, an approach that is notably echoed in Navoi's *Muhabbat-nameh*.
- Hafez portrays love as a mystical and spiritual force, a vision that deeply influenced Babur's poetry and worldview.
- Rumi presents love as a bridge between the human soul and the Divine, a theme clearly mirrored in Navoi's *Khamsa*.
- Nizami and Jami, through their *Khamsas*, had a profound impact on the narrative structure and mystical motifs of Uzbek literature.

Uzbek poets adapted Persian notions of love to suit their own cultural and literary contexts. For instance, Babur, in his *Baburnama*, refers to Hafez's verses to express personal and philosophical reflections, while Navoi draws inspiration from Rumi's *Masnavi* in his exploration of spiritual love. This cultural and literary exchange enriched the classical Uzbek poetic tradition and contributed to its thematic and stylistic development.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study demonstrates the profound and lasting influence of classical Persian literature on the depiction of love in classical Uzbek literature. Figures such as Alisher Navoi and Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur drew extensively upon Persian romantic motifs and stylistic elements to craft narratives that, while deeply rooted in their own cultural contexts, reflect a significant literary connection with Persian traditions. The concept of love in Uzbek literature, especially in the works of Navoi, represents a fusion of spiritual passion, Persian aesthetics, and indigenous values, highlighting the meaningful cultural exchange between two rich literary heritages.

Through a comparative analysis of Persian and Uzbek poetic expressions, it becomes evident that love, as portrayed in these texts, is not merely a personal or emotional experience, but rather a cultural and often mystical phenomenon interpreted through evolving historical and literary frameworks. As such, the concept of love in classical Uzbek literature can be understood as a mirror of Persian literary influence, embedded within the cognitive and aesthetic structures of the region.

Moreover, such comparative literary studies provide a crucial framework for reassessing the cultural ties between Iran and Central Asia. They pave the way for a more nuanced understanding of historical intercultural interactions. Future research could further explore how Persian literature has influenced other thematic domains within Uzbek literary tradition—such as mysticism, nature, and philosophy—or examine the evolution of these influences within modern literary contexts.

This research also emphasizes that love in Classical Uzbek literature, particularly in the poetry of Alisher Navoi, serves as a significant point of cultural interaction between Iran and Central Asia. The shared themes of divine love and the longing for union with the beloved appear prominently in the works of both Persian-speaking and Uzbek-speaking poets, not only in romantic poetry but also within mystical and ethical paths.

Navoi's role in this cultural exchange is especially significant. Recognized not only as a distinguished poet but also as a bridge between cultures, Navoi employed the Turkish language as a medium to convey and interpret Iranian and Islamic concepts. This approach contributed greatly to the spread of Persian literature and its cultural ideas in Central Asia.

In conclusion, Alisher Navoi's contributions as a cultural and literary figure not only shaped the history of Uzbek literature but also facilitated the cultural exchange between Iran and Central Asia. The literary and cultural relations between these regions, especially within the realms of romantic and mystical poetry, remain a rich and important area for future research.

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