



A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TRADITIONAL IMAGES IN WESTERN AND EASTERN LITERATURE

Zarifova Madina Azimbayevna

1st-year Master's student at Mamun

University +998995557673

madinazarifova@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Traditional images have diverse meanings for literary scholars and serve to reveal differences among various countries, nations, and cultures. While images in Eastern literature are primarily oriented toward mystical and philosophical content, images in Western literature place human destiny, personal glory, and individual freedom at the center. This thesis examines the cultural similarities and differences of traditional images in Eastern and Western literature.

Introduction.

In world literary studies, images that are constantly recurring, enduring across centuries, and manifested in various forms and appearances—yet differing in Eastern and Western literature—are referred to as traditional images. These are artistic representations that pass from one historical period to another, are frequently employed by poets and writers, and are continually reinterpreted according to individual creative perspectives.

In Eastern literature, particularly in classical poetry, such images as the beloved, the lover, the spiritual guide (pir), the king, the garden, and the path acquire mystical and philosophical significance. They express the idea of humanity's striving for perfection, divine love, and spiritual enlightenment. These images are deeply rooted in Sufi thought and symbolize the inner journey of the human soul toward moral and spiritual maturity.

In Western literature, by contrast, traditional images such as the king, the hero, the lover, and the tragic figure are predominantly associated with human destiny, inner conflicts, social responsibility, and moral choices. Through these images, authors artistically depict the complex relationships between society and the individual, emphasizing psychological depth and ethical dilemmas

1.Materials and Methods

In Eastern literature, the central traditional images include the lover (oshiq) and the beloved (ma'shuqa), which symbolize divine love and spiritual purity, as exemplified in works such as Layli and Majnun and Farhod and Shirin. The figures of the wise man, pir, or shaykh represent the spiritual mentor who has attained a deep understanding of life's truths and guides individuals toward moral and spiritual enlightenment. The image of the king embodies justice, harmony, and divine order, serving as a symbol of righteous authority. Natural images such as the garden, the flower, and the nightingale signify life, love, beauty, and the harmony between humanity and nature.

In Western literature, the principal traditional images include the hero, who symbolizes personal courage, strength of will, and individual determination, as seen in characters such as Achilles and Hamlet. The tragic hero represents the conflict between the individual and fate or society, highlighting inner struggle and moral responsibility. Another significant image is that of the rebellious individual, who seeks freedom and truth while opposing established norms and social constraints.

2.Results

These traditional images undergo various interpretations as they pass from one historical period to another. For instance, Alisher Navoi's portrayal of Layli and Majnun, which is largely grounded in mystical and romantic traditions, embodies ideals of beauty, fidelity, and spiritual devotion. In contrast, William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet places greater emphasis on individuality, personal choice, and social relationships, serving as a representative example of the Western literary approach to the same archetypal theme of love.

In contrast, traditional images in Western literature—such as the king, the hero, the lover, and the tragic figure—are predominantly connected with human destiny, psychological struggle, social responsibility, and ethical decision-making. These images emphasize individual experience, inner conflict, and the tension between personal desires and societal expectations.

3.Discussion

Comparative analysis demonstrates that images in Eastern literature tend to possess a predominantly symbolic and metaphorical character, whereas in Western literature they are distinguished by psychological depth and dramatic development. Nevertheless, in both literary traditions, traditional images reflect issues that are universally relevant to humanity. This divergence reflects broader philosophical and cultural distinctions between East and West. Nevertheless, both traditions employ traditional images as effective artistic tools to explore universal themes such as love, power, morality, and the search for meaning.

Conclusion

In conclusion, a comparative study of traditional images in Eastern and Western literature makes it possible to identify both the shared and distinctive features of global literary thought and contributes to a deeper understanding of intercultural literary connections. The comparative analysis confirms that while these images are universal in form, their interpretations are shaped by distinct philosophical and cultural frameworks in Eastern and Western literature. As a result, traditional images continue to serve as a dynamic and enduring means of artistic expression, enabling writers to convey timeless human concerns across different literary traditions.

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