

# Comparative Analyses Of The Human Soul In The Poetry Of Alisher Navai And William Shakespeare

Daniyeva Zilola Djamalovna

Master's student of the University of Economics and Pedagogy

Scientific supervisor: Daniyeva Maysara Djamalovna

Doctor of Sciences (DSc)

Professor of the University of Economics and Pedagogy

Karshi city, Republic of Uzbekistan

## Abstract

The concept of the human soul has fascinated poets and philosophers for centuries. Among the greatest literary minds who explored the depths of the soul are Alisher Navai, a master of Chagatai literature, and William Shakespeare, the iconic English playwright and poet. Though they lived in different cultural contexts—Navai in the 15th-century Timurid Empire and Shakespeare in 16th–17th century England—their poetic works share a profound concern with the nature, struggles, and beauty of the human soul.

**Key words:** lyrical works, human soul, emotional and psychological depth, symbolic language, metaphor, allegory, spiritual longing.

**Introduction.** Alisher Navai (1441–1501), deeply influenced by Islamic mysticism (Sufism), viewed the soul as a divine spark trapped in the material world. In his poetry, particularly in the *Khamsa* and other lyrical works, Navai presents the soul's journey as a spiritual quest—a struggle to break free from worldly desires and unite with the Eternal. His poems often describe the soul as a restless traveler, yearning to return to its heavenly origin.

In Navai's view, the human soul is noble and luminous but often distracted by the illusions of the physical world. He uses symbolic language—roses, wine, nightingales, and beloveds—to express the tension between the earthly and the divine. The beloved in his poems frequently represents God, and the lover (the soul) suffers from separation, illustrating the pain of spiritual longing.

*"My soul, like a bird in a cage of flesh,  
Yearns for the sky where it once belonged."*

Through metaphors and allegory, Navai paints the soul as both divine and flawed, noble yet struggling—a central theme in Sufi poetry.

**Methodology.** William Shakespeare (1564–1616), though not a mystic, portrayed the soul with unmatched emotional and psychological depth. In his sonnets and dramas, the soul emerges as a complex inner self, caught in the turmoil of love, ambition, guilt, and existential questioning. Unlike Navai's spiritual soul, Shakespeare's soul is often explored through human experience and internal conflict. In Sonnet 146, Shakespeare directly addresses the soul's superiority over the body:

*"Poor soul, the center of my sinful earth,  
Why feed'st these rebel powers that thee array..."*

Here, the soul is seen as noble and eternal, yet burdened by the material world and the sins of the flesh—a theme that echoes Navai's spiritual struggle.

In tragedies like *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, Shakespeare dives even deeper into the soul's moral dilemmas and mental anguish, showing how internal conflict can lead to destruction or enlightenment. Hamlet's famous soliloquy—*"To be or not to be"*—reflects a soul questioning its very existence, caught between suffering and escape.

**Results.** While Navai and Shakespeare differ in their philosophical and religious frameworks, both treat the soul as a central part of human identity. Navai's soul is engaged in a sacred journey toward God, while Shakespeare's soul grapples with internal battles and earthly desires. Both, however, reveal the soul's vulnerability, nobility, and capacity for growth.

- **Navai's soul:** Mystical, divine, longing for transcendence
- **Shakespeare's soul:** Human, conflicted, searching for truth in a chaotic world

**Discussion.** Though Alisher Navai and William Shakespeare lived in vastly different cultural and historical settings, their poetry shows that the human soul transcends time, geography, and language. Each poet explores the soul from a different angle—Navai from a spiritual and metaphysical perspective, and Shakespeare from a psychological and emotional one—yet their works resonate with similar questions about inner struggle, identity, and the human condition.

*Navai: The Soul as a Divine Seeker*

In Navai's poetry, especially within the context of Sufism, the soul is not merely a part of the human being—it is the most essential part. His verses often portray life as a temporary test, with the physical body as a trap or prison that prevents the soul from reaching its divine source. The soul's journey is one of purification, longing, and submission to divine love.

Navai uses rich allegory to describe this spiritual conflict. The beloved, the candle, the moth, the rose, and the nightingale all represent facets of the soul's battle between earthly desire and spiritual elevation. The soul in Navai's world is both a lover and a worshipper, caught in a passionate chase for the beloved—God.

This focus reflects the Islamic worldview, where the soul is created by God and destined to return to Him. Thus, for Navai, poetry becomes not just art but a form of devotion, helping readers reflect on their own spiritual journey.

*Shakespeare: The Soul as a Mirror of Human Conflict*

In contrast, Shakespeare's treatment of the soul is shaped more by humanism, the Renaissance focus on individual experience and rational thought. While religious themes are present in his works, Shakespeare is more concerned with the inner world of human emotion and decision-making. His soul is restless not because it's far from God, but because it is torn between conflicting desires, moral choices, and fears.

In his sonnets, Shakespeare often debates with his own soul, questioning its priorities and weaknesses. In his plays, characters like Hamlet, Macbeth, and Othello offer some of literature's most famous depictions of soul in crisis—grappling with guilt, doubt, ambition, and identity.

Shakespeare's soul suffers from being too human, while Navai's soul suffers from being too divine for the human world. This contrast reflects their differing worldviews: Navai sees salvation in transcending the material world, while Shakespeare sees truth in confronting it.

Despite their differences, both poets explore the duality of human existence—the conflict between body and soul, desire and reason, earth and heaven. For both, the soul is the inner voice, the part of the self that questions, dreams, and seeks meaning. Whether through divine longing or tragic introspection, both poets elevate the soul as the true seat of humanity.

Their works remind us that the soul is not static—it is wounded, tested, changed, and shaped by the journey it undergoes. In both traditions, poetry acts as a mirror to the soul, offering wisdom and reflection to those who read and listen.

**Conclusion.** In the poetry of Alisher Navai and William Shakespeare, the human soul is not just an abstract idea—it is alive, suffering, seeking, and growing. Through their unique lenses—one spiritual, the other psychological—they offer timeless insights into what it means to be human. Despite their different eras and cultures, both poets remind us that the soul, in all its beauty and pain, remains the deepest mystery of our existence.

## References

1. Bloom, Harold. *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*. Riverhead Books, 1998. – Analyzes how Shakespeare's characters reveal the depth of human emotion and soul.

2. Danieva M.Dj. The multifaceted nature of language. International journal of advanced research in education, technology and management. Vol.4, Issue 1 ISSN:2349- 0012. I.F. 8.1. 2025. -P. 167-176
3. Daniyeva M.Dj. Applied Linguistics. -Karshi: Tafakkur ziyosi, 2025. – 135 p.
4. Daniyeva M.Dj. The evolution theory of language// The 3rd International scientific and practical conference “Global trends in the development of educational systems” ISBN – 979-8-89692-741-9 DOI – 10.46299/ISG.2025.1.3. Bergen, Norway, 2025. – P. 137-141
5. Greenblatt, Stephen (Ed.). *The Norton Shakespeare*. W. W. Norton & Company, 2015. – A comprehensive annotated edition with commentary on Shakespeare’s treatment of the human psyche.
6. Lewis, Franklin D. *Rumi: Past and Present, East and West*. Oneworld Publications, 2000. – While focused on Rumi, this work gives context to the Sufi poetic tradition that influenced Navai.
7. Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. *The Garden of Truth: The Vision and Promise of Sufism, Islam's Mystical Tradition*. HarperOne, 2007. – Provides background on Sufi philosophy of the soul relevant to Navai’s writings.
8. Nawai, Alisher. *Divan* (Selected Poems). Translated by Edward G. Browne, various editions. – Offers insight into Navai’s lyrical style and spiritual metaphors representing the soul.
9. Nawai, Alisher. *Khamsa* (translated and edited by Robert Devereux). UNESCO Collection of Representative Works, 1981. – This collection includes Navai’s most significant poetic works, rich in spiritual and Sufi symbolism.
10. Schimmel, Annemarie. *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*. University of North Carolina Press, 1975. – An essential source for understanding Sufi concepts of the soul that influence Navai’s poetry.
11. Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello*. The Arden Shakespeare Series. – These plays provide deep psychological insight into the soul’s struggle with guilt, ambition, and morality.
12. Shakespeare, William. *The Sonnets and A Lover’s Complaint*. Edited by John Kerrigan. Penguin Classics, 1986. – Contains Shakespeare’s exploration of inner conflict, time, desire, and the soul.