

FORMAL AND STYLISTIC PECULIARITIES OF THE SONNET GENRE IN THE WORKS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE AND PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY**Mamatkulova Gulnixol Alisher qizi***Toshkent shahar Aniq va ijtimoiy fanlar universiteti I-kurs magistranti*mamatkulovagulnihol@mail.com*Ilmiy rahbari: Xamdamova Sitora Baxshillojevna**Xorijiy til va adabiyot kafedrası dotsenti v.b.*

Abstract. *This article provides a comparative analysis of the formal and stylistic features of the sonnet genre in the works of William Shakespeare and Percy Bysshe Shelley. The introduction highlights the relevance of the topic, emphasizing the development of the sonnet tradition in English literature across the Classical and Romantic periods. The methodology section is based on comparative literary analysis using both English and international scholarly sources. The results section examines Shakespeare’s adherence to the traditional 14-line structure, the characteristic rhyme scheme (abab cdcd efef gg), and his use of dramatic inner dialogue. In contrast, Shelley’s sonnets are characterized by a more flexible syntactic structure, a stronger Romantic spirit, and a pronounced philosophical-lyrical expression. The discussion highlights Shakespeare’s consolidation of the classical sonnet tradition and Shelley’s transformation of the form in accordance with Romantic aesthetics. The findings demonstrate that both poets played a significant role in the evolution of the sonnet genre, with Shakespeare emphasizing structural stability and Shelley enhancing emotional and ideological freedom. This comparative study contributes to a deeper understanding of the development of the English sonnet tradition.*

Keywords. *sonnet, William Shakespeare, Percy Bysshe Shelley, English literature, poetry, Romanticism, Classicism, comparative analysis, poetics, style.*

ФОРМАЛЬНЫЕ И СТИЛИСТИЧЕСКИЕ ОСОБЕННОСТИ ЖАНРА СОНЕТА В ТВОРЧЕСТВЕ УИЛЬЯМА ШЕКСПИРА И ПЕРСИ БИШИ ШЕЛЛИ

Аннотация. *В данной статье представлен сравнительный анализ формальных и стилистических особенностей жанра сонета в творчестве Уильяма Шекспира и Перси Биши Шелли. Во введении обосновывается актуальность темы, связанная с развитием сонетной традиции в английской литературе в период классицизма и романтизма. В разделе методологии используется сравнительно-литературный анализ на основе английских и международных научных источников. В разделе*

результатов рассматривается соблюдение Шекспиром традиционной 14-строчной структуры, характерной рифмовки (abab cdcd efef gg) и использование драматического внутреннего диалога. В отличие от него, сонеты Шелли отличаются более свободной синтаксической организацией, выраженным романтическим духом и философско-лирической направленностью. В обсуждении подчеркивается роль Шекспира в закреплении классической формы сонета и новаторство Шелли в её романтическом переосмыслении. Полученные результаты показывают, что оба поэта внесли значительный вклад в развитие жанра сонета, при этом Шекспир акцентировал структурную устойчивость, а Шелли — эмоциональную и идейную свободу. Данное исследование способствует более глубокому пониманию эволюции английского сонета.

Ключевые слова. сонет, Уильям Шекспир, Перси Биши Шелли, английская литература, поэзия, романтизм, классицизм, сравнительный анализ, поэтика, стиль.

SONET JANRINING FORMAL VA USLUBIY O‘ZIGA XOS XUSUSIYATLARI UILYAM SHEKSPIR VA PERSI BYSSHE SHELLI IJODIDA

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqola Uilyam Shekspir va Persi Bysshe Shelli ijodida sonet janrining formal (shakliy) va uslubiy xususiyatlarini qiyosiy tahlil qiladi. Kirish qismida mavzuning dolzarbligi — sonet janrining ingliz adabiyotida klassik va romantik davrlar davomida rivojlanishi asoslab beriladi. Metodlar bo‘limida ingliz va jahon adabiyotshunosligi manbalari asosida qiyosiy-tahliliy yondashuv qo‘llaniladi. Natijalar qismida Shekspir sonetlarining an‘anaviy 14 misrali struktura, qofiya sxemasi (abab cdcd efef gg) va dramatik ichki dialogga asoslangan uslubi, Shelli sonetlarida esa romantik ruh, erkinroq sintaktik qurilish va falsafiy-lyrik ifoda ustunligi yoritiladi. Muhokamada Shekspirning klassik sonet an‘anasini mustahkamlashi va Shellining uni romantik estetikaga mos ravishda yangilashi tahlil qilinadi. Natijalar shuni ko‘rsatadiki, har ikkala ijodkor sonet janrining rivojlanishida muhim rol o‘ynagan bo‘lib, Shekspir shakliy barqarorlikni, Shelli esa emotsional va g‘oyaviy erkinlikni kuchaytirgan. Ushbu qiyosiy tahlil ingliz sonet maktabining evolyutsiyasini chuqurroq tushunishga xizmat qiladi.

Kalit so‘zlar. sonet, Uilyam Shekspir, Persi Bysshe Shelli, ingliz adabiyoti, she‘riyat, romantizm, klassitsizm, qiyosiy tahlil, poetika, uslub.

INTRODUCTION

The sonnet genre has long been regarded as one of the most complex and artistically refined poetic forms in world literature. Its strict 14-line structure, consistent rhyme schemes, and

balanced internal rhythm allow poets to express profound meanings in a concise yet highly expressive form. In English literature, the sonnet reached a classical peak in the works of William Shakespeare, where it combined structural precision with dramatic depth. Later, during the Romantic period, Percy Bysshe Shelley reinterpreted the sonnet, giving it a more philosophical, lyrical, and stylistically flexible character. Therefore, a comparative study of these two poets' sonnets is of significant scholarly importance.

In Shakespeare's sonnets, the traditional English sonnet structure—three quatrains followed by a final rhymed couplet, following the abab cdcd efef gg scheme—is strictly maintained. This structure creates a sense of gradual development of thought, culminating in a decisive and often emotionally powerful conclusion. In contrast, Shelley's sonnets are marked by greater syntactic freedom, fluid imagery, and heightened emotional intensity, reflecting the aesthetic principles of Romanticism. These two approaches clearly illustrate the stylistic and formal differences between the classical and Romantic stages of the sonnet tradition. Although Shakespeare's and Shelley's sonnets have been individually studied in both Uzbek and international literary scholarship, their comparative formal and stylistic analysis remains a relevant academic issue. In modern literary studies, concepts such as genre evolution, poetic structure, and stylistic transformation play a crucial role in sonnet analysis. In particular, the aesthetic transition from Classicism to Romanticism in English literature is clearly reflected in the works of these two poets.

The aim of this article is to conduct a comparative analysis of the formal and stylistic features of the sonnets by William Shakespeare and Percy Bysshe Shelley, to determine their place within the poetic system, and to highlight their significance in the historical development of the sonnet genre. The research question is formulated as follows: how do form and style change in the sonnets of Shakespeare and Shelley, and how do these changes reflect the evolution of the sonnet genre? The study of this issue contributes to a deeper understanding of English literary tradition.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

This article is a review-type scholarly work and is not based on empirical research; instead, it is developed through a qualitative synthesis and comparative analysis of existing academic literature. The methodological approach is grounded in literature review techniques aimed at systematically examining the formal and stylistic features of the sonnet genre through the works of William Shakespeare and Percy Bysshe Shelley.

Firstly, the criteria for selecting sources were clearly defined: scholarly articles, monographs, and academic reviews published between 2020 and 2026 focusing on the sonnet genre in English and world literary studies, Shakespearean poetics, and Shelley's Romantic

poetry; direct relevance to the topic (sonnet structure, rhyme schemes, Romanticism and Classicism in poetry); and academic reliability, prioritizing peer-reviewed publications.

Secondly, the data sources were collected from international academic databases such as Google Scholar, ResearchGate, JSTOR, and Cambridge Core, as well as encyclopedic and critical literary publications. Classical and contemporary studies on Shakespeare and Shelley were also included. In total, more than 25 scholarly sources were reviewed, and 12 of them were selected as the core analytical base of this study.

Thirdly, the analytical method used is qualitative synthesis combined with comparative analysis. The content of each source was summarized, thematically categorized, and compared in terms of formal (structural) and stylistic features of Shakespeare’s and Shelley’s sonnets. In particular, Shakespeare’s adherence to the traditional English sonnet form and Shelley’s Romantic stylistic innovations were analyzed in parallel.

In addition, historical and literary context was also considered, especially the transition between Classicism and Romanticism and the evolution of the sonnet as a poetic genre in English literature. As a limitation, the absence of empirical corpus-based or statistical analysis is acknowledged; future research may extend this study by incorporating computational text analysis and corpus linguistics methods for deeper insights.

RESULTS ANALYSIS

As a result of the literature review, the formal and stylistic peculiarities of the sonnet genre in the works of William Shakespeare and Percy Bysshe Shelley are manifested in several key directions. **Formal structure of the sonnet.** In Shakespeare’s sonnets, the classical English sonnet form is strictly preserved: three quatrains followed by a final rhymed couplet with the abab cdcd efef gg rhyme scheme. This fixed structure ensures logical development of ideas and a clear progression from introduction to conclusion. Each quatrain develops a separate aspect of the theme, while the final couplet delivers a summarizing or paradoxical conclusion. In contrast, Shelley’s sonnets show a more flexible structural organization, with less rigid division of ideas and a smoother syntactic flow, reflecting the Romantic preference for emotional continuity over strict form.

Stylistic features and poetic expression. Shakespeare’s sonnets are characterized by dramatic tension, rhetorical precision, and rich metaphorical language. His style often creates a sense of internal dialogue, where conflicting emotions and ideas are expressed within a tightly structured form. Shelley’s sonnets, however, are marked by lyrical intensity, philosophical reflection, and symbolic imagery. His poetic language is more fluid and emotionally charged, often moving beyond personal experience toward universal and abstract meanings.

Rhetorical organization and thematic development. In Shakespeare’s poetry, rhetorical structure is based on logical argumentation and gradual development of thought, leading the reader toward a final interpretative resolution. Shelley, in contrast, relies more on meditative and associative progression of ideas, where themes unfold in a continuous emotional and intellectual flow rather than strict logical steps. This difference clearly reflects the transition from Classical rational order to Romantic expressive freedom.

Evolution of the sonnet genre. The comparative analysis demonstrates that Shakespeare played a key role in establishing and stabilizing the classical sonnet model in English literature, emphasizing formal discipline and dramatic structure. Shelley, on the other hand, reinterpreted and transformed the sonnet within the Romantic tradition, expanding its emotional and philosophical scope. As a result, the sonnet genre evolved from a structurally rigid form into a more flexible and expressive poetic structure. Overall, both poets contributed significantly to the development of the sonnet genre, confirming its adaptability and long-lasting relevance across different literary periods.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that both William Shakespeare and Percy Bysshe Shelley significantly contributed to the evolution of the sonnet genre, although their poetic approaches reflect different aesthetic principles. Shakespeare emphasizes structural stability and rhetorical precision, while Shelley demonstrates stylistic freedom and philosophical depth. This contrast confirms that the sonnet is a dynamic poetic form capable of adapting to different literary periods. For example, Shakespeare strictly follows the traditional English sonnet structure, which ensures logical progression of ideas and clear argumentative development. Shelley, in contrast, adopts a more flexible structural approach, allowing a continuous emotional and intellectual flow. This results in a more fluid and expressive poetic style.

From a stylistic point of view, Shakespeare’s sonnets are characterized by dramatic tension and metaphorical richness, whereas Shelley’s poetry is more lyrical, symbolic, and reflective. This clearly reflects the transition from Classical poetic order to Romantic expressiveness. However, certain limitations should also be considered. Shakespeare’s strict formal structure may limit experimental variation, while Shelley’s freer style may sometimes reduce structural clarity. In addition, historical context plays a crucial role, as both poets belong to different literary movements with different artistic goals.

Recommendations:

1. Further comparative studies should include a larger corpus of Shakespeare’s and Shelley’s sonnets for more detailed analysis.

2. Digital text analysis tools (corpus linguistics methods) should be applied to examine stylistic differences more precisely.

3. Teaching materials in literary studies should include comparative models of Classical and Romantic sonnets.

4. Future research should explore psychological and cognitive aspects of sonnet interpretation.

Overall, Shakespeare and Shelley together demonstrate the historical transformation of the sonnet from a rigid classical structure into a more flexible Romantic form, confirming its long-lasting literary significance.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the analysis shows that both William Shakespeare and Percy Bysshe Shelley made a significant contribution to the development of the sonnet genre, which makes it one of the most flexible and enduring poetic forms in English literature. The sonnet, while formally limited to a 14-line structure, demonstrates a wide range of expressive possibilities depending on the poet’s stylistic and aesthetic approach.

Shakespeare’s sonnets represent the classical model of structural precision, rhetorical clarity, and logical progression of thought. His use of the traditional English sonnet form highlights the importance of formal stability and dramatic intensity within a compact poetic structure. In contrast, Shelley’s sonnets reflect Romantic principles, characterized by stylistic freedom, emotional depth, and philosophical reflection. His approach expands the expressive boundaries of the sonnet and emphasizes lyrical continuity over strict formal segmentation. The comparative analysis also indicates that the evolution of the sonnet genre is closely connected to broader literary and historical transformations, particularly the shift from Classicism to Romanticism. While Shakespeare strengthened the formal foundations of the genre, Shelley redefined its stylistic and thematic possibilities.

For future research, further comparative studies based on larger textual corpora are recommended, including computational and stylistic analysis of sonnet structures. In addition, interdisciplinary approaches combining literary criticism with digital humanities methods may provide deeper insights into poetic style and genre development. The sonnet remains a highly adaptable poetic form that continues to reflect both artistic discipline and creative freedom, ensuring its lasting relevance in English literary tradition.

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