



Intersecting Identities: Cultural Resistance and Dialogism in the Selected Poetry of Al-Mutanabbi and Shakespeare

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Abstract

The current comparative study looks at how language strategies in the poetry of Al-Mutanabbi and William Shakespeare explore cultural identity through linguistic devices. The study draws on the theories of Mikhail Bakhtin and Edward Said and focuses on how language reflects and forms the cultural identities of these two great poets. Through the lens of Said's idea of Orientalism and Bakhtin's dialogic theory, the English Renaissance background of Shakespeare and Al-Mutanabbi's classical Arabic tradition is analyzed, revealing how language tactics build and contradict cultural views. By comparing these viewpoints, the present study intends to deepen our understanding of how language affects cultural identities across literary styles. Results showed how their poetry mediated cultural identities and provided a cross-cultural conversation that extended over time and space. The comparative analysis ultimately highlights the universal power of poetic language to both mirror and mold the intricate relationship between individual expression and collective cultural narratives. Moreover, their poetry obtained insights into the intricacies of cultural representation and the persistent influence of language on human cognition.

Keywords: Cultural Identity, Dialogism, Edward Said, Linguistic Devices, Mikhail Bakhtin

الهويات المتقاطعة: المقاومة الثقافية والحوارية في شعر المختار المتنبّي و شكسبير

الملخص

تتناول هذه الدراسة المقارنة كيفية استكشاف الهوية الثقافية من خلال الاستراتيجيات اللغوية في شعر كل من المتنبّي وويليام شكسبير، بالاعتماد على نظريات ميخائيل باختين وإدوارد سعيد. تركز الدراسة على كيفية التي تعكس بها اللغة الهوية الثقافية وتُشكّلها لدى هذين الشاعرين العظميين. ومن خلال عدسة مفهوم الاستشراق لدى إدوارد سعيد، ونظرية الحوارية لباختين، يتم تحليل الخلفية الثقافية لعصر النهضة الإنجليزية في شعر شكسبير، والتقاليد العربية الكلاسيكية في شعر المتنبّي، مما يكشف عن كيفية استخدام الأساليب اللغوية في بناء الصور الثقافية ومناقضتها. ومن خلال مقارنة هذين المنظورين، تهدف الدراسة إلى تعميق الفهم حول تأثير اللغة على الهوية الثقافية عبر الأساليب الأدبية المختلفة. وقد أظهرت النتائج كيف أن شعرهما يُعدّ وسيلة للتوسط بين الهويات الثقافية، وفتح حواراً عابراً للزمن والمكان. وهذا التحليل المقارن يبرز القوة العالمية للغة الشعرية في عكس وتشكيل العلاقة المعقدة بين التعبير الفردي والسرديات الثقافية الجماعية. وبالنتيجة اتاح لنا هذا الشعر فهماً أعمق لتعقيدات التمثيل الثقافي، وللدور المستمر الذي تلعبه اللغة في تشكيل الإدراك الإنساني.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الهوية الثقافية، حوارية، إدوارد سعيد، الوسائل اللغوية، ميخائيل باختين

Introduction

Shakespeare and al-Mutanabbi demonstrate expertise in their respective languages, using complex strategies to express significant insights about social themes and human nature, even though their linguistic devices differ due to cultural and temporal settings. Thus, one of the finest classical Arabic poets of all time is Abu al-Tayyib Ahmad ibn al-Husayn al-Mutanabbi (915–965), who was renowned for his humor, eloquence, and command of language. Originating in Kufa, Iraq, in the Abbasid period,

Al-Mutanabbi's poetry is notable for its complex metaphors, sophisticated rhyme systems, and sophisticated vocabulary. He wrote poems that express his pride, resistance, and philosophical reflections on subjects like fate and the human condition, utilizing traditional Arabic forms like the qasida and rajaz. He established a level of creative and linguistic brilliance that continues to inspire poets and intellectuals alike, and his effect on Arabic writing is still felt today.

Shakespeare, on the other hand, is one of the greatest playwrights and poets in English literature and lived (1564 to 1616). Shakespeare, whose literary legacy spans a wide range of genres, was born in Stratford-upon-Avon, England, during the Renaissance. His works are renowned for their profound exploration of human emotions, complex characters, and mastery of language, which include the use of poetic forms like iambic pentameter and blank verse. Shakespeare is also a cultural figure whose influence knows no bounds, as seen by his lasting influence on theater, literature, and culture.

Several studies have been conducted on the two poets and their works. For instance, in "The Poet Glorifies his Poetry: Al-Mutanabbi and Shakespeare as a Model" by al-Essa and Khrais (2015). This paper compares Al-Mutanabbi and Shakespeare, focusing on their glorification of poetry and themselves. The study examines examples

from Al-Mutanabbi's Diwan and Shakespeare's Sonnets (18-126), finding that both poets praise powerful figures to gain social or governmental status. Ultimately, they suggest their poetry immortalizes their patrons and themselves.

Secondly, Nasir's (2016) titled, "Personal Dual Gender of English and Arabic Nouns in Selected Sonnets of Shakespeare and Poems of Al-Mutanabbi," To better understand "dual gender" in Arabic and English, this study will concentrate on nouns that have the potential to be either masculine or feminine. The similarities and differences between the personal dual-gender nouns in the two languages are compared.

Thirdly, "The Oath or Swear Expressions in Shakespeare's and Al-Mutanabbi's Poetic Language: A Syntactic Contrastive Study" is the title of a work written by Nasir (2020). The research demonstrates how to recognize and contrast oath statements in the two languages, examines their grammatical patterns, and uses statistics to ascertain which expressions appear most frequently in Shakespeare and Al-Mutanabbi's writings.

Fourthly, a study by Manal Jasim Muhammad entitled "A Linguistic Study of Paronomasia (Al-Jinās) in Arabic and English"(2022). In this study, Muhammad looks at paronomasia, a rhetorical tactic that plays with words that sound similar but have diverse meanings in Arabic and English poetry to improve poetic imagination. It compares and contrasts English devices such as puns, homophones, homonyms, and paronomasia with Arabic jinās.

Finally, an article by Aldaw (2023) titled "The Semantics of Colors in Arabic and English Poetry." This article examines how various cultures understand color and how it is used symbolically in the poetry of Al-Mutanabbi and Shakespeare. It demonstrates how meanings associated with colors may range greatly, even within the same culture, and how the two poets employed color to express quite distinct feelings and ideas. The study emphasizes how color symbolism lacks universal language connotations and calls for more research to provide a more comprehensive understanding.

The present study, then, shows itself differently in the structure of the comparative investigation that uses Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogic theory and Edward Said's Orientalism to examine how language strategies in Shakespeare and Al-Mutanabbi's works represent cultural identities. The goal behind the study is to gain a deeper knowledge of both Shakespeare's English Renaissance and Al-Mutanabbi's classical Arabic contexts via a comparative examination of their language methods and cultural reflections.

Through the lenses of Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogic theory in his book *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (1981), and Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1979) and the comparative study examines how linguistic devices in the works of Shakespeare *18 Sonnet*, *19 sonnets* and "Notional poetry day or 130 sonnets" .on the other hand, Al-Mutanabbi Pome's *The Steed, the Night, and the Wilderness know me well, In the Desert* and *The Camel* reflect cultural identities. Perform a close reading of chosen poems of Al-Mutanabbi and Shakespeare, paying attention to the language styles that are used and how they are related to different cultures mediating cultural identity. Using this methodical



approach may enhance the academic comprehension of two poets and their works within their respective literary traditions.

The purpose of the present study is to compare the English Renaissance context of Shakespeare with the classical Arabic world of Al-Mutanabbi, highlighting both the parallels and differences in their linguistic strategies. By examining how each poet adapts language to reflect cultural norms, values, and historical contexts, the research will explore how literature shapes and influences cultural identities. It aims to reveal how the language choices of Shakespeare and Al-Mutanabbi cross cultural boundaries, challenge misconceptions, or reinforce cultural pride. Ultimately, this study seeks to enrich scholarly understanding by deepening the interpretation of both poets' works within their respective literary traditions, while also advancing the theoretical discourse in comparative literature, literary criticism, and cultural studies.

Methodology

The integration of Said's (1979) perspectives on how literature shapes cultural identities with Bakhtin's ideas about the dialogic and polyphonic aspects of texts offers a strong framework for examining the literary works of Al-Mutanabbi and Shakespeare. We can understand the intricate relationship between language, culture, and power in these literary masterpieces by looking at how these masters employ language to reflect and mold their cultural identities.

This study will use a postcolonial framework to compare and contrast the works of Al-Mutanabbi and Shakespeare, focusing on Edward Said's influential book *Orientalism* (1979), published by Routledge. Shakespeare's language is critically analyzed for its capacity to support or contradict imperialist ideology through Said's criticism of Western representations of "the East" as alien, antiquated, and primitive, often associated with colonialist politics. Said maintained that these depictions in Western literature and scholarship were more than just innocent artistic expressions since they were closely related to the politics of colonial authority and empire (Said, 1979,p.60). The study will examine how Shakespeare's works could represent underlying power relations and cultural supremacy by adopting this postcolonial viewpoint. The poetry of Al-Mutanabbi, on the other hand, will be analysed as a counterpoint within the classical Arabic tradition, examining how his language conveys cultural pride, resistance, or identity negotiation within a socio-political environment that is both historically distinct and equally complicated. Examining how Al-Mutanabbi's writings assert a cultural identity that defies or opposes Western-centric narratives is made easier by Said's extension of postcolonial theory to include both the colonisers and the colonised, this approach will enable a careful examination of the linguistic decisions made by both poets, illuminating how their writings address the politics of cultural representation, identity formation, and power dynamics across disparate historical and geographic contexts.

Mikhail, the second theorist whose idea of dialogism is used in the current study, is well known for his ideas about how language and literature are intrinsically dialogic. Bakhtin presented important ideas such as dialogism, heteroglossia, and the carnivalesque (Bakhtin, 1981, p.61) in *The Dialogic Imagination*, highlighting the variety of voices and viewpoints found in literature. He maintained that all language and literature are inherently dialogic, engaging in a broader conversation that encompasses a range of social voices and perspectives. This idea emphasizes how language is always in dialogue with other voices and situations rather than existing in isolation. Bakhtin expanded on his concept of polyphony in Al-Mutanabbi and Shakespeare's works, in which several unique voices coexist autonomously without being dominated by a single, overarching authorial viewpoint. Because of its polyphonic structure, a plurality of viewpoints, underscoring the richness and complexity of literary discourse as a space of interaction between diverse social, cultural, and ideological forces (Bakhtin, 1981, p.70).

Furthermore, conventional ideas of authorial control and a single, fixed meaning are challenged by the idea that a text is a dynamic environment where various voices and perspectives interact. In this regard, combining the theories of Mikhail and Edward Said provides a sophisticated method of analyzing Shakespeare's and Al-Mutanabbi's writings. This methodology highlights the fluid interplay between language, culture, and power in their literary traditions by fusing Bakhtin's concepts of dialogism and polyphony with Said's postcolonial critique of cultural representation and imperial authority. It demonstrates the intricate connection between literature and the sociopolitical environments in which it is situated by highlighting how each poet's language devices reflect and actively create and negotiate cultural identities. The European system of values, on the other hand, is built on a "racial ideology"; it turns out to be an instrument of exploitation. Western values are responsible for the human destruction that a civilization may adopt and spread (Al-Azawi, 2017, p.237).

discussion

1.1. Cultural Identities Through Linguistic Strategies in Al-Mutanabbi's Poetry

Examining Al-Mutanabbi's linguistic strategies provides important context for understanding Edward and Bakhtin's idea of dialogism. Bakhtin's idea, in which his poetry participates in a polyphonic discussion with numerous voices and perspectives, is reflected in the sophisticated language techniques used by the well-known classical Arabic poet. Al-Mutanabbi's poetry is full of historical and cultural references, resulting in a tapestry of varied perspectives that perfectly capture polyphony. Because of this diversity, themes like pride, bravery, and philosophical reflection can be explored in depth, providing a greater understanding of how his writings speak both inside and outside of their cultural context. To further emphasize the dialogic quality of his poetry and encourage readers to actively connect with cultural identities and social ideals, he employs Arabic poetic forms such as the "qasida" and "rajaz". Al-Mutanabbi's poem "*The Steed, the Night, and the*

Wilderness know me well” examines the two frameworks of Edward Said's *Orientalism* and Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of dialogism (Said, 1979, p.55).

1.2. Said's *Orientalism* and Cultural Representation

Edward criticizes the Western representation of the East in *Orientalism* as being stagnant, foreign, and inferior. Through its portrayal of Arab identity as multifaceted, tenacious, and intellectually sophisticated, Al-Mutanabbi's poetry actively challenges these reductionist depictions. In the lines "The Steed, the Night, and the Wilderness know me well, / does the sword, the spear, the parchment, and the pen." (II.16) Al-Mutanabbi challenges the conventional Orientalist view of the East as backward and uncivilized by contrasting symbols of intellectual achievement "the parchment, and the pen" with those of physical might "the sword, the spear". This creates a complex portrait of Arab identity (Said, 1979, pp. 66-70). Using these symbols, he challenges the oversimplified Western gaze that Said criticizes in *Orientalism* and affirms a respectable Arab culture that values courage and knowledge. The line, "I roamed the wild deserts in solitude Until even the beasts and the birds marveled at me," (II.18) further defies the Orientalist stereotype of the East as active and full of energy. Al-Mutanabbi's depiction of the poet as a solitary wanderer who commands admiration from nature itself symbolizes not just endurance, but the poet's mastery over his environment, a sharp contrast to the Western notion of the East as subjugated or controlled (Said, 1979, p.67).

Al-Mutanabbi, in the above lines, reclaims the story of Arab identity, creating a respectable persona that embodies intelligence, physical strength, and a balanced relationship with the natural world. In doing so, the poem supports Said's criticism of the West's simplistic perception of the East because Al-Mutanabbi asserts a proud and complex cultural identity through his poetry that goes beyond Orientalist distortions. The way that Western literature and academia have traditionally portrayed "the East" as foreign, archaic, and in need of Western control or explanation is criticized in Edward in *Orientalism*. In Al-Mutanabbi's poem, *The Camel*, the depiction of the camel, the desert, and the night offers a chance to consider how Arab identity is portrayed in the face of these Orientalist myths. Al-Mutanabbi gives the desert respect and resiliency instead of portraying it as a hostile or desolate region, frequently connected to Western stereotypes. In lines, "And the night, and the desert, / and the stars, and the camels, / All are but one to me, no matter where they lead me," Al-Mutanabbi transforms these organic elements, which Orientalist writings frequently portray as harsh and dangerous, into representations of fortitude and tenacity. A historic icon in Arab culture, the camel is portrayed as a metaphor for human tenacity and resilience rather than as a mere beast of burden. This presents a nuanced and proud picture of the Arab experience, challenging the static, simplistic images of the East found in Orientalist interpretations (Said, 1979, p.89).

Al-Mutanabbi again challenges the Western inclination to depict the East as inferior or archaic by using this camel metaphor. The speaker emphasizes an inner

strength that resists the Western notion of weakness or passivity by bearing responsibilities with dignity and a "heart of steel," much like *the camel*. Al-Mutanabbi offers a celebration of Arab identity, independence, and cultural pride by depicting the desert and its people as symbols of tenacity, rejecting the exoticized and simplified depictions of the East that Said criticizes in *Orientalism* (Said, 1979, p.90).

1.3. Bakhtin's *Dialogism* and Polyphonic Voices:

Mikhail's concept of dialogism, which emphasizes the coexistence of multiple voices and perspectives within a text, is also central to understanding Al-Mutanabbi's poem. In these lines, the poet engages in a dialogue between various symbols representing both physical strength and intellectual achievement. The "sword and spear" represent traditional values of heroism and bravery, while the collision of language registers in Al-Mutanabbi's poetry, Bedouin warrior motifs such as "the sword and spear" coexisting with urban intellectual imagery, "parchment and pen" is a prime example of Bakhtin's heteroglossia. This conflict is reminiscent of identity problems during the Abbasid era when Persianate cosmopolitanism and Arab tribal pride clashed. Likewise, his dramatic *fakhr*, boastful poetry, for example, "Were I to show the heavens my might, they would crumble," serves as a carnivalesque subversion, mocking heroic clichés while reaffirming his power. By presenting selfhood as a fluid conversation between the past and present, the desert chronotype "I am he whose fame made the blind see" further undermines fixed identity (Bakhtin, 1981, pp.46-60).

Bakhtin's polyphony exposes Al-Mutanabbi's contradictions, his dual vulnerability and haughtiness "I am feared in absence, revered in presence" as strategic unimaginability, in contrast to monologic readings of Arab poetry tradition. This method destroys the idea of a single "Arab hero," exposing identity as a site of conflicting voices (tribal, intellectual, and natural). By bridging the gap between contemporary theory and Abbasid literary politics, this approach provides a framework for reinterpreting pre-modern literature through dialogic lenses (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 60).

This is also where Bakhtin's carnivalesque element, which challenges established hierarchies and honors many points of view, is evident. Fixed notions of cultural identity are challenged by the poet's encounters with the natural and human worlds. Al-Mutanabbi encourages readers to see Arab identity as dynamic and complex by obfuscating the distinctions between warrior and scholar, man and nature. Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of dialogism emphasizes the interaction of multiple voices and viewpoints within a text, leading to a more dynamic and rich interpretation. Al-Mutanabbi's poetry, *The Camel*, explores the dialogic interaction between the natural world and the human experience. Instead of being passive objects, the camel, desert, night, and stars engage with the speaker, and each one symbolizes a distinct facet of the difficulties he encounters (Bakhtin, 1981, p.34)

The poem *Ode of the Camel* and *I pass through them all*, as "the camel does, / Bearing my burdens with a heart of steel" (II.2-4) presents the camel as a representation of tenacity. Still, it also engages in conversation with the night, the desert, and the stars, forces that both challenge and mold the speaker. Bakhtin's concept of polyphony, in which various aspects coexist without being subservient to a single dominant perspective, is reflected in this interchange of voices. Although the desert, night, and stars could be interpreted as representations of hardship, they are incorporated into the speaker's trip in this polyphonic conversation, helping him to comprehend perseverance and self-determination (Bakhtin, 1981, p.101).

The poem *The Camel* does not offer a single, unified interpretation of hardship; instead, it allows for multiple perspectives to coexist. *The camel's* ability to endure the harsh environment mirrors the speaker's emotional and psychological resilience, but the desert and night also symbolize the vast, indifferent forces that he must navigate. This dialogic interplay enriches the poem's portrayal of human perseverance, making it more than just a celebration of strength it is also an exploration of the complex relationship between the individual and the world around him. In the lines, "And the night, and the desert, / and the stars, and the camels, / All are but one to me, no matter where they lead me," Al-Mutanabbi expresses the speaker's solidarity with the harsh surroundings through parallelism and repetition. This coherence suggests a deeper resistance to external influences, both natural and, metaphorically, political or cultural, and demonstrates the speaker's capacity to rise above the difficulties presented by nature. This strength is further highlighted by the speaker's analogy to *the camel*, which shows that although the speaker carries burdens, she does so with an unwavering spirit (Bakhtin, 1981, p.80).

Furthermore, Al-Mutanabbi's poetry elevates the speaker's tenacity as something extraordinary through the use of imagery, especially the severity of the night and the desert. The speaker exhibits a kind of cultural pride that defies exploitation by embracing these forces rather than giving in to them. This might be interpreted as a kind of resistance to colonialism or other foreign influences, as well as to nature. The speaker's "heart of steel" serves as a metaphor for Arab identity's tenacity, which defies external pressures to be weakened or oversimplified.

1.4. Poetic Devices and Cultural Resistance

The poem's rich use of metaphor and symbolism strengthens its dialogic nature and its challenge to Orientalism. *Ode of the camel* poem in the line, "O you who parting from pain, so deeply, / Our hearts, after you, are nothingness itself." (II.20). introduces emotional depth, further expanding the polyphonic voices within the poem. Here, the more general themes of cultural identity and perseverance intersect with the more intimate realm of love and grief. The emotional toll of separation, which can be interpreted as both personal and symbolic of the cultural distance imposed by Orientalist misconceptions, is depicted by Al-Mutanabbi using the metaphor of the heart's emptiness (Said, 1979, p.70).

In the final line, "If what your detractors say has any truth, / Then what is a wound if it does not pain you?" (II.21), the poet directly addresses critics, possibly reflecting both



personal detractors and broader cultural critics, including the Western Orientalist perspective. This remark, which asks rhetorically what use criticism has as if it fails to grasp the core of what it criticizes, initiates a conversation with people who misunderstand or misinterpret the poet or the East itself. By doing this, Al-Mutanabbi rejects being characterized by outside narratives and affirms both his own and Arab culture's agency.

By promoting a rich Arab identity based on both bravery and intellectual depth, Al-Mutanabbi challenges orientalist myths that minimize the agency and complexity of the East. Al-Mutanabbi reclaims these symbols through his lyrical skill, participating in a cultural discourse that defiantly depicts Arab identity and tradition while opposing allegations of colonial domination. This perspective demonstrates how literature may alter perceptions and express cultural autonomy, consistent with Edward Said's appeal to critically analyze and dismantle Western misconceptions about the East (Said, 1979, p. 60).

Al-Mutanabbi uses a variety of poetic techniques in *The Camel* to convey a deeper cultural resistance to outside narratives in addition to beautifying the language. The camel serves as a metaphor for both the mental fortitude needed to face life's obstacles and the physical stamina needed to thrive in the desert. Historically, a symbol of Arab survival and life, the camel now represents defiance against injustice and hardship (Said, 1979, p. 34).

In the lines of the same poem, "And the night, and the desert, / and the stars, and the camels, / All are but one to me, no matter where they lead me," Al-Mutanabbi expresses the speaker's solidarity with the harsh surroundings through parallelism and repetition. This coherence suggests a deeper resistance to external influences, both natural and, metaphorically, political or cultural, and demonstrates the speaker's capacity to rise above the difficulties presented by nature. This strength is further highlighted by the speaker's analogy to the camel, which shows that although the speaker carries burdens, she does so with an unwavering spirit (Said, 1979, p. 50).

Furthermore, Al-Mutanabbi elevates the speaker's tenacity as something extraordinary through the use of imagery, especially the severity of the night and the desert. The speaker exhibits a kind of cultural pride that defies exploitation by embracing these forces rather than giving in to them. This might be interpreted as a kind of resistance to colonialism or other foreign influences, as well as to nature. The speaker's "heart of steel" serves as a metaphor for Arab identity's tenacity, which defies external pressures to be weakened or oversimplified.

Al-Mutanabbi's use of poetic elements, therefore, turns into a kind of cultural resistance, directly opposing the reductive depictions of the East that Said criticised in Orientalism and reaffirming the importance and resilience of Arab identity in the face of hardship. Al-Mutanabbi reclaims these images, turning them into symbols of strength and resiliency, as opposed to Orientalist depictions that frequently use the camel and the desert as symbols of weakness, passivity, or exoticism. The vast, unforgiving desert and the camel, which carries large loads through hostile situations, are used to represent strength,

pride, and the ability to persevere rather than submission. By doing this, Al-Mutanabbi's poetry subverts outside narratives that aim to minimise or oversimplify and provides a potent portrayal of Arab fortitude and perseverance Said,1979, p.99).

1.5. Cultural Identities through Linguistic Techniques in Shakespeare's Poetry

Shakespeare explores themes of love, beauty, and eternity in this sonnet, which is a prime example of his use of iambic pentameter, metaphor, and vivid imagery. His use of language gives his writings an ageless, eternal aspect. The term "Orientalism," coined by Edward, describes how the East has traditionally been portrayed and represented in Western literature and research, frequently in a way that upholds preconceptions and power relations (Said,1979, p. 42). Considering Shakespeare's "Sonnet 18," we might analyze the speaker's comparison of the beloved to a "summer's day." This analogy may represent a Western idealization of perfection and beauty as it draws a contrast between the idealized beauty of the beloved and the natural world.

1.6. Edward Said's *Orientalism* and Cultural Representation:

The term "Orientalism," coined by Edward, criticizes how Western academics and literature have frequently portrayed the East as "the other," portraying it as foreign, archaic, and in need of Western definition or control. Even though Shakespeare's Sonnet 18 is not specifically about the East, using this framework encourages us to think about how the sonnet interacts with larger cultural myths and the power relationships between identity and representation (Said,1979, p.80).

Shakespeare captures the cultural aspirations of Renaissance Europe in *Sonnet 18*, especially concerning identity, beauty, and nature. The beloved is positioned as a part of an idealized Western tradition where beauty is evaluated against natural components that are recognized to a European audience in the first line, "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" (sonnet 18, l.1) The poem's metaphorical use of nature, especially the English summer, supports the Western-centric worldview that elevates its cultural symbols as benchmarks for harmony and perfection. Lines like "Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May" (sonnet 18,l.3) illustrate how nature is portrayed as both beautiful and damaged, creating a transient and ephemeral ideal. According to a reading influenced by Said, this may be seen as a reflection of the Western propensity to romanticize its own culture while acknowledging yet frequently ignoring the shortcomings that come with doing so. Shakespeare's focus on using poetry to preserve beauty, "But thy eternal summer shall not fade"(l.9), also represents a form of cultural preservation that Said criticizes in *Orientalism*, where Western literature and art claim the ability to immortalize and exert control over representation and meaning.

The poem functions within the larger context of how Western civilization, through its literary traditions, creates idealized identities that are consistent with its values, even

while it does not directly address the East-West dynamic at the heart of Orientalism. Shakespeare's use of language creates an idealized version of the beloved, whose identity is influenced by Western poetry. Similar to how Said characterized the Western construction of the "Orient" as a static entity, this act of immortalization "So long as men can breathe or eyes can see, / So long lives this, and this gives life to thee"(ll.13-14) can be viewed as a part of a cultural tendency to fix identities within inflexible Western ideals (Said,1979, p.77).

Edward explores in *Orientalism* how the West frequently creates an "Other" that is disconnected from reality by idealizing, exoticizing, and exaggerating the East. The way women are frequently portrayed in Western literary traditions, especially in courtly love poetry, where idealized physical attributes are connected to unachievable beauty standards, also exhibits this pattern of idealization. By rejecting the overly dramatic metaphors employed to depict women's beauty, *Sonnet 130* subverts this tradition (Said,1979, p.50).

The speaker in *Sonnet 130* refuses to engage in the kind of idealization that Said would argue is akin to how Western cultures represent the Orient. The speaker says that his mistress' "eyes are nothing like the sun" (*Sonnet 130*, l.1) and that "Coral is far redder than her lips' red" (l. 2), rejecting the hyperbolic metaphors that objectify women and distance them from reality. This mirrors Said's critique of how the West creates unrealistic representations of the East, where the "Other" is adorned with exaggerated qualities. In "I grant I never saw a goddess go; / My mistress when she walks treads on the ground" (*Sonnet 130*, ll. 11–12), Shakespeare's speaker highlights his mistress's human and grounded existence. The sonnet avoids the kind of idealization that Said criticizes by emphasizing her humanity rather than her divinity or ethereality. Similar to how Orientalism opposes the distortion of civilizations through Western depiction, this "de-idealization" of the mistress questions established literary conventions. In the same way that Orientalism criticises the elevation of the Orient into an exotic, warped vision, the poem challenges a cultural tradition that elevates women to false ideals (Said,1979, pp.100-110).

1.7. Mikhail Bakhtin's *Dialogism* and Polyphony:

Bakhtin's concept of dialogism from the book *The Dialogic Imagination* emphasizes the multiplicity of voices, perspectives, and meanings that coexist within a text. In *Sonnet 18*, Shakespeare's use of metaphors, imagery, and themes can be seen as engaging in a polyphonic dialogue between different representations of beauty, time, and identity. The sonnet itself contrasts various voices and perspectives on beauty, making it dialogic. With its "rough winds," "darling buds," and "the eye of heaven," the natural world presents one view of beauty, but it is ephemeral and prone to variation. Because of its transience, the summer day, which initially looks like a fitting analogy, soon proves to be an insufficient metaphor for the beloved's beauty. This stands for the text's single "voice," the voice of the fleeting beauty of nature. But to preserve beauty beyond the



passage of time, the speaker presents another voice, that of poetry. Poetry itself becomes a vehicle, as the lines "But thy eternal summer shall not fade"(l.9) and "Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest"(l.10) demonstrate, through which beauty can defy the natural decay that affects all things (Bakhtin,1981, p.100).

According to Bakhtin's concept of polyphony, meaning develops by the interaction of various voices rather than any one voice or viewpoint controlling a text. This dialogic interplay between the poetry and the natural in *Sonnet 18* compels a meaningful negotiation concerning identity and beauty. The identity of the beloved is influenced by both the enduring beauty that the poem itself pledges to preserve and the transient beauty of nature. A multi-layered and dynamic understanding of identity is produced by the tension between these two types of beauty, poetic and natural. The ideal of the beloved's "eternal summer" is not set in stone or unchanging; rather, it develops as a result of the conflicting voices in the text (Bakhtin,1981, p.90).

Additionally, Bakhtin's conviction that meaning is open-ended is reflected in the sonnet's capacity to interact with these various voices. Even while the speaker claims that poetry will immortalize the beloved's beauty, this claim is only one aspect of a broader discussion regarding the potential and boundaries of art. The poem poses issues that are never entirely answered but yet have resonance because of the text's dialogic structure: the relationship between representation and reality, between art and life, and between temporality and eternity (Bakhtin,1981, p.99). Again, Bakhtin's ideas of polyphony and dialogism highlight the presence of various voices and viewpoints in a text. Shakespeare's *Sonnet 130* challenges the conventional norms of love poetry, which typically featured idealized depictions of women and inflated comparisons. Shakespeare creates a polyphonic space in this sonnet where the speaker defies convention, and the traditional poet's voices engage. It is invoked only to be opposed by the conventional voice of courtly love poetry, which likens the beauty of women to the sun, coral, or roses (Bakhtin,1981, p.99). By rejecting these analogies, the speaker establishes a contrast between his more realistic perception of his mistress and what is typically anticipated in love poetry: "I have seen roses damasked, red and white, / But no such roses see I in her cheeks" (*Sonnet 130*, ll 5–6).

Bakhtin's concept of dialogism is exemplified by this exchange between opposing poetic voices. The sonnet *Sonnet 130* recognizes and reacts to the traditions of its genre rather than offering a singular, cohesive viewpoint. The speaker both subverts the tradition by rejecting its idealizations and participates in it by making references to it. The speaker synthesizes the conflict between conventional and subversive voices by stating, "And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare / As any she belied with false compare" (ll. 13–14), implying that genuine love is independent of impractical beauty standards (Bakhtin,1981, p.120).

Furthermore, the complexity of the speaker's voice is polyphonic. He critiques traditional poetry's idealized metaphors on the one hand. However, despite his recognition of her flaws, he shows his mistress a great deal of love and respect. Bakhtin's polyphony,



in which various "voices" coexist and interact inside a single speaker's perspective, is further illustrated by this speaker's mixture of emotions and points of view.

Conclusion

Through their use of language methods, the poetry of Shakespeare and Al-Mutanabbi both demonstrates a deep engagement with cultural identities, expressing resistance to prevailing narratives while delving into the subtleties of identity. Al-Mutanabbi, a renowned Arab poet, challenges Edward Said's simplistic depictions of the Arab world in Orientalism by employing rich metaphors and symbols, such as the camel, desert, and night. In addition to challenging Western portrayals of the East as docile and unchanging, his poetry reclaims Arab cultural identity as robust, sophisticated, and multidimensional. Al-Mutanabbi's art exhibits polyphony, where several voices, including those with intellectual and physical prowess, interact, displaying a vibrant and complex cultural identity that embraces Arab traditions and universal human concerns, as seen through Bakhtin's dialogist perspective. Shakespeare, on the other hand, explores identity within a Western cultural framework through the use of linguistic devices like metaphor, iambic pentameter, and vivid imagery, especially in his sonnets. As a form of cultural self-idealization and control over representation, Sonnet 18's comparison of the beloved to a "summer's day" reveals an idealized Western standard of beauty, which Said's concept of Orientalism helps critique.

But just as Said criticises the West's unrealistic portrayals of the East, Shakespeare challenges these Western literary standards in *Sonnet 130* by rejecting overblown metaphors of female beauty. Shakespeare engages in a counter-narrative that defies literary idealisation by providing a more realistic, humanised vision of the beloved, challenging conventional depictions. *Sonnet 18* and *Sonnet 130* both display a polyphonic structure through Bakhtin's dialogism, in which opposing voices, the idealised and the realistic, or the transient beauty of nature and the eternal power of poetry, engage in a discourse about representation and identity. Shakespeare challenges the underlying traditions of Western poetry, allowing different viewpoints to coexist and reinvent identity, while Al-Mutanabbi opposes Western-imposed tales of the East. Whether through Shakespeare's undermining of Western values or Al-Mutanabbi's praise of Arab tenacity, both poets use their command of language to resist cultural oversimplifications and provide a nuanced, multidimensional representation of identity.



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