

**THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF LOVE IN "MAJNUN LAYLA" BY AHMED SHAWQI****\*Dr. Mohammad Mosa Foqara**

South-Western University Bulgaria

Received 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023; Accepted 25<sup>th</sup> May 2023; Published online 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023

---

**Abstract**

The article deals with "Anthropology and Love in Majnun Layla's Novel", by the poet Ahmed Shawqi, "Prince of Poets", the tragic love story of Qays Ibn-Al Mulawwah and Layla who are hopelessly in love with each other despite societal obstacles and expectations. This emotional story of love and commitment serves as a cornerstone of literary expression in the world. Arab and became a symbol of unchanging sincerity and the beautiful conflict between love and society. The characters Kais and Laila are so deeply committed to each other that they are willing to overcome all kinds of obstacles and hardships, including family rejection and war.

**Keywords:** Anthropology, Love, Romance, Culture, Prince of Poets, Social, Folklore.**INTRODUCTION**

Ahmad Shawqi (1868-1932), an eminent Egyptian poet and playwright, revolves around deep, romantic themes in his poetic work, "Majnun Layla". The story is inspired by the classic Arabic love story of Qays Ibn- Al Mulawwah and Layla known as Majnun Layla or "mad from Layla". This essay aims to critically examine the role of anthropology in understanding the concept of love in Shawqi's work and the significance of this study in grasping the cultural, social, and psychological aspects in which the theme of love is manifested (Shawqi 1925:36-45). It is noteworthy to mention that anthropology is the scientific study of human societies, cultures, and their development for our purpose, it serves as a useful lens to delve into the depths of the theme of love in "Majnun Layla".

**Objective of the Article**

The aim of the essay on "anthropology and love in the novel Majnun Layla" by Ahmed Shawky is to analyze and understand the relationship between culture and love in the novel from an anthropological perspective. The article also aims to explore how the author portrays love and human relationships in Arab culture and how these relationships include social and cultural interactions. The article also presents the challenges facing love in this culture such as religious, social and cultural considerations that influence the nature of romantic relationships and their impact on the entire society.

**The significance of the subject**

Anthropology is the study of human cultures, customs and traditions, and seeks to understand the relationship between man and the culture in which he lives. In the novel "Majnun Layla" by Ahmed Shawky, the events revolve around the personality of a man who suffers from the madness of love, and shows how culture and traditions can affect his personality and thought.

The importance of the anthropological essay in this novel is evident in our understanding of man's relationship with culture and traditions, and how they affect him and shape his personality and behavior. The novel also presents love in a different way, showing how love affects the mind and body, and can make a person lose his mind.

**Majnun Layla L Plot Summary**

The classic story of majnun Layla begins with Qays Ibn Al Mulawwah, a young poet from an Arabian tribe. Who falls madly in love with his cousin Layla. His love and longing for her turn him into a poet, and he arouses the attention of people around him by composing poems dedicated to his beloved. Unfortunately, Layla's father marries her off to another man, which sends Qays Ibn Al Mulawwah into a spiral of madness and despair. He roams the wilderness, mourning his unrequited love through poetry. The tale ends tragically with the deaths of the star-crossed lovers.

**The main characters in Majnun Layla's novel**

*Laila al-Amriya:* The Arab poet Laila bint Mahdi bin Saad, who is the mother of Malik al-Amriya. She was known as Habiba Qais bin Al-Mulawwah. She is very beautiful.

*Qays Ibn Al-Mulawwah:* One of the poets of spinning, and he was known as Majnun Layla for his intense love for her. Layla was Qays' cousin.

*Ward Ibn Mohammad al-Aqili:* This person married Laila al-Amiriyyah, but he sanctified Laila's love for Qays, so he did not practice intimacy with Laila, out of sanctification for her love from Qays, so she remained a virgin in reverence for Qays. love her.

**Anthropological analysis of love in "Majnun Layla"  
Cultural and social aspects**

Shawqi's interpretation of the love between Qays and Layla showcases the significance of the cultural and social factors in shaping human relationships. It is evident that the social norms and the dynamics of the tribal society played a crucial role in preventing the unification of the two lovers. In the Arab world,

family reputation and status were of paramount importance; hence, Layla's father disregarded her affection towards Qays Ibn Al Mulawwah and chose a wealthier, suitor for her (Nasser 2014:76-100). The tribal customs and community expectations influenced their tragic fate, emphasizing the influence of cultural and societal factors in emotions like love.

### Psychological and emotional Aspects

The psychological and emotional dimensions of love are vividly expressed in Shawqi's portrayal of Qays Ibn Al Mulawwah as "Majnun Layla". To the point where it dominates his entire being, it demonstrates the power of love in shaping the minds and lives of its victims (Elmadhoun 2016:12-22). The concept of love as madness also serves as a metaphor for the human psychological experience, as emotions often overpower reason and logic, leading to decisions and actions driven solely by the heart. The poetic expressions in Qays Ibn Al Mulawwah verses mirror the overwhelming emotions of love, pain, and loss (Swaydan 2017:123-140).

### Anthropological perspectives

The anthropological perspective provides a unique view of the love story in "Majnun Layla", as it transcends the tale's tragic romance and highlights the human condition's diverse factors. Through the exploration of how cultural, social, and psychological elements intertwine with the concept of love, the reader gains a comprehensive understanding of humanity's power and vulnerability in their search for love and belonging (Abu-Lughod 1991:70-88). Moreover, the anthropological analysis of Shawqi's work establishes the universality of love and the shared human experience found across different cultures and societies. Examining the love story from different cultural contexts deepens our understanding of love and its numerous forms.

### Conclusion

Ahmed Shawqi's "Majnun Layla" serves as a valuable literary piece that delves into the depths of love and its impact on human emotions.

By adopting an anthropological approach to analyze this narrative, we gain insight into the cultural, social, and psychological factors that shape and define human relationships. The relevance and importance of this study extend beyond the confines of a single love story or a specific region. It serves as a testament to the universality of the human experience and our shared search for love, belonging, and understanding, reminding us of the power and vulnerability that come hand in hand with the complexities of love. It must be mentioned that conclusions were drawn from writing the article, and these conclusions are:

1. That love is a main theme in the novel, and that it is considered a driving force for the events that take place within it.
2. The novel sheds light on many different cultural and social aspects, and uses popular myths and legends to enhance the power of love and present it in the best way.
3. Love can transcend cultural and geographical barriers and lead to the fusion of many different cultural and social elements.

### REFERENCES

- Shawqi, Ahmed, (1925). *Majnun Layla*. Cairo: Dar El-Maaref Publishing.
- Nasser, Hala, (2014). "Ahmed Shawqi: Life, Work, and Legacy in Context". *Journal of Arabic Literature* 25, No,2, pp76-100.
- Elmadhoun, Suhair, (2016). "Love in Arabic Literature: Poetry as a Reflection of Emotional Transformations". *Journal of Emotion Studies* 1, No1, pp12-22.
- Swaydan, Zeina, (2017). "Love Madness, and poetry: An Analysis of Majnun Layla". *Arabic Literature Review* 19, No2, pp123-140.
- Abu-Lughod, Layla, (1991). "Writing against culture". In *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the present*, edited by Richard fox, pp70-88.

\*\*\*\*\*