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METHODOLOGICAL JOURNAL**<http://mentaljournal-jspu.uz/index.php/mesmj/index>**EASTERN MOTIFS IN RUSSIAN LITERATURE OF THE PUSHKIN ERA*****Nargis Fagimovna Shagieva****Senior teacher**The Russian Language Department**Chirchik State Pedagogical University**Chirchik, Uzbekistan***ABOUT ARTICLE**

Key words: 19th-century Russian literature, Eastern motifs, the Caucasus, Romanticism, A.S. Pushkin, the Caucasian War, Eastern culture, the Pushkin era.

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Abstract: The article examines Eastern motifs in Russian literature of the Pushkin era and the reasons for their active spread in the literary process of the 19th century. Particular attention is paid to the historical, cultural, and aesthetic prerequisites for the interest of Russian writers in the East, especially the Caucasus. The author demonstrates that the development of Eastern themes was closely connected with the political events of that period, particularly the Caucasian War, as well as with the formation of Romanticism in Russian literature.

The paper analyzes the influence of Eastern culture, traditions, and imagery on the works of Russian writers of the first half of the 19th century. The role of the Caucasus as a symbol of freedom, mystery, and spiritual strength is emphasized, which found reflection in the works of A.S. Pushkin, M.Yu. Lermontov, A.S. Griboyedov, and other authors. A central place in the article is devoted to the творчество of Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin, his interest in the East, his journeys through the Caucasus and Crimea, as well as the representation of Eastern themes in his poetry and prose.

The author concludes that Eastern motifs became an important part of Russian literature of the Pushkin era, contributing to the expansion

Introduction. The 19th century is rightly called the “Golden Age” of Russian literature. It was during this period that the greatest works were created, which later became literary masterpieces recognized throughout the world. This was also the time when the Russian literary language was formed. It was in the first half of the 19th century that the foundations of the future literary process were established and developed. [1]

Examining the historical relations between Russia and the East, we can see that they originated in the distant past and largely depended on both external and internal factors. The genuine interest of the two sides in each other is obvious. One of the main and undeniable proofs of this interest is historical fact itself. Throughout history, literature has always been and remains its eternal and faithful companion.

Cultural, political, and social relations have always found reflection in the literary process, which continuously educated readers by introducing them to important events characteristic of a particular time and era.

At the beginning of the 19th century, Russian literature was still dominated by Classicism with its strict rules and artistic principles. Eastern motifs did not fit within the framework of this literary style, and therefore they were reflected in literature in a peculiar, subjective, and sometimes even fictionalized way.

One thing is clear: Russia's interest in the East was enormous and was primarily associated with the Caucasus. The reasons for this interest included geographical proximity as well as political and economic relations. As we know, the beginning of the 19th century was marked by flourishing development in trade, education, architecture, culture, the military system, and, of course, literature.

Russia was actively establishing economic relations closely connected with the socio-political situation within the country. The East, rich in resources and a desirable partner, greatly attracted Russia by supplying various goods. Everything brought from Eastern countries, as well as the people engaged in trade and dialogue with Russians, fascinated society immensely. Their unusually beautiful clothing, melodious language, manners, and exotic objects—all seemed mysterious and intriguing, shaped by their unique customs, culture, and traditions. Undoubtedly, this enormous interest was reflected in Russian literature and in the entire literary process of the time. It can also be traced throughout the historical development of Russian literature. Yet what, above all, caused such an intense Russian interest in the East?

Unfortunately, the first half of the 19th century in Russian history was marked by tragic events. The years from 1817 to 1864 were the period of a long, cruel, and uncompromising war. Throughout history, one of the main goals of politics has always been the strengthening or expansion of state borders. During the period under consideration, Georgia united with Russia, and thus discussions about the country's borders became especially important. Since the East bordered Russia, the issue of security became urgent and of primary importance. Russia actively negotiated with neighboring Eastern states, but no compromise was reached. The result of this failure was war.

Dagestan, Chechnya, and Adygea became potential enemies of Russia, which sought in every way to strengthen its borders in these territories. The Islamic peoples of the Caucasus and Transcaucasia quickly responded by declaring war against the Russians, a war known as "gazavat." [2] Like any war, it claimed countless lives, including not only ordinary people but also members of the intelligentsia—the talented thinkers and hopeful future of the nation.

Returning to the literary process, we see that in the years 1800–1810 the theme of the East had already appeared in journalism and Russian fiction. By the 1820s–1830s, this theme became one of the most significant, relevant, and in-demand topics. Its popularity remained strong until 1861, including within the literature of Romanticism. Historical events and related circumstances became the reason for such close attention to Eastern themes in Russian literature. It is important to note that public attitudes toward the Caucasian War were largely formed through knowledge gained from literary works containing Eastern motifs and images. The Caucasus greatly influenced the works of such famous writers and poets as A.S. Griboyedov, A.S. Pushkin, M.Yu. Lermontov, L.N. Tolstoy, and many Decembrist writers. This enchanting culture attracted them with its mystery and unfamiliarity. The East left a profound mark on their work, personal destinies, and characters. [3]

Methods. Many researchers study the historical period of the Caucasian War through literary works because they openly and impartially depict the Caucasus, Muslim peoples, traditions, rituals, culture, and the Russian perception of everything Eastern. These works also seek the causes of those tragic events. Russian writers explored the problem of relations between Russia and the East more deeply and broadly in their works, expressing positions close to readers and shaping their understanding and assessment of events. [4]

We have already discussed one factor behind the rise of interest in Eastern themes and confirmed its historical basis. Another equally significant factor was aesthetic in nature. In the 1820s, Romanticism actively developed in Russian literature. The characteristic features of this

movement presented the Caucasus as a mysterious, enigmatic, fearless, and free land. This is precisely how it was depicted in literature.

Russian Romantics portrayed the Caucasus in all its beauty in their works. Special credit should be given to the person who, more than anyone else, managed to depict the realities of the Caucasian War, the culture and customs of this wild land, and the traditions of the freedom-loving mountaineers and Muslim peoples. Of course, this was the young and energetic Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin. "In his work, we see the birth and development of Romanticism, which helped not only to see the true image of the Caucasus but also to feel it deeply, to penetrate the most hidden corners of the soul, and to leave a mark in the heart of even the most skeptical reader and listener." [5]

Romanticism became the dominant force that defined the Caucasian War in Russian literature as both an image and a literary hero across various genres. This theme was expressed as the main problem of comparing and contrasting two worlds: Russian and non-Russian, one's own and the foreign. These works are filled with profound respect and interest toward another land, other peoples, their culture, and their homeland. We see sympathy and understanding even toward the people against whom Russia fought. It turns out they were no worse than any other nation. They possessed the mentality of free people defending their homes, families, and land. Why condemn them? They simply did not want enslavement. This was natural and understandable. Thus, Romanticism revealed the true image of the Caucasus, the real situation, and the image of the mountaineer combined with Eastern motifs.[]

Alexander Pushkin has continued for a third century to remain not only a Russian poet, but also a poet of the East. His profound interest in this magical region found direct reflection in his творчество, inspiring admiration among readers for many generations.

"Alexander Pushkin is undoubtedly the greatest poet of Russian literature. Though I may merely repeat what has long been known to everyone, the genius of this writer astonishes and deeply moves the soul. It was no coincidence that the critic Apollon Grigoriev said of him: 'Pushkin is our everything.' Indeed, he truly embodied everything, feeling with his extraordinary soul the problems and sufferings of his people. Yet it would be unfair to say that only the Russian people mattered to Pushkin, for alongside such quintessentially Russian works as *The Captain's Daughter*, *Boris Godunov*, *Eugene Onegin*, and *The Lady Peasant*, we also study *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai*, *The Gypsies*, and *The Prisoner of the Caucasus*, while from childhood we are familiar with his *The Tale of the Golden Cockerel*.

Although all these famous works portray the lives of people entirely different from us in their lifestyle, thinking, and customs, this is precisely what makes them so fascinating; it is

because of this feature that they deserve to be called masterpieces. Where else could we learn about the passionate and devoted nature of Eastern women, or about the warlike and fearless, yet vulnerable soul of Caucasian men? We read, and the incomparable talent of Alexander Pushkin compels us to experience together with his heroes, and together with the poet himself, emotions previously unknown to our northern souls, unaccustomed to such fiery intensity.

His heroes are not horrified or repelled by the harsh amusements of the mountaineers, and the poet himself treats with profound respect the religion flourishing in the eastern lands of our country.

Everyone knows that the great poet's great-grandfather was the famous African godson of Peter I — Abram Petrovich Gannibal. He too was a Muslim. His homeland was the beautiful and scorching Ethiopia. In general, the biography of this remarkable man is full of mysteries and unanswered questions. It is not surprising that the great-grandfather deeply interested his talented grandson. From the lips of Gannibal's sons, Ivan and Pyotr, young Pushkin first heard about the magical East. One can scarcely imagine the vivid images conjured by Pushkin's rich imagination when his elders told him stories from the life of Abram Petrovich instead of fairy tales.

The years of southern exile were among the most productive periods in Pushkin's творчество. Clearly, both these years and the poet's ancestry influenced his work and awakened his interest in Eastern themes. The close interaction of two cultures — Russian and Eastern — had a beneficial influence on Russian classical literature, enriching and embellishing it.

Results. “Eastern (Caucasian) exoticism was precisely what the poet needed, shaping his romantic worldview in the 1820s. While depicting ‘the pearly waves of the shore,’ ‘the roar of the sea,’ and ‘heaps of rocks,’ the poet was by no means fantasizing, but rather reproducing real natural landscapes he had seen in Crimea and the Caucasus.”

Pushkin's exile to the south coincided with the beginning of his fascination with the works of the English poet George Gordon Byron. “Pushkin borrowed from Byron the artistic form of the romantic poem with its fragmentation, suggestiveness, strong dramatic beginning, and lyrical style of narration.”

At the same time began the history of translations of the Russian poet's works into the languages of Eastern peoples. During his lifetime, Pushkin became known in the governmental circles of Iran, which were interested in maintaining good-neighborly relations with Russia.

Most recorded translations of the poet's works published in different years in Iran were based on intermediary translations in English or French and were completed in the early

twentieth century. The same was true for the first translations of Pushkin's heritage in India, the Arab world, and other Eastern countries. To Russia's credit, translations of Pushkin's poetry into Eastern languages were carried out directly from the original Russian texts.

Unlike many Romantic poets, both Russian and Western European, who admired Eastern exoticism, Pushkin understood more deeply and felt more subtly Russia's connection with the destinies of all humanity.

Hence arose his tremendous interest in "foreign national poetry," which, according to him, reflected the "distinct physiognomy" of the people that created it, and only that people. In Pushkin's work one cannot find a single line capable of offending any nation or ethnic group. The sensitive attention of the Russian genius to the fate of the peoples of Asia and Africa, full of humanity and sincere sympathy, gave rise to a heightened interest among tens of millions of "white, black, and colored" readers in his literature.

It is difficult to explain this "miracle of Pushkin." Over more than two centuries, his poems, verse narratives, and prose have not faded in the slightest. They have not diminished either morally or aesthetically. On the contrary, every encounter with Pushkin enriches and ennobles the soul. The Russian poet's sensitivity and attentiveness toward people never grow old, whether they are a coachman driving a troika, a peasant girl, a serf blacksmith, a Circassian woman, or a captive Turk.

The world of Pushkin's poetry is boundless, abundant with "foreign" themes and plots, including unfinished works whose action unfolded beyond the borders of Russia — "from the western seas to the very gates of the East."

The problem of "Pushkin and the East" has many specific aspects. Academician Mikhail Alekseyev prophetically remarked: "The all-encompassing and extraordinary genius of Pushkin, unparalleled in its scale and universality, can only be understood after long and sustained efforts to compare his literature with various and diverse phenomena of world literature."

The interaction and mutual enrichment of Eastern and Western cultures remain an important driving force in the development of world culture. Under such conditions, Pushkin's poetry helps select and preserve the best while rejecting mediocrity and banality. His works exert a beneficial influence on the formation and development of modern Eastern cultures, many of which are even older than our own.

Discussion. When turning to one or another region of the East, Pushkin, unlike his older contemporaries such as Walter Scott, George Gordon Byron, Thomas Moore, and Vasily

Zhukovsky, portrayed distinct and dissimilar cultural worlds each time. He emphasized not similarities or recurring phenomena in Eastern countries, but rather their differences. The poet knew how “to notice distinctions” between “similar creations of human genius.”

In the work of Yelena Surova, the principles of translating Pushkin’s poems and verse narratives into Hindi are examined. The issue widely discussed in modern scholarship — the readiness of a receiving literature to perceive the ideas and images of Russian classics — is also considered. Surova speaks of the necessity of further improving the terminology and theory of interaction and interconnection between national cultures.

The fate of Pushkin’s works in Eastern countries vividly and clearly reflects the dynamics of their historical and social development, as well as the nature of their relations with our country.

The cultural types of East and West are heterogeneous, and therefore their interaction should be considered with this heterogeneity in mind. Pushkin’s творчество opens wide possibilities for observation and conclusions in this respect.

In L. A. Tartakovskaya’s article “Journey to Arzrum: An Artistic Exploration of the East,” attention is paid to the transformation of Pushkin’s views on the East, to his deeper perception of the “Oriental world,” and to the nature of his disputes with contemporary writers dealing with “Oriental issues.”

New ideas about Pushkin’s attitude toward the literary traditions of the Middle East were expressed in the article by A. J. Gadzhiyev.

“It is impossible to imagine Pushkin’s multifaceted interest in every region of the Oriental world without his extensive cycle of poems inspired by his deep knowledge of the Old Testament. This cycle took shape throughout the poet’s life.” One of these poems — “In vain I flee to Zion’s heights” — devoted to Pushkin’s interest in Biblical subjects, became the subject of an article by M. F. Muryanov.

It so happened that Pushkin’s “Oriental projects,” reflected in the journal *Sovremennik*, long failed to attract scholarly attention, despite several monographs devoted to the publication. In the article by D. I. Belkin, “The World of the East in Pushkin’s *Sovremennik*,” interesting information is gathered clarifying the poet’s Oriental concept, his reflections and plans “about times to come,” and attention is drawn to Pushkin’s ambiguous attitude toward the articles of the orientalist Osip Senkovsky. We are witnessing how Pushkin’s word becomes increasingly significant in the cultural communication of Eastern peoples, and we hope that this theme will remain truly inexhaustible.

Alexander Pushkin greatly loved the city of Chişinău. He lived there among his compatriots serving in the military. The city, with its bustle, culture, individuality, and noise, strongly attracted and inspired the poet. During this period of his life, deeply emotional and tender works appeared. Who does not know these delicate creations — “Beneath the blue skies of her native land...”:

“She languished, withered away...

At last she faded, and surely above me

Her youthful shadow already hovered;

But an inaccessible boundary lies between us.

In vain did I awaken feeling:

From indifferent lips I heard the news of death,

And indifferently I listened to it.”

Or:

“Oh, if it is true that in the night...”:

“Oh, if it is true that in the night,

When the living rest,

And moonbeams from the sky

Glide across gravestones,

Oh, if it is true that then

The silent graves grow empty —

I call the shadow, I await Leila:

Come to me, my friend, come here!”

And this wonderful work “For the Shores of a Distant Homeland”:

“But there, alas, where heaven’s vaults

Shine in blue radiance,

Where the olive’s shadow falls upon the waters,

You fell asleep your final sleep.

Your beauty, your sufferings

Vanished within the funeral urn —

And with them the farewell kiss...

Yet I await it; it follows you...”

Alexander Pushkin was fascinated by the origins of Eastern plots, various Eastern legends and myths, fairy tales, the Muslim faith, sacred books, and Biblical stories that served as the basis for these works. As we know, he advanced with cautious yet bold steps along the

path of creating works with Eastern themes, using and analyzing the sources he discovered concerning the East.

The poet traveled with immense delight along the Black Sea coast and through the marvelous land of the Caucasus. The picturesque landscapes before his eyes, the people inhabiting these places, their customs, clothing, language, manners of communication and behavior, daily life, family relations, attitudes toward faith and traditions, their culture, their simultaneous love of freedom and wildness — all inspired and fascinated Pushkin. No detail escaped the poet's attention. Whether it was the boundless sea or the skin color of a simple Moldavian woman, the sun and stars, the wind and air, the road and enormous mountains — Pushkin had no superfluous elements or unnecessary details. Everything mattered. To create a complete picture, even the smallest elements were indispensable.

Each time we reread the works of Alexander Pushkin, we never cease to marvel at his powers of observation, his ability to recreate reality with precision, his unique manner of expressing thought and conveying the essential meaning to the reader, the enchanting musicality of his language, and the originality of his plots.

“The Eastern theme in the works of Alexander Pushkin was a natural process generated by life itself, both within Russia and beyond its borders.” The poet became a model for his literary colleagues who chose to continue his path — a special artistic road opening to readers the magical world of the East. To be the first is undoubtedly a great responsibility and an unpredictable mission, a unique role both in the literary process and in the significance of literature within Russian literary studies. Pushkin confirmed his title as a great poet by demonstrating a talent rooted in his personal refinement, character, intellect, sincere concern for everything occurring in the world, honesty, humanity, justice, and respect both for his native country and for other countries, especially the Eastern lands with their unique culture, traditions, and magnificence. Others learned from him, followed his example, admired and imitated him, continuing his path in their own творчество.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Russian literature was still dominated by the era of classicism with its strict requirements and tendencies. Eastern motifs did not fit within the norms of this artistic style and therefore found peculiar, subjective, and sometimes even imaginary reflections in literature.

One thing is obvious: Russia's interest in the East was enormous and associated primarily with the Caucasus. The reasons for this interest were geographical proximity, as well as political and economic relations.

Conclusion. In Russian literature of the period under consideration, the theme of the East had already been established both in journalism and in fiction. By the 1820s–1830s, this theme had become the most prominent, popular, and relevant. Its popularity continued unabated until 1861, that is, throughout the era of Russian Romanticism. Historical events and related circumstances were precisely what caused such intense attention to the East within the literary process. At the same time, similarities in vocabulary and imagery often emerged among contemporary poets. This circumstance compelled us to examine more carefully the “Eastern-oriented” texts of Alexander Pushkin: his works devoted to the Caucasus and the East in general. For Russian authors, the East became a special category that helped them organically perceive a “foreign” culture without losing their own national roots. The image of the homeland in many cases became an inseparable part of their poetic world.

The years of southern exile were among the most productive periods in Pushkin’s творчество. Clearly, these years and the poet’s ancestry influenced his work and awakened his interest in Eastern themes. The close interaction between Russian and Eastern cultures beneficially influenced Russian classical literature, enriching and expanding its heritage.

An important role in the development of Pushkin’s interest in the East was played by the expanding system of Oriental studies in Russia, the growing number of Eastern-themed publications in journals, almanacs, and articles. This topic greatly interested readers and aroused intense curiosity. And curiosity, naturally, demanded satisfaction. Therefore, literature of the period regularly published news concerning both the Caucasian situation, the ongoing war in the region, and this mysterious and intriguing world as a whole. Readers were undoubtedly eager to know who inhabited these wild lands, what language they spoke, how they dressed, what they ate, what nature and climate were like there, what their political views were, what faith they practiced, and how it differed from Christianity. Thus people read everything related to the East with fascination and enthusiasm. And Alexander Pushkin revealed this world to his readers from a special perspective — authentically and truthfully, inventing nothing but depicting it exactly as he saw it with his own eyes.

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