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### The Image of Eastern Women in the Works of Alexander Pushkin

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#### Extended Abstract

This article reinterprets the figure of the “Eastern woman” across a curated corpus of Alexander Pushkin’s poems and prose, contending that she functions not as a decorative emblem of exotic desire but as a structural device of cultural mediation. Situated within the textures of Russian Orientalism—its frontier imaginaries, imperial anxieties, and syncretic borrowings—the study pursues three linked questions: from which narrative and lyrical perspectives are Eastern women seen, addressed, or permitted to speak; what evaluative codes—religious, ethical, political, and affective—govern their portrayal; and under what formal and thematic conditions these portrayals either reproduce aestheticized distance or open a corridor for dialogic proximity and recognition. Methodologically, the analysis combines intertextual readings of sacred texts and *One Thousand and One Nights*, motif tracking of hospitality, testing, prudence, and stillness, and narratological mapping of scenes structured by pursuit, misrecognition, and qualified triumph. Five clusters of findings emerge. First, religious–mystical coding aligns feminine figures with hospitality and revelation, testing both protagonist and reader rather than serving as static pious tableau. Second, political–historical pressures expose how imperial and legal logics discipline intimacy, with the fate of Eastern women operating as a barometer of sovereignty, kinship, and honor. Third, social–ethical worlds foreground women’s prudence, care, and tactical silence—acts that look back at and complicate the Orientalist gaze. Fourth, erotic ambivalence transforms desire into self-knowledge, as pursuit leads to humbled recognitions, partial unions, and refusals of fantasy closure. Fifth, intertextual refunctioning of storytellers, particularly Scheherazade, recasts narrative as a life-sustaining technology that defers violence and reframes judgment through speech. Form itself carries the argument. Shifts in focalization, parallel images, patterned refrains, and strategic silences enact the mediatory function that the figure embodies, sustaining an oscillation between admiration and critique, distance and dialogue. While acknowledging the asymmetries of empire, the study highlights moments where voice, opacity, and ethical authority are granted to Eastern women, thereby seeding dialogic tendencies within Russian literary tradition. Read as symbolic mediators rather than inert icons, Pushkin’s Eastern women transform alterity into ethical address and reconfigure poetics into a procedure for intercultural understanding. In advancing a gender-sensitive account of Russian Orientalism, the article offers a formalist–ethical method that reads figures of alterity as devices for organizing perspective, testing conscience, and keeping open the conversation between cultures.

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