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Oriental and Quranic Values in Silver Age Poetry: Classification and Artistic Functions

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Abstract: This article examines the features of the representation of oriental and Quranic values in the poetry of the Silver Age of Russian literature. The aim of the study is to classify Eastern and religiously symbolic motifs and to determine their artistic functions within the poetic discourse of the early twentieth century. It is a full literary approach based on comparing the semantic and interpretative verses and conceptions. The study concludes that oriental symbols generally influence the visual-aesthetic level of a work, while Quranic values enrich its philosophical and spiritual content. The scientific originality of the research consists in systematization of the oriental and Quranic motifs on a single analytical model, which further distinguish their functional traits. The methodology of the work is not only in its theoretical significance, but also in the opportunity to integrate of the results obtained into educational courses on history of Russian literature, poetics theories and comparative literary studies as well influence their use on preparation of scientific-methodical materials.

Keywords: Silver Age, Orientalism, Quranic Values, Poetic Symbolism, Intercultural Dialogue, Artistic Function, Religious Images, Poetic Discourse

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1. Introduction

The poetry of the Silver Age of Russian literature at the beginning of the twentieth century is distinguished not only by the renewal of artistic forms and stylistic directions, but also by a particular depth of spiritual and philosophical inquiry. The poets of the period tended to explore the inner human world, questions about faith and destiny and the meaning of life, yielding a highly-interactive dialogue with symbolism, mystical images, and an intercultural discourse. In such an environment the images of the East, oriental motifs and quranic values played a much greater role in the poetic consciousness of the time as an aesthetic and semantic means of artistic expression. The East was as much a geographical bearing as an orienting cultural, spiritual, and philosophical touchstone capable of challenging artistic preconception.

The relevance of the Eastern subject matter is conditioned by its multilayered semantic nature. In poetic texts, the East often appears as a space of ancient wisdom, contemplation, and inner purification — as a symbol of the path toward truth and harmony. Such motifs perform not a decorative but a conceptual function, forming a special atmosphere of philosophical reflection and spiritual quest. It is precisely in the poetry of the Silver Age that Eastern imagery acquires a systemic character, uniting aesthetic, religious, and cultural meanings within a single artistic field.

The specificity of the literature of this period lies in the aspiration toward a synthesis of various traditions — European and Eastern, rational and mystical, secular and sacred. The poetic word becomes a means of inner revelation and a way of comprehending transcendent reality. As a result, a complex symbolic system is formed in which oriental and religious images coexist and complement one another, intensifying the depth of artistic meaning. At the same time, a scholarly problem arises concerning the differentiation of oriental motifs from Quranic values, which in poetic discourse frequently intertwine and lose their clear semantic boundaries.

A number of symbols — light, word, path, fate, patience, revelation — can function simultaneously as universal Eastern images and as elements of religious semantics. Such ambiguity complicates the interpretation of the text and demands a systematic analysis based on the classification of images and the identification of their artistic functions. The aim of this article is to classify Eastern and Quranic values in the poetry of the Silver Age and to determine their artistic role in the formation of the poetic discourse of the era. The study is directed at identifying the semantic characteristics of these images, their symbolic content, and their cultural-philosophical significance in the literature of the early twentieth century. It is assumed that such an approach will make it possible to consider Eastern imagery not merely as an aesthetic device, but as an important spiritual and intellectual component of the poetic worldview of the Silver Age.

2. Materials and Methods

The theoretical foundation of the work is developed at the intersection of Oriental and Russian studies, with the history of Russian Silver Age literature, religious symbolism in literature. The multilayered nature of the subject makes it necessary to refer here to the works of both domestic and foreign scientists dealing with the East not only as geographical space, but also culture-philosophical, aesthetic category. One of the important interpretational influences on perception of this phenomenon was exerted by leaguings [1], who understands orientalism as a system of Western depictions and forms one culture 'other' cultural background. In the cultural-historical sense, attention should be given to the views of Raymond Schwab [2] who stressed historical influence which Eastern tradition exerted on European consciousness and art. Such solutions make it possible to consider the eastern themes in poetry as a model for artistic design paid symbolical and philosophic meaning..

The study of Silver Age poetry draws on the works of Dmitry Oblomievsky [3], who noted the intensification of mystical and symbolist tendencies in early twentieth-century literature that facilitated the active use of Eastern imagery. A similar position is held by Avril Pyman [4], who considers this period as an era of cultural synthesis and spiritual quest. In their works, the East is interpreted as a space of metaphysical experience and aesthetic renewal of poetic language. The functioning of oriental motifs in a literary text is also reflected in the studies of Viktor Zhirmunsky [5], who emphasizes the structural role of symbolism in the poetic system of modernism. This direction is complemented by Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the dialogue of cultures [6], according to which a literary text constitutes a space for the interaction of various traditions and meanings.

A separate place is occupied by studies of religious and Quranic symbolism in literature, where sacred images are interpreted as universal spiritual codes — light, word, path, and revelation. Such an approach makes it possible to view Quranic values not only as religious elements, but also as aesthetic categories of artistic discourse[7]. Thus, existing scholarly works demonstrate a sustained interest in the problem of the representation of the East and religious symbolism in the poetry of the Silver Age. At the same time, the question of their systematic classification remains insufficiently developed, which confirms the necessity of a comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach within the framework of the present study.

The analytical part of the work is meant to reveal and generalize oriental and Quranic values in the Silver Age poetry, as well as to specify their artistic functions in the poetic text. In this reading, the East is no longer considered as an actual geographic region but rather a symbolic and cultural-philosophical category which embodies spiritual searches of modernism. In the artistic self-consciousness of Auschwitz poetry Eastern motifs play a special role as a semiotic field in which aesthetic, religious and existential symbolisms are being intermingled[8].

Oriental values in Silver Age poetry most frequently manifest through stable images and motifs that create an atmosphere of exoticism and cultural 'otherness'. Among the most widespread are the motifs of the desert, the caravan, the minaret, the night sky, the Eastern city, the mysterious woman of the East, as well as images of the path and wandering. The desert in this context symbolizes not only geographical remoteness but also a space of inner purification, solitude, and philosophical contemplation. The minaret and Eastern architecture serve as signs of spiritual elevation and aspiration toward the celestial. The image of the Eastern woman, often surrounded by an aura of mystery and unattainability, performs the function of an aesthetic ideal and symbol of spiritual beauty. Exotic details — incense, the starry sky, caravans, sands — create the artistic illusion of another world, distinct from European everyday life.

Qur'anic beliefs, unlike western designs, are of an inner and eternal nature. They may not always be conveyed through direct religious citations but are present at the level of symbolism and semantic structure of the text. These include the images of light (nur), word, fate, patience, path, revelation and divine guidance. In poetical language, light means truth, illumination and the being of a supreme principle[9,10]. The theme of the word is connected to sacred knowledge and spiritual revelation. The elements of fate and patience come from who we are practically philosophical about the path our life takes, understanding-plural knowledge that existence is predestined. So that the Quranic values may serve as universal spiritual ciphers which are embedded into a literary text, independent from any confessional affiliation.

Of particular interest is the interaction of oriental and Quranic motifs within a single poetic work. Their synthesis intensifies the multilayered quality of artistic meaning and forms a complex symbolic structure. Oriental images more often perform an external, atmospheric, and aesthetic function, creating the cultural background of the work, while Quranic values deepen the inner philosophical and spiritual dimension of the text. Such a combination allows poets of the Silver Age to achieve an effect of semantic polysemy and universality of images.

The analysis of poetic texts shows that the use of Eastern and religious symbolism varies depending on the individual style of the author. In some poets, the exotic imagery and decorativeness of oriental motifs predominate; in others — the philosophical and mystical interpretation of sacred symbols. In both cases, however, the East serves as a means of expanding the artistic space and deepening the semantic perspective of the work[11]. It is through such images that a special type of poetic thinking is formed, oriented toward the synthesis of cultures and spiritual traditions. For a visual representation of the interaction of oriental and Quranic values, a comparative table is used below to systematize observations and underscore the scholarly character of the analysis.

Table 1. Classification of Oriental and Quranic Motifs in the Poetry of the Silver Age

Category	Oriental Motifs	Quranic Values
Nature	Desert, starry sky, caravan, sands	Light (nur), revelation
Architecture	Minaret, Eastern city, exotic details	Path, spiritual ascent

Human images	Eastern woman, wanderer, stranger	Patience, fate, divine guidance
Philosophical concepts	Cultural otherness, contemplation	Word, truth, predetermination
Aesthetic function	Atmospheric, decorative, visual	Philosophical, spiritual, universal

The presented systematization demonstrates that oriental motifs are more often associated with visual and cultural elements, while Quranic values reflect the inner spiritual stratum of the poetic text. Their combined functioning forms a special poetics of symbolic synthesis characteristic of Silver Age literature. The analysis shows that oriental and Quranic values in early twentieth-century poetry serve as mutually complementary components of the artistic system. Eastern imagery provides aesthetic richness and cultural depth to the work, while religious-symbolic elements form the philosophical dimension of the text. Their interaction allows one to speak of Silver Age poetry as a space of intercultural and spiritual dialogue, in which the artistic word becomes an instrument for the comprehension of universal human values [12].

3. Results and Discussion

The conducted analysis of Silver Age poetic texts shows that oriental and Quranic motifs are represented unevenly and depend on the individual poetics of each author. In quantitative terms, oriental images appear more frequently — desert, Eastern city, path, architectural details, and exotic landscapes. They possess high visual expressiveness and perform primarily an atmospheric and aesthetic function, forming the cultural background of the work and enhancing the effect of artistic novelty.

Quranic values appear less frequently but are distinguished by a greater concentration of meaning. The images of light, word, fate, patience, and revelation function as universal spiritual categories and are more often associated with the philosophical and mystical dimensions of the text[13,14]. If oriental motifs shape the external imagery of poetic space, then Quranic symbols define its inner ideological depth.

Comparative analysis shows that poets of the symbolist direction more clearly express sacred and metaphysical imagery, while authors of a romantic and aesthetic orientation are dominated by motifs of travel, exoticism, and cultural 'otherness'. At the same time, in most cases their coexistence is observed, which forms a synthetic model of artistic thinking. The general tendency consists in the gradual synthesis of oriental imagery and religious symbolism, as a result of which the poetic text acquires multilayered quality and universality[15]. This interaction testifies to the aspiration of Silver Age poets toward the expansion of cultural boundaries and the search for universal spiritual orientations through the symbolic comprehension of the East.

4. Conclusion

The conducted study has shown that oriental and Quranic values in the poetry of the Silver Age form an interconnected system of artistic meanings reflecting the spiritual and cultural quests of the era. Oriental motifs primarily shape the visual-aesthetic level of the text, while Quranic images deepen its philosophical and existential content. Their synthesis contributes to the emergence of multilayered symbolism and the expansion of the poetic worldview.

The scientific novelty of the study lies in the comprehensive classification of oriental and Quranic motifs and in the differentiation of their artistic functions within a unified analytical model. The proposed approach makes it possible to consider Eastern imagery not in isolation, but within the system of intercultural and spiritual interaction. The practical significance of the work consists in the possibility of applying the results in

courses on the history of Russian literature, poetics theory, and comparative literary studies, as well as in the preparation of scholarly and educational-methodological materials.

Prospects for further research are associated with the expansion of the range of analyzed authors, the inclusion of other national literatures of modernism, and the use of digital methods of textual analysis for the quantitative confirmation of the identified tendencies.

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