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## **THE LANGUAGE OF THE EAST, THE VOICE OF FLOWERS: ADAM MICKIEWICZ'S POETIC WORLD**

### **ABSTRACT**

The article examines the poetic features of language in several works by Adam Mickiewicz devoted to the theme of the East. The study highlights the use of vivid figurative expressions, striking similes, and numerous stylistic devices characteristic of Eastern poetry in some pieces from the cycle Eastern Flowers. As its main focus, the paper analyzes several qasida's from this diverse series, emphasizing their rich aesthetic imagery and harmonious expression. Through this analysis, the article underscores Mickiewicz's profound familiarity with the poetic traditions of Eastern peoples and his creative mastery in drawing inspiration from them.

**Keywords:** figurative expression, poetic language, Eastern tradition, imagery, poet

### **Introduction**

When speaking about the organic unity of language and culture in artistic creativity, as well as about intercultural and interlingual phenomena, one inevitably recalls the multifaceted creative principles of Adam Mickiewicz, a prominent figure of Polish literature. Some European and Russian scholars, half in jest, refer to the poet's fascination with the East and his numerous works devoted to it—distinguished by their thematic and stylistic diversity—as “Mickiewicz's ghazals.” This characterization is only natural. A significant part of his creative life was dedicated to the ancient artistic monuments of the East, such as the Avesta, to the works and life paths of eminent representatives of medieval Arabic poetry like al-Shanfari, al-Mutanabbi, and others, as well as to the lifestyle of the medieval Turks. Remarkably, he addressed these themes through the qasida—a genre traditionally uncommon in Western literature.

As always, Mickiewicz strove to create a poetic atmosphere in harmony with the environment in which the events unfolded. To achieve this, he drew upon figurative

expressions, poetic devices, vivid metaphors, and striking parallels characteristic of traditional Eastern poetry.

Darmo rumak arabski wyprzedzić mię żąda,  
Kark jego leci w poręcz z garbami wielbłąda.  
Młody mój orszak zna się dobrze ze strzałami,  
Jak guślarz, co je miesza, gdy lud wróżbą mami.

*AlMotenabbi (6)*

### **The Poetics of Eastern Influence**

In contrast to many other European and Russian poets who turned to Oriental themes, Adam Mickiewicz distinguished himself by his frequent and deliberate use of figurative expressions and poetic devices deeply rooted in the traditions of Eastern poetry. According to critical assessments, the orientalist poet, through such aesthetic strategies, appears to have consciously sought to embody the persona of “a son of the East.”

The similes and epithets in Mickiewicz’s lyrical works resonate with poetic “attributes” that had been cultivated and canonized in Eastern verse for centuries. By employing these artistic means, the poet not only enriched his imagery but also strove to preserve and reflect the authentic local color of the cultural environment he sought to represent.

Serce walczne, szabla, z której ognie biją,  
I łuk żółty wielbłądzią krzywiący się szyją;  
Przy którym pas bogaty, suta frędzla pływa,  
Majdan gładko ciosany i tęga cięciwa,  
Co tak żałośnie jęczy, gdy z niej grot wyleci,  
Jako matka wydarte ścigająca dzieci.

*Szanfary kasyda z arabskiego (7)*

For instance, in his verses we encounter expressions such as *serce walczne* – “a valiant heart”, *szabla, z której ognie biją* – “a sabre from which flames leap forth”, *łuk żółty* – “a golden-hued bow”, *wielbłądzią krzywiący się szyją* – “like the bent neck of a camel”, *pas bogaty* – “an ornate belt”, *suta frędzla* – “a luxuriant tassel”, *Majdan gładko ciosany* – “a smoothly carved bow frame” and *tęga cięciwa* – “a taut and powerful bowstring”. Here, the plaintive resonance of the bow is likened to a mother lamenting after her child—an image that embodies both tenderness and sorrow, and that reveals the poet’s deep mastery of Eastern imagery.

### **Symbolism, Imagery, and Aesthetic Fidelity**

A true artist, in writing about foreign peoples, seeks not merely to describe them, but to evoke an image of their culture through the subtle use of the phonetic, lexical, phraseological, and grammatical richness of his own language. Mickiewicz revealed this mastery most profoundly in his recreation of poetic elements: directing principal and auxiliary words, direct and indirect expressions, metaphors, and the layered stylistics of vocabulary toward the illumination of thought and feeling. However arduous the task, the poet, through his remarkable artistry, sought to remain faithful to the expressive beauty and figurative essence of the second language.

In the spirit of Eastern lyricism, Mickiewicz compares the brevity of human life to the fleeting existence of the nightingale and the rose. In doing so, he reminds humankind that, though centuries may pass, the memory of those who lived their brief lives with dignity and honor must never fade.

Lecz ich bulbul zabłyśnie — i wnet oko zmruży,  
Wnet znikną w ziemi liście, w sercach pamięć róży.

A nasze lądy zinnem dochowują łonem  
Pamięć istot straconych przed lat milionem:

***Wschód i Północ (8)***

Similarly, Mickiewicz often created a tender, melancholic effect through contrasts of meaning and color. He evokes in the reader the sorrowful awareness that youth will never return: under the desert sun, faces and cheeks may darken, yet hair once turned white will never regain its former blackness.

Słońce nam poczerńiło oblicza i czoła,  
Siwym włosom czarności przywrócić nie zdoła.

***AlMotenabbi (6)***

### **The Harmony of Sound and Meaning**

Maxim Gorky once remarked that “a word is the garment of thought,” yet the aesthetic appearance of this garment must correspond proportionally to the depth and substance it conveys. Well acquainted with the folklore of Eastern peoples, Mickiewicz skillfully employed felicitous repetitions across all poetic genres in his verse, creating a melodious harmony pleasing to the ear.

Już płynie w suchym morzu koń mój i rozcina  
Sypkie bałwany piersiami delfina.

Coraz chyżej. coraz chyżej,  
Już po wierzchu żwir zamiata;

***Farys (9)***

At first glance, the artistic devices employed by Mickiewicz appear strikingly natural, yet they simultaneously provide a vivid and complete depiction of the object to which they refer. This is a clear demonstration of the poet's creative mastery. By skillfully revealing the characteristic stylistic features of poetic texts, he sought to embody all the aesthetic qualities inherent in the genre.

It must be borne in mind that with such parameters, the poetic text is regarded as an "aesthetic-informative and communicative act." In other words, such instances are to be understood "not as elements of everyday life, but as literary and artistic phenomena" (1, p. 327).

A włos mój brudu pełny, nie znający woni,  
Kołtunami przylegał do niemytej skroni.  
Łono pustyni, co się bez końca rozszerza,  
Tak twarde i tak nagie jako grzbiet puklerza,  
Nieraz całe bosymi przemierzyłem stopy;  
*Szanfary" kasyda z arabskiego (7)*

### **Cultural Memory and the Conceptual Dimension**

In a literary text, the impressions or connotations expressed by individual lexical units, or those evoked in the reader's consciousness, may be designated in cognitive linguistics by terms such as frame, plot, image, or concept, depending on their scope and form. According to D. S. Likhachov, "a concept is a universal human consciousness." Repeated reference to it creates an associative field in the subject's mind, the boundaries of which are determined by "cultural memory" rooted in moral values (2, p. 10).

From this perspective, it should be emphasized that an attentive reader will recognize that behind each episode employed by Adam Mickiewicz in his works on Eastern themes lies a wide range of cultural-historical and national-ethical dimensions.

Ksiądz odpowiedział: «Czyż te zamiary  
Mam w groźnym wykonać musie?  
Czyliż twój Basza był naszej wiary,  
Czyliż on umarł w Chrystusie?»  
*Renegat, ballada turecka (10)*

### **Conclusion**

Adam Mickiewicz, through both the themes of his works on the East and the specific lexicon imbued with distinct semantic nuances, not only enriched his native Polish literature but also demonstrated a profound engagement with another cultural tradition. This assertion is vividly confirmed by the orientalist poet's skillful and

well-placed use of figurative expressions, metaphors, and other artistic devices characteristic of classical Eastern poetry.

Słońce nam poczerńiło oblicza i czoła,  
Siwym włosom czarności przywrócić nie zdoła.

*AlMotenabbi (6)*

or:

Osiadł Aryman, jak złodziej ukryty,  
Gniewny jako lew, jak wąż jadowity.

*Aryman i Oromaz (11)*

or:

Gwiazdy patrzą się wiecznie, bo nie mają powiek,  
Znużonych bezsennością, jak podróżny człowiek.

*AlMotenabbi (6)*

or else:

Nieme dzidy, z ich ręki wypuszczone w pole,  
Nauczyły się świstać, jak skrzydła sokole.

*AlMotenabbi (6)*

Rozchodzą się z dżamidów pobożni mieszkańce,  
Odgłos izanu w cichym gubi się wieczorze,

*Bakczysaraj w nocy (12)*

Na tem ja, bracia, kończę piosenkę,  
I piosnka moja skonala.

*Renegat, ballada turecka (10)*

O minarecie świata! o gór Padyszachu!  
Ty, nad skały poziomemu uciekłszy w obłoki,

*Czatyrdah (13)*

or:

Już płynie w suchym morzu koń mój i rozcina  
Sypkie bałwany piersiami delfina.

*Farys (9)*

This great artist, whose works have been translated into the languages of most nations of the world, has left in the collective memory of his multilingual readership a lasting impression of the cultural history of this ancient and enchanting land. As the well-known Slovak translation theorist A. Popovič has observed, the translation of such works, and their reception in a foreign linguistic environment, are inevitably

accompanied by a certain degree of opposition between cultures—what may be termed an “interspatial factor” (5, p. 131). In a sense, Mickiewicz was able to overcome these objective intercultural barriers.

He not only acquainted his readers with the characteristic features of the national and cultural milieu he described but also succeeded, through artistic means of depiction, in appealing to their aesthetic sensibilities. All of this, of course, may be explained by the poet’s deep appreciation of the socio-political, material-cultural, and artistic-aesthetic elements of the era he portrayed, combined with his individual creative impulse, intellectual capacity, and boundless love for this land.

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### Xülasə

Məqalədə Adam Mitskeviçin Şərq mövzusuna həsr olunmuş bir sıra əsərlərində dilin poetik xüsusiyyətləri araşdırılır. Tədqiqatda “Şərq Çiçəkləri” silsiləsindən bəzi əsərlərdə Şərq poeziyasına xas olan canlı bədii ifadələrin, parlaq bənzətmələrin və çoxsaylı üslubi vasitələrin işlədilməsi önə çıxarılır. Əsas diqqət bu rəngarəng silsilədən bir neçə qəsidənin təhlilinə yönəldilir, onların zəngin estetik təsvirləri və ahəngdar ifadələri vurğulanır. Bu təhlil vasitəsilə məqalə Mickiewiczin Şərq xalqlarının poetik ənənələrinə dərinlən bələd olduğunu və onlardan ilhamlanmaqda yaradıcılıq ustalığını nümayiş etdirdiyini ortaya qoyur.

**Açar sözlər:** bədii ifadə, poetik dil, Şərq ənənəsi, təsvir, şair

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