

REPRESENTATION OF THE ORIENTAL WORLD IN
THE LITERARY TEXTS OF XIX CENTURY EUROPEAN WRITERS

Marine Sioridze

PhD, Associate Professor

Faculty of Humanity, Department of European Studies

Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University

Batumi, Georgia. 6010, Ninoshvili 32/35.

+995599 240 656 E-mail: marine.sioridze@bsu.edu.ge

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2189-523X>

Abstract.

Interest in the Eastern world has a long history. Back in the middle Ages, during the Crusades, the differences between the West and the East became clear. One of the outstanding figures of the Middle Ages, Jacques de Vitry, a participant and eyewitness of the Fifth Crusade, who described the historical events in his most important work “History of the East” or “History of Jerusalem”, confirms the sharp differences between the Eastern and Western worlds in the Middle Ages, which should be studied, it has a long tradition in European historiography. The problems of the West and the East are the subject of many scientific studies and are still relevant today.

The theme of the East has always occupied a special place in the works of European writers. Based on the relevance of the research topic, we set the task of studying the literary texts of the 19th century European writers. As research material, we selected the works of

Chateaubriand, Lamartine, Nerval, Gautier, Maupassant, Goethe, Byron, Shelley, Moore and Flaubert on the theme of the East. Also, our task is to reveal and emphasize similarities and differences in travel literature created by European writers, to show the East seen through the eyes of Western authors.

The present study is conducted based on the basic principles of comparative analysis and imagology. Imagology is a relatively new field of humanitarian research, which studies the face of the “foreigner”, “other” in the public or cultural consciousness of this or that country, ethnos. Comparative literature is interested in imagological studies. Literary imagology has its specific goals. It is a doctrine about faces, about those solid faces of ethnically, culturally different peoples that are presented in artistic texts.

The purpose of our research is to reveal cultural markers in Western literary texts. The imagological aspects of comparative literary studies are most clearly revealed in the literary texts created on the theme of the “other”, “foreign” nation. In the end, this kind of approach will be a kind of novelty in the process of researching works on the subject of the East. Also, our goal is to study the imagology of the East as a cultural space in Western literature, since any text dedicated to the life, civilization, culture, traditions, customs, beliefs, representative of a “other” nation and The action takes place on the territory of “another” nation.

Keywords: East; civilization; culture; identity; image; exotic; west; literature.

Introduction.

The problems of the West and the East are the subject of many scientific studies and are still relevant today. Interest in the Eastern world has a long history. This interest has intensified especially in recent decades. The problem of the East and the West is the subject of many scientific studies. Important social and cultural theories were created on this topic. Against the background of globalization and growing migrations, the topic of dialogue between civilizations and

cultures is becoming even more relevant. The possibility of dialogue and finding a common language between these two radically different, Eastern and Western, Muslim and Christian worlds is primarily dictated by political urgency, however, the discussion has moved from the field of social sciences to humanities and has been fruitfully reflected in fiction. The theme of the East has always occupied a special place in the works of European writers.

What is the relationship between Orientalism and literature, and how does it aid us in our research? *Orientalism and Literature* sets out to interrogate a key critical concept in literary studies and has the aim of reviewing the evolution of the concept as it has been explored, imagined and narrated in literature. Building upon existing scholarship, the aim is to give readers a comprehensive grasp of the origins and present contours of Orientalism and to point out future directions in this field. In the early eighteenth century the term designated scholarship on the East, as well as a style in the arts. Interest in the study of Oriental languages led to the establishment of Orientalism as a profession. Although it continued as a discipline for well over two centuries, its scope developed beyond its philological beginnings and its vaguely defined existence as a literary or artistic topic or style.

The Holy Land occupies a privileged place in the imagological repertoire of our travel writers, given their Christian background. In this case, we are going to dwell on two representative images: that of the Jordan and the Holy Sepulchre. On the banks of the biblical Jordan River, Lamartine romanticizes its colors by evoking Swiss landscapes: “we bathe our heads, feet and hands in its soft waters, warm and blue like the waters of the Rhône when it escapes from the lake from Geneva. The same “aquatic” reminiscence will be awakened in Constantinople, under the walls of the grand seraglio “where the perpetual current of the Bosphorus forms small murmuring blue waves like the waters of the Rhône in Geneva” (Lamartine 2011, 306, 681). With more realistic precision than romantic imagination, Flaubert (2006, 263) sees the Jordan whose width at this point corresponds to

the width of the Touques at Pont-l'Évêque; a similar insight he had upon seeing the river Alpheus in Greece where "it is as wide as the Seine at Nogent" (Ibid, 462). In this intertext naturally joins Chateaubriand who in his amplified imagination makes the theatricality.

In fact, the 18th century was the century of Orientalism in France: the Arab world is now a world with which the Kings of France maintain diplomatic relations, a world increasingly known thanks to the intensification of commercial exchanges, relations policies and also to the increase in the production of travelogues. On the other hand, in Italy in the 18th century, travel literature, which nevertheless presents a certain originality compared to French and English travel literature, remains relegated to an inferior rank. In the 19th century the image of the Arab world will change radically; first in French literature and then also in Italian literature, it will gradually deteriorate perhaps not so much because of its "otherness", but, on the contrary, precisely because of the secular, intrinsic, familiarity. At the same time, the Arab world will be the object of particularly violent and systematic colonization practices.

In all the travel accounts of European Orientalist writers of the 19th century, the attraction of the cities of this Orient is beyond doubt. The young travelers left with the intention of discovering mythical places that are the cities celebrated and shaped in large part by their meticulous readings of the precursors writers travelers and by the stories told by their friends, either on their return to Europe, or in letters sent by each other. Thus, Maxime du Camp had described to his friend Flaubert the delights of the Orient during his trip to Constantinople in 1844; four years later, he even dedicated his book *Souvenirs and Landscapes Oriental* to her. Once there, these cities do not bring the same happiness to each traveler and it is important to emphasize that the disenchantment of the moment is one of the symptoms of the traveler who has too high expectations, as is often the case with Flaubert. There disillusionment is all the greater the farther reality is from the imaginary vision.

Methods.

The research methodology provides for the analysis of literary texts written on the Eastern theme by famous Western writers based on narratology and hermeneutics. The present research is conducted based on the main principles of the field of comparative literary studies, imagology. Imagology is a relatively new field of humanitarian research, which studies the face of the “foreigner”, “other” in the literary, public or cultural consciousness of this or that country. Comparative literature is interested in imagological studies. Literary imagology has its specific goals. It is a doctrine about images about the solid images of ethnically, culturally different people, which are presented in literary texts. The ethnoimagological aspects of comparative literary studies are most clearly manifested in the artistic works created on a foreign theme.

Results.

As a result of the research, we identified the cultural markers of the Eastern world in the literary texts of famous European writers. Ultimately, this kind of approach is a kind of innovation in the process of researching texts created on the subject of the East. Also, as a result of the research, we studied the imagology of the East as a cultural space in Western literature and determined that works created on foreign themes are considered works of any genre, which are fully or partially dedicated to the life of another nation, present one or more foreign characters, the action takes place on the territory of another nation, etc.

Through a comparative and imagological analysis, this article examines the vision of the Orient, rather imaginary than documentary, of European writers such as Chateaubriand, Lamartine, Nerval, Gautier, Maupassant, Goethe, Byron, Shelley, Moore and Flaubert. The purpose of this article will then be to identify and underline the differences as well as the nuances in the images created by these great authors and travelers of the time who left us extraordinary travel stories. That said, we propose to show various referent images such as

those of the Jordan, Turkey, Iran, Balkans, Greece, Egypt and Palestine where the different reflections of our travel writers intersect. We will end by noting that there is always an omnipresent civilizing idea in the East that our authors highlight.

Discussion.

The content of the concepts of East and West needs to be clarified from the point of view that neither one nor the other represents time and space. Once and for all defined totality. In addition, they are not homogeneous and unchanged from the point of view of civilization. It is possible to talk about Western civilization as an integrated unity, but the East has historically not been homogeneous in terms of civilization; within its framework, several civilizations are considered in any era (Chikovani, 2005: 94).

Back in the middle Ages, during the Crusades, the differences between the West and the East became clear. One of the prominent figures of the XII-XIII centuries, Jacques de Vitry, a participant and eyewitness of the Fifth Crusade, who described the historical events in his most important work "History of the East" or "History of Jerusalem", confirms the sharp differences between the Eastern and Western worlds in the Middle Ages, The study of which has a long tradition in European historiography. Jacques de Vitry, bishop of the crusading city of Acre and dean of the College of Cardinals, who has contributed greatly to the historiography of the Crusades, uses the terms "the East", "the countries of the East and the West" in his writings, but it does not appear that either it is more "privileged" for the author. In his letters, he draws attention to the distinguishing features of the cities of Europe and the Crusader East. For the author, European cities represent a very homogeneous and well-defined reality, while talking about Eastern cities, a radically different impression is created. It is interesting that Jacques de Vitry also writes about Georgians: "In the East there is another Christian people... very warlike, brave in war, strong in stature and powerful, they have countless warriors, and they sound the bell of fear to the Sarkinoses. With his attacks, he often inflicts great damage on the Persians, Medes

and Assyrians, in whose border regions he dwells surrounded by unbelieving peoples. These people are called Georgians, because they treat and worship Saint George with special reverence, they consider him as their protector and standard bearer in the fight against the unbelievers, and they respect him more than all other saints... People who go to bless the Lord's tomb enter the holy city with unfurled flags and do not pay toll to anyone. Women of Georgians, like Amazons, have drawn weapons like knights in war..." (2008:134).

We cannot talk about the Orient and its imaginary geography without addressing the capital work of the Frenchman Antoine Galland, a true intercultural ferryman as the first translator of *the Koran* and of the founding story *The Thousand and One Nights*. This late 17th century scholar wanted to introduce his contemporaries to Eastern philosophies. This traveler, who traveled the Mediterranean East for fifteen years on "working" trips, had the merit of having opened the horizons of men of subsequent centuries to the splendor of a modern East, which he will try to transmit in *The Thousand and One Nights* the most remarkable elements. The Orient he describes is a marvelous Orient. The aesthetic emotion he felt during his travels combined with the shock of the discoveries linked to his scholarly wanderings. It was while looking for the disappeared cities and the dismantled civilization of ancient Greece that this traveler discovered another world, that of the East.

At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, during the era of colonialism, the confrontation between the West and the East intensified and became irreconcilable; the famous English writer Rudyard Kipling wrote: "West is west and East is east and the twain shall never meet." As a result of the comparison and analysis of the cultures of these two different spaces, the categories: democracy, freedom, equality, scientific knowledge, rationality, dynamism, development, modernization, innovation, individualism, personality, active technical-technological transformation of the world, capitalism, etc. Sh. The "East" embodied other values: despotism, mysticism, intuition, access to the world, immobility, stability, traditionalism,

ritual, collectivism, meditation, achieving harmony with the true natural environment, etc.” (Kipling, 1974: 35).

Edward Said, an American corporatist of Palestinian origin, in his famous monograph “Orientalism” (1978) uses different terms to denote East and West as a geographical and cultural construct: “East-West” and “Orient-Occident”, the first pair is a geographical signifier, the second yes - cultural. Said considers the Orient as a cultural phenomenon to be almost entirely a European invention. „Since ancient times, the East has been for the West a place of romance, exotic creatures, haunting and fascinating memories and landscapes, amazing feelings. According to Said, East and West are conditional, artificial concepts. The East is “Orientalized”, artificially created. The relationship between the East and the West is a relationship of power, power (Said, 2006:7). For Said, the opposition: East-West is false and extremely undesirable. According to him: Cultures and civilizations are so interconnected that any generalized or simply schematic description of their individuality is doomed to failure. One of the aims of “Orientalism” was to show that any attempt to “stuff” cultures and peoples into separate differentiated types not only distorts and falsifies, but also reveals the way in which knowledge cooperates with power and gives rise to such abstractions as “the Orient” and “West” (2006: 536).

Europe inherited this perception from ancient times: the West-Europeans and the East - foreigners. At first, the East was of interest to Europe only from a practical point of view. For the Europeans, the East - India, China and Africa - was full of mystery, saturated with wealth and luxury. Later, for the European colonizers, the East became a means of acquiring property and wealth. The colonial policy in the eastern countries contributed to the formation of orientalism. If at first Orientalism was perceived as an attempt to understand another culture, another civilization, and then it represents an attempt to know one's own superiority at the expense of comparison with others. The East helps Western Europe to define its own distinctive and superior place and importance in the world and in modern civilization.

Despite the incredible development of the media, the extraordinary dissemination of international and intercontinental travel, the knowledge that most European citizens have of the Arab world is probably based on images that have become fixed in our imagination in the 18th century, when the great European travel literature, the vast corpus of “Voyages en Orient” and “Oriental” studies, especially French and English, preceded, accompanied and favored French, English and successively colonial expansion Italian also in North Africa and the Middle East. As E. Said asserts, during this historical period an idea of Europe took hold, in the European imagination, a collective notion which defines us, “we” Europeans, in front of all “those” who are non-European; we can well remember that the essential feature of European culture is precisely what has made it hegemonic in Europe and outside Europe: the idea of a European identity superior to all peoples and to all cultures which do not are not European (Said, 1980: 19).

The study of the image of the Oriental World offered by French and Italian literature of the 19th century can help to shed light on the mechanisms through which the perception of the Other was structured and constructed, which is still today , the most widespread in Italian and French public opinion, and which does not fail to weigh in the identity crisis that the two countries are going through, not so much because the Arab represents for Italian or French culture the Other par excellence, but precisely because, as we will often see in Italian literature, it was in the 19th century that this “orientalism” of a world was structured which for centuries had not been experienced as radically foreign, but with which reports and exchanges had been intense and frequent.

The study of the texts of European travel literature of the 19th century and, in general, of the texts in which was formed, fixed and spread in Europe and throughout the Western world an image that could be defined as “paradigmatic” of the Arab world, is not of exclusively literary interest. These are indeed texts for the most part without great aesthetic value which, now deprived of the halo of

charm and mystery that everything related to the Orient exerted on the imagination of Europeans of the 19th century, have lost much of their appeal and are now almost completely forgotten. However, their study can be useful and interesting not so much under the linguistic or formal profile, but rather under the “anthropological” profile. Literature, in fact, does not only have an aesthetic value; although it does not provide demonstrations and truths of a general character, it provides specific knowledge and therefore exercises a form of action on the world which does not oppose argument and theory, but makes it explicit and evident thanks to emotional participation. The concrete stories that literature and in particular travel literature have offered to a much wider audience than those who read theoretical texts, owe a much greater power and diffusion to the emotional participation which has in itself a value. Specific and irreplaceable cognitive. As Solange Chavel argues: “Emotions tell us something about the world: they are a tool of knowledge for a human being who is dependent on the world. Reading a novel therefore means developing a knowledge of the individual through the emotions that the author offers us to feel. The knowledge acquired is less an objective knowledge than, than a knowledge of “the effect that it has” to be in such and such a situation. But on this particular point, work is not only important for ethics; it is also crucial for political philosophy. Nussbaum maintains, in fact, that literature is a privileged instrument for constituting a political community. The novel does not only help us to acquire a finer vision of our moral situation; he is also an important medium in political matters, because he makes us sensitive to the diversity of situations of life” (2012:79).

Nineteenth-century literature certainly played an essential role in the constitution of this European “political community” which, convinced of its own objective superiority, supported both imperialism and colonization with the same conviction. The study of these texts can allow us, today, to be aware of the way in which the “European” and Western gaze was placed on the Arab world, and more in general on the extra-European world, during this crucial period and can,

therefore, lead us to be aware of the mistakes he made when he came into contact with the Other and tried to represent him. The “European” and Western imagination is still felt today in a decisive way by this image, which is all the more powerful in that it was formed at a time when European travel literature had no real rivals. In the representation of the world and in the dissemination of this representation.

Awareness of these errors can help us modify this distorted image of the Arab world and, more generally, of the non-European other which still today pollutes our representation of the world and even our civil cohabitation in our societies of increasingly multi-ethnic. At the same time, among the prejudices, stereotypes and platitudes, it is also possible to find in this vast literary corpus traces of a sincere interest, of a search for authentic and disinterested knowledge, of an attempt to understand not distorted. And although these glimpses of Truth through which it is possible to hear the voice of the Other, unrecognized and distant, are rare, they can provide us with useful indications on how to confront ourselves today with the Other who is among us and within us. As Solange Chavel affirms: “Literature [...] is an adventure of perception and imagination: in this, it is itself a moral process” (2012: 97).

The difficulty of precisely defining such a vast and complex world, or simply identifying the various factors which form its basis (languages, ethnic groups, religions, culture, etc.) which is still considerable today, was, in many respects, insurmountable for 19th century Europeans, even educated ones. This is why terms like “Arabs”, “Turks”, and “Muslims” in XIX century travel literature have varying meanings or are used as equivalents. For example, Felice Caronni uses the terms “Turks”, “Arabs” and “Muslims” as perfect equivalents; Chateaubriand, as we shall see, quite clearly distinguishes “Turks” from “Arabs”, Lamartine on the contrary designates with the term “Turks” not those who belong to a defined ethnic group, but all Muslims of high status and of a particular cultural and spiritual quality.

The term “Arabs”, in Lamartine's text as well as in the texts of many other authors, designates more precisely, with a certain pejorative nuance, the nomads. The term “Moor” (from the Latin “Maurus”, African) which in Roman times designated the Berbers of North-West Africa, often changed its meaning: in the middle Ages the term had become synonymous with “Muslim living in Andalusia”, whether Berber, Arab or Iberian; later some authors use the term to designate the black Muslims of the Sahara. Filippo Pananti, as we will see, uses this term to indicate the part of the Tunisian population that does not fit into any of the categories such as “Blacks”, “Arabs”, “Turks”, etc. because it results from a mixture of different ethnic groups.

In the evolution of the image of the Arab world from the Middle Ages to the 19th century, we can distinguish five periods: in the first period, that of the Middle Ages, we can find, in Italian literature above all, but also in French, many traces of a centuries-old relationship of familiarity and exchanges. Between the 15th and 16th centuries, while in French literature all references to the Arab world disappeared, Italian literature was characterized by the development of a humanist and secular image of the Arab world. On the contrary, in the 17th century, following the economic, political and cultural crisis of the Italian States, Italian literature seemed to completely turn its back on the sea which surrounded the Peninsula as France opened up to the Mediterranean world and travel relations in French are multiplying.

According to a proposition by Lamartine “to travel is to translate; it is to translate to the eye, to the thought, to the soul of the reader, the places, the colors, the impressions, the feelings that nature or human monuments give to the traveler. It takes both knowing how to look, feel and express” (2011: 171). That said, the writer-traveler would be a translator of foreign lands and mentalities, an active mediator between his own culture of origin and one foreign culture. It directly directs our sight to places where we are not, and causes our spiritual eyes to recreate them in our imagination. As a result, more than a hundred years before the theories of the famous immanologist

and comparatist Daniel-Henri Pageaux, Lamartine had already recognized the intermediary character of the journey and of its written transposition which is a travelogue. Lamartine emphasizes the importance of the gaze, namely the interaction between the eye of the reader and that of the traveling author, as well as the importance of “knowing how to look” on which D.-H. Pageaux is about to title one of his books in metaphor the *Eye in hand* (“for a poetics of mediation”, in the subtitle). By consequently, this literary and cultural mediation integrates observation with writing and its supreme goal is the promotion of otherness: “the joint work of the hand and the eye is to bring the reader, the spectator to see something else in what he thinks he sees or looks at. [...] The function of the intermediary is therefore to offer the reader something never seen, read, thought about...” (2009: 18).

Therefore, it is a complex of outer empirical experience and inner ethical experience fundamentally determined by the viewing culture in contact with other different cultures which becomes the object of the critical eye, these are then the cultures studied. The key element of cultural mediation is the traveling writer whom Pageaux (1994: 28-29) metaphorically calls “intellectual Proteus”, “a transmitter of ideas and knowledge”. It is characterized by “freedom of spirit, openness of thought, listening to others, a taste for adventure, great culture... a spirit nomadic. He is a witness to the historical moment of a foreign country, and his writings are specific testimony that he transmits in his mother tongue to his readers, that is to say to those who share the same cultural values as him. All the same, the first trigger for the trip is its openness to the foreign reality that the traveler begins to adopt little by little through analogies that he reconstructs according to his previous trips and experiences. Since this is his personal confession of the trip, where meticulous observation is mixed with an often fertile imagination, the writer-traveler has the right to lie to us, to invent and sometimes to hide certain impressions, because he has the privilege of having been there, unlike us, his readers. Finally, the writer-traveler is not at all a simple passer-by in

the gallery of living images, he is not the slave of superficial impressions nor of his fragile memory either: “what the traveler is looking for is not a landscape, but an idea of civilization that will have to be examined, analyzed, and judged” (Pageaux, 2007: 20).

The authors we have chosen to research in this article demonstrate such a protean traveler, each in their own unique way. Their common point is obvious: they are all victims of the oriental exoticism that was in full vogue during the Romantic era. Where did this exuberant enchantment come from? It may be that “this exoticism is above all the expression of the absolute antithesis of the West. An antinomic West, the East is an inverted West: not reason, but passion, the marvelous, cruelty, not progress or modernity, not the near daily life, but the distant enchantment, lost garden or regained paradise...” (Pageaux, 1994: 74). This is the fact that Edward Said underlines in the introduction to his seminal book *Orientalism*: “The Orient was undoubtedly a European invention; for a long time it was the place of romantic adventures, exotic beings, memories and landscapes that live in human memory nourished by singular experiences” (2000: 19). This is why the West tried in vain to “civilize” the magical and wild Orient, because it is precisely the enchanting Orient that “tamed”, on the contrary, Western thought and imagination. The best example is undoubtedly Victor Hugo, who never traveled to the Orient, although he excelled in *Orientalism* (1829). In the words of Said “European culture reinforced its own power and identity by profiling itself against the Orient as its substitute, even its hidden self” (2000: 12).

Throughout the 19th century, the East, especially the Middle East, was a favorite place of travel and literary inspiration for Europeans. Moreover, European literature was created an important corpus in the oriental style, often based on personal travel experiences.

Lamartine considers the Orient as the homeland of his imagination, which had always “been in love with the sea, the deserts, the mountains, the customs and the traces of God in the Orient. All my life the Orient had been the dream of my days of darkness in the autumn and winter mists of my native valley” (2011: 91). Gautier has

the impression of having really lived there: “It seems to me that I lived in the Orient, and when during the carnival I disguise myself in some caftan and some authentic tarbouch, I think I am resuming my real clothes” (2013: 10). Nerval is fascinated by the richness of religious alterities so that he felt “pagan in Greece, Muslim in Egypt, and pantheist among the Druses...” (1998: 90). Monsieur Ohmlyn de Flaubert (*Rage and impotence*) goes further in his oriental bovarysm: “He dreamed of the Orient! The Orient, with its burning sun, its blue sky, its golden minarets, its stone pagodas; the Orient! With his poetry full of love and incense; the Orient! With its perfumes, its emeralds, its flowers, its gardens with golden apples; the Orient! With its fairies, its caravans in the sands; the Orient! With its seraglios, abode of fresh voluptuousness” (2006: 37). All the statements quoted testify to an impeccable orientophilia, and yet certain authors will more or less openly express their repugnance towards this often illiterate and barbaric Orient.

In the preface to his *Itinerary from Paris to Jerusalem* (1811), Chateaubriand had already suggested that he was going to “look for images, that’s all”. But these images will not be an ethnological or anthropological study as with Gautier, because Chateaubriand refuses to know distant peoples and their mores: “I do not claim to have known peoples among whom I have only passed“. Therefore, he asks the reader to hear his story “less like a journey than like memoirs of a year of my life” (2005: 55). Indeed, the real subject of the story is the author himself who speaks only of himself, “eternally”, “safely”, “in perfect sincerity”. He is not interested in people of different races and colors, but in exotic landscapes, monuments, ruins, and above all the imprints that French genius left on “uncivilized” territories.

Moreover, Chateaubriand refuses to learn the language of the people where he stays; he also refuses to take off his shoes or his hat according to the mores of the country, because a true Frenchman must respect the rules of his country wherever he is; he hates the Turks, because they only devastate the world or sleep with women; the Arabs resemble animals with their crude language; the Islamic religion was

retrograde for the whole Near East, for the Lights go out where the Muslims set foot; finally, what could be more beautiful in Egypt than the monuments that the French left there during the Napoleonic campaigns? This is how Chateaubriand, in the disproportionate elevation of himself and of his French identity, adheres to the cultural model of “phobia” which seeks the differentiation of otherness. It would undoubtedly be the best example of French orientalism in the 19th century.

On the other hand, we will see later that Lamartine and Nerval, unlike Chateaubriand, create a favorable, albeit idealized, image of the Turks and the Muslim religion. What is common for all our travel writers when they land on the soil of ancient civilizations is the bitter disappointment of what they see compared to what they have “seen” in books, heard in the tales or imagined in their heads. So there appears a huge break between the real and the imaginary, between the real and the fictionalized, making the enchanted Orient a disenchanting Orient.

Athens, this altar to the gods, today has “a dark, sad, black, arid, desolate appearance; a weight on the heart; nothing living, green, graceful, animated; exhausted nature... Apocalyptic land, which seems struck by some divine curse”. The effect of Parthenon “does not correspond in any way to what one expects of it, seen thus; and the pompous words of travelers, painters or poets, fall sadly on your heart when you see this reality so far from their images” (Lamartine 2011, 161-162). Chateaubriand evokes the crows hovering around the citadel of the Acropolis, and yet the image is not at all dark or gloomy as with Lamartine, because “Athens, the Acropolis and the debris of the Parthenon were colored with the most beautiful colors of the peach blossom” and the sculptures of Phidias “came to life and seemed to move...” (2005: 186). In fact, he was disillusioned by the image of Sparta which he had first visited, and this is why the image of Athens provides him with a desired counterpoint: “Sparta and Athens have preserved their different characters even in the ruins: those of the first are sad, grave and solitary; those of the second are cheerful, light,

inhabited” (Ibid.166). And, Gautier's counterpoint seems the most interesting: not only does he remain amazed at the images offered to him by the Parthenon, but he gives primacy to reality over what any imagination would be capable of creating, because in front of this ancient monument all our dreams disperse and “reality appears to you with its sovereign power a thousand times greater than imagination” (2013:132). In addition, he abhors the imbecile perversity of the barbarians who for centuries destroyed masterpieces of plastic arts without destroying the imperishable beauty that always emanates from mutilated statues, often decapitated. Fortunately, “the imagination reconstructs the absent body, perhaps more beautiful than it had emerged from the pure block of Paros or Pentelica” (Ibid, 126).

Even if he never set foot on the island of Cythera, in his imaginary journey to the native land of Venus, Gérard de Nerval makes a clear difference between dream and reality, between Cythera imagined in myths or paintings by Antoine Watteau, and the one that is really bare, “not a tree..., not a rose, alas! Not a shell... I was looking for the shepherds and shepherdesses of Watteau”. The awareness is abrupt and relentless, which can be seen in the following parallelism: “Here is my dream... and here is my awakening! [...] the eastern sky, the sea of Ionia give each other the holy kiss of love each morning; but the earth is dead, dead under the hand of man, and the gods have flown away! (1998: 114).

Although he had never seen it, Nerval accurately imagines his disappointment at the image that “modern” Cythera would offer him, because he deeply feels the painful impression that invades us at the sight of cities and lands distant. To see with his eyes means the disappearance of our “castles in Spain”, that is to say of a marvelous world that we created for ourselves in our early youth, getting drunk on readings, paintings, dreams. It is the impression felt by Lamartine at the sight of Athens, and of Chateaubriand at the sight of Sparta, of which we have just spoken. Now, Nerval has gone a step further, for he has exactly described to us in his fantasy the real disappointment of Chateaubriand and Lamartine.

Although fascinated by the Egyptian pyramids to such an extent that he asked a traveling companion to engrave his name on them. But Chateaubriand appears very disappointed in front of Alexandria which “seemed to him the saddest and most desolate of the earth” where the new Alexandria mixes “its ruins with the ruins of the ancient city; [...] a few skinny dogs devouring carcasses of camels on the beach...” (2005: 479). All the same, Egypt remains the cradle of sciences, religions, laws, in a word – of the human race, but today this country suffers under the yoke of modern illiteracy. Nevertheless, in the eyes of Chateaubriand, the exotic nature, the palms restores the old brilliance to this civilization because it recalls the sweet enlightened France: “The palm trees seemed lined up on the bank like those avenues with which the castles of France are decorated: nature thus takes pleasure in recalling the ideas of civilization, in the country where this civilization was born and where today reign ignorance and barbarism” (Ibid, 59).

Of this civilizing supremacy of the West speaks the meeting of Nerval (1998: 98) with a Prussian officer under the pyramid of Cheops where the officer immediately recognized a Frenchman, being happy to have crossed someone “civilized“. It is significant to point out that in Nerval's story we will find no trace of his ethnic or European superiority, except for the moment when he compares Ethiopian women to monkeys. “Otherwise, no aristocratic condescension,” concludes Claude Pichois (Ibid, 118).

As we have already mentioned, in the fertile imagination of our travelers the oriental landscapes evoke the native land or a region close to them. As he crosses the Nile River, Flaubert (2006: 84) notices the desert on the right, and the green meadow on the left: “with its sycamores it looks like from afar a plain in Normandy with its apple trees”. In addition to the castles of France already mentioned, while he goes up the Nile, Chateaubriand (2005: 163) contemplates sparse palm trees indicating “here and there villages, like the trees planted around huts in the plains of Flanders”. These reminiscences will be frequent in Palestine as we will show below.

If we except from the bewitching power of exotic landscapes, the dominant impression we have after reading the Itinerary is that Chateaubriand hates illiterate people who live and die, without knowing it, precisely at the source of any “literate” civilization. On the other hand, with Nerval we feel the tender concern and anguish in front of the men and women most threatened, be they the little people of Vienna and Cairo, prostitutes of Syra, slaves of Egypt: never with Nerval does the picturesque outweigh sympathy for the most miserable (1998: 112). Of the Jordan where the holy river in his eyes becomes a real theater of religious scenes: “I cannot say what I felt at the sight of the Jordan. Not only did this river remind me of a famous antiquity..., but its banks still offered me the theater of the miracles of my religion”. For, according to the intimate conviction of the author of *The Genius of Christianity*, it is “with the Bible and the Gospel in hand that one must travel through the Holy Land” (Chateaubriand, 2005: 349), and that means with the Bible and the Gospel before spiritual eyes.

The travel literary texts of European writers caused interest in Eastern themes. The East became a place of imaginative escape and refuge from the reality of the pragmatic West, an exotic world for many Western writers, including Chateaubriand, Lamartine, Gautier, Montesquieu, Goethe, Hugo, Byron, Flaubert, Maupassant, and others.

Jean-Baptiste Chardin, a French traveler and jeweler, wrote *“Travels in Persia and other Oriental Countries”* that influenced the French writer Charles Louis Montesquieu, who authored the novel *“Persian Letters.”* The epistolary form of the novel and the spicy news of Persian harems, the peculiar description of exotic trifles allow the author, with this novel to interest a public of completely different tastes (Montesquieu, 2015: 2). Montesquieu's *“Persian Letters”* are one of the examples of European literature that took up Eastern themes with great interest. Montesquieu responds to the interest of the European society at that time and uses oriental characters and themes, already established stereotypes, to criticize the European society. It

often mocks socio-political stupidity and it is well masked by the correspondence of Persians in Europe.

Victor Hugo composed a series of poems on the theme of the East, *Les Orientales* (1829). Hugo's interest in the East was determined by the exoticism of the East. He wanted to discover something new, to escape and a kind of relief from Europe's troubles. Hugo's poems are full of local colors. One can feel the great influence of famous Greek songs, Spanish, Arabic and Persian poetry. Some poems convey already clichéd images – baths, chadors, deserts, sexual intrigues, murders, tyrants.

The inspiration of the German writer Johann Wolfgang Goethe in the East was not caused by direct contact with it, but by reading about it and tracing it. He was fascinated by the East from his youth and wanted to translate *the Mualaq*s, a collection of samples of preislamic poetry (from the English translation of William Jones). In 1774, he published a short poem “*Mahomets Gesang*” (*Song of Muhammad*), which is a dialogue between the apostle's son-in-law and his daughter Fatima. He paints with admiration and love the life of Muhammad, who cannot be swayed by any temptation from his chosen path - this is a significant difference from the European view of the life of Muhammad before him.

Goethe published a rather extensive cycle of poems on the theme of the East, *West-Östlicher Divan* (*West-Eastern Diwan*), which was inspired by the poetry of the Persian poet Hafez. For Goethe, the East represented an exotic world, a place to escape from reality and an atmosphere where he freely expressed everything, including love themes. The romanticized and idealized image of the East, the exoticism seen by the Germans as a quest for peace, refuge and love in an imaginary East, was repeated in many other literary works (Hofwood 1999: 30).

Goethe's “*West-Eastern Diwan*” is one of the brilliant examples of East-Western literary synthesis, which is not “Saturated with patriarchal air” a simple longing for the East. The author is based on a deep knowledge of the East, including Eastern classical literature,

which is clearly palpable and tangible for the reader. Goethe wrote about the "*West- Eastern Diwan*": "My aim is to joyfully connect the West with the East, the past with the present, the Persian with the German, and grasp their manners and mentality, understand them through and in relation to each other" (Kessel 1973: 29) and indeed, this aim Justifies both the "West-Eastern Diwan" and his surprisingly interesting and informative comments, which clearly show deep knowledge of Arabic-Persian classical literature and Eastern civilization and culture in general (Gardavadze, 2009: 143-144).

George Gordon Byron formulated a similar view in England. He established the icon of the Orient as a place of romantic experiences. Lord Byron was the only poet romantic who traveled to the Orient, he was fascinated by the Orient from an early age, reading the Koran, One Thousand and One Nights, Lady Mary's letters, aiming at the true depiction of a foreign culture. Lady Mary campaigned against Western prejudices about the Turkish-Muslim community. That's what Byron loved and tried to do. Byron lived in Greece, Albania and Turkey, he felt at home in the East because he had the opportunity to escape the restrictive society of the West (Hofwood, 1999: 31).

Byron not only used oriental themes, but was distinguished by deep knowledge of the East. He creates a cycle of oriental poems ("*The Giaour*", "*The Bride of Abydos*", "*The Corsair*", "*Lara*", "*The Siege of Corinth*", "*Parisina*"). The plot of these typical romantic poems unfolds against the background of the exotic East (Sharafuddin, 1994: 223). Influenced by Byron, English poet, romanticist, Byron's friend Percy Shelley writes the poem "The Revolt of Islam".

Byron's *The Giaour* influenced one of the most important representatives of Irish romanticism, Thomas Moore, who is known for his romantic story "*Lalla Rookh*" written in verse and prose based on oriental themes. Moore delights in describing the luxury of the East and uses Oriental clichés. Moore made the main theme of his poems romantic love, which could be experienced in the East. Like others, he thought that love in the East was fundamentally different from that in the North. Because of the warm climate, he considered oriental love to

be more passionate and sensitive. Moreover, he thought that polygamy and the institution of the harem were created to overcome this situation. Middle Eastern love, according to Moore, is more direct than Western love, more down-to-earth and free of any element of idealism.

In *Lalla Rookh*, Moore's relationship with the oriental landscape is noteworthy. It is idealized as "an artificial paradise, like a theatrical production, where all the arts of sexual seduction are presented." When describing the countries, Moore uses the following comparisons: "Yemen with its blissful climate", "Syria - the land of roses", "Jordan - a sweet beach and trees full of nightingales". This is followed by the harsh air of the desert, where feelings are awakened and relationships may become more intense (Hopwood, 1999: 32).

Guy de Maupassant visited as a journalist Algeria and Tunisia. Maupassant looked at Arab society through French colonial eyes. To him, all Arabs were "thieves, strange people, childish, still primitive, as at the birth of races." The Arabs charmed him with their hospitality and he lived in their tents, although he believed that these two peoples living side by side had nothing in common. According to him, it is impossible to cross "the immeasurable and mysterious barrier that inexplicable nature has erected between the races." He was fascinated by the oriental dances and the adornment of the Arab girls, but he left North Africa so that the Arab women could not make a deep impression on him with their seductive beauty (Hopwood, 1999: 105-106).

When Byron created a cycle of oriental poems at the beginning of the 19th century, English interest in the exotic East reached its peak. It is true that the 18th century was the most fruitful in this respect, but the traces of connections between the two worlds lead back to the Anglo-Saxon period. After the spread of Christianity in England, starting from the 5th century, pilgrims and travelers moved from west to east. The first travelers from the West to the East were Christian pilgrims and scholars who flocked to the Holy Land to learn the wisdom of the East. They knew Syriac, Hebrew, Arabic languages.

Those who returned to the West spread imaginary and unrealistic representations of the East, which were then reflected in Western literature. The creation of an unreal Eastern icon corresponded to the heroic epic and mythological aesthetics of that time. The image of the East in Anglo-Saxon literature was imaginative but positive. East It was associated with heroic deeds, supernatural events, and exotic nature, however, the positive image of the East changed with the rise of Islam and turned into a negative one, which was further strengthened during the Crusades in the middle Ages and acquired special dimensions. Thus, travelers returning from the East to the West wrote accounts of the people of the East and their lands. Such early works served political and religious propaganda and did not represent the real face of the East. Moreover, the distorted representation of Eastern peoples and their cultures was done on purpose. The reason was Islam, which Europeans perceived as a threat.

The writings of European travelers about the Eastern world, which presented false and negative images of the East, influenced Western literature. Such solid stereotypes existed until the middle of the 18th century. The Middle East, the birthplace of Christianity and Islam, ancient cultures and civilizations, was perceived as a land of ignorance, wars, strange creatures and monsters while the region was flourishing politically, economically, religiously and culturally. Most British writers who had not traveled to the East themselves drew on the imaginary and unrealistic representations of the East created by early travelers as sources for their writings. They were consciously or unconsciously promoting false representations of the East. Their goal was not to show the real face of the East, but to interest the readers in the exotic East (Oueijan 1996: 4).

Edward Said distinguishes between English and French authors in terms of perception of the East. For the British, the East was India under British rule. Traveling to the Middle East meant exploring the road to the main colony. The essence of the East was defined by material possessions, so to speak, by material imagination. England defeated Napoleon, expelled France: what appeared to the English as

the East was part of the Empire. From the 1880s, Britain controlled the territory from the Mediterranean Sea to India. Writing about Egypt, Syria, Turkey, or traveling there meant expressing political will and political definition.

The European writers traveled, dreamed, and thought of places that existed primarily in their minds, memories of Orient, forgotten mysteries, veiled messages, and an almost virtuosic style whose highest literary forms are found in Flaubert, Goethe, Hugo, Byron and Nerval. The works of these western writers are entirely in the realm of imagination and are inaccessible to realization except for aesthetics. To a certain extent, the same is true of the European scientific travelers who studied the East.

Conclusion.

Through a comparative and imagological analysis, this article has examined the vision of the Orient, rather imaginary than documentary, of European writers such as Chateaubriand, Lamartine, Nerval, Gautier, Flaubert, Goethe, Byron, Hugo, Moore, Shelley, and Maupassant. The purpose of this article was then to identify and highlight the differences as well as the nuances in the images created by these great authors and travelers of the time who left us extraordinary travel stories. That said, we have proposed to show various referent images such as those of Turkey, Jordan, Iran, Greece, Egypt and Palestine where the different reflections of our travel writers intersect. We will end by noting that there is always an omnipresent civilizing idea in the East that our authors highlight.

Although they share the same taste for oriental exoticism, which is moreover a commonplace in the literature of the time, the representations of the Orient of our writer-travellers are, as we have just shown, very more varied and complex than expected. This complexity is due to the reality that they saw on the spot, but much more to what they “saw” in their individual imagination nourished by prodigious readings on the Orient specific to romantic enthusiasm. Although figments of the imagination, their stories have largely shaped the actual perception of the East in the eyes of the West. Despite

Orientalism, namely a Eurocentric and colonialist superiority that they express here and there more or less openly, as was the case with Gautier and in particular Chateaubriand, there is always an idea of civilization that all authors carry in their cultural baggage: at Chateaubriand it is the French glory of times gone by; with Gautier, in accordance with his poetics of art for art's sake, it is imperishable beauty; in Lamartine, Hugo and Goethe as poets and philosophers "born oriental", it is the idealization of the places and peoples of the enchanted Orient despite the disillusionments experienced; in Nerval, Maupassant and Byron it is concern for humanity, especially for those seriously affected by poverty; finally, with Flaubert and Byron, it is precisely the bewitching charm and magical sensuality of the landscapes, the sun, the perfumes, the flowers, the oriental princesses. As a result, even if they share the same European cultural code, each of them looks and fantasizes with their material and spiritual eyes at the same time, what a diversity of different images of the same places produces, in this case the East. The same is always different.

All reflection done, we would like to point out the edifying value resulting from the meeting of the West and the East. Traveling deepens our knowledge of others and of ourselves, because we cannot build our identity without knowing and understanding otherness. Whether it is assimilation or differentiation, favorable or deprecated image, an attitude towards the other is necessary in order to constitute the relationship of mutual respect and tolerance. The travel stories of our writers demonstrate this, because they ennoble our knowledge and sensitize our hearts to embrace the other and their difference.

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**აღმოსავლური სამყაროს რეპრეზენტაცია XIX საუკუნის
ევროპელი მწერლების ლიტერატურულ ტექსტებში**

მარინე სიორიძე

ჰუმანიტარულ მეცნიერებათა ფაკულტეტის
ევროპეისტიკის დეპარტამენტის ასოცირებული
პროფესორი ბათუმის შოთა რუსთაველის სახელმწიფო
უნივერსიტეტი. ბათუმი, საქართველო, 0610
რუსთაველის/ნინოშვილის ქ.32/35,
+995599 240 656. marine.sioridze@bsu.edu.ge
ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2189-523X>

აბსტრაქტი.

აღმოსავლური სამყაროს მიმართ ინტერესს დიდი ხნის ისტორია აქვს. ჯერ კიდევ შუა საუკუნეებში, ჯვაროსნული ლაშქრობების დროს ნათლად გამოიკვეთა განსხვავებები დასავლეთსა და აღმოსავლეთს შორის. შუა საუკუნეების ერთ-ერთი გამოჩენილი მოღვაწე, ჟაკ დე ვიტრი, მეხუთე ჯვაროსნული ლაშქრობის მონაწილე და თვითმხილველი, რომელმაც ისტორიული მოვლენები აღწერა თავის უმნიშვნელოვანეს ნაშრომში „აღმოსავლეთის ისტორია“ ანუ „იერუსალიმის ისტორია“, ადასტურებს შუა საუკუნეებში აღმოსავლურ და დასავლურ სამყაროს შორის არსებულ მკვეთრ განსხვავებებს, რომელთა შესწავლას ევროპულ ისტორიოგრაფიაში დიდი ხნის ტრადიცია აქვს. დასავლეთისა და აღმოსავლეთის პრობლემატიკა მრავალი სამეცნიერო კვლევის საგანია და აქტუალურია დღესაც.

აღმოსავლეთის თემას ყოველთვის განსაკუთრებული ადგილი ეკავა ევროპელი მწერლების შემოქმედებაში. საკვლევი თემის აქტუალობიდან გამომდინარე, ამოცანად დავისახეთ XIX საუკუნის ევროპელი მწერლების ლიტერატურული ტექსტების შესწავლა. საკვლევ მასალად შევარჩიეთ შატობრიანის, ლამარტინის, ნერვალის, გოტიეს, მოპასანის, გოეთეს, ბაირონის, შელის,

მურისა და ფლობერის აღმოსავლეთის თემაზე შექმნილი ნაშრომები. ასევე, ჩვენი ამოცანაა გამოვავლინოთ და ხაზი გავუსვათ მსგავსებებსა და განსხვავებებს ევროპელი მწერლების მიერ შექმნილ სამოგზაურო ლიტერატურაში, ვაჩვენოთ დასავლელი ავტორების თვალთ დასახული აღმოსავლეთი.

წინამდებარე კვლევა წარმართულია შედარებითი ანალიზისა და იმაგოლოგიის ძირითად პრინციპებზე დაყრდნობით. იმაგოლოგია ჰუმანიტარული კვლევის შედარებით ახალი სფეროა, რომელიც შეისწავლის „უცხო“, „სხვის“ სახეს ამა თუ იმ ქვეყნის, ეთნოსის საზოგადოებრივ თუ კულტურულ ცნობიერებაში. იმაგოლოგიური კვლევებით დაინტერესებულია შედარებითი ლიტერატურათმცოდნეობა. ლიტერატურულ იმაგოლოგიას თავისი კონკრეტული მიზნები აქვს. იგი წარმოადგენს მოძღვრებას სახეების შესახებ, ეთნიკურად, კულტურული თვალსაზრისით განსხვავებული ხალხის იმ მყარი სახეების შესახებ, რომლებიც წარმოჩენილია მხატვრულ ტექსტებში.

ჩვენი კვლევის მიზანია დასავლურ ლიტერატურულ ტექსტებში კულტურული მარკერების გამოვლენა. „სხვა“, „უცხო“ ერის თემაზე შექმნილ ლიტერატურულ ტექსტებში ყველაზე ნათლად ვლინდება შედარებითი ლიტერატურათმცოდნეობის იმაგოლოგიური ასპექტები. საბოლოო ჯამში, ამგვარი მიდგომა იქნება ერთგვარი სიახლე აღმოსავლეთის თემაზე შექმნილი ნაშრომების კვლევის პროცესში. ასევე, ჩვენი მიზანია შევისწავლოთ აღმოსავლეთის, როგორც კულტურული სივრცის იმაგოლოგია დასავლურ ლიტერატურაში, რადგან „უცხო“ ერის თემატიკაზე შექმნილ ნაწარმოებად ითვლება ნებისმიერი ტექსტი, რომელიც ეძღვნება სხვა ერის ცხოვრებას, ცივილიზაციას, კულტურას, ტრადიციებს, ადათ-წესებს, სარწმუნოებას, წარმოაჩენს „უცხო“ ერის წარმომადგენელს და მოქმედება მიმდინარეობს „სხვა“ ერის ტერიტორიაზე.

საკვანძო სიტყვები: აღმოსავლეთი; ცივილიზაცია; კულტურა; იდენტობა; ხატი; ეგზოტიკა; დასავლეთი; ლიტერატურა.