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Cultural Interpretations of Islam in the Literary Works of the Symbolist Ellis (Lev Kobylynsky)

This article examines the problem of cultural synthesis in Russia at the turn of the 19th–20th centuries through the prism of the work of Lev Kobylynsky (Ellis) — a Symbolist poet, literary theorist, translator, and mystic whose personality and poetry became a concentrated expression of the key vectors of the era. The insufficient study of the mechanisms of reception and transformation of key concepts from one spiritual tradition within the artistic consciousness of another lends particular relevance and novelty to this research. Despite the scholarly interest in Eastern motifs in Russian literature, the process of meaning formation for new concepts emerging at the intersection of Qur'anic narratives and the Russian poetic tradition requires more systematic analysis. The aim of this article is to identify and analyze the specific features of the representation of Qur'anic motifs in the works of the Symbolist poet Ellis (L.L. Kobylynsky). The authors argue that the aesthetic discourse of the Silver Age functioned as a unique semiotic laboratory in which the encounter between East and West, the classical canon and modernist experiment, generated not a mechanical combination of heterogeneous elements but a new quality — a polyphonic model of meaning generation based on hermeneutic dialogue. The study places particular emphasis on the reception of the Qur'an in the poetic legacy of Ellis. Based on an analysis of poems from the collection *Stigmata* («The Enveloping Day,» «The Night of Al-Qadr,» «The Death of the Bedouin,» and others), the article examines the mechanisms of transformation of Qur'anic motifs — from almost literal adherence to the verses (ayats) to a free Symbolist reinterpretation that intensifies the catastrophic pathos of the Day of Judgment and the mystical resonance of the Night of Decree. It is demonstrated that Ellis's interest in Islam was not driven by an external exoticization of the East but by a deep metaphysical quest: the poet perceived the Qur'an as part of a unified spiritual experience of humanity, in which eschatology and Sufi psychology resonate with Christian mysticism and the anthroposophy of Rudolf Steiner, of whom Ellis was a follower. The article also traces the connection between Ellis's Qur'anic poems and the theoretical positions of Russian Orientalists (V.M. Alekseev, S.F. Oldenburg) and the philosophical insights of Rabindranath Tagore, thereby situating the poet's work within the broader context of a global intellectual project of civilizational dialogue. The study concludes that Ellis's poetic legacy crystallizes key features of the Silver Age — an aspiration toward spiritual totality, the blurring of boundaries between arts and confessions, and the transformation of life into performance. The investigation of such «borderline» figures is recognized as a methodological necessity for understanding the universal patterns of intercultural dialogue and the phenomenon of the Silver Age in its full complexity and internal contradictions.

Keywords: Silver Age, symbolism, Ellis, reception of the Qur'an, intercultural communication.

Introduction

The aesthetic discourse of the Silver Age functioned as a unique semiotic laboratory, effecting not a simple addition but a profound synthesis of diverse cultural codes—from the classical canon to the emerging paradigms of modernism. Antiquity, in full accordance with the dominant tendency of the era, was actualized not as a museum specimen but as a living semantic resource. Its reception generated a powerful interdisciplinary resonance: philological and archaeological discoveries entered into dialogue with theosophical quests and religious-philosophical insights, jointly forming a heterogeneous yet integral cultural chronotope. It was precisely this orientation toward the synthesis of cultures that predetermined a key feature of the period's artistic language: semantic universalism. In the diverse manifestations of Silver Age creativity, complex systems of reference are established, in which motifs of Eastern and biblical origin not only coexist but enter into contrapuntal relations, creating a new, polyphonic model of meaning generation.

It was precisely this innate sensitivity of Silver Age culture, its orientation toward the «mystical» [1; 112] and the «other» [1; 112], that made it an ideal receptor for Eastern spiritual and artistic systems. It is fundamentally important to note that the dialogue with the East rested on a powerful foundation provided by the Russian academic school of Oriental studies, which reached its apogee precisely during this period.

Thus, the intellectual project of the Silver Age—characterized by a rare equilibrium between philosophical reflection and artistic experiment (vividly embodied in figures such as A. Blok, K. Balmont, N. Gumilev, V. Khlebnikov, Ellis (L.L. Kobylynsky), D. Andreev, S. Yesenin, A. Kusikov, and others)—retains its heuristic value. Its relevance, marked by a renewed surge of interest in Eurasianism and cross-cultural approaches, is not accidental. The era demonstrates that a truly large-scale cultural «performance» is impossible without an intense dialogue carried out within the unique consciousness of the creator. The Silver Age presents itself not merely as a historical example but as an operating model for epochs that define themselves at the intersection of civilizational vectors [2; 84]. The programmatic nature of the dialogue of cultures in the Silver Age was recognized by its key figures long before it became a subject of academic study. As early as 1907, the outstanding Orientalist V.M. Alekseev formulated an almost prophetic vision: «The encounter of West and East will open a vast perspective for all humanity. The reaction of the Western soul to the soul of the East, and vice versa, will create a new life, new people, a new culture. I am fortunate precisely because of this synthesis» [3; 300]. This thesis of creative synthesis as a source of «new life» finds profound development in the reflections of S.F. Oldenburg. The scholar draws a subtle comparative analysis of cognitive strategies: if the West by the beginning of the 20th century had achieved incredible heights in the knowledge of the external world through technical instrumentation («replaced the sharpness of sight with the microscope»), the East, in his opinion, preserved and developed a unique competence in introspection—knowledge of the inner world of man. «...And here at every step we see how insignificant our achievements are in this most important area,» Oldenburg states, «we constantly feel that the East here has in many ways managed to come closer to man, to understand his spiritual creativity better than we do» [4; 5]. The West's competence is here presented as «extraversion» (knowledge of the external world), while the East's competence is «introversion» or «the competence of introspection,» representing knowledge of the inner world and, consequently, an attempt to penetrate the world of the human soul. This concept of «East-West synthesis» [5; 141], actively developed in Russian literature of the time, found powerful resonance in the philosophical thought of the East itself, lending it the character of a global intellectual project. At the beginning of the 20th century, many representatives of culture sought their own paths to understanding the world, and a striking example of this was the position of the Indian thinker and poet Rabindranath Tagore, who saw in the dialogue of civilizations a path to the humanization of the modern world. In his view, the mission of the East was «to change the entire picture of modern civilization, breathing life into it where it is mechanical, replacing cold calculation with human feeling,» directing development not so much toward «power and success» as toward «harmonious and living development, toward truth and beauty» [6; 45]. This orientation—not toward confrontation but toward complementary enrichment, where «Western rationality was combined with Eastern spirituality» [7; 56]—precisely corresponded to the quests of the Russian intelligentsia of the Silver Age.

Materials and Methods

The material for this study consisted of poetic texts of the Symbolist movement, in which images of the East, the «East–West» discourse, symbolic meanings and linguistic forms associated with the modelling of a new cultural space can be traced. The analysis included works in which the Eastern component is evident both at the thematic level and within the system of motifs, images, sacred meanings and linguistic shifts: *Immortali* (Ellis, 1904), *Stigmata* (Ellis, 1911), and others. In the analysis, particular attention is paid to Qur'anic motifs, the path, prophecy, the book, faith, law, prayer, trial and spiritual transition, since it is precisely these that allow us to trace how the concept of the East is formed in poetry as an independent semantic pole. The study also takes into account scholarly works in literary studies devoted to Symbolism, cognitive poetics, intertextuality and Eastern motifs in the poetry of Ellis.

The study was theoretical in nature; therefore, its methodological basis consisted of methods of interpretation, comparison and systematisation of literary material. The primary approach was a cognitive-poetic one, through which the «East–West» model was examined as a semantic framework organising spatial, cultural, temporal and value-based relationships within the text. Within this approach, the study analyses how the poetic work links the image of the East with notions of a different world order, a different source of knowledge, a different type of historical movement and a different perspective on the future.

Motif and intertextual analysis were employed to identify the utopian dimension and Qur'anic motifs. Motif analysis was used to identify a number of stable semantic elements through which the Eastern space is constructed in the text: the motifs of the sacred word, prophecy, spiritual trial, heavenly order, cosmic movement, faith, law, the symbolic path, and prayer. Intertextual analysis was aimed at establishing links

between the Symbolist texts and the broader Eastern cultural and religious context. The focus was on identifying typologically related images, themes and symbols that suggest the presence of a Qur'anic or, more broadly, Eastern layer of meaning within the poetic structure.

The research procedure involved selecting texts, identifying semantic and linguistic markers, grouping them into thematic blocks, and subsequently generalising the findings.

Results and Discussion

Such a vector of thinking also affected the work of a prominent representative of the poetry of the so-called junior Symbolists, Lev Kobylynsky (Ellis), well known as a «translator, literary theorist and culturologist» [8; 135]. It naturally generated a deep intellectual engagement with traditional Eastern teachings: Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, and Islam. Their anthropocentrism, concentration on the inner world of the individual and their spiritual potential, became a kind of philosophical resource for Ellis, who was seeking answers to the crisis phenomena of European modernity. His fascination with the East was not exotism but a conscious choice in favor of an alternative, holistic paradigm of understanding man. From a theoretical standpoint, the process of such synthesis, being the product of a striving for spiritual-intellectual totality, possesses its own specificity in each era. In the Silver Age, it took the form not of a mechanical combination of elements but of a hermeneutic dialogue, during which the «own» and the «alien» mutually redefined each other, giving rise to a new quality—that very «new culture» of which V.M. Alekseev prophetically wrote.

Ellis's poetic activity represents a three-level project of synthesis. Together with A. Bely (B. Bugaev) and S. Solovyov, he was among the founders of the «Argonauts» circle and the Musaget publishing house, being not only a practitioner but also the first theorist of Symbolism. At the spiritual-biographical level, his fate embodies the idea of spiritual wandering and chivalry. Having traversed the path from a Moscow «Argonaut» to an émigré, absorbed after 1911 by the Catholic culture of Italy, Ellis lived the metaphor of a search for absolute values beyond national borders. And at the third level of artistic practice, his early collection *Immortali* (1904) is not merely an anthology of translations but a manifesto of timeless dialogue. The title itself («Immortals») indicates a desire to gather the «flowers» of eternal poetry—from secular lyrics to prayers—erasing the boundary between the ordinary and the divine, the Western European and the universal.

The poetry of Ellis-Kobylynsky from the very beginning, being «a focal point of many epochal contradictions, united and concentrated the expression of key aspirations of the era» [9; 63]: the theoretical understanding of new art, spiritual search extending beyond confessional and national frameworks, and the practice of cultural transfer, affirming the unity of world poetic language. As M. Tsvetaeva aptly noted, he was a «scattered poet, a man of genius» [10; 124], whose «scatteredness» across genres, languages, and countries was itself a form of service to the ideal of synthesis. Her remarkable poem «The Enchanter» (1914) captured the image of the poet Ellis:

*«On byl nash angel, byl nash demon,
Nash guverner — nash charodey,
Nash prints i rytsar'. — Byl nam vsem on
Sredi lyudey» [11; 185].
(«He was our angel, he was our demon,
Our tutor — our enchanter,
Our prince and knight. — He was everything to us
Among people») [11; 185].*

It was Ellis who had the distinction of discovering M. Tsvetaeva's poetic gift. While serving as a tutor in her artistic home, he opened to her the world of contemporary Russian poetry, introduced her to masterpieces of world poetry, revealed the features of new approaches to literature, and introduced the young high-school student Marina to the Moscow literary circle, at the very center of which his own life unfolded. Being an incredibly talented poet, his personality was a concentrated model of the main intellectual and spiritual vectors of the era, accumulating a complex of characteristic roles: an innovative poet, a virtuoso translator and erudite in Western literature, one of the founders of the theory of Symbolism, and also a metaphysical wanderer whose spiritual path—from Marxism through theosophy and mystical quests to the conscious acceptance of Catholic priesthood—mirrors the general evolution of religious-philosophical thought at the turn of the century.

His poetry concentrated the intersection of different philosophical, religious, and artistic-poetic semiotic fields. It is crucial that he not only came into contact with these spheres but achieved in each of them a significant degree of competence, which made him an ideal, «nurtured» [12; 162] product of the Silver Age—an era that chose synthesis as the highest principle of creativity and thought.

This charismatic force manifested itself in a unique ability for mimetic creativity. According to contemporaries N. Valentinov and A. Bely [12, 13], he was an «extraordinary mime,» capable of plunging spectators into a hypnotic trance with a single improvised act («a depiction of the life of Atlantis»), erasing the boundary between reality and myth. Even in friendly communication, described by Marina Tsvetaeva in the poem «The Enchanter,» his figure is surrounded by an aura of «magic» and «windblown scatteredness,» which only emphasized his status as an artist of life, whose very behavior was a performance.

The key to understanding the poet's aesthetic was the work of Charles Baudelaire. While many Symbolists turned to the French poet, for Ellis he became a personal and existential ideologue. Baudelaire's «dandyism»—the idea of transforming one's own existence into a complete work of art, living «before the mirror» [14; 48]—was embodied by Ellis with almost religious literalness. His sanctuary-room with a portrait of Baudelaire, candles, and drawn curtains was not merely an interior but a total installation materializing the aesthetics of «captivating evil» and mystical solitude. Even in poverty, he strove to follow the stylistic canon of the dandy, carrying to an absolute the era's striving to aestheticize one's everyday life.

Moreover, Ellis was the first to come under the very strong influence of the German mystical philosopher Rudolf Steiner. Steiner created his own doctrine of Anthroposophy, a synthesis of the world's major religions. According to Steiner, Anthroposophy «connects the spiritual in man with the spiritual in the universe and leads him to the one God, and the knowledge of the 'science of spirit' is a very important stage in the maturation of humanity» [8; 142].

The ideas of Anthroposophy for a long time became determinant in the poet's work, and it was this that predetermined the Symbolist poet's interest in the main sacred book of Muslims—the Qur'an. The poet's intense spiritual quest is an extremely distinctive phenomenon in the history of Russian literature. His poems on Qur'anic themes and motifs represent an artistic interpretation of the spiritual history of humanity, a search for the hidden meaning of many world events. The Qur'an, together with the Bible, became for Ellis an expression of universal truth about life and man, which later found reflection in his poetic revelations.

All of Ellis's Qur'anic poems were published in the original poetry collection *Stigmata* (1911). Every touch of Ellis to the East was directly an attempt to comprehend the mysteriously important, defining life and its mystical component. Each of his poems—«The Enveloping Day,» «The Extracting One,» «The Night of Al-Qadr,» «The Death of a Bedouin»—represents a search for spiritual awareness that within the diverse components of the Qur'an lie truths of the common history of humanity. Thus, in these poems, one can state that Ellis took the Qur'anic motifs quite seriously, and his poetic representation constitutes approaches to important themes of the Symbolist worldview. The key themes and motifs are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

Key Themes and Motifs of the Qur'an in Ellis's Texts

«The Enveloping Day»	«The Extracting One»	«The Night of Al-Qadr»	«The Death of the Bedouin»
The motifs of the oath and the Day of Judgment Surahs of the Qur'an: 7: Al-A'raf (187); 69: Al-Haqqah (1–3; 13–33); 75: Al-Qiyamah (7–9); 79: An-Nazi'at (6–14; 34–46); 81: At-Takwir (1–14); 82: Al-Infitar (1–5); 84: Al-Inshiqaq (1–5); 100: Al-'Adiyat (1–3)	The Motif of the Fallen Angel in the Epigraph of the Poem Surah 79: An-Nazi'at (1–3)	The Motifs of the Night of Decree (Al-Qadr), dedicated to the revelation of the Qur'an to the earth Surah 97: Al-Qadr (1–5)	An attempt at a free poetic rendering of the distinctive Qur'anic world and the motifs of the Holy Scripture.

The poem «The Enveloping Day (from the Qur'an)» represents a profound internalization of a number of Qur'anic surahs dedicated to the motifs of the Oath in the Qur'an and the theme of the Day of Judgment. This theme is of particular interest to the Symbolists, for within these distinctive images often lay the Symbolists' conceptual framework for explaining the world. These themes are excellently represented in the work of such Symbolist poets as D. Merezhkovsky, K. Balmont, and others.

The scenes of the Day of Judgment are described in detail in many Qur'anic surahs [15]: Al-Haqqah (69), At-Takwir (81), Al-Qiyamah (75), An-Nazi'at (79), and Al-Infitar (82), which describe grandiose events: the folding of the sun, the falling of stars, the moving of mountains, the trumpet blast of the angel Israfil, and the separation of people into the righteous and the sinners, with a description of their lot in Paradise and Hell. These and many other surahs (e.g., 17:49; 20:100-112; 22:7, 17-23; 50:41-44) provide vivid and disturbing images of the End of the World, when everyone will receive recompense for their deeds, and this is a central theme of the Qur'an. Like many representatives of Silver Age poetry, Ellis creates his own poetic representation of these days and reproduces the motifs of the Muslim Scripture. The images created by the poet transform his vision of the Qur'an's imagery and lend the text a truly catastrophic character:

*«Vdrug zakipyat morya, kak dno ogromnykh chash,
po-chelovecheski vdrug zarydayut zveri,
Vosstanut zzhivo zakopannye dshcheri,
I dushu kazhduyu postignet temnyy strazh...»* [16; 106]

*(«Suddenly the seas will boil, like the bottom of huge bowls,
Suddenly the beasts will weep in human fashion,
The daughters buried alive will arise,
And every soul will be overtaken by a dark guardian» ...)* [16; 106]

The poem is constructed as a sequence of cataclysms leading to the final separation of people. This directly corresponds to the Qur'anic description of the End of the World and the Day of Resurrection.

The poem begins with an oath (a classical Qur'anic rhetorical device). It should be noted that the motif of the oath is very important for the Scripture. Fifteen of the one hundred and fourteen surahs of the Qur'an begin with these oath-like openings. This construction is organic to the Qur'anic text and reveals a deeply figurative system of the Holy Book, expressed in a structure of semantic and meaning-transforming linguistic constructions quite unfamiliar to European perception. Ellis creates his own vision of the oath motif, conveying the greatness of God and His Scripture, the predetermination of Truth, and the necessity of following His commandments. The steeds—a symbol of fierce, uncontrollable power—refer us to Surah Al-'Adiyat («The Chargers»): «By the charging steeds that pant, / By the strikers of fire [with their hooves]» (100:1-2) [16; 106]. This explicitness sets the tone of inevitability and the wrath of God, and «...the trumpet day is near... the mournful Azrael» [16; 106].

Azrael is the angel of death in Islamic tradition. The epithet «mournful» indicates an interesting psychologization, reflecting the gravity of his spiritual mission. In the Qur'an, the angel of death is not named, but his function is described: «Say: 'The Angel of Death, who has been entrusted with you, will cause you to die; then you will be returned to your Lord'» (Qur'an 32:11) [15]. Ellis uses pan-Islamic images of the Day of Judgment and the End of the World, creating profound images: «and suddenly the mountains will race faster than a herd of goats... the enveloping day, like a fiery shroud, will clothe all bodies...» [16; 106].

In this context, there is a direct reference to key Qur'anic verses about the End of the World: «...and the mountains will be set in motion and become a mirage» (Qur'an 78:20); «On that Day they [the mountains] will be like carded wool» (Qur'an 101:5); «On the Day when they will be enveloped by the Fire» (Qur'an 52:13); «The Fire will envelop them [the sinners]» (Qur'an 29:54) [15]. Ellis creates a certain picture of the End, generalizing the internalized images and motifs of the Qur'an, emphasizing the universal scale of the end: «suddenly the seas will boil, like the bottom of huge bowls...» «suddenly the beasts will weep in human fashion» [16; 106]. The motif of panic and horror of all living things is specified in the Scripture: «When the seas overflow [and ignite]» (Qur'an 81:6) [15]; «When the seas are burst forth» (Qur'an 82:3) [15]; «On the Day when the Trumpet will be blown, and all those in the heavens and all those on the earth will be terrified» (Qur'an 27:87) [15].

In Ellis's poem, a very important image appears, taken by him from the Qur'an: «the daughters buried alive will arise,» which traces a crucial socio-religious motif referencing the pre-Islamic pagan Arab custom of burying newborn daughters alive. The condemnation of this custom is one of the important prescriptions of the Qur'an: «When the female infant buried alive is asked / For what sin she was killed...» (Qur'an 81:8-9) [15]. Ellis includes this image as a symbol of the justice of the Qur'an's teachings. For the poet, a comprehensive description of the destruction of the world becomes incredibly important: «And suddenly the earth will become but a handful of pitiful dust... and the trumpet blast will roll up the heavens like a scroll.» These

lines are an almost exact rendition of Surah 21, «The Prophets»: «On that Day We will roll up the heavens like a scroll for books» (Qur'an 21:104) [15].

The image of the scroll is a precise Qur'anic metaphor used by the poet to denote the eschatology of the end. The poetic line «And suddenly the earth from its depths will spew forth all corpses...» directly correlates with the central dogma of Resurrection in the Qur'an: «When the earth is shaken with its [final] earthquake, / And the earth discharges its burdens [the dead]» (Qur'an 99:2-4) [15], «...and will split the moon... and will cast down to earth the twelve star signs» [16; 106]. This concept of the splitting of the moon directly references the title of Surah 54 of the Qur'an — «Al-Qamar» (The Moon), the first verse of which reads: «The Hour has drawn near, and the moon has split» (Qur'an 54:1) [15]. The falling of stars becomes a common image for biblical and Qur'anic apocalypse: «And when the stars fall» (Qur'an 81:2) [15]; «...and the stars fall» (Qur'an 77:8) [15].

«...and, awakened by the trumpet, a beast with a bull's head will come out to us from the mosque...» [16; 106], is a poetic continuation of the description of the Day of Judgment. This description of ad-Dajjal (the Antichrist) in Islamic eschatology, although traditionally ad-Dajjal is not a beast but a man-tempter. However, for Ellis, he is a monstrous hybrid, the «beast of the earth,» mentioned in the Qur'an: «And when the word befalls them, We will bring forth for them a creature from the earth, which will speak to them, [saying] that the people were not certain of Our signs» (Qur'an 27:82) [15]. Ellis continues the symbolic picture of the end of the world and indicates the function of the image to mark people, reflected in the lines about the rod and seal: «in an instant, Moses' rod with Solomon's seal shall obediently convey to the throne of the Judge» [16; 106].

Moses (Musa) and Solomon (Sulayman) are great Prophets in the Qur'an, symbols of divine authority and wisdom. Their attributes (the rod, the seal) become here instruments of God's Judgment, and their truth will reach the throne of the Judge—the throne of Allah. The poet is deeply convinced that «on that Day few shall enter the eternal light...» [16; 106]. Ellis manages to describe Paradise (al-Jannah) not in sensual but in peaceful, Symbolist tones: shade, coolness, «the twinkling of eyes.» This echoes the Qur'anic descriptions of «gardens of bliss» (Qur'an 42:22), «coolness of the eyes» (32:17), «extended shade» (56:30) [15]. Ellis does not merely list the portents but creates an effect of rapid, almost explosive montage of catastrophes. His «suddenly» is repeated, emphasizing the suddenness and inevitability of the Hour of Judgment. He freely mixes Qur'anic (daughters buried alive, beast of the earth), biblical (trumpet blast, falling stars), and pan-apocalyptic (blood and pus like dew) images, creating a universal picture of the End. The poem is philosophically permeated with the idea of the transience of the world and the triumph of supreme justice. The title image of «the enveloping day, like a fiery shroud» is a brilliant metaphor. The Day of Judgment unmasks all the falsehood of the world and clothes it in the fire of Truth and Recompense for sins. Ellis creates not an illustration but a poetic symphony on themes of Qur'anic apocalypse. He remains surprisingly faithful to the spirit and letter of the Qur'anic descriptions but filters them through the prism of the Symbolist imagination, intensifying the emotional horror and metaphysical grandeur of the Day when «the heavens will be rolled up like a scroll.» This is the pinnacle of his work with Islamic material, where monumentalism serves his art.

For Lev Kobylinsky, the East, from the standpoint of Qur'anic motifs and the Islamic mystical tradition (Tasawwuf), represented an extremely important and fruitful approach because Ellis, as a theorist and practitioner of Russian Symbolism deeply engaged with Catholic and pan-Christian mysticism, frequently turned in his later poetry to Sufi imagery and philosophy. The refraction of motifs from the Muslim Scripture in the work of this Russian Symbolist and mystic interprets a key Qur'anic concept of Ellis's poetics.

In Ellis's poem «The Night of Al-Qadr,» one of the most important features of his poetry is revealed. The fact that Ellis—a deeply Christian-oriented Symbolist—chose this particular surah for poetic translation is extremely telling concerning the poet's understanding of eternity. «Laylat al-Qadr» is one of the most sacred and mysterious surahs of the Qur'an, describing the night of the Revelation of the Scripture. It is the point of direct contact between the Divine and the human, a time when the heavens open. Such themes perfectly align with the entire poetics of Symbolism, given its search for «other worlds» and mystical revelations.

At the beginning of the poem, Ellis provides an epigraph from Surah 97, «Al-Qadr»: «The Qur'an, Chapter XC VII. Revealed in Mecca. — 5 verses» [17; 109]. This almost immediately sets a tone of serious, almost scholarly engagement with the sacred text. The indication of the place of revelation (Mecca) and the number of verses emphasizes his work with the primary source, not merely a free poetic fantasy. The text itself begins with the most important key formula of Islam — the Basmala: «In the name of God, the Most

Gracious, the Most Merciful.» This is a gesture of deep respect for the text and recognition of its transcendent origin. For him as a mystic, this is not a convention but a necessary spiritual premise.

«In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

1. We sent down the Qur'an on the holy night of Al-Qadr.
2. Who will explain to you what the night of Al-Qadr means.
3. The night of Al-Qadr is longer than countless months.
4. And the Spirit and the Angels descend on the night of Al-Qadr,
To determine the affairs of the Universe for the year on that night.
5. And until dawn, only peace reigns throughout the night of Al-Qadr.» [17; 109]

The literal translation of the verse reads as follows: «Indeed, We sent it (the Qur'an) down on the Night of Decree» (Qur'an 97) [15]. Ellis replaces the word «decree» with the epithet «holy» for the night. This is a crucial semantic shift, related to Ellis's understanding of the essence of that which is defined. The Arabic «al-Qadr» carries the meaning of «decree, destiny, measure, power, magnitude.» Ellis emphasizes not so much the fatality of the night as its divine nature. The second line of Ellis's text preserves the Qur'anic rhetorical question, which points to the inscrutability, the mystery of this night, and its transcendence of human reason. This is the core of Symbolist poetics—the indication of an inexpressible mystery, within which lies a thought of surprising power and fullness. The third line of Ellis's poetic interpretation somewhat changes the meaning and conveys the depth of the poet's perception of this concept. In the Qur'an, the line is presented as: «The Night of Decree is better than a thousand months» (Qur'an 97:3) [15], implying that one night of worship on this night is better than a thousand months. Ellis radically changes the meaning, creating a free poetic interpretation: «The night of Al-Qadr is longer than countless months.» He transforms metaphysical superiority into a paradox of time, a rupture in the fabric of temporality. The night becomes a timeless eternity containing «countless months.» This is a pure Symbolist and Sufi concept: sacred time is not subject to earthly measures; it is «longer» because it participates in eternity. The fourth line of Ellis's interpretation accurately conveys the Qur'anic text related to «the angels and the Spirit.» «The Spirit» (ar-Ruh)—in Islamic tradition, often understood as the Archangel Jibril (Gabriel) or a special higher essence. For Ellis the Christian, this is undoubtedly the Holy Spirit, which adds an interconfessional mystical resonance to the text. The poetic phrase «to determine... the affairs of the Universe for the year» is an example of Ellis's brilliant poetic interpretation. The Qur'an states: «On that night, the angels and the Spirit (Jibril) descend by the permission of their Lord with all His decrees» (Qur'an 97:4) [15]. Ellis specifies and dramatizes, creating a metaphor of cosmic scale: «the affairs of the Universe» and «for the year.» He sees in this night an act of the annual renewal of the world order, the «determination» (affirmation) of destinies. Here, Ellis is close to important Islamic interpretations indicating that on this night the decree of destiny for the coming year is determined. The final phrase of the poetic text, «And until dawn, only peace reigns throughout the night of Al-Qadr,» is Ellis's poetic chord in understanding that state of divine peace, harmony opposed to the worldly bustle. Ellis hyperbolizes time, turning «better» into «longer,» transforming the night into an implicit concept of the importance of this being. Ellis does not merely translate the surah; he filters it through the prism of Russian Symbolism with its attraction to mystery, eternity, and the transfiguration of reality. He somewhat weakens the Islamic aspect (the night of fasting, prayer) and strengthens the universality of the concept of night. His «Night of Al-Qadr» is a symbol of the very possibility of the breakthrough of Eternity into time, Revelation into history, Divine Order into the chaos of the world. This is a deeply respectful and creative encounter of a Christian mystic with the heart of the Qur'anic message.

«The Death of a Bedouin» is a deeply symbolic work by Ellis, summarizing the conjunction in his work of Qur'anic eschatology and Sufi psychology. This text is not merely a description of death but a mystical drama of conversion and the soul's transfiguration at the moment of transition into eternity. The poem has a clear two-part structure, reflecting the Islamic duality: dunya — akhirah (this world — the hereafter). The two-part structure is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2

The Two-Part Structure of the Poem «The Death of a Bedouin»

Dunya — This World (lines 1-10)	Akhirah — The World of Eternity (lines 11-18)
Death of a sinner in the desert.	Akhirah — awakening in eternity. Lightness, metaphors, resolution, bliss.
Concreteness, heaviness, sin, corporeality.	but before every letter of the Qur'an, I, like a child, would obediently bow
a molten mass burned his chest	and there, in the distance, the East was already pinkening
and, like a serpent, the sunbeam sucked my temple	and, like streams from a long jug, a fresh breeze poured onto my chest
I was worse than a samum for the caravan	Am I falling or am I drawn by wings? Is it late or early hour?
crafty and greedy as a night jackal	But the distance flows in broad waves, All like an embroidered tent's hijab.»
A dog's death	And suddenly the Prophet's saying came true: my sultry gaze was enveloped by the eternal Day, and fragrance, and the singing of the stream, and caresses of women, and sweet shade.

In the poetic text, there are lines important from the standpoint of Muslim apologetics: «Calling upon the Prophet, I fell from the camel» [18; 109]. The beginning with an appeal to the Prophet (PBUH) is an act of repentance, which deeply corresponds to Islamic teaching: repentance is accepted until the death rattle. In the Qur'an: «But Allah will not forgive those who die while they are disbelievers» (Qur'an 4:18) [15]. The hero is not a disbeliever; he is a sinner, and his appeal is the key to salvation: «I was worse than a samum for the caravan... but before every letter of the Qur'an / I, like a child, would obediently bow» [18; 109]. This is a key psychological paradox. The hero is a sinner («crafty and greedy as a night jackal»), but faith and reverence for the Word of God live in his heart. The Qur'an repeatedly states that truly believing people, upon the mention of Allah, should enter a state of humble awe. Even a sinful soul preserves at its core a submission to Revelation.

Ellis skillfully works with the symbolism of images; his metaphor «a dog's death overtook the Bedouin» is a harsh, humiliating statement of a bad end, for in Arab culture, comparison with a dog is the ultimate humiliation. Ellis emphasizes the baseness, the corporeality of the end in this world. But the moment of transition to the Sufi symbolism of purification: «...from a long jug, / a fresh breeze poured onto my chest» helps us understand how profound the poet's explicit-implicit images are, and how they operate in the perception of the specificity and depth of the Eastern thematic material. Wind is a powerful Qur'anic symbol of mercy and revivification. In Surah 9, «Repentance»: «He sent a cool wind upon you to bestow His mercy upon you» (Qur'an 9:24) [15]. This breeze and the jug are the first signs of relief after death, the beginning of the soul's ablution and a symbol of purification before prayer.

Ellis creates extended visions of Eternity: Paradise (al-Jannah) is presented as «all like an embroidered tent's hijab.» The tent becomes a symbol of peace, comfort, and nobility in eternal life. The hijab in this context serves as a veil separating the manifest world from the hidden. The Qur'an says of the disbelievers: «On their hearts are veils» (Qur'an 83:14) [15]. Here, the veil is lifted, revealing eternity. Its comparison to an

embroidered tent is a pure Qur'anic metaphor: «The description of Paradise promised to the righteous: in it are rivers of water that does not stagnate... and rivers of milk... and tents» (Qur'an 47:15) [15].

The culmination of the end is presented by the poet within a symbolic confrontation with disbelief: «and suddenly the Prophet's saying came true,» «my sultry gaze was enveloped by the eternal Day» [18; 110]. The Qur'an states: «But the righteous will be in Gardens and amidst rivers, / in a seat of truth, before an All-Powerful Sovereign» (Qur'an 54:54-55) [15]. The poet reflects on the «eternal Day,» which is certainly an alternative to the night of death: «there they abide forever, in a Day that lasts» (Qur'an 50:34) [15]. The sultry gaze, which burned with passions in the world, is now satiated with the light of eternity: «and fragrance, and the singing of the stream, / and caresses of women, and sweet shade» [18; 110].

Ellis creates a direct poetic reconstruction of Qur'anic descriptions of Paradise: «fragrance of musk and ginger» (Qur'an 76:5; 83:26); the sound of flowing water — one of the main images of Paradise (Qur'an 2:25; 47:15) [15]; the caresses of women (hur): a frequent motif («purified spouses») (Qur'an 2:25; 3:15) [15]; sweet shade: «and shade extended» (Qur'an 56:30) [15] — is salvation from the scorching heat of the desert of mortal life.

Ellis creates not merely a picture of death but a parable about the saving power of faith hidden within the most fallen heart. His Bedouin is not a saint but a sinner, yet his humility before the Qur'an and his final invocation of the Prophet become the key that opens for him the gates of mercy. This is fully consistent with the Islamic doctrine of Allah's mercy (ar-Rahman), which surpasses His wrath. Ellis, being a connoisseur of mysticism, masterfully fuses the Qur'anic figurative canon with a personal, almost physiological experience of death, proving that a «dog's death» can be transfigured into eternal life through the power of sincere supplication and reverence for the Word of God.

Conclusion

Thus, Ellis proved to be an ideal receptor and subject of synthesis in the early 20th century. As a theorist of Symbolism and a practitioner of translation [19; 431], he embodied in his work the key vectors of the Silver Age. This made his poetic consciousness an ideal laboratory for a hermeneutic dialogue of cultures, in which the East (in particular, Islam) was perceived not as an external exoticism but as a source of an alternative paradigm for understanding the inner world of man, consonant with the quests of the era. Ellis masterfully fuses the Qur'anic figurative canon with the personal, demonstrating that death can be transfigured into eternal life through the power of sincere supplication and reverence for the Word of God.

His poetry «crystallizes one of the two powerful currents that seethed within Symbolism: the attraction to the irrational element and the pervasive fusion of art with life» [20; 31]. As a representative of the vivid extremes of his era, he embodied in his poetic universe the complex composition of the world and the epoch, allowing one, through a particular case, to arrive at universal patterns of cultural synthesis.

This analysis of the poetic legacy of Lev Kobylynsky (Ellis) has made it possible to identify the specificity of the Symbolist-mystical model of representing Islamic discourse, which constitutes a unique synthesis of aesthetic program, religious quest, and philosophical universalism. Ellis's interest in Islam was conditioned by deep metaphysical searches within the current of Symbolism and Anthroposophy [21; 48]. What attracted him in the Qur'an were the universal eschatological and mystical themes (the Day of Judgment, the Night of Decree, death and the transfiguration of the soul), which he regarded as part of a single spiritual experience of humanity, standing alongside biblical revelations. Consequently, the study of the legacy of such figures is not a particular task but a methodological necessity for comprehending the phenomenon of the Silver Age in all its fullness and internal contradictions. This means that Symbolist poetry used the Eastern cultural code not as decoration but as a resource for constructing an alternative model of the future. Through sacred motifs, the text was able to speak of the future order as normatively and spiritually grounded, rather than as an arbitrary or purely technical project. It was precisely this feature that distinguished the Symbolist function of Eastern space from the traditional representation.

The overcoming of this opposition took place not only at the conceptual level but also in the materiality of poetic discourse. The present study has confirmed that the model of the cultural aspect of the assimilation of Islam in the work of the Symbolist Ellis (Lev Kobylynsky) serves as a mechanism for organizing the poetic thinking of the Symbolists, and its realization through cognitive schemas, Symbolist content, sacred code, and linguistic experimentation opens up prospects for further interdisciplinary research in the fields of comparative literary poetics and intercultural semantics. The limitations of this study stem from its exclusive focus on Eastern texts and cognitive-linguistic aspects, which leaves aside other modernist movements and the socio-political context of the era. Prospects for further research lie in the incorporation of visual art to ana-

lyze the intermediality of the model, the study of the evolution of cognitive schemas in the poet's later works, and the use of digital humanities methods for large-scale mapping of Eastern motifs in Ellis's poetry.

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Эллис (Лев Кобылинский) шығармашылығында Исламды игерудің мәдениеттанулық аспектісі

Мақалада XIX–XX ғасыр тоғысындағы Ресейдегі мәдени синтез мәселесі — символист акын, әдебиет теоретигі, шебер аудармашы және мистик Лев Кобылинский (Эллис) шығармашылығының призмасы арқылы қарастырылады. Оның тұлғасы мен поэзиясы дәуірдің негізгі векторларының шоғырланған көрінісіне айналды. Бір рухани дәуірдің негізгі концептілерін екінші дәуірдің көркемдік санасы шеңберінде қабылдау және трансформациялау механизмдерінің жеткіліксіз зерттелуі зерттеуге ерекше өзектілік пен жаңалық береді. Орыс әдебиетіндегі шығыс мотивтеріне деген қызығушылыққа қарамастан, құран хикаялары мен орыс поэтикалық дәстүрінің тоғысында пайда болатын жаңа ұғымдардың мағына түзу процесі жүйелі талдауды қажет етеді. Мақаланың мақсаты — символист акын Эллистің (Л.Л. Кобылинский) шығармашылығындағы құрандық мотивтердің репрезентация

ерекшеліктерін анықтау және талдау. Авторлар Күміс ғасырдың эстетикалық дискурсы бірегей семиотикалық зертхана ретінде қызмет еткенін дәлелдейді, онда Батыс пен Шығыстың, антикалық канон мен модернистік эксперименттің кездесуі әртекті элементтердің механикалық қосындысын емес, жаңа сапаны — герменевтикалық диалогқа негізделген мағына тудырудың полифониялық моделін туғызды. Зерттеудің ерекше назары Эллистің поэтикалық мұрасындағы Құранды қабылдауға бағытталған. «Stigmata» жинағындағы («День облакающий», «Ночь Алькадра», «Смерть бедуина» және т.б.) өлеңдердің материалы негізінде құрандық мотивтердің трансформация механизмдері — аяттарды дәл дерлік ұстанудан бастап, Қиямет күнінің катастрофиялық пафосы мен Әл-Қадір түнінің мистикалық үнін күшейтетін еркін символистік интерпретацияға дейін талданады. Эллистің исламға деген қызығушылығы Шығыстың сыртқы экзотизациясынан емес, терең метафизикалық ізденіспен анықталғаны көрсетілген: ақын Құранды адамзаттың біртұтас рухани тәжірибесінің бөлігі ретінде қабылдады, мұндай эсхатология мен суфизм психологиясы христиандық мистикамен және Эллис өзі ізбасары болған Рудольф Штайнердің антропософиясымен үндес болып шығады. Мақалада сондай-ақ Эллистің құран өлеңдерінің орыс шығыстанушыларының (В.М. Алексеев, С.Ф. Ольденбург) теориялық көзқарастарымен және Рабиндранат Тагордың философиялық пайымдауларымен байланысы көрсетіледі, бұл ақын шығармашылығын өркениеттер диалогының жаһандық интеллектуалдық жобасының кең контекстінде қарастыруға мүмкіндік береді. Эллистің поэтикалық мұрасы Күміс дәуірдің негізгі ерекшеліктерін — рухани тұтастыққа ұмтылуды, өнер мен конфессиялар арасындағы шекаралардың жойылуын, өмірдің перформансқа айналуын кристаллизациялайды деген қорытынды жасалады. Осындай «шекаралық» тұлғалардың мұрасын зерттеу мәдениетаралық диалогтың әмбебап заңдылықтары мен Күміс ғасыр феноменін оның толықтығы мен ішкі қайшылықтарында түсінудің әдіснамалық қажеттілігі ретінде танылады.

Кілт сөздер: Күміс ғасыр, символизм, Эллис, Құранды қабылдау, мәдениетаралық коммуникация.

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Культурологический аспект освоения Ислама в творчестве символиста Эллиса (Льва Кобылинского)

В статье рассматривается проблема культурного синтеза в России рубежа XIX–XX веков сквозь призму творчества Льва Кобылинского (Эллиса) — поэта-символиста, теоретика литературы, виртуозного переводчика и мистика, чья личность и поэзия стали концентрированным выражением ключевых векторов эпохи. Недостаточная изученность механизмов рецепции и трансформации ключевых концептов одной духовной традиции в рамках художественного сознания другой придает исследованию особую актуальность и новизну. Несмотря на интерес к восточным мотивам в русской литературе, процесс смыслообразования новых понятий, возникающий на стыке коранических преданий и русской поэтической традиции, требует более системного анализа. Целью статьи является выявление и анализ специфики репрезентации коранических мотивов в творчестве поэта-символиста Эллиса (Л.Л. Кобылинского). Авторы доказывают, что эстетический дискурс Серебряного века функционировал как уникальная семиотическая лаборатория, где встреча Запада и Востока, античного канона и модернистского эксперимента порождала не механическую сумму разнородных элементов, а новое качество — полифоническую модель смыслопорождения, основанную на герменевтическом диалоге. Особый фокус исследования направлен на рецепцию Корана в поэтическом наследии Эллиса. На материале стихотворений из сборника «Stigmata» («День облакающий», «Ночь Алькадра», «Смерть бедуина» и др.) анализируются механизмы трансформации коранических мотивов — от почти точного следования аятам до вольной символистской интерпретации, усиливающей катастрофический пафос Судного дня и мистическое звучание Ночи Предопределения. Показано, что интерес Эллиса к исламу был обусловлен не внешней экзотизацией Востока, а глубинным метафизическим поиском: Коран воспринимался поэтом как часть единого духовного опыта человечества, где эсхатология и суфийская психология оказываются созвучными христианской мистике и антропософии Рудольфа Штейнера, чьим последователем Эллис являлся. В статье также прослеживается связь коранических стихотворений Эллиса с теоретическими установками русских востоковедов (В.М. Алексеева, С.Ф. Ольденбурга) и философскими прозрениями Рабиндраната Тагора, что позволяет рассматривать творчество поэта в широком контексте глобального интеллектуального проекта диалога цивилизаций. Делается вывод, что поэтическое наследие Эллиса кристаллизует ключевые черты Серебряного века — стремление к духовной тотальности, стирание границ между искусствами и конфессиями, превращение жизни в перформанс. Исследование наследия подобных «пограничных» фигур признаётся методологической необходимостью для понимания универсальных закономерностей межкультурного диалога и феномена Серебряного века во всей его полноте и внутренней противоречивости.

Ключевые слова: Серебряный век, символизм, Эллис, рецепция Корана, межкультурная коммуникация.

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