

Title: "The Sun of World Poetry": Pushkin Celebrations of 1949 and the Cold War
Alienation Rhetoric

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A conflict of ideologies as well as a battle for geopolitical repartition, the Cold War manifested itself in production and circulation of such spatial paradigms as the "iron curtain" and "the wall." Their intrusion in language marked the solidifying of real or imaginary borders of the new world order. In the Soviet Union, where domestic affairs, international politics, and propaganda were inseparable, the aim of the early Cold War ideological campaigns was, among other things, to justify the party's claim to the global expansion by asserting the world-wide cultural superiority of the Soviet order. The celebration of Pushkin's 150th anniversary was one of such campaigns. Taking place soon after the break-up between the former allies, it absorbed and propagated the rhetoric of the Cold War. Metaphors of isolation and border transgression proliferated in speeches of party leaders, scholars, and writers, contributing to the formation of alienation discourse, which would dominate the Soviet media and academic discourse for the next four decades.

The paper will demonstrate that, by proclaiming Pushkin "the Sun of World Poetry," Stalin's ideologues endeavored not only to extol the Soviet political order and cultural achievements, but also to justify the recent invasion of Eastern Europe and the subsequent ruthless russification of subjugated nations. In contrast to the Pushkin Centennial of 1937, which propagated the new nationalist ideology, the Anniversary of 1949 extended the map of Russian cultural influence by projecting Pushkin on the cultural space beyond Soviet borders. The paper will analyze rhetorical tensions created by the simultaneous expansion the Soviet state and the geopolitical and individual isolation, which intensified with the onset of the conflict. It will also contrast alienation paradigms of the Cold War with Pushkin's concept of border transgression, including his idea of inviolability of the self, expressed in letters and diary entries.