

Title: Genre Bending: Revisiting Pushkin's Southern Heroines  
Author: Amanda Murphy, University of Wisconsin, Madison

Although a major study by Stephanie Sandler finds that Pushkin's Southern heroines are devoiced and subjected to acts of violence, I will argue that Pushkin's choice of the Byronic/lyrical epic for his Southern Poems, with its elegiac feel, sets up the expectation for an unhappy love plot, a love triangle, and a woman who ends up dead. In fact, Pushkin's Southern heroines already reveal the earliest foundations of what would become the feminine ideal of Tatiana in *Eugene Onegin*.

Pushkin adopted and developed the plots, styles, and character traits he found in Byron's works to serve his own artistic goals. As V.M. Zhirmunsky notes, Pushkin's Southern heroines are depicted in a fundamentally different way from Byron's Eastern heroines. Whereas Byron's hero-centric Eastern tales utilize heroines as plot instruments, Pushkin depicts the inner struggles of his Southern heroines as well as his (more Byronic) heroes.

In this study, I will compare Pushkin's heroines to their Byronic counterparts, showing the unifying characteristics of Pushkin's Southern heroines and how they break genre expectations. Each of the women of Pushkin's Southern Poems is characterized by her unpredictable and sudden onset of love, her depth of feeling, her violent and jealous reactions to obstacles to her union with her beloved, and her inability to adapt to complex circumstances. As Pushkin matures, these traits develop to produce his feminine ideal.

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