
*Szymon Ostrowski*¹

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Rafiq Navruzov, *Cultural paradigms*, Adam Marszałek Publishing,
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The flow of ideas and cultures overlapping and mixing is not a phenomenon observed only in the 20th and 21st centuries. Globalization is sometimes dated back to the days of Columbus and his contacts with the Natives of the American continent. However, an amalgamation of philosophical and religious beliefs and cultures as well is one of the core achievements of, among many, the Macedonian state, the empire of Alexander the Great, Ancient Rome, and Muslim warriors of the Middle Ages. In the book “Cultural Paradigms”, author Rafiq Navruzov takes us on a journey through the history of religion and literature to describe contacts of different cultures and

different interpretations of sacred texts of the Middle East. His goal is to present ancient philosophies as prolific, humanity as imaginative, and titular cultural paradigms as key for interpretations and translation of any cultural works.

Before review of the content of the book itself, the description of it and the title is needed. The book focuses on Zoroastrian, Christian, and Muslim sacred texts and beliefs in different cultural contexts. The title, while short and catchy, does not reflect the content of Navruzov’s work in full. What is more, it can be misleading for some readers e.g. looking for publications on culture’s role in political affairs and diplomacy or looking exactly for a book written by Navruzov but unaware of its existence. The inclusion of the book in the “Asia and Pacific Library” series helps to narrow the geographical scope of the author’s research and observations. Still,

¹ PhD Candidate, Interdisciplinary Doctoral School of Social Sciences – Academia Rerum Socialium, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń; ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3592-4409>; 503449@doktorant.umk.pl.

a subheading describing more deeply the author's aim and his work would be better for a book and readers.

"Cultural Paradigms" is a monograph, a collection of sections of different lengths focusing, as it was mentioned, on ancient and medieval sacred texts: Avesta, the Holy Bible, and the Koran in different cultural contexts. Additionally, Rafiq Navruzov focuses on medieval Azerbaijani and Persian poetry, works by Goethe and Leo Tolstoy all implemented in sacral, oriental, or philosophical environments. The first three chapters focus on Zoroastrian texts and beliefs such as symbols and an understanding of good and evil. Chapter four focuses on the Bible. The fifth one is about hermeneutics, an art of interpretation of literature, in this case, sacred texts. Chapter six is focused on Goethe and his thoughts on the "Book of Dede Korkut", a Turkic pre-Islamic epic. Later in two next papers, Novruzov presents some insight into the translation of Nizami Ganjavi's works by Czech scholar Jan Rypka and he compares Nizami's philosophy and themes of his poems and novels to "Divine Comedy" by Dante Alighieri. The next four chapters are an analysis of the works of poet Nasimi and many others and translations of their works, especially Nasimi and Khafiz to Russian. This part is also another look at hermeneutics, this time on its Egyptian tradition. The book ends with three chapters on Leo Tolstoy, his views on religion and research on both the Bible and Koran

and a short text about the idea of sacrifice in different cultures.

As one can see, the list of topics contained in "Cultural Paradigms" is very long. As explained in the foreword, the publication is intended for scholars, students, and readers interested in Zoroastrianism. This aim and scope of topics make the book very specific and valuable for experts on literature, religions, and culture of the Islamic world and pre-Islamic Asia. For the less experienced audience, this book can be an entry point to start building knowledge on Zoroastrianism, research of literature, and cultural differences in general. Additional value of the book is texts about European writers Goethe and Tolstoy that introduce more or less better-known facts about their lives and works.

"Cultural Paradigms" overall are written very well and it is full of information. However, the book is not free from mistakes that could be pointed out in the editorial process. The aforementioned chapter on Jan Rypka and his research on Nizami is full of inconsistencies in naming and writing. The name of the Czech researcher is written as in this review or the "Jan Ripka" version. Additionally, in one sentence of this chapter, centuries' numbers are written down both in Arabic and Roman numbers. Still, it is a minor overlook in one chapter of a longer publication. Outside of that, no editorial or factual errors were found.

"Cultural Paradigms" by Rafiq Navruzov is, as mentioned, a good publication for

literature and theology researchers, scholars, and students. For readers unfamiliar with matters of hermeneutics and a more “historical” take on cultural globalization it is the entrance point to know more or a source of trivia-like knowledge. On the other hand, for political studies researchers it can be a reminder of the cultural dimension of globalization that should not be overlooked. A unique take on the same texts but from different cultural perspectives can tell a lot about societies, cultures, and political systems. What one needs is to reach other cultures’ definitions of such

ideas as good, evil, death, justice, honor, etc. The book loses however on a rather unspecific title and a few striking mistakes in one of its chapters. Those do not diminish the value of work that the author put in his work and the knowledge he collected and produced during his writing.

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