

S. Sholl's "Own" and "Alien" Russia

Evgenii Morozov^{1*}, Nailya Urazayeva¹, and Rinat Kusarbaev²

¹Nosov Magnitogorsk State Technical University, Department of Romano-Germanic Philology and Translation, 455000 Magnitogorsk, 38 Lenin Avenue, Russia

²South Ural State Humanitarian Pedagogical University, Department of Foreign Languages, 454038 Chelyabinsk, 69 Lenin Avenue, Russia; South Ural State University, Department of Linguistics and Translation, 454080 Chelyabinsk, 76 Lenin Avenue, Russia

Abstract. In this paper, within the framework of the linguoculturological approach, the problem of interaction of cultures is studied. In this regard, the conceptual opposition of "own" – "alien" reflects the uniqueness of perception and interpretation of the real world, due to the features of a particular culture. The authors try to restore some fragments of the character of Russia based on the material of the publicistic prose of Suzanne Sholl, the Austrian author of "Russland mit und ohne Seele". The relevance of the paper is due to the need to overcome obstacles in intercultural communication, to harmonize the positions of people and societies belonging to different cultures. The main methods of research are hermeneutic, cultural-historical, descriptive ones and a continuous sampling method as well. The attitude of the Austrian writer to Russian culture, interpersonal relations, and mental activity of a person is analyzed through the prism of the dichotomy "own" – "alien". Particular attention is paid to intercultural gaps, which are unique to one nation. Russism reflecting the national cultural specifics of the people refers to this type of lacuna. The analysis of empirical material has shown that the author develops alien cultural elements that cause her various evaluation reactions: surprise, misunderstanding, respect, protest.

The questions of the difference in mentality, the mutual perceptions of representatives of different cultures always attracted the attention of researchers. In the context of globalization that has emerged in recent decades, these aspects become even more important and acute. Openness in relations between countries and cultures and the creation of a single information space contribute to deepening the opposite tendencies in politics and culture.

On the one hand, there is a process of integration and unification, the cultural differentiation of peoples and cultures striving to preserve their own identity are intensified. In extreme manifestations, this aspiration reaches separatism and nationalism. It is difficult to build relationships based on the complete rejection of the "other" in our modern world in terms of globalization.

Only during the interethnic communication does a person comprehend the meaning of his existence, his moral value and irreplaceable significance, only with the participation of the "other" human life becomes individually and socially meaningful [1].

In this new historical context of a multicultural society, the opposition of the "own" and the "alien" comes to the fore becoming the basis for realizing and curbing these contradictory processes. Multicultural concepts of globalization should be based on the recognition of the world diversity and on the idea of tolerance. "Given the conditions of contemporary

multiethnic and multicultural world, globalization processes should be oriented gradually to the leveling of all globalized communities on the basis of the quintessence of the spiritual formation which leads to a new type of tolerance formation" [2].

According to a valid statement of Tariq Modood, "multiculturalism is a mode of integration, which can be contrasted with other modes such as assimilation, individualist-integration, and cosmopolitanism, and like the others it is based on the core democratic values of liberty, equality, and fraternity/unity. While multiculturalism involves a respect for minority identities, this is not at the expense of national identities, as long as the latter are remade to include minority as well as majority identities" [3].

The main role in these processes belongs to the strategies and models of the representation of the "own" and the "alien" in the media and literary texts that form the information culture of society and are the main factor of mass public behavior. The relevance of the study is thus determined by the expansion and intensification of intercultural exchange, the need to explore the functioning of the concept of the "own" and the "alien" in new conditions that prevailed at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries in the process of globalization and multicultural society.

The "own" and the "alien" opposition is a defining and controversial concept for many liberal arts, in

* Corresponding author: buddenbroki@mail.ru

particular, philology, linguistic culture, philosophy, political science, etc. The complex multilevel nature of the concept causes a variety of aspects of its consideration in the scientific literature. The problem of the "own" and the "alien" is a subject of discussions both in domestic and in foreign linguistics [4-11].

The concept of the "own" and the "alien" is realized at different levels of society's existence: religious, state, linguistic, ethical, etc. The "own" and the "alien" opposition is an axiological category connected with the assessment, for example, in terms of "good / bad", "right / wrong", etc.

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In intercultural hermeneutics, as one of the directions of comparative historical literary studies, the interest continues to be in the problem of introducing and perceiving the "alien" within the framework of intercultural literary discourse. We should note that the issue of studying the traces of foreign culture in national literature acquires an increasingly moral aspect at the moment. Under the study of the character of the "alien" in the host culture, we understand first of all the study of stereotypes and various prejudices of the national consciousness, as well as the possibility of culturological impression of a particular epoch, and contribute to the development of the social and literary background, which is reflected in any national literature. This statement applies to modern Austrian literature.

Russia and Austria have a rich history of coexistence, which includes a friendly partnership, enmity, competition and mutual distrust [12]. We should mention that much in the perception of the "alien" by both cultures comes from the last century, saturated with a lot of events. But only by the end of the 20th century, the elements of the mosaic of Russian reality were finally formed, which were reflected in the minds of the Austrians. Today, more than ever, cultural relations between Russia and Austria are in the stage of closest rapprochement. This is reflected in the study of various aspects of peoples' lives. The Russians go to Austria; the Austrians come to Russia in order to acquaint their citizens more closely with different aspects of the life of the Russians.

Can the foreigner's notes on foreign culture be of interest to him? Klyuchevsky V.O. undertook an attempt to answer this question, rightly observing that "everyday life conditions, everyday phenomena, first of all, fix eyes on another observer ... To describe them, expose the most prominent features, and finally express the immediate impression they made on the person unaccustomed to them, it could have been better and fuller than the people who looked at similar phenomena ... From this side, the note of a foreigner can serve as an important addition to domestic historical monuments" [13].

What are the trends in reflecting the phenomena of Russian reality through the evaluation and the attitude of the authors in modern German-language literature? For this analysis, the material of the book "Russland mit und ohne Seele" published in 2009 was taken, authored by

Suzanne Scholl, the Austrian writer, and journalist. The work is a collection of autobiographical notes relating mainly to the writer's life and her many years of work as a correspondent on ORF radio in Russia after the collapse of the USSR. Acquaintance with Russia happens gradually for the author. And many moments of unfamiliar Russia are perceived by the author through the prism of the "own" and the "alien" contradistinction based on the division of society into two groups "we" (understandable to us) and "they" (incomprehensible to us). Part of the society defined as "we" has points in common. "Own" is someone who is close to you, is like the second "I". <...> Part of the society, labeled as "they", is characterized by alienation, hostility. "The word "stranger" contains the idea of a strange and incomprehensible" [14].

The above categories are closely intertwined with each other in the text of the work. The analysis of the practical material makes it possible to expand the direction of the evaluation of the "own" and the "alien" and as a result, allows us to distinguish two components of the estimated marking. The "own" as a rule, is labeled as good, and the "other" is bad. In the analyzed work, the "alien" appears often as incomprehensible, inexplicable that require clarification.

The author repeatedly turns to the question of the existence of a "Russian soul" about which everyone keeps repeating, and he stresses the following:

Diese «russische Seele», über die so viel geredet werde; nach dem ersten Glas Wodka könne es durchaus sein, dass sie zum Vorschein komme <...> Die Menschen in Russland lebten in ständiger Anspannung, mit stets vorgehaltenem Schild und geschlossenem Visier. Man könne ja nie wissen, was einem drohe, von einem, den man nicht kenne [15].

There was a stereotyped idea about the Russians as a nation abusing vodka, and the "Russian soul" is appeared while intoxication. At the same time, the author notes the suspicion of the Russians, which she associates with the long years of repression that forced people to live in constant fear and tension.

The life of the Russians is viewed by the author through the prism of the time model. Russian culture reflects the time that moves in a circle. According to the German or Austrian approach, time is linear, one-dimensional, unidirectional and irreversible. Time moves, and its motion is continuous. Every moment is unique.

It will not be exaggerated to say that the concept included in the German word *Zeit*, realized in terms of *Pünktlichkeit*, *Planung* and *Terminkalender*, refers to the key elements of the manifestation of national culture. For most of the Russians, time is not a rigid principle of their life. Therefore, their attitude can often be called frivolous, which is reflected in all kinds of delays, non-compliance with schedules of buses, trains, etc. and is clearly demonstrated in one of the specific situations:

Natürlich gibt es keine Erklärung dafür, warum der Zug, der vor fünf Minuten abfahren sollte, noch gar nicht da ist [15].

The main city of Russia – Moscow – is represented by the author as a city of contrasts, which can be confirmed by the following examples:

Freitagnachmittag steht ganz Moskau im Stau. Egal ob man hineinfährt oder aus der Stadt Richtung Datscha unterwegs ist, alles ist paralyisiert [15].

But when the heroic character gets used to Russian reality, Moscow becomes "her own". She feels "at home" (*zu Hause*). At the same time, she does not forget to mention that Moscow aspires to be a standard world metropolis, but sometimes it still resembles the provincial Soviet past, thus pointing to the backwardness and incompetence of real Moscow:

Ich bin zu Hause. In einem Moskau, das eine normale Weltmetropole sein will und trotzdem immer noch Seiten hat, die an die provinzielle sowjetische Vergangenheit erinnern [15].

Due to the beauty of the local color and the charm of many sights, the author compares Moscow with a fairy-tale city. However, this does not apply to all of Moscow; there are places that cause antagonism for the author.

Eine Stunde später bin ich dann daheim in meiner Wohnung und schaue hinunter auf den Gartenring. Oder das, was zwischen den Tausenden Autos vom Gartenring zu sehen ist. Weiter hinten zwinkert mir ein roter Stern von einem Krematorium entgegen, die goldene Kuppel der Christ-Erlöser-Kathedrale glänzt im Dauerregen. Stünde davor nicht der klobige weiße Kasten des Innenministeriums, vor dem sich dunkelgrüne Mannschaftsautos aneinanderreihen, ich wäre wieder einmal in einer Märchenstadt angekommen. Denn das ist Moskau an manchen Orten auch – märchenhaft [15].

On the basis of the analysis of S. Sholl's work, one can draw a conclusion about the social acceptance another's culture by the author, which, however, does not always indicate personal, internal and moral comfort, since this foreign culture contradicts the values accepted in the Austrian society.

Despite the widespread understanding the breadth of the Russian soul among "ours", the Russians' readiness to share their part of the soul and answer a request of a fellowman or unfamiliar person, the author shatters this perception in the following episode:

Die Bitte an einen jungen Mann, ob er mir helfen könnte, meinen großen, schweren Koffer über den ziemlich breiten Spalt zwischen Bahnsteig und Zug zu hieven, wird mit einem verächtlichen Lachen abgelehnt [15].

S.Sholl in her book also raises a conundrum of interethnic conflicts and hostility of the Russians towards representatives of national minorities – the so-called Caucasus natives. Below is an example that clearly speaks in favor the author's opinion on this issue:

Wer von einer «Person kaukasischer Nationalität» spricht, meint: Diese Person könnte ein Terrorist sein, ein Bandit, ein Dieb, ein Mörder – auf jeden Fall aber ein Fremder, dem man nicht vertrauen kann [15].

The author explains that these people in Russian society are perceived as "outsiders who cannot be trusted" in any case. In General, according to the author, Russia has a very acute national problem:

...in Russland sind eben immer noch die Juden für alles verantwortlich, was schlecht ist. Gemeinsam mit den Tschetschenen und überhaupt allen Kaukasiern, Usbeken, Tadschiken und wie sie heißen mögen, die eben keine echten Russen sind [15].

It should be noted that for Europeans there is no difference in terms Russian (as as a nationality) and Russian (as citizenship). Therefore, such a division by nationality remains often unclear.

Moscow's climate is alien to the author who admits that this is the only thing she can not accept. Moreover, such weather is not a hindrance for a native of the Soviet Union, even from the southern republics. Description of weather is based on negatively marked vocabulary.

Draußen liegt schmutziger Schnee auf den Dächern vor den hohen Fenstern des Speisesaales. Der Himmel ist moskauerisch winterlich trüb, durch die Fensterritzen zieht es empfindlich. Galina, die Armenierin, die Südländerin, scheint das weniger zu stören als mich, die nur eines an Moskau wirklich verabscheut: das Klima [15].

It should be noted that bad weather in General is a leitmotif of the work of S. Scholl.

The "own" – the "alien" dichotomy is verbalized by many linguistic means: indicating territorial features (*in einem Moskau, in Russland, Leningrad, die Sowjetunion*), the use of anthroponyms (*Chruschtschow, Breschnjew, Konstantin Simonow, Petja, Swetlana*), ethnonyms (*Russen, Juden, Armenier, Aseris, Österreicher*), historical events (*nach blutigen Pogromen an den dort lebenden Armeniern, der unsägliche Krieg um Karabach*), personal and possessive pronouns (*ich – wir – sie; mein – unser – ihr*), lexical tools (*ein Fremder, Ausländer, exotisch, umgerechnet an die siebzig Euro Miete, keine Kopeke zahlen*), grammatical means of modality expression (*Moskau, das eine normale Weltmetropole sein will* – modality of doubt), linguoculturesmes (*die Datscha, Perestrojka, Komunalka, Politbüro*), etc.

A characteristic process of modern interaction of cultures is increasing interaction of languages, their interpenetration. When describing one or another aspect of the life of Russian society, the Austrians are forced to resort to the use of borrowings from the Russian language, which facilitates the translation of the national and cultural specifics, but also reflects the alienness of the concepts denoted by these lexemes for another culture [16]. The engaged units of foreign (Russian) language receive the status of foreign inclusions in the German language.

Russian expressions are very effective means of achieving the emotionally expressive and stylistic expressiveness of German publicistic discourse. At the same time, their appraisal is almost always accompanied by an explication of the alienity mode ("otherness", not as they do) – the "other".

All those changes caused by the October Revolution in numerous spheres of Russian life and, as a result, the formation of a new government, reflected not only the lexical composition of the Russian language but also had a significant impact on many languages of the world, including German one. There was a whole layer of

words borrowed from the Russian language or through it – Russism. However, a comparatively large number of Russian-speaking loans in modern German language refers to the Soviet era and reflects mainly Soviet realities and the political spirit of its time. The so-called "Sovietisms" are used to refer to ideas and concepts closely related to revolution and socialist construction; they are carriers of ideological content, which cannot be fully expressed through other means [17].

Due to the speed of our life and thanks to technological innovations, the process of archaizing the components of the lexical composition of the Russian language, with which there is no need to struggle is quite natural. Nevertheless, it is not as if Sovietisms have forgotten once enriched the vocabulary of speakers of the host language. The application of some of them found a broad response in the literary texts.

In the literary use of certain words borrowed from the Russian language, the German-speaking reader will have certain connections, as a rule, from his background knowledge of Russia. Since in most cases the use of Russism is determined by a specific speech situation, the appeal to them serves as a typical means of expressing an appraisal, an author's attitude to the events or phenomena described. This is especially typical of works of fiction, which is not accidental since the author has the potential to influence a reader.

To adequately perceive the meaning of the text by a representative of another culture, the author should adjust to the background knowledge of the recipient. So, when describing the places of residence of Leningraders in the text, the author uses Russism *Komunalka* with the subsequent explanation *Gemeinschaftswohnung*:

Alle anderen lebten wie die Mehrheit der Bewohner Leningrads in jenen fernen siebziger Jahren des 20. Jahrhunderts in *Komunalkas*, in *Gemeinschaftswohnungen* [15].

The book describes that most of the residents of Leningrad lived in their co-habitable apartments, without having their own housing. The shared apartments were, according to the author, an indispensable part of life for many generations of Soviet citizens:

Viele Generationen von Sowjetbürgern haben zumindest ihre ersten Lebensjahre in solchen *Komunalkas* verbracht [15].

Critically the Austrian writer refers to the social sphere in Russia. For example, she notes that elderly people in Russia are literally deprived of the right to medical care:

Wer alt ist in Russland, hat offenbar das Recht auf entsprechende medizinische Hilfe verwirkt [15].

Along with borrowed Russisms, there are German synonyms for the same concepts, but they are clearly delimited in terms of use. Thus, the Russian word "dacha" the German language has as well, but it is used only in relation to the Soviet and Russian life. In German lexical usage, the word *Landhaus*, that is, in this case, borrowed Russisms; they act as exoticisms: *Freitagnachmittag steht ganz Moskau im Stau*.

The word *Datscha*, chosen by the author, characterizes the Russian way of life and can only be used in the "Russian" context.

The situation with the female taxi described in the book ("Schenskoje Taxi" – another Russian author's use of Russism, accompanied by a translation into German – "Frauentaxi") demonstrates this approximation and development of the "alien" in the form of familiar taxis with male drivers that are not very clean and smelling of cigarettes and alcohol that the interior of female taxi is described as "peinlich sauber" (too pure – a combination of a positive characteristic with a negative hyperbolizing amplifier). Thus, the taxi interior is far from being very accurate, the author already regards it as a norm, although this must be alien to the pedantic Germans who like order.

Among the borrowings from Russian, which are adopted by German, there are lots of words defying person. And, particularly, these borrowings define person as an actor. For example, his or her profession, occupation, position, social and religious affiliation. In S. Scholl's works, we also can see the Russisms with explicit connotation. With great efforts, the heroine manages to jump into the train and sit by the window. She is looking at flashing-by highrisers, and one of these buildings has a sign: *Der Kreml wird russisch!* And an inscription: *Nazbol* [15]. Then, the author explains that notion according to the correspondence to the worst political line of Russia in the system of National Bolshevism. German folk are used to this concept, although it is still impossible to find in the dictionaries. It was similar during the Weimar Republic times, when the German National Bolsheviks were aimed at inclusion in the Soviet Russia or the USSR, and demanded to start a national revolution, but not a world communist revolution.

The realities included in the text, like *das Chruschtschowsche Tauwetter*, *Breschnjewsche Stagnation*, *Glasnost*, *Perestrojka*, *Putsch* etc., are urged at the cognitive level to activate "Russia" frame from the recipient and thereby cause a fairly complete picture of the Russian (Soviet, in this case) reality in the reader's views.

On the one hand, S. Sholl's work explores the development of alien models of cultural behavior, which makes it possible to try to understand the mentality and worldview of representatives of a different culture, to develop strategies for accepting the fact that the world and cultures are multifaceted in their manifestations, and to cultivate tolerance for the world of "strangers"; on the other hand, it makes it possible to expand the boundaries of the "own".

Otherness in the work of S. Sholl does not mean a negative attitude, alienation, aggression, but involves the recognition of other things and the acceptance of their features. The stereotypes and prejudices are interrelated and can only be understood in mutual relations. And, finally, having looked at the "own" through the prism of the "alien" as if looking at oneself from outside, one can draw conclusions about one's own merits and demerits and adjust one's behavior. The analysis of the inclusion of Russisms in the language of Austrian documentary prose shows that most of them are used in a certain context (thematically connected with Russia or the former USSR) and serve as exoticisms to create a

national color and convey the attitude to the object as the "alien".

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