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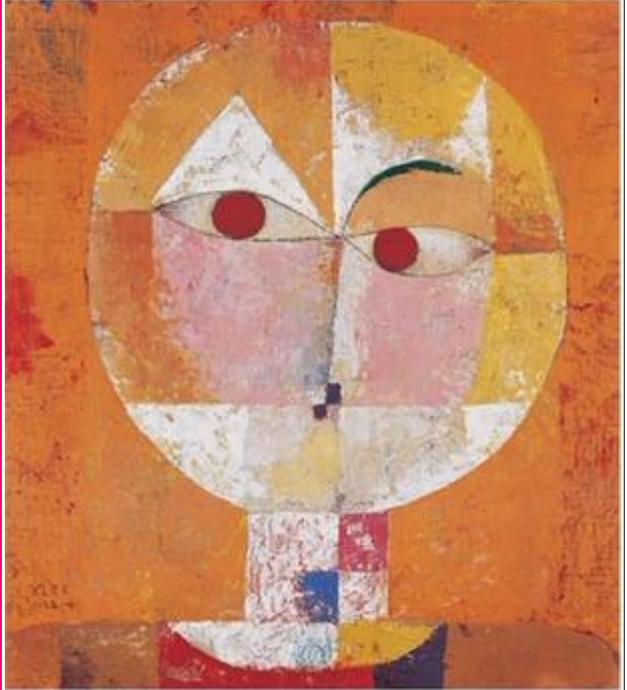
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Life retrospective of Russian emigrants in China

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Abstract

The article attempts to reproduce an integral picture of the world of Russian emigrants and the functioning of two Russian cultural enclaves that arose in China in the 1920s and 1930s based on the examples of a comparative analysis of two novels published at the beginning of the XXI century. As a result, the variety of views, styles, and forms born by the authors creates a kind of atmosphere in which readers are indulged, feeling a sense of ownership of the ongoing actions. In conclusion, the Russian culture of Shanghai and Harbin can rightfully be considered interethnic and cross-cultural.

Keywords: Russian, Emigration, Foreign, Countries, Picture.

Retrospectiva de la vida de los emigrantes rusos en China

Resumen

El artículo intenta reproducir una imagen integral del mundo de los emigrantes rusos y el funcionamiento de dos enclaves culturales rusos que surgieron en China en las décadas de 1920 y 1930 a partir de

los ejemplos de un análisis comparativo de dos novelas publicadas a principios del siglo XXI. Como resultado, la variedad de puntos de vista, estilos y formas nacidos por los autores crea una especie de atmósfera en la que los lectores se entregan, sintiendo un sentido de propiedad de las acciones en curso. En conclusión, la cultura rusa de Shanghai y Harbin puede considerarse legítimamente interétnica e intercultural.

Palabras clave: ruso, emigración, extranjero, países, imagen.

1. INTRODUCTION

XX century will enter as a period of global world wars in world history. It was a time when totalitarian regimes were formed in many countries of the world that covered the mass destruction of people and the process of forcible unification of individuals in them with words about democracy, freedom, equality, and other similar mottoes. But at the same time, the XX century was also a time of mass migration, caused by both the World Wars and the escapement of people from those political regimes to which they did not want to submit. Many factors of modern life allow us to conclude that the trend of global mass migration will continue (and, possibly, will increase) in the XXI century.

In the XX century, Russia has become a country that has given the world a huge number (millions) of emigrants who (for various reasons) were forced to leave (escape) from their country and seek a new residence in other countries. This process began during the Civil War, continued during the Second World War, and then continued in

the 1970-1980s. This process continues now, as a result - dozens of thousands of young educated people leave their homeland for the West and the East in search of self-realization. Nowadays it is difficult to name a country in the world where Russian emigrants would not live. But this process in the XX - XXI centuries, touched not only the Russians, but also Europeans, Asians and Americans. In the last decade, the problem of cultural adaptation of representatives of one civilization within the framework of another civilization has become an important problem for many countries.

The experience of emigration, accumulated by Russian people, adapting in the most difficult historical conditions to a foreign culture, over a long period of their greatest efforts to preserve the national culture, deserves special attention. This experience was represented in the literature of the Russian emigration, called the literature of the Russian foreign communities. In recent years, this topic has acquired the status of an independent scientific direction within the framework of literary and cultural studies.

Among them, a special place is occupied by the study of the Russian eastern foreign countries, the history of which was significantly different from the history of its other islands, and which has been studied much worse so far than its western - European and American - branches.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

In the 1990–2000s, after the topic of Russian emigration became open to objective scientific research and many works of art created in China were published in Russia, as well as historical documents, numerous historical, cultural, and literary studies devoted to this topic. In addition, it can be noted that the Russian East abroad itself in the 2000–2010s itself has become a special subject of literary and artistic depiction (KAHAMBING & DEGUMA, 2019).

The aforementioned works contained new information for many people and new approaches to portraying a unique cultural phenomenon - Russian enclaves, which became Shanghai and Harbin in the 1920s and 1930s, located on Chinese territory. At the same time, it can be noted that all these works were practically not noticed by modern literary criticism and academic literary criticism. All these works have a number of common artistic features, combining at the same time the features of fiction narrative and popular historical research (MELIKHOV, 2003).

As the history of China in the second half of the XIX - the first half of the XX centuries (however, like the history of Russian emigration) is poorly known to modern readers, writers who have addressed this topic, writers who have addressed this topic, inevitably have to make inserts (digressions) in which historical explanations are offered, the background is reproduced - the context recreated events. Second, the description in these works of the events of 1920-1930,

(and sometimes earlier), as a rule, was combined with a statement of some events that occurred in later periods (in the 1950s, 1970-1980s and 1990s), which made it possible to offer the reader a modern assessment of events (that is, the works had two - and sometimes more - temporary layers that overlapped one another).

Third, all these works had a ramified plot, which allowed them to be considered as adventure and adventure novels were written on a historical theme. For example, in ORLOV'S (2008; 2009) novel *Harbin Express* describes how in the years of the Civil War, the exiled physician P. Dokhturov, along with adventurers, searches in Manchuria for a mysterious Chinese remedy for all diseases - a panacea, which the Soviets also hunt for, Japanese and Chinese intelligence services. In the novel by BORISOVA (2014) *Vremena Goda* described the search for the main character Sandra and the wise CHINESE WANG (2008) in (IVAN IVANOVICH) *yan-shenzhen - lifebloom*, which allows people to gain inner strength and intelligence.

Fourth, in these novels there were several contrasting points of view - truths - about the events described, which were associated with a certain interpretation of the events described: the truth of the White Guards and the inhabitants of pre-revolutionary Russia (represented, for example, by Harbin), the truth Revolutionary Russia (the Soviet Union), the truth of the Chinese population, a look at the historical events of modern post-Soviet Russia ... Such a clash of different - sometimes diametrically opposed - positions, none of which, like as a rule, it is not drowned out by the dominant voice of the author, it

allowed the reader to make independent conclusions and offer their own assessment of the characters and their actions.

Fifth, in these works there were several types of art space - revolutionary and post-revolutionary Russia - Moscow, St. Petersburg (Petrograd), Siberia, the Far East; Russian enclaves (Harbin with several other Russian cities located on the Eastern Eastern Railway - Qiqihar and Mukden - and Shanghai) in China; China itself (outside of foreign concessions), which is presented through a description of the nature and culture of the country, through the image of numerous representatives of the Chinese people, a description of the realities of life. And, of course, reflections on national specificity — the secret of Chinese culture and history — in comparison with Russian and European cultures, which are presented either on behalf of the author or on behalf of one of the heroes, play a large role in the novels. Here is an example of the thoughts on the features of Chinese culture expressed by one of the heroes of the novel by BORISOVA (2014) *Vremena Goda*:

Yes, Manchuria is a temporary, puppet state, nothing more than a springboard for the Japanese to conquer all of China. And very good and excellent, «he said, ironically smiling. - Let the samurai conquer us, this does not need to be resisted. In fact, having ceded them to a cocky swoop, we ourselves will conquer them. We, the Chinese, will drown them in our immense body, swallow them with our vast, ocean-like spirit, and dissolve in our great culture. Whenever the Middle Empire began to wither, it received an injection of fresh barbaric

blood. The Mongols conquered us - and where are they? They became Chinese. They conquered the Manchus - and also became habitat. The aristocracy of conquerors became related to ours, our language became their language, and our culture became their culture. We swallowed and digested them all. The same will be with Japan. Our true enemy is the World of the West. He is opposite to us in everything.

He has been tearing pieces out of our body for a hundred years, and now through a communist ideology, he is trying to penetrate our soul. Without marriage to Japan, we will not stand in this great struggle. Celestial is a great female, and she needs a strong male. But this is a female mantis. When they fertilize her, she eats and absorbs her lover. So, we can conclude that the appeal to this artistic material allows us to understand not only the artistic features of individual literary works or directions, not only the features of literary life in a particular region, but also to approach the understanding of the picture of the world of Russia and China of the general laws of national cultures and civilizations, as well as the principles of national survival formed within their framework. To study this material, we will use the method of cultural-contextual analysis of the literary process.

3. RESULTS

If we compare the novels *White Shanghai* and *Harbin*, it can be noted that they complement each other in a number of aspects and

allow us to present an integral picture of the fate of the Russian eastern emigration. The novels show two different types of entry of Russian people into the culture of another country and other peoples, which can be arbitrarily designated as Shanghai and Harbin. The Shanghai method was connected with winning a place among foreign cultures, the Harbin method - with the struggle to preserve the traditional Russian way of life, which remained in the city throughout the entire period of its Russian history.

In *White Shanghai* author's irony is more pronounced, which contributes to the reader's impression of the apparent superficiality, lightness and frivolity of the text; in *Harbin*, the text coming from the author is more serious and thoughtful, the course of presentation of events is distinguished by thoroughness and the presence of philosophical digressions. At the same time, the novels *White Shanghai* and *Harbin* have many common features. The main scene of both works - the two main cultural centers of the Russian foreign countries located in China - Shanghai and Harbin - and at the same time two cities in which the diverse interests of many states intersected - China, the Soviet Union, Japan, Great Britain, and the United States of America. The authors of both novels turn to the dramatic events of the 1920s, creating an integral historically true picture of the life of Russian emigrants, as well as the events taking place with them; both writers are characterized by the desire to deeply reveal the thoughts and feelings of the heroes.

Both writers describe the difficulties of life of Russian emigrants and seek to reveal various ways of getting used to a foreign environment, to show the irreversibility of the changes that are taking place, to consider the consequences for the Russian person of forced isolation from the homeland and the need to reconcile with the role of the alien in a new country for them. The writers show the Russians' desire to recreate their world in China (either very small, personal — the world of their family and closest friends, or wider, including their community), their isolated space and protect it from the invasion of external forces (in including from their compatriots) preserving its identity.

Writers convey the bewilderment of people who are in a foreign land, reveal their psychological state and severity of experiences, show how they, on the one hand, try to preserve themselves and their values, and on the other hand, change in order to survive in new conditions. Time does not allow them to allow a single minute of delay, so events change quickly, as in a kaleidoscope, and fateful decisions must be made just as quickly. At the same time, the authors strive to maintain a neutral position, somewhat detached from the heroes, allowing the reader to draw their own conclusions based on modern ideas about history.

Both novels have a complex, ambiguous genre nature. The works can be defined as historical novels with a documentary basis in which events from the life of the main characters take place against the backdrop of grandiose historical changes. Some similarities of the

novels can be found at the level of the plots, which are based on the situation of loss/separation - gaining each other's heroes (Klim and Nina; Alexander Petrovich and Anna Ksaverievna).

In the novels, in addition to the main characters, with which the main storyline is associated, there are many secondary characters, each of which has an additional storyline branching off from the main one. These characters represent both the Russian population of Shanghai and Harbin, and the Chinese population of these regions, as well as numerous representatives of other countries. It is possible to note some closeness of individual images, for example, the appearance of other, ideal characters who were not created for life in the world of violence, evil, betrayal and hypocrisy.

A large place in the works is played by the author's thoughts reflected on the fate of the Russian people and the reasons for their historical rejection of their beloved homeland. Reproduction of the psychological and emotional drama of the characters implies the need for the reader to understand the essence of historical events and the ability to take into account the context of events, to deeply and carefully perceive the text between the lines, to reveal hidden meanings in the characters' replicas and comments. Novels only slightly open the curtain of history - one of the possible doors to the past, which for each reader is his - depending on his personal experience (KRASNOYAROVA, 2017).

In both novels, the idea of the significance and value of each unique human life is clearly expressed - regardless of nationality, citizenship, political views, philosophical ideas, religion. The small, indoor, family world created by the heroes of the novels - contrary to historical circumstances - turns out to be more valuable and more important to humanity than the imaginary interests of states, parties, nations (which in reality are most often pretended to be high state goals selfish interests of specific people who have arrogated to themselves the right to speak on behalf of the majority).

4. DISCUSSION

The protagonist of the novel *BORISOVA* (2014) the wise *CHINESE WANG* (2010) (Ivan Ivanovich) characterizes the 20th century. as the era of Hard Truths (following J. Orwell, according to European tradition, this time can be called the era of totalitarian regimes), which cannot get along with one another, and this always ends in great blood, so it is better to live in the era of Soft Truth, because they always agree among themselves (*BORISOVA*, 2014).

As a retrospective of Russian life, recreated in the novels *White Shanghai* and *Harbin*, shows, people of different nationalities and classes, being left to their own devices, can easily agree with each other and live peacefully together, benefiting both themselves and their countries. And at the same time, the texts of the novels demonstrate

that as soon as a state (through its military and diplomatic representatives, politicians or special services) begins to intervene in people's lives, trying to put it within the framework of a certain idea, how it instantly and inevitably destroys moral or physical people, destroys the small world of people, destroys the relations of understanding and trust that have developed between different people and peoples, between peoples, destroys the economy of states and ultimately inflicts a huge real harm to any country and its population, in the name of interests of which the impersonal state allegedly acts.

So, two different works of art created at about the same time by representatives of different generations of writers are largely complementary and provide the reader with the opportunity to reproduce their own picture of the life of Russian emigration in China, mentally reconstructing the events of the past and the actions of their participants. The works of art describing life in Shanghai and Harbin represent a special version of the Chinese text of Russian literature, which is combined not only with the image (description) of China, its history and nature, but with the reproduction of the cultural realities of China, the appeal to the numerous texts of Chinese culture, national religious and philosophical ideas used by the Chinese literature of plots and images, certain stylistic and plot-compositional features of Chinese artworks (KONDAKOV & KRASNOYAROVA, 2017: RAMALU ET AL, 2018).

In the foreground in these works is a description of the life of the Russian emigration, while China remains mainly the general

background of the events described. In fact, this version of the Chinese text can be called the Russian version. If applied to Russian literature of the late XVIII - first half of the XIX centuries.

We talked about the Chinese context of Russian literature, which was the research of the first Russian Sinologists and other non-artistic sources of information about China, then with respect to the works of Russian literature of the beginning of the XXI century, describing Russian emigration, we can say that the image of China in these novels turned out to be the context of Russian life, recreated in them the Russian world.

At the same time, it should be noted that the image of China in these works was not just a background, the scene. The Russian world in these works was inevitably compared with the similar Chinese world, and such a comparison made it possible to pose problems of intercultural communication, dialogue of cultures, national specifics, and allowed making historical and philosophical conclusions about the fates of different peoples and the general laws of historical development.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The Russian culture of Shanghai and Harbin can rightfully be considered interethnic and cross-cultural. As the material of both

novels shows, Shanghai and Harbin carefully preserved national traditions and at the same time creating new ones connected with the territory in which they lived. The Russians Shanghai and Harbin tried to play the role of the second Motherland. Shanghai and Harbin cultural enclaves were the bearers of the unique experience of preserving and transmitting the traditions of different national cultures, overcoming intercultural barriers, national and political borders.

This experience, gained during the period of real life in the space of the Russian city, continued to affect the lives of Shanghai and Harbin residents, and later, when the Russian history of both cities ended and the enclaves already ceased to exist, as a cultural field, an image whose study allows us to understand mechanisms of functioning of Russian culture.

Russian people, who could not withstand Firm Russian truths, fled to China. They encountered no less firm Chinese and Japanese truths. Consequently, the clash led to the formation of a special enclave - the type of Russian culture oriented towards preservation of national cultural values with simultaneous penetration into the surrounding culture - eastern (Chinese and Japanese) in Harbin and western (with a large Chinese impurity) in Shanghai.

Such a peaceful, mutually beneficial coexistence of very dissimilar cultures was created by people who were building their own small cultural worlds. As both works show, it helped to develop the economy and culture in a successful way. Nevertheless, after several

decades of successful existence, the Russian enclaves in Shanghai and Harbin were destroyed under the influence of the repressive state regimes that implement firm truths.

This negative experience of the Russian cultural enclaves in the East (in particular, reasonable in the art form) can be used during the process of artistic interpretation in the history of cultural enclaves of the 21st century.

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