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THE PSEUDO-SLAVIC REALIA IN PSEUDO-ETHNIC FANTASY: THE ISSUES OF TRANSLATION INTO THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE

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Abstract. To date, the traditional fantasy genre that has its roots in European folklore is transforming as authors seek new, fresh mythological foundations and exotic forms of narration. In an attempt to conquer foreign markets, some of them deploy Slavic mythology and embed words of Slavic origin to create their magical worlds. However, the resulting product is often a Pan-Slavic fantasy universe that refers to no specific culture. In this research, 'pseudo-ethnics' denotes an exotic atmosphere created by words associated with a broad linguacultural cluster. The object of the study was the vocabulary used to denote pseudo-Slavic realities in the novel *Shadow and Bone* by Leigh Bardugo and its film adaptation, as well as the translation techniques employed by the Russian translators. Leigh Bardugo used pseudo-Russian anthroponyms, toponyms and words that denote everyday objects and magical creatures. They represent Latinized Russian borrowings and seemingly authentic neologisms that deploy some morphological and phonetic language features an English-speaking reader might associate with the Slavic culture. However, when translated for an audience with a Slavic ethnic background, the pseudo-ethnic fantasy book or film loses its exotic flavor. The translation techniques for Latinized Russian words conveying the pseudo-ethnic atmosphere are de-transliteration and de-transcription. As part of the translation, translators had to adhere to the grammar rules of the Russian language and eliminate grammatical errors in parts of speech or gender.

Key words: fantasy, pseudo-ethnics, Slavic fantasy, Leigh Bardugo, translation, realia, English, Russian.

ПСЕВДОСЛАВЯНСКИЕ РЕАЛИИ В ЖАНРЕ ПСЕВДОЭТНИЧЕСКОГО ФЭНТЕЗИ В ПЕРЕВОДЕ НА РУССКИЙ ЯЗЫК

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Аннотация. Традиционный жанр фэнтези, уходящий корнями в европейский фольклор, постепенно меняется. Этот процесс выражается в поиске авторами произведений новых мифологических основ и экзотических форм выражения. В попытке завоевать зарубежные рынки некоторые из них обращаются к славянской мифологии и лексике славянского происхождения. Показано, что результатом такого поиска становится конструирование панславянской фэнтезийной вселенной, не связанной с какой-либо конкретной культурой. Применительно к таким произведениям предложено использовать термин «псевдоэтника», обозначающий экзотическую атмосферу, созданную посредством реалий, соотносящихся с весьма широким лингвокультурным кластером. Объектом исследования в статье избрана лексика, передающая псевдославянские реалии в романе американской писательницы Ли Бардуго «Тень и кость» и его экранизации, предметом – способы их передачи на русский язык. В произведении употребляются антропонимы, топонимы и слова, называющие предметы быта и волшебных существ, позволяющие читателю ассоциировать текст со славянской культурой. Установлено, что за создание псевдоэтнической атмосферы отвечают латинизированные заимствования из

русского языка, а также авторские неологизмы, в составе которых присутствуют отдельные морфологические и фонетические черты, ассоциирующиеся у англоязычного читателя с русским языком. Основные приемы перевода слов, отвечающих в тексте оригинала за создание псевдоэтнической атмосферы, можно определить как детранслитерацию и детранскрипцию в тех случаях, когда речь идет о латинизированных русских словах. В русском переводе произведение частично утрачивает свою экзотичность. Кроме того, переводчикам приходится учитывать явные для русскоязычного читателя ошибки, связанные с принадлежностью к той или иной части речи или категорией рода.

Ключевые слова: фэнтези, псевдоэтника, славянское фэнтези, Л. Бардуго, перевод, реалия, английский язык, русский язык.

Introduction

The phenomenon of ethnic identity in fantasy and science fiction has received much scientific attention. Afrofuturism studies seek inspiration from the long history of Afro-American literature [Kaplan, 2021; Ziethen, 2021]. The commercial success of Asian Sci-Fi and its screen versions led to the rise of Indian futurism [Mehan, 2017] and Asian futurism [Shin, 2017; Lavender, 2017; Xu, 2021; Stanford, 2022]. *Netflix* adaptation of *The Witcher*, a Polish fantasy series by A. Sapkowski and a fantasy action role-playing game series of the same name, sparked studies of Slavic fantasy [Abasheva, 2021; Obertová, 2022; Jágrova et al., 2019].

Thus, the fantasy genre has expanded beyond pseudo-medieval European mythologies familiar to Western Europe and the United States, with settings based on non-Western cultures [Bileta, 2020a]. While Chaohuan is strongly associated with China, Afrofuturism depicts a radically decolonized Pan-African future without being tied to any African community. For example, *City of Brass* (2017) by Shannon Chakraborty explores 18th century Cairo, but the ethnic setting is so conventional that the action could occur in any other Arab country. Marlon James's *Black Leopard, Red Wolf* (2019) could be set in any place in Africa. Rebecca Kuang's *The Opium War* (2018) was inspired by the history of China and Japan, but the world she describes is fictional.

Contemporary Slavic fantasy is an example of both trends, i.e., genre diversification and obscure cultural referencing. Slavic fantasy by Katherine Arden, Catherynne Valente, Naomi Novik, Sophie Anderson, Mercedes Lackey, Alicia

Jasinska, and others is often regarded as a postmodern combination of the old and the new, where authors play with traditions by setting old stories in a relevant context [Mikinka, 2020]. However, the resulting fantasy books often reflect a surrogate quasi-identity with no direct reference to the culture and history of a particular Slavic country as they refer to some abstract Eastern European culture. In this work, we define this phenomenon as **pseudo-ethnics**.

The word pseudo-ethnics originates as a marginal term in fashion and music, where it is understood as a stylization. For example, Slavic folk rock bands use motifs that are unmistakably recognized as Slavic by their target audience but are not tied to any actual country. In design, a laconic "Scandinavian style" has no connection with a specific Scandinavian country; in fashion, a "safari" pattern has little to do with a particular African ethnicity; a restaurant of Asian cuisine offers a Pan-Asian menu, etc.

In the fantasy genre, a pseudo-ethnic atmosphere is usually created using vocabulary, some of which are actual Latinized words of Slavic origin and some are imitations coined by the author. In this respect, pseudo-Slavic fantasy creates a curious phenomenon. When a Slavic fantasy novel written by an English-speaking author gains so much popularity it receives a film version, Russian translators face a challenge when the book and film enter the Russian book market. They have to deal with the situation when the linguistic community of language A (Ru) receives a book/film translated from language B (En), where reality-words of language A (Ru) are transformed following the rules of language B to convey a historical or ethnic atmosphere of the culture of language A (Ru).

The research objective is to describe the linguistic means that create a pseudo-ethnic atmosphere in Leigh Bardugo's English-language pseudo-Slavic fantasy book entitled *Shadow and Bone* and its screen adaptation, as well as to study the translation techniques used to render pseudo-Russian cultural realia.

Materials and methods

Leigh Bardugo is an American author inspired by Russian history and culture. She is probably the most famous contemporary English-writing fantasy author who exploits Slavic atmosphere and whose commercial worldwide success has been awarded by a screen-version of her book series, as well as by a global online *Grishaverse* fandom. To link her fictional world to some general Slavic context, she introduces real or made-up pseudo-Russian words that designate the actual or fictitious realia of Slavic linguistic culture. This research studied the pseudo-Slavic realia that Leigh Bardugo incorporated into her novel *Shadow and Bone* (Bardugo, 2012) and how these realia were dealt with in the official Russian translation (Bardugo, 2021). By the continuous sampling method, we obtained lexemes that denoted various pseudo-ethnic realia of the pseudo-Slavic universe in the original text, which we then analyzed from the point of view of the corresponding translation solutions in the Russian text. We also compared the Netflix TV show (2021) of the same name and its Russian dubbing by Lostfilm (2021) to define the visual and verbal means used to create a pseudo-ethnic atmosphere in the written narrative and its visual adaptation.

Results and Discussion

Leigh Bardugo's fantasy series definitely falls into L. Fialkova's definition of alternative Slavic fantasy as *fantastika* (speculative fiction), an umbrella term for fantasy "created by English-language writers based on real or assumed Slavic folklore, separate from Slavic fantasy *per se*" [Fialkova, 2021, p. 24]. Some critics believe that books written by non-Slavic writers by cultural appropriation leave no room for Slavic diversity as they all feature one and the same pseudo-Slavic magic characters, landscapes, names, etc. [Dunato, 2023]. Others say that cultural appropriation gives

an opportunity for stereotyped cultures to receive positive reconsideration [Bileta, 2020a].

In her major insight into Slavic fantasy, L. Fialkova described the magic fictional Medieval Rus' in Peter Morwood's and Katherine Arden's trilogies that mix real history with fairy-tails and *byliny* to produce a 'timeless, fairytale-like world' of crypto-history [Fialkova, 2021, p. 16]. Evelin Skye, Catherynne Valente, and Orson Scott Card appealed to a more recent Slavic chronotope of the late 19th – early 20th century [Fialkova, 2022]. Using this terminology, *Shadow and Bone* can be described as an iconic instance of alternative Slavic fantasy with late 19th-century vibes. In Leigh Bardugo's *Shadow and Bone*, the action is set in a fictional country called Ravka. Readers understand that the author is describing a conventional and magical Russia: the fictional world of Ravka is full of realia specific to Russian linguistic culture. As a result, the author creates a fantasy chronotope associated with Russian history and culture.

The phenomenon of pseudo-ethnics refers to a piece of fiction or art that recreates the atmosphere of a certain linguistic culture without mentioning this linguistic culture explicitly. In other words, it is a fantasy subgenre that exploits realia associated with the culture and history of a certain ethnic community to create an artistic universe with a special, *ethnic* atmosphere. The reader is provided with some unambiguously interpretable reference to a particular linguistic and cultural environment and gets the impression that the country fictionalized in the text is an artistic reflection of a segment of reality.

The reader of *Shadow and Bone*, as well as the audience of the TV show of the same name, can easily recognize the realia as belonging to another culture. Linguists coined several terms to describe culturally embedded words borrowed into a language or fictitious words having a pronounced cultural flavor. The words borrowed from a different language and denoting culture-specific artefacts can be called *xenonyms* [Kabakchi 1998; Pashchenko, Davletshina, 2023]; those that designate non-existing realia in fictional worlds are defined in scientific literature as *quasi-realia* [Sorokovik, 2022], *words of conlang*, i.e., constructed language [Borisova, 2023], *occasionalisms* [Mishchenko, 2023], or *neologisms* [Vasilyeva,

2024]. The novel *Shadow and Bone* contains both words of Slavic origin that denote artefacts peculiar to Russian culture (*kvas*, samovar, etc.) and words that do not exist in a Slavic language but have cultural associations due to some phonological or morphological features. Since both groups of words create a pseudo-ethnic atmosphere, the author treats them as pseudo-ethnic vocabulary.

In this research, lexemes used to create the pseudo-ethnics in the book and its screen adaptation were classified thematically into anthroponyms, toponyms, routine, and magic.

The list of **anthroponyms** that render the book its Slavic atmosphere could be divided into people's names, i.e., first names: *Mal* (*Мал*), *Pyotr* (*Петр*), *Vasily* (*Василий*), *Genya* (*Женя*), *Zoya* (*Зоя*), *Tatiana* (*Татьяна*), *Nadia* (*Надя*), *Valok* (*Валек*); family names: *Dubrov* (*Дубров*), *Morozov* (*Морозов*); or both: *Alina Starkov* (*Алина Старкова*), *Nikolai Lantsov* (*Николай Ланцов*).

It seems logical to conditionally refer to this group some words which are not anthroponyms *per se* but which identify, i.e., name, groups of people categorized by profession: *Grisha* (*Гриши*), *Corporalki* (*корпоралки*), *Etherealki* (*этериалки*), *Materialki* (*материалки*), *Alkemi* (*Алкемы*); by status: *tsar* (*царь*), *tsaritsa* (*царица*), *Koroleva* (*королева*), *Apparat* (*Аппарат*); *Sankta* (*Санкта*), *kapitan* (*капитан*), *oprichnik* (*опричник*); and by the function of direct address: *soverenyi* (*суверенный*), *lapushka* (*лапушка*). We have to bear in mind that the words that denote group nouns (*Corporalki*, *Etherealki*, *Materialki*, *Alkemi*) look and sound Slavic due to the affixes, not the roots, which are of Latin origin and hence their meaning is clear to English-speaking audience. In the film version, the words from this group included only words of direct address: *milen'kiy* (*миленький*), *moya milaya* (*моя милая*).

Some anthroponyms used in the book and in the film, which would seem foreign to an English speaker, are clearly of non-Slavic origin. For instance, a military community called *Drüskelle* (*дрюскелле*) is obviously a pseudo-Scandinavian word (probably, it is the atmosphere of a Nordic landscape that they share with the pseudo-Slavic world of Ravka); *Tante Heleen* (*Танте Хелен*) is an obvious German kinship term; the name

Baghra (*Багра*) sounds more Indian than Russian, etc. For instance, *Tante Heleen* remains *Танте* in the translation, never *тётя/тётушка* (*Aunt/Auntie*). These words give the Russian versions of the book and the film the exotic touch lost in translation because words like *tsaritsa*, *lapushka*, *oprichnik*, etc., obviously lose their exotic fleur for the Russian audience.

The list of pseudo-ethnic **toponyms** includes *Balakirev* (*Балакирев*), *Kerskii* (*Керский*), *Chernitsyn* (*Черницын*), *Poliznaya* (*Полизная*), *Kribirsk* (*Крибирск*), *Chernast* (*Черность*), *Polvost* (*Полвость*), *Petrazoi* (*Петразои*), *Novyi Zem* (*Новый Зем*), *Tsibeya* (*Цибея*), *Tula* (*Тула*), *Vy* (*Ви*). Those that appear exclusively in the screen version are *Drakonasha* (*Драконаша*) and *Dva Stolba* (*Два Столба*).

Realia related to the **routine** include utensils: *samovar* (*самовар*); foods: *kutya* (*кутья*); drinks: *kvas* (*квас*), *vodka* (*водка*); clothes: *kefta* (*кафтан*, translated in the film as *кефта*); transport: *troika* (*тройка*), *skiff* (*скифф*, translated as *корабль* in the film); currency: *kruge* (*крюге*).

The list of pseudo-ethnic words related to **magic** includes names of supernatural creatures coined by the author: *malenichki* (transliterated in the book as *маленички*, translated explanatory as *маленькие привидения* (little ghosts) in the screen version), *volcra* (*волькра*), and *nichevo'ya* (*ничегои*); magic philosophy terms: *odinakovost* (*одинаковость*), *etovost* (*этовость*), and the existing Russian word *merzost* (*скверна*), which is applied here not in its usual sense of "something abominable, physically or morally disgusting", but to denote fictional realia, i.e., a kind of forbidden magic. The book also contained several uses of interjections: *da* (*да*) and *net* (*нет*).

The lists of words used to create a pseudo-ethnic atmosphere in the book and the film did not overlap completely because the TV show omitted those exotic words which it could compensate for by visual images (*samovar*, *kutya*, *kvas*) and those that would require long explanation (*odinakovost*, *etovost*).

In some cases, Leigh Bardugo shows a surprising lack of understanding of the basic principles of Russian grammar. For example, she ignores using gender markers in family names: Alina Starkov, the main character, is a foreignized

version of a Russian surname with no female ending (-*a*), typical of all female variants of surnames ending in -*ov*. In the Russian translations of both the book and film, the name, if transliterated, would be a mistake, so the translator uses the female gender marker. However, Alina Starkov does not look as strange to Russian readers, who are familiar with Hollywood movie characters such as Natasha Romanoff, as the female surname *Morozova* combined with the male names *Alexander* and *Ilya*. Obviously, the gender marker had to go in the Russian translation, and the characters became Алина Старкова, Александр Морозов etc. Although English native readers with passing knowledge of East-European culture might not be aware of this gender mistake in naming, any Russian-speaking consultant could have pointed it out to the author.

So, Russian grammar is a challenge for English-speaking writers of Slavic fantasy. Usually, they do have some family or academic background that makes them familiar with Russian linguistic culture. Otherwise, they need to consult a native Russian speaker to check the use of Russian words and allusions to Russian culture and history [Fialkova, 2022]. As T. Bileta puts it, a failure to observe the fact that many Slavic surnames are gendered gives away an author's cultural background and level of familiarity with the setting, an error that an English-writing author of Russian or Bulgarian origin would never commit. In fact, Slavic speakers would find some of Bardugo's toponyms and naming conventions "strange and inconsistent at best" [Bileta, 2020b].

In *Shadow and Bone*, the anthroponyms and toponyms transfer the Russian atmosphere because they contain a typical Slavic family-name suffix (-*ov*/-*ev*) or are represented by Eastern-European analogues of popular Western names (*Pyotr* instead of Peter, *Vasily* instead of Bazil, *Zoya* instead of Zoie, etc.). In addition, some of them contain specific hissing phonemes that non-Russians usually associate with this culture, e.g., *Chernitsyn* or *Tsibeya*.

The collective nouns for a group of magicians *corporalki*, *etherealki*, and *materialki* have a typical Russian plural ending -*i*. However, the author coins another collective noun that sounds as *otkazat'sya*, in which any Russian speaker unmistakably recognizes an infinitive. Russian translators adapted the word to the rules

of Russian grammar by giving it a noun form (*от-казники*). As a result, the word does not look ridiculous in Russian (which *отказаться* definitely would) but it definitely loses its fantasy fleur, and this is the main problem with Russian translations of English-language Slavic fantasy: what seems exotic and mysterious in English, becomes ordinary and mundane when it returns to its original culture.

A similar phenomenon appears when it comes to translating the word *Grisha*, the collective noun that names all magic users in Bardugo's universe. To a Russian speaker, *Grisha* sounds like a diminutive form of the name *Grigory* and awakes no associations with the plural or collective. Probably, the author attempted to allude to the notoriously famous historical figure of Grigory Rasputin, whom English-speaking readers might know from popular film culture. Again, the translators had to adapt the word to the rules of Russian plural form: *гриши*. To avoid similarities with the short form of the name Grigory, a singular form of *Grisha* was shortened as *гриш*.

An English-native lover of pseudo-Slavic fantasy may develop a certain degree of familiarity with the flexion -*i* as a marker of a plural noun form because authors of Slavic fantasy tend to keep the authentic plural ending in exotic words, e.g., *chierti* or *podsnezhniki* [Fialkova, 2021, p. 24-25]. For instance, Catherine Valente uses the word *domoviye* and *rusalki* alongside its singular form *domovoi* and *rusalka* [Fialkova, 2022, p. 169].

Spelling and morphemes are an economical but effective tool to create a pseudo-ethnic atmosphere. For instance, Bardugo spells the military rank of "captain" as *kapitan*, which completely loses its exotic touch in the Russian translation (капитан); instead of using the ordinary English word *sovereign* to indicate a noble title, Bardugo makes it sound Russian by adding a typical adjectival ending: *soverenyi*. In the text version, these modifications maintain the recognizability of the word while giving it an exotic touch. In the film, the meaning of the word is difficult to understand although its function as a word of direct address remains clear.

L. Fialkova mentions a similar use of authentic historical realia-words instead of their English analogues if these words have the same origin and the meaning of the exotic Slavic words

can be easily decoded, e.g., *gvardia* instead of *guard* [Fialkova, 2021, p. 17]. In cases like this, the exotism does not violate the principle of linguistic economy, i.e., the meaning of the exotic word does not have to be explained because explanatory incorporations may threaten the integrity of the fictional world and break the reader's involvement in the narrative. In other cases, words like the abovementioned *chierti* or *podsnezhniki* work for the general alienness of the magic Slavic chronotope: *chierti* are no Biblical devils but some mysterious pagan deities of the woods, and *podsnezhniki* are not just any flowers the reader may encounter in their English-speaking world: they perform magic in Russian fairy-tails.

Due to their rich creative potential, toponyms are used in the genre of fantasy as an effort-consuming means of creating fictional worlds. However, L. Bardugo avoids overusing them. Almost all of the toponyms in *Shadow and Bone* were coined by the author. The author used only one authentic Russian toponym – *Tula* (*Тула*). Others sound Russian not only because their root morphemes seem Russian but due to the adjectival ending (*Novyi*, *Poliznaya*) or an authentic-sounding ending *-sk* in the toponym Kribirsk, which non-Russian audience might associate with real Russian toponyms, e.g. the cities of Novosibirsk, Omsk, etc. In the book and the screen version, these toponyms were translated as *Полизная* and *Новый Зем.* The translators preserved the exotism of these place names by avoiding translating them as *Полезная* and *Новая Земля*, i.e., the Russian words, from which these pseudo-Slavic toponyms seem to have originated.

Some routine realia words may be associated by a Russian reader with the Russian classical literature (*kvas*, 'a fermented drink'; *samovar*, "a tea boiler"; *troika*, "a three-horse carriage"; *vodka*, "an alcoholic drink"), as well as some more exotic vocabulary (*kutya*, "a traditional dish associated with a funeral"). All these words but *vodka* were absent in the film version. As for the translation technique, it would be logical to call it de-transliteration because *kvas*, *samovar*, *troika*, *vodka*, and *kutya* are, in fact, transliterated Russian words *квас*, *самовар*, *тройка*, *кутья*.

This is where we again face the problem of a pseudo-Slavic book being translated into the Russian language. To convey the national flavor,

English authors transliterate or transcribe Russian words, as well as italicize them. When the fantasy book is translated back into Russian, the transliterated or transcribed words lose their exotic touch. In a broader sense, it would be possible to introduce such translation techniques as *de-transcription* and *de-transliteration* to denote the process of returning a word-reality of language A (Ru) from the language of text B (En), where this reality was used to create a historical or ethnic atmosphere of the culture of language A (Ru), into the linguistic and cultural space of language A (Ru).

However, several cases cannot be addressed using de-transcription or de-transliteration techniques. For instance, the Tsar's confessor bears the title of Apparat, which would confuse the reader if transliterated as *аппарат,* i.e., literally, 'a device'. The translator of the book invented a similar-sounding word *апрат*. In the TV show, an explanatory translation technique was used, and the character appears as *духовник царя* (*minister*).

As mentioned, it is only logical that de-transcription and de-transliteration may ruin the original exotic atmosphere. To avoid this, Russian translators try to apply other translation techniques. For example, in Bardugo's book, the magical uniform called *kefta* associates both with the Russian word for a cardigan (*кофта*) and an old-time long jacket worn by the rich and noble (*каф-тан*), both Russian words being etymologically connected. The book translators chose the word *кафтан*: although the word loses its exotic touch in translation, at least it maintains some historical connotation. In the official Russian translation of the screen version, *kefta*, the word for the magical uniform, was left unchanged for the sake of exotism. Another attempt to compensate for the loss of exotism is the word *merzost* translated as *скверна*, which is stylistically marked as elevated, religious, or old-fashioned.

As for the magic creatures, L. Bardugo for some reason missed the chance to refer to Russian folklore. Thus, the *volcra* monsters sound Latin, if anything, with flexion *-a* associated not with the female gender of the Russian grammar but with the irregular plural form typical of nouns of Latin origin (*data*, *bacteria*, etc.). However, the word *nichevo'ya* (magical monsters) consists of a Russian word (*ничего* – nothing) and a Russian adjectival inflexion. In the Russian translation,

these words were adapted to the grammar rules of plurality and turned into *ничегои* and *волькры*. In the second book of the trilogy, however, there appears a sea monster named *Rusalye* (Русалье), which is an obvious reference to the mermaids of Russian folklore.

L. Fialkova dwelled upon the linguistic creativity of English-native authors who create new words for their fantasy realia based on authentic Russian words. For instance, she mentioned types of evil creatures in Katherine Arden's trilogy: the writer used existing names for supernatural beings (*domovoi*, *dvorovoi*, *polevik*, *bannik*), as well as coined some new names to signify the magic creatures of her invention, such as *bagiennik* (a swamp spirit) and *vazila* (a horse-guarding spirit) [Fialkova, 2021, p. 26]. Although in *bagiennik*, the root may remind the English reader of the word *bog*, the meaning of the neologism can hardly be fathomed without explanation. Still, the affix *-ik* may hint that the word denotes some entity if the reader manages to draw a parallel between *polevik* and *bannik*.

As for the film version of *Shadow and Bone*, the visual component played a huge role in creating the pseudo-Russian atmosphere: it comes alive not only in the speech of characters or place names but in the visual images of costumes, landscapes, interiors, etc. For instance, the patterned and gold-embroidered *keftas* remind the audience of a Cossack uniform or the last royal costume ball (1903) dedicated to the 300th anniversary of the House of the Romanovs: authentic photos of Russian princes and princesses dressed like fairy-tale characters are quite popular on the Internet. The visualization of the pseudo-Slavic world makes the best of what J. Dunato described as "the vast snowy forests and steppes of Northeastern Europe. <...> Furs, winter, wild men on horses, remote villages..." [Dunato, 2023]. The dark and gloomy landscapes oppose the brightness of gilded palace interiors, thus combining the aesthetics of *Battleship Potemkin* with the grandeur of *War and Peace*, which is in line with the story that *Shadow and Bone* tells about a country split into halves by a Shadow Fold.

Conclusion

In fantasy fiction, English-speaking authors frequently create pseudo-ethnic fantasy worlds that refer to all things simultaneously and nothing in particular. On the linguistic level, the easy way to achieve the pseudo-exotic effect is to incorporate culture-specific words into the text that create a certain umbrella-like exotic atmosphere but do not denote a country *per se*. The words that verbalize cultural artefacts give the imaginary world a sense of realism. In pursuit of an exotic atmosphere, fantasy authors often violate the grammar of the language they intended to imitate. However, when the book is translated into the language that was the source of the pseudo-ethnic vocabulary, the exotic appeal may be lost.

Shadow and Bone, a pseudo-Slavic novel by Leigh Bardugo, uses words intended to evoke associations with 19th-century Russia without specifying the setting. This fictional pseudo-Russian chronotope contains realia that refer to their normal denotations, fictional denotations, or coined lexemes derived from similar Russian words. Some realia are vaguely perceived as being of Slavic origin due to some phonetical or morphological markers. The Russian translators used transliteration and transcription to render the pseudo-Slavic vocabulary. However, they had to adapt words used in the original to the rules of Russian grammar and eliminate mistakes caused by the author's lack of experience in Russian linguistics. In many cases, the translators used translation techniques that we may call de-transliteration and de-transcription of Latinized Russian words, which inevitably lose the exotic entourage.

Most realia were maintained in the screen version, but food, drinks, and vehicles were omitted – a loss compensated by film images.

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