

## THE ART "MULTICULTURALISM": EAST AND WEST IN THE WORKS OF BARBARA FRISHMUTH

<sup>1</sup>LIUDMILA V. TROFIMOVA

*<sup>2</sup>Kazan Federal University, Leo Tolstoy Institute of Philology and Intercultural Communication, 18 Kremlevskaya Street, Kazan, 420008, Russia..*

*E-Mail: <sup>a</sup>tlv1981@mail.ru*

**Abstract:** Barbara Frishmuth is the recognized master of modern German-speaking literature, her creativity is conformable time therefore in her works it is easy to find "problem subjects" of the present. The Austrian writer creates especially individual art world, includes, following the Austrian tradition, in the narration a fantastic element and philosophical reflections. Barbara Frishmuth is the author of numerous novels, stories, and books for young generation, and concerns questions of relationship of the East and West in the creativity. Barbara Frishmuth was able to convey her ideas to the reader, as well as to set them thinking critically about life. The author of article is guided by the following methods of a research: biographic method, cultural and historical method, receptive method. Frishmuth is convinced of a possibility of peaceful existence and mutual enrichment of cultures and religions of the East and West, and also a role of the writer in rapprochement of the different worlds. Research relevance is dictated by need of reconsideration developed in the European society for decades of relationship of representatives of various religious faiths (Islam and Christianity) taking into account the changed geopolitical situation. Frishmuth could not remain indifferent to the escalating conflict between the Islamic and western countries. She also participates in these conflicts "a small part" as the writer and therefore she counted necessary to try to attract interest of people in traditions of Islam which are forgotten today by representatives of traditional Islam and fundamentalists writes. The author of article gives the generalized characteristic of "multiculturalism" and considers the work of the Austrian writer in this context. The conducted research considers a poorly studied urgent problem of the present taking into account literary experience of Barbara Frishmuth.

**Keywords:** Austrian literature; Barbara Frishmuth; multiculturalism; Islamic religion; Turkish culture

### 1 Introduction

Works of the modern Austrian writer Barbara Frishmuth (1941) are imbued with the idea of "peaceful co-existence" of "stranger" and "within the European culture. The relation to a problematic issue of integration the writer repeatedly showed in works of different years, first of all, in novels – "Disappearance of a shadow in the sun" ("Das Verschwinden des Schattens in der Sonne" 1973), "A maturing time" ("Die Entschlüsselung", 2001), "The friend's note" ("Die Schrift des Freundes", 1998), "Summer, when Anna disappeared" ("Der Sommer, in dem Anna verschwunden war", 2004).

Earlier the author of article analyzed a fabulousness problem in Barbara Frishmuth's creativity (Trofimova, 2015, page 919).

Deviation of Frishmuth from obviously female works to books about "others" countries and religions is dictated by the objective need connected with the urgent problems of globalization which became in the XX century as in European, and on a global scale.

The creative biography of Barbara Frishmuth is closely connected with the East. Defining it is possible to consider biographic aspect: Frishmuth learned Turkish, lived some time in Turkey, planned the scientific research connected with culture of a bektashy brotherhood.

Fact of common knowledge is that east mentality is more shown in the sphere of religious views of her representatives. The writer sets the task to show to readers other Islam, not that which they know from mass media. She tries to fight against prejudices which were created in the European consciousness. It, first of all, is connected with information concerning laws of Sharia with wearing a hijab by women, with the ban on alcohol, etc., besides, the fight which is intensively discussed in society between Sunnites and Shiites, and also terrorist actions of fanatical Islamic groups which represent Islam in negative light. It is natural that such image of "another" has under itself objective reality.

### 2 Methods

Material of a research are novels of Frishmuth "Disappearance of a shadow in the sun" (Das Verschwinden des Schattens in der Sonne", 1973) and "The friend's note" (Die Schrift des Freundes", 1998). The author of article is guided by methods in which experience of classical literary criticism, domestic and foreign is combined: the biographic method allows to track creative evolution of the writer, her internal dynamics, "embodiment" in society, a cultural and historical method – a way of perception, the analysis and assessment of works of art within cultural and historical aspect, a receptive method – reaction of the perceiving consciousness and feeling of the reader to the work, to the art world of the author.

### 3 Results

The author of article investigates features of "multiculturalism" of Barbara Frishmuth as one of aspects of the tolerance consisting in a possibility of parallel coexistence and mutual enrichment of cultures on material of the novel "Disappearance of a Shadow in the Sun" ("Das Verschwinden des Schattens in der Sonne" (1971). Works of the writer, an interview with it, and also literary criticism were sources of information.

In the works Frishmuth shows that Islamic and Christian cultures not only can coexist, but also mutually enrich each other. In her opinion, the high aspiration of a writer consists in becoming the link promoting rapprochement of representatives of the different worlds perceiving "the stranger's eyes, and "others" from the point of view of native.

### 4 Discussion

Barbara Frishmuth builds "bridge" in the novels between the East and the West and "acquaints" the reader with other Islamic mentality. Islam in her works appears as the phenomenon mystical, mysterious, hidden behind a mask of art and the imagination.

Under "mystical" Islam Frishmuth masks Alevism and bektashizm. The Alevism represents a form of "popular" Islam which basic principles are the love and respect for people, irrespective of religion and belonging to ethnic groups, the special attitude towards people of work. The fact that the Alevism often is considered as a mystical kind of Islam is explained by it. The Alevism reminds the multi-colored mosaic put from the customs and rituals borrowed from various religions (Zhigulskaia, 2017, page 77).

As heroes of Frishmuth are also bektash - representatives of a Sufi brotherhood who in anatoliysky and Balkan folklore are called the freethinkers living outside standards of the traditional Islamic right act. Thus, the author, emphasizing heterogeneity of east religious mentality, carries out, relying on own experience, a noble mission of the peacekeeper as acquaints the western reader with "version" of Islam unknown to a wide range.

S. Polat-Menke believes that Frishmuth intentionally emphasizes other sides of Islam, increases its importance, changes perception of the West and, therefore, gives hope for a possibility of emergence of new dialogue between two worlds (Polat-Menke, 2013, with. 416).

According to E. M. Shastina who, first of all, mean outstanding German-speaking writers, Nobel Prize laureates – Hermann Hesse and Elías Canetti: "will be in the Western European literature many examples illustrating spiritual synthesis of the East and West thanks to what the world literature was enriched with great works" (Shastina, 2013, page 201).

The term "multiculturalism" for the first time appeared in the late sixties of the XX century in Canada. In modern Europe multiculturalism assumes, first of all, manifestation of cultural interaction, inclusion in its cultural field of elements of cultures of other countries. Beyond the scope of this article there is a debatable character of the concept "multiculturalism".

Frishmuth is among those few authors who in the books try to represent relationship "" and "others", namely Turkish and Islamic and European culture. The admitted fact that the Turkish culture takes the important place in creativity of Frishmuht (Aytac,1990, c.217). K. Gellner considers that dialogue of the East and West - one of key subjects of the novels mentioned earlier. Frishmuth perfectly owns material as often happens in the countries of the East, first of all, in Turkey (Gellner,2001, c.211).

On deep belief of Frishmuth, political and economic problems are only a background, interpersonal and interfaith contacts of representatives of the East and West are more important. The so-called tolerance which became today an ordinary concept is perceived by Frishmuth not only as tolerance to religion of people of other faith, its formulation of the question is much broader.

In the first novel of a multicultural orientation "Disappearance of a shadow in the sun" in which Frishmuth tries to present Islamic culture in all richness of paints appears Istanbul with its secrets and riddles at readers as the great city which is historically connecting Christianity and Islam. Abu Khaled considers that this novel made a significant contribution to the cultural relations between the East and the West (Khaled Mohammad Abu Hattab,1978, page 35).

The work "Disappearance of a Shadow in the Sun" can be divided into two parts. In the first part the storyteller tries as it is possible to approach legends and legends of Turkey closer. At the end of the novel the legend of Simurg is told (Frishmuth,1980, page 114).

According to this legend of Simurg it can be interpreted as a symbol of "virtual unity" or to act as the destiny tool. The role of a prophetic bird of Simurg for destiny of the heroine of the novel fascinated by the Turkish myths, the city of a dream and the fairy tale is defined - the help in complex affairs, solution of the problems and acceptance of the only right decision.

The main character - the student from Austria collects material in Turkey for the thesis which cornerstone the interrelation of poetics bektashy and dervish awards is. Its circle of contacts in Turkey is limited, it lives with the teacher Zevim and the student Turgut, maintains the relations with the father's friend Aqsa. Sometimes it meets young people students and writers, feeling, as before, the barrier dividing it and foreign culture.

Real life of the heroine mixed up with myths and the imagination, with stories about an award bektashy and its history. During the researches the storyteller gets acquainted with the mystical party of moral of the 13th and 14th centuries. The heroine of the novel wishes to correspond to the new environment completely. She is convinced that knowledge of the country is possible only through its history and culture. This wrong position prevents the heroine to understand structure and problems of the Turkish society of the second half of the 20th century and to merge together with others country.

In the second part of the novel the heroine awakens from the imaginations about magnificent life in Istanbul. In spite of the fact that the girl realizes that she has feeling of love, learns friendship, gets respect, however she stands aside, is perceived as the traveler passing by. Gradually step by step she learns that her friends conduct a double life which is carefully hidden from it.

The heroine did not want to believe that existence of bektashy depended on the government, at last, she realized that the fatal flaw was to look for so-called keys to the present far back in the past and to learn culture, having mastered the lived events. "... ich hatte das Fremdsein dadurch überwinden wollen ... Und so würde es auch bleiben, solange ich es mir leisten konnte, Vergangenheit und Gegenwart nach den Gesetzen meiner Phantasie miteinander zu vertauschen ..." ("I wanted to overcome "others" ... And it would proceed until I do not realize that it is necessary to change the present and the past, adhering to laws of my imagination ..." Trofimova L. V. Lane.) (Frishmuth,1980, page 140).

The subject of its research is not of interest as all of them live in afternoon to relatives and friends, trying to solve social and political problems to which it has no relation. At last she understands that she will manage to learn others world not in its past, and through perception of the present.

G. Brokopf-Maugh writes that the importance of the novel not in acquaintance of German-speaking reader's audience to exotic culture, and in representation of process of rapprochement with "stranger", dissolution own in the stranger and as a result dissolution of an individual in society (Brokopf,1991, page 87).

N. Akbulut allocates in the novel different types of "stranger" which can be shown as in spatial stay of the European woman in others country, and in life in social groups in the Turkish society (Akbulut,1993, page 41). In his opinion, the Austrian writer presented the East like artists impressionists, reflecting at the same time the world not it what she knows it or remembers and what she sees in concrete time-point.

I. Kamaluldin writes that Frishmuth manipulates "cross-cultural" cliches, intending to show, thus, the attitude of cultures to each other (Kamaluldin,1997, page 114). According to the researcher, Frishmuth managed to be presented a full picture of a difficult political situation in Turkey to warn the reader against precipitate judgments. For this purpose the writer addresses an award of bektashy, projecting its customs and traditions on ancient history of the Turkish state.

Barbara Frishmuth played a big role promoting of the Turkish culture, at the same time not only as the author of works of art, but also thanks to the translations of texts of east authors which are a peculiar link between the East and the West. In this sense personal experience of the author allows to look at a problem as if "from within". Frishmuth seeks to be objective, but as any artist she is not free from a mythology (Shastina,2014, page 465).

Frishmuth deeply trusts how S. Polat-Menke writes, in a possibility of creation of the cross-cultural dialogue built on the tolerant attitude towards east culture (Polat-Menke,2013, page 187). K. Gellner divides this point of view. In his opinion, the Austrian writer set for herself the task to eliminate neglect and dissonance between cultures of the East and West by means of association of people (Gellner,2001, page.211).

M. Razboynikova-Frateeva considers that the writer expresses the attitude towards the Austrian reality in the novel "Disappearance of a Shadow in the Sun", relying at the same time on integration foreign-language and foreign. The novel becomes the beginning of a conversation about cross-cultural problems of the modern world (Razboynikova-Frateeva,2008, page 108). A priori integration acts as a certain key for the solution of the problems connected with resettlement of the people.

Foresight of Frishmuth strikes, the novel was written last century, however did not lose the relevance during an era of new opposition of the East and West.

Foreign culture, as envisioned by Frishmuth, acts as the guide in search of lost and forgotten as the unity of religions, overcoming

all arisen borders is necessary, it is necessary to be open for others, to sympathize with others, and the personal should not die or get lost in the stranger (Frishmuth, 1999, page 60).

Acquaintance of heroines to "other" Islam, to other east mentality makes sober them. They suddenly realize that the reality can be apprehended as a certain vital concept.

## 5 Summary

East mentality is close to Frishmuth, being a writer and the translator it is between languages and cultures, between feelings and reason, between the abstract ideas and experience.

The Austrian writer Barbara Frishmuth in literary works intends to share the wealth of experience of acquaintance to the "mystical" East and Islam with the western reader, hoping at the same time that they will become a starting point in a long way of knowledge of this religion, cultures, in settlement of the interfaith conflict.

## 6 Conclusion

"Multicultural discourse" and its manifestation in literature it is very urgent for the modern world as reflects changes of views of culture in general and on literature in particular. In the novel "Disappearance of a Shadow in the Sun" the Austrian writer Barbara Frishmuth imparts the wealth of experience of acquaintance to the East and Islam with the western reader, hoping at the same time that they will become a starting point in a long way of knowledge of this religion, cultures, in settlement of the interfaith conflict, but also in awareness of impossibility of change of own cultural convention and its injection in foreign culture.

Thus, "multiculturalism" in creativity of Frishmuth appears as a certain model of culture, as need to self-identification as a problem of the choice of values and orientation in the latest space as one of aspects of tolerance consisting in the requirement of parallel existence of cultures for the purpose of their mutual enrichment and development in the complicated relations "the - the stranger".

## Acknowledgement

The work is performed according to the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.

## References

1. Akbulut N. *Das Türkebild in der neuen deutschen Literatur 1970-1990*. Berlin: Köster, 1993. – S. 41-51.
2. Aytac G. *Edebiyat Meraklisi Okurlara Tanıtılacak Degerli Bir Yazar: Barbara Frishmuth*/G. Aytac//Edebiyat Yazilari I. – Ankara: Gündogan Yayinlari, 1990. – S.214-217.
3. Brokoph-Mauch G. *Die Begegnung mit dem Orient in Barbara Frishmuth Roman, Das Verschwinden des Schattens in der Sonne*, / G. Brokoph-Mauch// "Akten des VIII. Internationalen Germanisten-Kongresses. Begegnung mit dem "Fremden". Grenzen, Traditionen, Vergleiche. – München: iudicium, 1991. – S. 85-90.
4. Frishmuth B. *Löcher in die Mauer bohren*. Rede zur Eröffnung des Symposiums, "Wir und die anderen" / B. Frishmuth//Das Heimliche und das Unheimliche: drei Reden. Berlin: Aufbau, 1999. – S.55-76.
5. Frishmuth B. *Das Verschwinden des Schattens in der Sonne*. – München: Deutscher Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1980. – 121S.
6. Gellner C. *Grenzüberschreitungen zwischen Orient und Okzident. Literatur, Multikulturalität und Religionsdialog*/C. Gellner//Barbara Frishmuth. Fremdgänge. Ein illustrierter Streifzug durch einen literarischen Kosmos.–Salzburg-Wien-Frankfurt: Residenz Verlag, 2001. – S. 211-239.
7. Khaled Mohammad Abu Hattab. *Versuch einer kritischen Analyse zum Bild der islamischen Mystik in Barbara Frishmuths Roman "Das Verschwinden des Schattens in der Sonne"*/Khaled Muhammad Abu Hattab//FLTS 2.1978. – S. 37-56.
8. Kamaluddin Ishrak. *Das Bild des nahen Ostens in der deutschen Prosa seit 1945*. Untersuchungen zum Charakter und der Funktion von Orientalismuskonzepten bei modernen deutschsprachigen Autorinnen und Autoren. – Frankfurt a. M. 1997. - 188S.
9. Razbojnikova-Frateeva M. *Das fremde Nachbar. Integrationsproblematik im Werk von Barbara Frishmuth*/ M. Razbojnikova-Frateeva//Österreichische Literatur zwischen den Kulturen: internationale Konferenz.– Veliko Tarnovo: Röhrling Universitätsverlag, 2008. – S. 107-120.
10. Shastina E. *Elias Canetti's Biography as an Example of Mythopoesis*//World Applied Sciences Journal 30 (4): 463-467, 2014 ISSN 1818-4952 © IDOSI Publications, 2014 DOI: 10.5829/idosi.wasj.2014.30.04.14044.
11. Polat-Menke S. *Islam und Mystik bei Barbara Frishmuth. Werkanalyse und interreligiöses Lernen*. - Ostfildern: Matthias Grünewald Verlag, 2013. – 585 S.
12. Shastina E. M. *Reception of the Chinese culture in Elias Kanetti/E.M's creativity*. Shastina//Philological sciences. Questions of the theory and practice. – Tambov: Diploma, 2013.– No. 8.-P 2.–P. 200-205.
13. Trofimova L.V. *"Fabulousness" as a feature of poetics by Barbara Frishmuth*//Social Sciences (Pakistan). – 2015. – Vol.10, Is.6. – P.919 - 925.
14. Zhigulskaya D. V. *Philosophy of the Turkish Alevism*. (Electronic resource) access Mode: <http://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/filosofiya-turetskogo-alevizma> (date of the address 16.01.2017)