ON THE SEMANTICS OF THE TITLE OF M. STEPNOVA'S NOVEL "THE GARDEN"

К семантике названия романа Марины Степновой «Сад»

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ABSTRACT

The article is devoted to a specific concept based on the material of one of the literary texts of the latest Russian literature. In the novel by M. Stepnova (2019), the concept of "garden" is central and fundamentally important. In the author's picture of the world of a 21st-century writer, this concept becomes the title of the literary work, conceptually significant in the national picture of the world. In this regard, it was appropriate and logical to analyze the concept, taking into account all the potential inherent in the meaning of the word "garden", in the broadest sense, especially since "garden" is manifested in many ways in the novel. The concept of "garden" reflects the World of Russian estate life in the 19th and early 20th centuries, captured primarily by L. N. Tolstoy, A. P. Chekhov, and I. A. Bunin. In the literary text of M. Stepnova, the concept of "garden" is presented as a hero, a book, a text, Eden, and is both an image and a symbol. In addition, the concept of "garden" in the context of the novel acquires additional connotations and meanings, giving rise to new associations invisible at first glance. Thus, the semantics of the name appear multilevel because it includes both Western European traditional and nationally determined ideas, which is proved in this study.

Keywords: semantics, concept, symbol, garden, Marina Stepnova.

РЕЗЮМЕ

Статья посвящена рассмотрению конкретного концепта на материале одного из художественных текстов новейшей русской литературы. В романе М. Степновой (2019) концепт «сад» является центральным и принципиально важным. В авторской картине мира писателя XXI века этот концепт становится названием произведения, будучи одновременно концептуально-значимым в национальной картине мира в целом. В этой связи уместно и логично проанализировать концепт, что и предпринято авторами статьи, учитывая весь потенциал, заложенный в значении слова, в самом широком его понимании, тем более что «сад» в романе проявляется многогранно. Концепт «сад» отражает мир русского усадебного быта XIX — начала XX вв., запечатленный, прежде всего, Л.Н. Толстым, А.П. Чеховым, И.А. Буниным. В художественном тексте М. Степновой концепт «сад» представлен как герой, книга, текст, Эдем и является и образом, и символом. Кроме того, концепт «сад» в контексте романа приобретает дополнительные коннотации и смыслы, порождая новые ассоциации, невидимые на первый взгляд. Таким образом, семантика названия представляется многоярусной, ибо включает в себя как западноевропейские традиционные, так и национально-обусловленные представления, что и доказывается в данном исследовании.

Ключевые слова: семантика, концепт, символ, сад, Марина Степнова.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the article is to consider a specific concept based on the material of the text of the latest Russian literature. The concept of *garden* not only manifests itself in a multifaceted way in the individual author's picture of the world of the XXI century writer Marina Stepnova, but also acts as the name of her last novel (2019), becoming fundamentally important and conceptually significant.

In cognitive linguistics, the term concept has various definitions and ambiguous interpretations (S. A. Askoldov, Yu. S. Stepanov, M. V. Pimenova, V. V. Kolesov, Z. D. Popova, I. A. Sternin, G. G. Slyshkin, N. F. Alefirenko, A. P. Babushkin, V. I. Karasik and others); therefore there are different schools and directions. For example, J. Fauconnier and M. Turner (Fauconnier G., Turner M., 1998) developed a theory of conceptual integration. Realizing that "cognitive linguistics is not so much a new direction in science, as the awareness of what a linguist should do" (Norman 2013: 9; Tabakowska 2000), we take into account different approaches, including linguistic and cultural (Sipko 2011), research of semantic typology, a convergence of cognitive linguistics with corpus using the methods of statistical analysis (Schwarz, Chur, 1996; Wolf, Polzenhagen, 2009; Haspelmath, Tadmor, 2009 and others), studies of the philosophy of language (Dolnik 2010; Dolnik 2012), the views of linguists from different countries and the Glossaries of Cognitive Linguistics created by them (Evans 2007). In addition, there are special studies about the Garden (Landacker 1991; Wierzbicka 1992; The Meaning of Gardens 2020).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The article summarizes different approaches, which ensured the use of an integrated method. Language is an open system in the dynamics of constant change and renewal. Different research methods were used, but primarily analytical, comparative and contextual analysis, as well as various definitions of the term *concept*, which seem promising and relevant in the light of the disclosure of semantics of the title of M. Stepnova's novel.

The relevance of this research lies in the material itself: the novel "The Garden" was written in 2019 and published by the publishing house AST in 2020, besides using the method of combining different views on the problem of the concept.

In discussing the concept and meaning of the name, let's start from the following definitions of the concept: the concept is "a clot of culture in the consciousness of a person; that in the form of which culture enters the mental world of a person" (Stepanov 2001: 43). At the same time, the concept, being a mental unit, is «a set of potencies contained in the vocabulary of the language as a whole and separate from its carrier» (Kolesov 1999: 35). We emphasize that regardless of the variation of definitions, the term concept includes the entirety of potential meanings, all connotations and national-personal associations.

RESULTS

As a result of the research, it turns out that the concept of *garden* is both an image and a symbol, along with being a "living word" (Alefirenko 2009) and a concept.

The semantics of the name seem to be multi-tiered, since it includes Western European traditional ideas and nationally determined ones, associated primarily with Russian estate life. In addition, and this is proved in this study, an image, a symbol and the concept of *garden* in the context of the novel acquire new connotations.

DISCUSSION

Traditional appeal to explanatory dictionaries (V. V. Lopatin, T. F. Efremova, S. I. Ozhegov, A. P. Evgenieva, D. N. Ushakov, S. A. Kuznetsov, etc.) allows you to demonstrate the lexico-semantic polysemy of the polysemantic word GARDEN. The scope of the article allows you to cite only one quote: "1. A plot of land for growing garden plants, garden plants (flowers, fruit, trees and shrubs) growing on such a plot <...> Cherry Orchard. Winter Garden. (a room in a mansion furnished with living plants). 2. Big square; a park. Gardens and parks of Moscow. Summer, Solovyovsky Garden (the name of such parks in St. Petersburg). 3. An institution that collects, breeds and studies plants and animals. Botanical Garden. Zoological garden. 4. Spread. = Kindergarten. Take the child to the garden. Get vaccinated in the garden. Kindergarten" (Kuznetsov 1998). In Ozhegov's dictionary, the last meaning of the word follows the second and is interpreted as "the same as kindergarten <...> An educational institution for preschool children" (Ozhegov 1986: 601).

M. Stepnova says that she originally called her book "Different", but the editor of the publishing house E. D. Shubina was categorically against it and chose the name "The Garden". The original name corresponds to writer's intention since everything in the novel is supposed to be "different", so the title would consequently give the key to understanding the inarticulate epigraph. This word-concept is persistently repeated at the end of the novel, etc. However, the name proposed by Shubina is multidimensional. Given a new name the novel has remained the same, the epigraph too, thus the new name has absorbed the whole range of eigenvalues, new connotations with a long train of associations, and the semantics of the original name. The writer Maya Kucherskaya, commenting on the title of the novel by M. Stepnova, noted that "I want to enter *the Garden*, but not into *Different*" (Stepnova 2021).

Garden in the novel is to be understood in a wider and more voluminous sense than just the landscape, primarily because he is an actor, as well as a character capable of carrying out purposeful actions. The Garden is the hero of the novel; it is not a mere background. The garden appears almost immediately, but the first three pages of the novel are devoted to books that occupy a central place in the world of the mistress of the estate, but then the living, bright and pristine image of the Garden bursts into the narrative, initiates events which will happen to the heroine, Nadezhda Aleksandrovna Boryatinskaya, further: "There was a holiday around-endless, generous, triumphant. Juicy, almost primeval greenery, peeped out from everywhere, twisted, curled into

loops, protruding frantic terry" (Stepnova 2020: 15). In addition, the living image of the Garden appears at critical moments in the development of the plot.

In the monograph "The Poetry of Gardens" by D. S. Likhachev writes that 'the garden was perceived as a big book, as a kind of "classroom" (Likhachev, 1998). M. Stepnova follows the existing tradition. 'The garden has always been "active" (Likhachev, 1998), this is how it is presented in Stepnova's novel - described in smells, colors and sounds. Garden – an animate being, a living organism – is not only compared with a book but literally "replaces" it. With the birth of a late child, the heroine realizes that "everything turned out to be a lie – from the first to the last word" (Stepnova 2020: 68) regarding the books and their messages. The beloved book world did not protect Nadezhda Aleksandrovna from the prose of life, from the reality of everyday life, everything the books taught her turned out to be an illusion.

The idea of the novel was corrected as it was written, therefore, in the process of working on the book, M. Stepnova became a mother, which not only changed her life but also influenced both the idea and the plot of the work being created. She says that at one of the stages of work, "the child, the upbringing of the child eventually became the most important" (Pisareva 2021). Initially, the heroine was supposed to remain a "passionate scribe" until the end of the novel, but the writer decided to write a story where "books will lose to their mothers" and "turned the action in the book one hundred and eighty degrees" (Pisareva 2021). The first chapter "Mother" ends with a complete rejection of books, although Boryatinskaya's daughter is named after the literary heroine L.N. Tolstoy Natasha Rostova. The themes of the birth and upbringing of a child become the central themes of the novel. "Why didn't anyone write about this? Why didn't anyone warn you?" (Stepnova 2020: 70), - the heroine asks a question, but there is no answer to it in the 19th century books. From a genre point of view, The Garden is a novel of enlightenment. According to the author's definition, it is about "how difficult it is to be parents in any era, with the rising problems of absolute love, absolute acceptance and absolute freedom" (Stepnova 2021). Slowly, the second lexicosemantic meaning of the word given in the dictionary as "nursery school" (in which the children are brought up) begins to play its significant role. Through this, another meaning of the garden concept is manifested.

> There was a garden outside the window. That was all she now had left. A child who miraculously survived. And the garden (Stepnova 2020: 50)

Consciously reproducing this fragment of the text as it is done in the novel, with a breakdown of one phrase-thought into four sentences (parceling), which, in turn, become four paragraphs, we want to emphasize that we have an almost poetic text, a laconic poem in prose with a circular composition and the keywords: garden, everything remained, child. Not only the close connection of the child with the garden is emphasized by the author, but also the absence of everything else. There is only a child and a garden, they make up the world of the heroine. Like two themes in a classical symphony, they begin to vie with each other. Daughter Tusya, free and independent,

like a natural phenomenon, like the Garden itself, to which she owes her birth to. Five years later, "Nadezhda Aleksandrovna is sitting in the same nursery, looking out into the garden through the huge open windows. Tusya is running among the apple trees, playing tag with Meisel" (Stepnova 2020: 92). Tusya – Natalia, translated from Latin, means *native*, *natural*, fully justifying her name: headstrong, difficult to control, obsessed, spontaneous, like "Garden" without a gardener.

The Garden as a concept, image, symbol, hero is important in the first chapter but fades into the background in the second chapter "Father", dedicated to the doctor and educator Meisel. The space of the garden is replaced by the space behind the estate, transferred to the endless fields around the villages, where the teacher takes daily walks with a pupil, little Natalia Boryatinskaya. In the third chapter "Daughter", dedicated to Tusya, the garden practically disappears, because Tusya does not go there, she gives all her time to the horses. Stables, meadows and pastures become her native space.

Of course, "The Garden" is a poetic image that evokes several traditional associations. In this case, the "Garden" is Eden, the Garden of Eden with the symbols of the kingdom of heaven, first of all. The author of the novel consistently describes how reasonably and multi-tiered it is arranged: raspberries, cherries, pears, plums, blackthorns and, of course, apples. "Nadezhda Aleksandrovna physically felt around a quiet, unstoppable movement: a sleepy bee hum, a mosquito groan, the flow of juices in invisible strong veins, the bursting of leaves and even a thin, strained squeak with which the pale, young arrows of future plants pushed the earth apart" (Stepnova 2020: 15).

The garden will play its intended role as a biblical garden with the inevitable motives of temptation, the fall, the birth of a child in torment, exile, suffering and loneliness. In addition, the garden - as the "Dictionary of Symbols" records - 'often used as a metaphor for a love paradise created by lovers - "a garden spring well of living waters" (Song of Songs, 4:15)" (Tresidder 2001; Tresidder 2005). The heroine eats an apple but seduces her husband with another fruit, considered classic as it is a recreation of popular image from Old Testament: she "held out to her husband - a burst, almost biblical, almost a fig, flowing with hunger and honey, from the garden of a small, dark-skinned and also invented Sulamith" (Stepnova 2020: 20). The motive of the curse is realized peculiarly: "from the very first days everything went wrong". Perception of the Garden as a symbol of a lost paradise and of hope for the same to be found in the future is also present in the novel. 'In ancient traditions, the image of an ideal world, cosmic order and harmony is a lost and regained paradise <...> "paradise" is an etymological synonym for "garden" (Tresidder 2001: 77). While the Boryatinsky garden is imagined as such, it is not paradise. It carries a different meaning, one which does not represent "cosmic order and harmony". The image of the Garden is transformed, acquires ambivalence, the epigraph to the novel begins to sound differently, acquires a meaning that was not originally put into it, and the Cosmos is replaced by Chaos, as Paradise turns into Hell.

Note that in symbolism the garden was thought of as "a spiritual idyll of mystical-erotic encounters" (Hansen-Löve 2003: 617; Hansen-Löve 1989). This is exactly what happens in the novel, but the erotic date in the garden turns out to be a surprise. The mysticism lies in the fact that a child is brought into the world by very elderly parents, which is "shameful" according to the ideas of the 19th century, as well as seemingly

impossible and unthinkable. One could also not that the perception of the garden as a "spiritual idyll of mystical-erotic encounters" has a long tradition, characteristic not only of symbolism. The most striking example of Russian "mystical-erotic" literature of the Baroque era was the creation of Simeon of Polotsk "Multicolored Vertograd" (1689).

After the sins of the garden, the family falls apart, a gradual process of extinction of the noble family begins. Thus, the novel "The Garden" continues the theme of farewell to the "noble nests", with the passing era, captured in the novels of I. S. Turgenev, I. A. Goncharov, in small prose by I. A. Bunin from "Antonov's apples" to "Dark Avenues" and, of course, in the play by A. Chekhov "The Cherry Orchard". An association with Chekhov's play is unavoidable to arise, however, even though the garden is cut down at the end of the novel, and the theme of the outgoing manor nobility sounds insistent, it leads to unexpected reflections. Stepnova's novel lacks the main thing that constitutes the essence, the whole nerve of Chekhov's tragicomedy: special intonation, pauses, piercing lyricism, longing for a wonderful past that will no longer be, crying for childhood, youth, unfulfilled hopes, time rapidly slipping away, frivolity and impracticality of the main characters, symbolic surroundings, full of conventions, the fragility of beauty, filled with a shrill sound of a broken string and the transparent haze of a tremulously and tenderly blooming cherry orchard. There is none of this. The garden depicted by Stepnova is fruitful, but not blooming. Shortly before her death Boryatinskaya dreams of how she walked in the August garden with Tusya on her hands, and how she sang everything affectionately "...and this is, Tusenka, pluuu-uum <...> and these are apples, juicy, sweee-eety, and apples were still falling - with a quiet, ripe thud" (Stepnova 2020: 408). "Both gardens - old and young - were drowned in flowers" (Stepnova 2020: 402), only when Meisel was buried.

Only Nadezhda Aleksandrovna needs a garden. The internal connection between the aging mistress of the estate and the garden that changed her life is so close that they die at the same time: "When the garden was finished cutting down, Boryatinskaya was still alive, but she didn't feel anything. In turn, reflecting the same empty, slowly darkening sky" (Stepnova 2020: 410). Considering the significance of the connection between the Garden-Paradise and the symbols of the heavenly kingdom, symbolically empty Heaven means abandonment by God.

Tusya, on the contrary, has nothing to do with the garden, except for the fact of birth, she rarely appears there as she is possessed by another element and affection – a passion for horses. "Her dream was overgrown with meat, and where there is meat, there is blood. For the sake of horses, it was necessary to sacrifice a garden. And she sacrificed it" (Stepnova 2020: 410).

"The garden was hers – no doubt. And these people are strangers" (Stepnova 2020: 39), this is what the mother thought of her older children in the context of the garden. For the Daughter, the Garden is "just trees – that's all" (Stepnova 2020: 410). In these two quotes lies their key differences, the gap between generations and eras.

As in the play by A. P. Chekhov, the image in the novel develops into a symbol. If the main character is the Garden, then it is doomed to be cut, to destruction, which is inevitable when the eras change: the noble aristocracy is replaced by the bourgeoisie, entrepreneurs, new people with a new worldview and a system of different values. These new people, the younger generations are represented through the person of Tusya, as

she says herself: "I don't care about the past. I need a future <...>. The way I want it." (Stepnova 2020: 389). The idea of rejecting the Garden as a medium between two worlds (present and future, an old and a new one or an old and a new generation) is at the same time a rejection of the tradition, i.e. the Christian tradition in general. Stepnova describes how the garden is being cut down; Alive, numinous, sentient organism. "The tree shuddered, as if in disbelief. Screamed. Choked up. Threw a handful of disturbed, disheveled, uncomprehending birds into the sky. Apples rained down on the grass in a frequent rain. Knock. Knock. Knock. Throughout the garden, the tops of living trees twitched helplessly, as if in pain. Radovich could not endure, he turned away" (Stepnova 2020: 409).

In Chekhov's play, the reader-viewer does not see how the garden is chopped down, only hears the clatter of the axe and the play ends with this process. In this regard, the line of Y. Levitansky (1963) is accurate: "The dream occurs in the last century. / This sound is heard a century ago. / The cheerful woodcutters are walking, / Chopping, / Chopping / The Cherry Orchard". There is no completion as if the garden is still being cut down, as if the action lasts for a century!

Stepnova puts a bold point. "The new and old gardens were completely cut down. The park too. Tusya left only one single tree – near the tomb of Meisel. An old pear" (Stepnova 2020: 413). Pear, since apple and plum have rich semantics and a cherry will again evoke the association with "The Cherry Orchard", which is not wanted in this case. Stepnova consequently decides not to use a cherry, or a plum, nor an apple tree, probably to exclude unnecessary connotations.

D. S. Likhachev, referring to the idea of a garden as a book, depicted in poetry, continues this idea and cites as an example the poem "Linden Avenue" by Boris L. Pasternak (from the cycle "When he roams around", 1956-1959). M. I. Tsvetaeva develops Pasternak's thought, arguing that an object of the material world, be it a garden, or a tree, or a bush, is simultaneously a poetic text. In Tsvetaeva's poetic cycle "The Bush", the Bush is such an object of the material world, but at the same time, it is also a poetic text. Garden – a creation of nature; a text, especially a poetic one, is a creation of man; the book is the creation of a writer. It is not known whether the author of the novel "The Garden" laid this meaning in her work, consciously or unconsciously, but such a reading of the novel seems possible. In this regard, the last version of the name is more successful than the original. "The Garden" is a book and a text being written at the same time, so it is logical and natural that the text breaks off when the garden is cut down at the end of the book. The finale of Marina Stepnova's novel is tragically open: "Tusya was happy and free. / Finally. / How free is everyone who does not know what the future holds for him" (Stepnova 2020: 413).

CONCLUSIONS

As a result of the research, the concept of *garden* is to be taken both as an image and a symbol.

Garden in the novel is presented as a hero, a book, a text that suddenly breaks off along with the novel. The Garden in the novel plays the role of Eden, a biblical

garden with symbols of the kingdom of heaven along motives of the Fall. The Garden is also a traditional symbol of the lost paradise. In addition, and this is proved in this study, the image, symbol, concept of "Garden" in the context of the novel acquires new connotations and semantics of the original name – the Garden, with its contrast –Hell. The semantics of the name seems to be multi-tiered since it includes Western European traditional ideas and nationally determined ones, associated primarily with the Russian estate life, contained in frames of the theme of the departure of nobility. The concept becomes a symbol of the outgoing nobility and the change of historical eras.

As a result of considering the concept of *garden* in the context of the novel of the same name by M. Stepnova (2020), it turns out that *garden* absorbed all of the potential meanings, all connotations and national-personal associations.

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