

THE CONCEPT OF “WOLF” IN THE WORKS OF RUSSIAN AND TATAR WRITERS (BASED ON THE PROSE OF I. BUNIN AND N. GIMATDINOVA)

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Abstract: In this study, the authors address the problem of the representation of the concept “wolf” in Russian and Tatar prose of the twentieth century. In light of the national language image of the world and the relationship with the folklore tradition, the linguistic and semantic aspects of the realization of the linguistic and literary concept “wolf” in I. Bunin’s and N. Gimatdinova’s works are investigated. The authors analyze the associative-semantic groups in the realization of the concept “wolf” in the works under consideration: “wolf – man”, “wolf – nature”, “nature – civilization”, which are most typical for the writers of the twentieth century and are closely connected with the folklore tradition. The image concept of wolf becomes the original yardstick of the deeds of the characters, the criterion of their moral characteristics, which makes Russian and Tatar prose similar. At the same time, in Russian and Tatar literature the concept “wolf”, closely connected with the folklore tradition of the two peoples, reflects two different branches of human consciousness – the western and the eastern, which, among other things, defines the concept “wolf” as a national category. The wolf for the Tatars is a totemic animal, the keeper of the family, at the same time in Russian folklore this hypostasis of the image of wolf practically disappears. Bunin defines wolves through the irrational principle and associates them with the feeling of Love as the foundations of Being. N. Gimatdinova, also gravitating toward folklore tradition and irrationalism at the same time, symbolically linking the image of wolves with the foundations of Being, first of all puts forward the idea of harmony between man and nature.

Keywords: concept, wolf, archetype, associative-semantic group, mentality, conceptual sphere.

1 Introduction

The analysis of literary concepts in a fiction today is becoming quite effective in understanding the laws of author’s thinking. The conceptual approach has been developed in linguistics, including in linguoculturology. Concept as a notion has not yet been exactly defined, but in many respects it is associated with the notion of mentality, as well as with archetype. Linguoculturology defines the concept as a cell of culture in the mind of the author. In science there has appeared the notion of archetypical concept formed not only at the level of the collective unconscious, but at the national level, the level of mentality of the people. Archetypical concepts expressed initially in the works of folklore are deeply mental; but mentality is expressed, in M.A. Shelyakin’s opinion, “first of all, in language works – in the texts being rife with world views, intentions and belonging to a certain time, man, society” (Shelyakin, 2005).

It is necessary to distinguish the linguistic and literary understanding of “concept”. We will consider the concept rather as a literary notion – referring to literary concept. Here we tend to the definition by V.G. Zusman, who most clearly formulated the literary treatment of the concept in his works. Justifying the possibility and necessity of including the notion of concept into the term system of modern literary criticism, the scholar writes that reliance on the concept opens up new opportunities in representing literature as a communicative literary system. “The literary concept is an image, symbol or motif that has “an exit” to geopolitical, historical, ethnopsychological moments that lie outside the work of literature” (Zusman, 2001). Literary concept at the same time is considered as a unit of individual consciousness, author’s conceptual sphere, verbalized in a single text of the writer’s works (which does not exclude the possibility of evolution of conceptual content from one period to another) (Tarasova, 2010). It is believed that literary concept and literary image are the categories of the same order, reflecting different mental operations. “However, these concepts are diverse. Literary concept as a unit of consciousness of the writer is much more complex and significant than the image as a means of expressing the author’s image of the world. Literary image can be a representative of the concept in the work, comprehending its

main components – as a rule, conceptual and figurative, emotional” (Tsurkan, 2018). It is the latter statement that determines the logic of analysis of the concept “wolf” in the texts of Russian and Tatar prose below. Thus, the aim of the investigation is to reveal the representation of the literary concept “wolf” from the Russian and Tatar authors at the level of the figurative system, relying on the lexical field of the text in particular.

2 Methodology

The methodology for revealing the features of realization of the linguoculturological and literary concept in the literary text draws from the analysis of the literary text previously developed by the authors of this article through the characteristic of associative-semantic groups that synthesize both the linguistic and literary principles of the works. At the same time, the authors of the article rely on the latest data on the conceptual and comparative analysis of two national literatures in the articles of recent years (Nagumanova et al, 2017; Ibragimov et al, 2015; Li et al, 2017; Tikhonova et al, 2017).

As we wrote in our previous articles, concept is a cell of culture in the author’s mental consciousness (the definition by Stepanov) (Stepanov, 1997; Nurhayati, 2018). Many writers of both Russian and Tatar literature prefer the people’s tradition, which makes it possible to reveal a particular literary realization of a folklore natural concept in their works through figurative system. The analysis of associative-semantic groups in the realization of a concrete concept enables to determine the mental level of literary image, especially one that goes back to the archetype. Here you can talk about the archetypical concept in the work of the writer.

3 Results and Discussion

I. Bunin as a realist of the twentieth century is very akin not only to the classics, but also to folklore, which determines his interaction at the mental level with popular Russian ideas. This makes it possible to actualize the conceptual analysis of the text, highlight key concepts in the realization of the author’s conception. One of “the supporting” concepts of I. Bunin’s story “Wolves” is the concept “wolf”, brought out into the title of the work and defining the author’s idea, including the very picture of amorous theme and Bunin’s concept of love. Let us single out the invariant characteristics of the concept “wolf” in Russian culture. The concept “wolf” functions in a variety of interpretations and becomes a special sign. Initially, it represents a strong predatory beginning. Wolf is “a ferocious predator whose hunting nature commanded man’s respect” (Khazankovich, 2009). At the same time, wolf was comprehended into the totemic animals. Totemic animals were “the points of reference of the ethnic worldview, and then these images got literary and aesthetic transformation in national literature” (Sokolova, 1998; Villalobos Antunez, 2003). The image of wolf is found in European legends and appears, mainly, as a werewolf. Thus, the basis of the folklore archetype Wolf is the pagan and mythological representations of the ethnos about the beast, the variation content of which is determined by the type of ethnic culture: wolf can be perceived as a tireless warrior, Beast-progenitor or werewolf beast. At the same time, Russian fairy tales often represent wolf as “a grey robber”, a greedy and stupid creature.

The concept of “wolf” in Bunin’s story is realized through such semantic groups as “wolf – predator”, “wolf – nature”, “wolf – man”.

The associative-semantic group “wolf – predator”, “wolf – nature” is actualized at the beginning of the story. The wolf is immediately pictured as a powerful predator who, with “an amazing audacity, when at the peasant’s cottages there one was already having supper, ... stabbed a sheep in one yard and hardly

carried it away" (Bunin, 1980). The concept "wolf" is constantly associated with the concepts "darkness", "death", "destruction", with which the story begins. In the middle of the story the wolves appear already in reality in front of two characters - a girl and a grammar-schoolboy. These are three big wolves, in the eyes of the rjnhs [there flashes transparent green shine, then red - transparent and bright, like hot syrup of red currant jam. Describing wolf-predators, Bunin pays special attention to color details; red, black, grey and green. The opposition "life - death" is actualized at the level of color. The semantics of Chaos is before us. Bunin uses the folklore invariant of the concept of wolf, associated with the semantics of force, destruction.

At the same time, wolves as a natural phenomenon are associated with the concept of nature (the story creates the natural vertical and horizontal - "heaven - earth"). However, Bunin defines wolves as ones to be infernal entities and, perhaps, to reflect the irrational, incomprehensible beginning. Wolves stand at the wall of the forest, which is deeply symbolic and connected with the idea of a metaphysical border between two worlds (real and surreal). Thus, the protagonists of the story are, in fact, in an extreme situation - between life and death.

The vertical and the horizontal to be created in the text, defined by Bunin's existential code, is organically connected with number symbolism. The wolves are three in the story, which again refers to the folk fairy-mythological tradition. "Three" is the embodiment of absolute perfection and often reflects the hypostases of the divine: Creation - Conservation - Destruction; Spirit - Soul - Body. "Three" is a perfect number, since when it is divided, the central equilibrium point remains. It is considered to be complete, perfect, harmonious. The images of the three wolves are associated with the idea of the unity of ambivalent existence - harmony and destruction simultaneously. In Bunin's story, thus, the concept of "wolf" turns from the archetypical concept into a philosophical one.

At the same time, the concept "wolf" is used by the author as a kind of presentation of his characters, their characterization. The associative-semantic group "man - wolf" is connected with the opposition "strength - weakness". The feminine appears to be strong and active in this story by Bunin as well. Wolves are the touchstone that allows us to see the true colors of the characters. The scar that is the result of the struggle does not disfigures the heroine, but gives a special charm, becomes a symbolic detail.

Certainly, the story is not about the wolves. Its main theme is the theme of love as a kind of flash that illumines a person's life. This situation of outbreak in a person's life is vividly represented by the writer at the language level: twinkling stars, summer lightning, match fire, glow of fire, sky flame. The culmination of the fiery concept was revealed at the time of the appearance of the wolves. The love concept is constantly associated with the dichotomous opposition "darkness - light". The semantic field "love - fire - blaze - earthly passion", which is connected with the symbolism of the image of wolves, is actualized. The appearance of these grey predators in the story can definitely be considered to be an impressive metaphor for the realization of a love story, the love of flash, the love of wildfire. The encounter with wolves, thus, is a metaphorical characteristic of love passion, deeply earthly, momentary and at the same time irrational, eternal, like the writer's wolves themselves. Between harmony and chaos, according to Bunin, there is a category of love as the central point of equilibrium of the world.

4 Summary

In a completely different vein, the concept of wolf is revealed in the work by N. Gimatdinova, whose works are also characterized by an unrealistic beginning. In the story "In the Corral" we see the embodiment of the concept "wolf", defined by the national Tatar folklore tradition.

Wolf in the world of Tatar folklore is the highest symbol of freedom in the animal world, a symbol of independence. At the same time, wolf is also a symbol of fearlessness. In any fight the wolf fights to the finish: victory or death. Under normal

conditions, the wolf will not allow, for its part, to offend the weaker. Ancient ancestors have passed down the highest philosophy to the Tatar people precisely through the image of wolf. The Turkic tribes considered wolf to be a sacred animal, so it became a totem. It was the image of the white wolf that was considered to be sacred. Wolf in Tatar mythology becomes the savior of nations, the ancestor of the tribe, and the white wolf - the deity (Urmachev, 1994). The image-concept of wolf has traditionally passed into Tatar literature from Turkic mythology and folklore.

N. Gimatdinova's novel presents, in contrast to I. Bunin's, originally a two-color solution: white wolves and grey wolves, which is determined by symbolic opposition "good - evil", "light - darkness". Hayat, who lives alone in the corral, is the only person who understands the language of wolves, and a bearer of a kind, harmonious beginning. Here we find the associative-semantic group "wolf - man", which is based on the idea of natural Harmony. Although others do not accept the heroine, she is surrounded by animals, among them are wolves. They guard the house and the peace of Hayat. The natural Harmony is before us, and wolf is understood here as a totemic animal - the guardian of the old covenants, the natural beginning.

The heroine is genetically connected with white wolves (she comes from the lands of white wolves), which is symbolic. At the same time, the concept of forest plays an important role. According to R. Fathrahmanov, forest is a place of refuge from all afflictions. The symbolism of forest is represented here, as in Bunin's story, in the tideway of the folk tale. "The tragic loneliness of Hayat is opposed to the inhumanity of our society, which shows the destruction of the harmony of human community. The forest is the place where harmony between people and nature is perfect. Such open-hearted natures can only live there. Antihuman society perceives them as white wolves, and they are doomed to be ruined. Therefore, moving Hayat to the village leads her to frustration" (Fathrahmanov, 2003). The concept "wolf", as we see, is associated with the people's ideas about wolves as royal animals guarding Nature, maintaining its harmony. From the very beginning wolves are traditionally in Tatar folklore the keepers of nature and its unwritten laws, the principles of nature. In the story "In the Corral" via the concept of wolf, the opposition "the natural - the civilized" is vividly marked. The main character becomes the bearer of the natural principle, and her close harmony with nature is symbolically denoted by the concept "wolf". N. Gimatdinova does not use the image-concept of wolf to express the feelings of her characters, as Bunin does. She is concerned about the connection between man and nature and the alienation of a civilized person from primordial values.

5 Conclusion

So, the wolves in the story of the Russian author are presented as an ambivalent image-concept in which the situation of metaphysical duality is determined by a certain being-unity. Wolf symbolizes here the love beginning in its particular irrational modification and is the main metaphor of the text. The concept "wolf" is comprehended in the concept "love" of the Bunin's story as its metaphorical part. Thus, the association-semantic group "wolves - love" in Bunin's story is built on the principle of "part - whole". The number symbolism (three wolves) marks the embodiment of the Bunin's view of the world in the story. Love as a category is conceived by Bunin as the key and central concept of Being at the crossroads of the vertical and the horizontal (sky - earth), life and death, chaos and harmony.

The Tatar writer puts the paradigm "man - nature", "nature - human society" to the first place, where the white wolf becomes a deified symbol of the harmony between nature and man, the harmony of human feelings. Being a sacred totem symbol, it is opposed to the disharmony of the world of people, punishes the characters for their moral inconsistency. Thereby, the first place is given to the lexemes that designate nature and color (white color, "forest" semantics). If Bunin's forest is the border of two

worlds, Gimatdinov's forest is a symbol of the natural world. The unity of the main character with the inhabitants of the forest, including the wolves, indicates her spirituality and moral principles. The world of the heroine is harmonious, unlike other characters. The writer's white wolf has a symbol of true existence. It is noteworthy that, like Bunin's concept of wolf, Gimatdinova's concept of wolf is related primarily to feminine. Bunin sees strength in woman, above all, the power of love as a source of life. Thus, despite the different nature of representation of the concept "wolf" in view of the peculiarity of its national manifestation, the two authors are like-minded in solving the eternal questions of being, reaching the level of being. The concept of wolves as a sign of being in stories of two authors is defined by the feminine principle. But in Bunin's – these are: "wolves – woman – Love"; and in Gimatdinova's – "wolves – woman – Nature".

As the analysis of two products of different national literatures shows, actualization of the methodology of the conceptual approach to the fictitious text allows not only to reveal the features of the works of two authors, but also to reach the level of author's conceptual sphere, the level of author's consciousness and mentality.

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