

## THE ARTISTIC ROLE OF SYMBOLS IN IVAN GONČAROV'S "OBLOMOV"

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### Abstract

*The article deals with the aesthetic characteristics of the symbols "home", "way", "light" and also examines the artistic role of these symbols in the structure of Oblomov's image.*

**Keywords:** *image, symbol, home, way, light, circle, national character, East, West, Il'ja Oblomov, Ivan Gončarov*

### Rezumat

*În articol, abordăm atât caracteristicile estetice ale simbolurilor „acasă”, „cale” și „lumină”, cât și rolul artistic al acestor simboluri în chipul lui Oblomov.*

**Cuvinte-cheie:** *imagina, simbol, casă, cale, lumină, cerc, caracter național, est, vest, Ilia Oblomov, Ivan Gončarov*

We considered the problem of interpreting Oblomov's image in cultural, historical and literary aspects in our previous articles. And we concluded that Oblomov is an integral artistic image, the unambiguous interpretation of which leads to a simplification of the meaning of the novel (Brajuc, 2018a). There was showed the unity of "type" and "character" in the structure of the image of Oblomov. We investigated the artistic techniques that the author uses to create the image of the main character. We also identified that the dominant device in the novel is multi-stage antithesis. We proved that the peculiarity of antithesis in I. Gončarov lies in the fact that it conveys not a total disconnection and mismatch, but paradoxically expresses synthesis, unity (Brajuc, 2018b). We compared Oblomov's image with the concepts of Russian culture and literature ("laziness" and "peace"), as well as with other characters of the novel (Andrej Štol'c, Olga Il'inskaja, Agafia Pšenicyna) (Brajuc, 2019a).

Ivan Gončarov's novel is also built on the basis of a system of certain symbols. Let us consider the role of this system in the content structure of the fiction text.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century philology a scientific trend has emerged in which language is considered as the cultural code of a nation and not just an instrument of communication and cognition. Language not only reflects reality, but interprets it, creating a special reality in which a person lives.

That is why the philosophy of the turn of the millennium is developing on the basis of studying the possibilities and peculiarities of using the language.

By studying the language of different people, we penetrate not only into the modern mentality of the nation, but also into the views of ancient people at the world, society and themselves. Echoes of bygone years, are surviving the centuries, are preserved today in proverbs, sayings, phrases, metaphors, symbols of culture. Language is intimately connected with culture: it grows into it, develops in it and expresses it.

Since every native speaker is at the same time a bearer of culture, linguistic signs acquire the ability to perform the function of cultural signs and thus serve as a means of representing the basic attitudes of culture. That is why the language is able to reflect the cultural and national mentality of its native speakers. Culture is correlated with language through the concept of space. So, each culture has its own keywords, for example, for Germans – attention, order, precision. A complete list of keywords for Russian culture has not yet been established, although a number of such words have already been well described – soul, will, fate, longing, intelligence, laziness, etc. When a linguistic unit is commonly used, frequent and is part of phraseological expressions and proverbs, then it is considered a key word of a culture. Each particular language is a distinctive system, which imposes its imprint on the consciousness of its speakers and forms their picture of the world.

V. A. Maslova notes: "Despite the cumulative function, i.e. the function of being a means of accumulation and storage of information, language does not become a repository of culture. The unit of language – a word – is only a signal, the function of which is to awaken human consciousness, to touch certain concepts in it, ready to respond to this signal. Texts are the true guardians of culture. Not the language, but the text reflects the spiritual world of a person. It is the text that is directly related to culture, for it is permeated with a multitude of cultural codes, it is the text that stores information about history, ethnography, national psychology, national behavior, i.e. everything that constitutes the content of culture. The text is a set of specific signals, which automatically evoke not only direct associations, but also a large number of indirect associations in the reader brought up in the traditions of the culture" (Маслова/Maslova, 2001, p. 87).

The richness of an artistic image is determined by its multiple meanings, a multitude of subject-meaningful and associative links both inside and outside the text: "The structure of an image is determined by the reader, expanding or, on the contrary, narrowing the textual base of interpretation" (Чернец/Černec, 2003, p. 8). In order to more fully reveal the content of the artistic images of the novel *Oblomov*, it is necessary to take into account the symbolism of the novel by I. Gončarov. The category of the symbol in art is

close to the category of the image. The category of the symbol correlates with the nature of the artistic image, on the one hand, and a "sign" – on the other hand: "In a broad sense we can say that the symbol is an image taken in the aspect of its signification, and that it is a sign endowed with all the organicity and inexhaustible multivalence of the image" (Щемелёва/Šemelëva, 1987, p. 378). A symbol is an image in which there is always a certain meaning, merged with the image, but not reducible to it. "Every symbol is an image (and every image is, at least to some extent, a symbol); but the category of a symbol indicates the exit of an image beyond its own limits, the presence of a certain meaning, inseparably fused with the image, but not identical to it... passing into a symbol, the image becomes "transparent"; the meaning "transpires" through it, being given exactly as a semantic depth, a semantic perspective that requires difficult delving" (Щемелёва/Šemelëva, 1987, p. 378). In other words, the semantic structure of the symbol is multi-layered, the symbol is endowed with a huge variety of meanings (in fact – incalculable). "If polysemy is only a hindrance to the rational functioning of a sign for an extra-artistic (e.g., scientific) sign system, then a symbol is the more meaningful the more it is polysemous" (Щемелёва/Šemelëva, 1987, p. 378).

The image as a symbol reveals many meanings, which are perceived by the reader depending on his or her life experience. The interpretation of a symbol is designed for the active internal work of the perceiver, because the main feature of symbols is that they arise not only in the texts where we find them, but also go back to ancient ideas about the world, to myths, rituals, literary and historical texts. In other words, in order to interpret a symbol it is necessary to take into account both contextual and intertextual connections of the work. According to V. A. Maslova, "a word-symbol is a kind of "data bank", which can be imagined in the form of a spiral, i.e. circles, as if hidden in each other and passing one into another; it is a semantic spiral of a symbol, which includes a wide range of meanings, from implicit (hidden, potential), i.e. they are not expressed in any way, but being an integral part of it, and ending with a scale of semantic substitutes, i.e. programmed substitution of one meaning by another" (Маслова/Maslova, 2001, p. 97).

"The meaning of the symbol objectively realizes itself not as a presence, but as a *dynamic tendency*" (Щемелёва/Šemelëva, 1987, p. 378). This meaning, in essence, cannot be clarified by reducing it to an unambiguous formulation, but can only be explained by relating it to further symbolic entanglements that will bring it to greater rational clarity, but will not reach pure concepts. The interpretation of the symbol is devoid of the formal clarity of the exact sciences; its distinction from them is fundamental and substantive. "The meaning of a symbol really exists only within the situation of communication, of *dialogue*, outside of which we can observe only the empty form of

a symbol: by delving into a symbol, we do not simply parse and consider it as an object, but simultaneously allow its creator to appeal to us and become a partner in our spiritual work. The essence of the symbol will be lost if we close its infinite semantic perspective with some kind of final interpretation that attributes to a certain layer of reality the exclusive right to be the meaning of all meanings without denoting anything itself" (Аверинцев/ Averincev, 2001, p. 511).

If we consider the image of Oblomov in this respect, we can make sure that his features reflect the Russian picture of the world, that is, the literary hero (character) becomes a symbol embodying the national character. The figurative details associated with the image of color, light, road, river, abyss, chasm, house, food, birds, plants, considered in their symbolic meaning, participate in the creation and disclosure of artistic images of the characters of the novel.

Thus, for our understanding of the symbol it is fundamental to correlate it with the content of the cultural information transmitted by it. A. F. Losev wrote that a symbol contains a generalized principle of further deployment of the semantic content coiled in it. This same property of the symbol was emphasized by Y. M. Lotman. He noted that culture is always, on the one hand, a certain number of inherited texts, and on the other hand, inherited symbols.

Literary critics and linguists understand the meaning of the term "symbol" in different ways. For example, Stepanov argues that a symbol is not a scientific concept, but it is a concept of poetics; it is always significant only within the framework of a particular poetic system, and in this system it is true. For example: the symbol of blizzard in Puškin and the Symbolists, the desert symbol in Lermontov, the road symbol in Gogol, the border and threshold symbols in Dostoevskij, the garden symbol in Čehov, the wing and home symbol in Cvetaeva. As a rule, one can say of these symbols, in the words of Y. M. Lotman, that they are "the gene of the plot. However, along with them there are linguistic symbols that are generated in the process of the evolution and functioning of language. Such symbols have a mythological or, more precisely, archetypal nature.

V. A. Maslova names the following features of a symbol: "imagery (iconicity), motivation, complexity of content, multiple meanings, vagueness of meaning boundaries, archetypicality, universality in a single culture, intersection in different cultures, national and cultural specificity, built-in myth and archetype" (Маслова/Maslova, 2001, p. 98).

Culture is always associated with the past, and therefore it is a collective memory, which implies the preservation of previous spiritual experience, the continuity of the moral and intellectual life of people. This memory captures the ideas and images that are beloved by each people, repeated

from century to century, cross-cutting motives of behavior and types of thinking, stable sets of perceptions and experiences.

Despite the fact that researchers often assessed the character of I. Goncharov, many concurred in his understanding of him as a national type. For Appel Grigor'ev it is important that Oblomovka is connected with the national ground and that it is an artistic embodiment of the national principles of Russian life which give strength to love, live and think (Григорьев/Grigor'ev, 1967, p. 337). The religious philosopher N. O. Losskij wrote in his book "The Character of Russian People" : "Goncharov being a great artist gave an image of Oblomov in such a complete form which shows the deep conditions which lead to the evasion of systematic work full of dull trifles and which in the end produce laziness... Oblomovschina is in many cases a reverse side of the high characteristics of Russian man – striving for perfection and being sensitive to the flaws of our reality" (Лосский/Loskij, 1990, p. 55). I. Sukhikh notes: "Oblomovshchina is a peculiarity of the Russian mentality (way of thinking) – this is how a culturologist or cultural historian could formulate this thought" (Сухих/Suhikh, 2006, p. 231).

I. Gončarov believed that his novel would be understandable to a Russian person because it touched on purely Russian problems. He writes about this to his like-minded translator of his works into Danish, P. G. Ganzen: "I never not only did encourage, but as much as it depended on me, even kept translators from transferring my works into foreign languages. It happened... because all characters in my works, manners, terrain, flavor – too national, Russian – and therefore, it seemed to me always, they will be little understood in foreign countries, little familiar... with Russian life. Oblomov is so Russian that he will seem pale, incomprehensible and uninteresting to foreigners" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1980, p. 460, p. 471).

It is no coincidence that the image of Oblomov became a reflection of the national consciousness, the archetype of the Russian man. I. Gončarov does not build a special symbolism, but appeals to the tradition inherent in the language and culture of the people. The symbols of "home", "way" and "light" are the main, defining symbols in fiction. Often a particular literary work from a compositional point of view is built entirely on one of them. These intertextual symbols help to reveal the specificity of artistic images, the idea of the work. Before proceeding to the disclosure of the symbols of "home", "way" and "light" in the novel, it is necessary to understand the very essence of these symbols, to show their archetypal and universal features, their connection with the national Russian worldview.

The image of home is associated with the understanding of everything native and close to a person: family, clan. For this reason the hut, the house had a great importance for man even in ancient times. The house, according to the observation of A. N. Afanasyev, "was the first ... temple. That is why

the word "mansion" (house, dwelling, hut) is quite close in its semantic features to the lexeme "temple" (a sacred place). The image of a house in its entirety reveals its symbolic load due to the unity of the associated motifs of unity, warmth, comfort and kinship. The house in folk culture is the center of the main values of life, happiness, prosperity, unity of family and clan (including not only the living, but also ancestors). The house, built by the hands of the owner or his parents, embodies the idea of family and clan, the connection of ancestors and descendants.

The most important symbolic function of the house is protective. In byliny and fairy tales, a man takes shelter in a house from pursuing enemies who are unable to cross the threshold. Gates, thresholds, windows – a symbolic boundary between home and the outside world, between their own, mastered space and another's.

Parts of the house symbolize its sacred elements. The most revered places are the red corner, the stove, and the table. The red corner is the part of the house where the icons hang and the table stands; it is the most ceremonial and significant place in the dwelling.

The most sacred place in the home, in particularly among the Slavs, has always been the hearth. "The izba, in the ancient language of Nestor, is *ispka*, comes from the verb 'to sink'" (Афанасьев/Afanasyev, 1986, p. 67). Therefore it is not difficult to explain the connection between "house" and "fire", which symbolize all warmth, life and resurrection. Not coincidentally, according to the legends, when a family member set off on a journey, the warm influence of the hearth followed the wanderer and protected him/her in a foreign land during the whole journey.

The stove is one of the sacred centers of the house, it is the most mythologized and symbolically significant household item among the Slavs. The stove is opposed to the red corner in which icons are kept, and man feels as if facing God. In the stove they cook food, sleep on it, and in some regions it is also used as a bath, it is mostly associated with folk medicine. "The symbolism of the stove is attributed mainly not to the sphere of ritual or etiquette of human behavior, but to his intimate, "womb" life in such its manifestations as coitus, defloration, fetal development, birth and, on the other hand, agony, death and posthumous existence. The stove plays a special symbolic role in the interior of the house, combining the features of the center and the border. As a receptacle of food or home fire, it embodies the idea of home in the aspect of its completeness and well-being and in this respect is correlated with the table" (Славянская мифология/Slavjanskaja mifologija, 1995, p. 310).

The table was an object of special reverence. The table, standing in a red corner, was an integral part of the house; for example, when a house was sold, the table was necessarily given to the new owner. Such properties of a

table as its immovability and inseparability from the dwelling are used in a number of ceremonies.

The symbolic meaning of the table in the folk tradition was largely determined by its likeness to the church throne, especially since both words have the same root: in the second case the Old Slavic prefix "pre" was added. The formulas "table is a throne" and "table is the throne of God" are known to all East Slavs. Prescriptions such as "the table is the same as the altar throne, and therefore one should sit at the table and behave as in church" are also widespread. For example, it was not permitted to place extraneous objects on the table, since it was the place of God Himself. The Slavs constantly had bread on the table, which transformed it into a throne, cf. the proverb: "Bread on the table, so the table is a throne, but not a piece of bread – and the table is a board". The constant presence of bread on the table was to ensure prosperity and well-being at home.

"In the Orlov district during lunch and dinner the peasants tried to sit at the table longer, "because, in their opinion, as long as you sit at the table, you will stay in the kingdom of heaven". There was a ceremony "to go (to sit, to gather) in heaven", during which, in particular, people walked around the table or sat at the table in Kharkiv Province on the second or third day after the christening. Apparently, the correlation with paradise of the table is explained by one of the meanings of the church altar: "the earthly paradise, where our parents lived". ... The symbolism of the table at the East Slavs is correlated with the idea of way; as a sacral center of dwelling it is both initial and final point of any way" (Славянская мифология/Slavjanskaja mifologija, 1995, p. 367).

The everyday or festive meal, the meal, plays an important symbolic role in many peoples. The meal is furnished as a peculiar ritual designed to reveal the inner structure of the collective, to affirm the unity and solidarity of people gathered around one table and eating in the face of higher powers.

The most honorable place was at the head of the table, in the red corner under the icons. If there was no father in the family, his place was taken by the eldest married son, and if he was not yet married, the mother was in charge. It was observed that the host should not sit in the corner under the icons, but moved a little away, leaving a place for God. In keeping with the notion of God as the "dispenser of goods," the meal was organized in such a way as to present the food served by the cook as gifts coming from God. In the end, the meal is presented as a kind of exchange with God: for the food that comes from the Lord, the fellow diners give him thanks and express their reverence. The host, who takes his place at the head of the table, under the icons, presides over the meal on behalf of God, who is invisibly watching over the people and their attitude toward his gifts.

"There were not allowed to curse food in Rus'. "If anyone blasphemes meat eating and drinking in the Law of God... let him be cursed", reads the Old Russian monument "From the Apostolic Commandments" (manuscript of the 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> centuries)" (Славянская мифология/Slavic mythology, 1995, p. 176). Taste qualities of food, according to "Domostroy", depend not only on the skill of the cook, but also on the behavior of the participants of the meal. "If one eats with reverence and in silence or while having a spiritual conversation, the food and drink are sweet, but if one slurps them, it is as if they turn into garbage. We need to praise God's gift and eat with thanksgiving, then God will send fragrance and turn bitterness into sweetness. In traditional households, they thanked God for food, not the hostess" (*ibidem*). The joint meal of young people in the wedding ritual, known in many Slavic peoples, marks their entry into an intimate relationship. "In the Russian tradition, the erotic symbolism of food is clearly traced" (*idem*, p. 177).

Bread is considered the most sacred food by the Eastern Slavs: a symbol of wealth, abundance, happiness and prosperity at home. Bread is a gift from God and at the same time an independent living being or even an image of the deity himself. It requires a special and almost religious attitude. "As for specially baked sacred bread-pie, it is an indispensable attribute of majority of calendar and family holidays (Christmas pie "cesnitsa" for Serbs, Easter "kulich" or "paskha" for Eastern Slavs, wedding "korovai" for Eastern Slavs). To the same circle belong Russian pancakes obligatory on Shrovetide and at funerals" (*idem*, p. 25).

"Home", "hearth", "table", correlated with the idea of the road, are the starting and ending points of any path. The symbolism of "way" is connected with the meanings of "life", "destiny" of a person and the world. The way is an exit, meeting, separation, distance, escape, search, testing, obstacle (abyss, pit), loss, discovery, return. Often, the way symbolizes fate, and the fate of appearing to be a path from which you can not turn – "you can not escape from the fate. A constant and inherent property of the path – is its difficulty. A Meeting in Slavic beliefs is a manifestation of fate. It is associated with the designation of happiness, destiny. Meeting may have both positive and negative consequences, the latter is often explained by the action of evil forces.

The symbolism of light, coming from folk mythopoetic tradition, is associated with the embodiment of world order, beauty, truth, righteousness. "According to folk-Christian views, God the Father and Jesus Christ, angels and saints have a luminous, sunny nature, darkness is embodied by devilish forces. While heaven is located in the east and is called "sunny," hell is located in the west and is submerged in darkness. By illuminating the earth's surface, the sun seems to hand it over to the power of the divine forces, and by hiding at night it leaves it in the power of evil.



Sunlight is poured out on man as God's grace, and it also repels unclean powers. The people assimilated and developed the biblical teaching about the divine origin of light and its separation from darkness as the first divine act (Genesis I: 1-4). According to the "Verse on the Book of Doves," the heavenly bodies have a light-bearing nature: "We have white free light conceived from the judgment of God,/The sun red from the face of God". The supernatural origin of sunlight is also due to its dazzling nature, intolerance to the human eye (only the righteous man may look at the sun and see how it plays, shimmering in different colors)" (*idem*, p. 349).

To the greatest extent, human eyes are associated with light, and not only perceive light from outside, but they emit it themselves, and when a person dies, the light is "lost" from the eyes. Darkness corresponds to the state of a grief-stricken person and the picture of the sun setting at night or hiding behind clouds.

According to the legend, people first built a house without windows and tried to carry light into it by gathering it outside in sacks or louvers, and only later an angel prompted them to cut through windows. The window provides access to light and air into the room, is a symbol of the sun and the eyes of the house. "Hence the symbolism of the window as an image of light, clarity, supervisibility, which allow the connection of man, his soul with the sun, heavenly luminaries, God" (Мифы народов мира/Mify narodov mira, 1992, p. 250).

The sun is the source of life, warmth and light. In folklore, the sun was called clear and red, bright and holy, divine and righteous, good and pure. In folklore, the sun is represented as an intelligent and perfect being who is either a deity himself or does God's will. In popular beliefs, the sun is the face, the eye or word of God, or the window through which God looks at the earth.

The sun is something eternal. The disappearance of the sun is death to all life, a complete disaster, not only at the level of nature, flora and fauna, human civilization, but also at the level of the cosmos, the planetary world, the entire universe.

The morning sun is a symbol of birth and awakening, resurrection. The evening sun is death and sleep, sunset. This is how the image of the sun is interpreted in literary and pictorial works: death, as a rule, is illuminated by the last rays of the sun going over the horizon; birth – against the background of the first, gentle rays of the sun. "The light of the sun is a symbol of life, prosperity, joy, peace and harmony. The light of the stars, the moon are symbols of old age, fading, sorrow, boredom, deceit, betrayal, and fading away" (Символы, знаки, эмблемы/Simvoly, znaki, èmblemy, 2005, p. 430).

The earth's equivalent of the sun is fire. Fire is the emblem of the sun. Fire and the sun are closely intertwined in their properties, their capabilities and significance both in nature and in human civilization. In addition, fire has always been considered a product of the sun's rays, the earthly ambassador of the sun. And the element of the sun is also fire. Fire is the symbol of the Spirit and of God, the triumph of light and life over darkness and death, universal purification.

The sun is the wheel of the chariot on which Elijah the prophet rides across the sky, and according to another version, sun is lifted on its wings by the angels of God. Symbols of the sun are the circle, the wheel. "One of the most ancient pan-Slavic images is the image of the wheel-sun" (Мифы народов мира/Mify narodov mira, 1992, p. 452). The image of the thunderer's chariot originally symbolized his connection with the sun (the chariot of Elijah the prophet). "The wheel is a figure symbolizing the solar way. ...The wheel symbolizes the dialectic of perpetual motion. In the spinning wheel, motion repeats itself. The wheel is the sign of the solstice. There were calendar projections of the wheel, where each spoke fell on a particular turn in the weather. The six-spoked wheel was the sign of Il'jin day" (Символы, знаки, эмблемы/Simvoly, znaki, èmblemy, 2005, p. 229). "The circle is the primary symbol of unity and infinity, the sign of the absolute and perfection. ...The circle is the ancient pre-Christian sign of the wheel-sun. A complex symbol combining the idea of perfection and eternity, the circle surpasses all other geometric forms. The line of the circle is the only line that has neither a beginning nor an end and all its points are equivalent. The center of the circle is the source of the infinite rotation of time and space. ...The circle is one of the most widely used figures to express the idea of eternity, as movement around the circle symbolically means a constant return to itself" (*idem*, p. 252).

The circle confines internal finite space, but the circular motion that forms this space is potentially infinite. In temporal terms, the idea of the circle finds even fuller embodiment. "In numerous mythological plots and motifs, in everyday representations and corresponding customs in the language itself (cf. Russian "time" from "vert-men-" "that which rotates, returns") the cyclic concept of time is reflected. The daily and annual circular motion of the sun united the cyclicity of time with the cyclicity of space... ...Naturally, the sun symbolized as such a deity most often on the basis of its form and the circular nature of its daily and annual motion" (Мифы народов мира/Mify narodov mira, 1992, pp. 18-19).

According to folk beliefs, the life time forms a closed circle with sacral and magical power. The motif of "life" of a person, plant or object is presented in rituals, roundels, games, riddles, incantations. The folk calendar gave to the continuous cyclic natural time a character of ritual

system (strict alternation of holidays and weekdays, periods of fasting and meat-eating, good and evil days).

As we can see, the concepts of "home", "path" and "light" can be viewed symbolically, and in this aspect they complement and reveal themselves and thereby deepen the artistic images of the work in which these names are frequent, especially when introducing the characters, describing their nature and the circumstances of life. A symbol is always an image in which a number of meanings are revealed behind the phenomenon depicted. A slow reading of the text, which allows us to comprehend first of all the integrity of the artistic structure and provides an opportunity to perceive not only the totality of its individual elements in their integrative relationship, but also the "dissimilarity" and uniqueness of origin and mode of existence of each text particle, is impossible without taking into account symbols that, among other things, often form a new meaning and renewed image of the word, including it in the system of unusual synonymy, antonymy, homonymy, paronymy as well as associative series.

When considering the artistic images in the novel Oblomov it is necessary to take into account the symbolism of the concepts of "home", "way" and "light" as complementary and revealing the artistic essence of the novel. It would be possible to consider each of these symbols separately and their role in the creation of the image, but it is not by chance that we consider these symbols in their interconnection: in the novel Oblomov, they complement each other and it is in their unity that they reveal the essence of the images. The symbolism of "Oblomov's house" is linked to the symbolism of "light" (sun, fire, and hearth) and to the symbolism of "the way" (cyclicality, return). The symbolism of "light", in its turn, cannot be imagined without a connection with "home" (without fire there is no hearth, table, food) and without a connection with "road" (wheel, circle), which is associated with the hero's life journey and the motif of "burning" and "extinguishing". Comprehension of the symbolism of the "way" (life, destiny, dreams) is impossible without taking into account the symbolism of "home", family (what the hero dreams of and strives for, from where and where he is going), and the symbolism of "light" (the sun and the hearth). Recall that "the meaning of the symbol objectively realizes itself not as a presence, but as a dynamic *tendency*" (Щемелёва/Şemelëva, 1987, p. 378). This meaning cannot be clarified by reducing it to an unambiguous formulation, but can only be explained by relating it to further symbolic entanglements, which will lead us to greater rational clarity, but it is impossible to achieve unambiguous understanding.

Let us turn to the text of the novel and show how the symbols of "home," "way," and "light" help to reveal the essence of artistic images. The characteristics of the main characters in the novel Oblomov are always

connected in one way or another with the symbols we have identified, whether it is a portrait characteristic, a landscape, an interior or a live setting, a monologue, a dialogue of the characters. Let us specify the composition of the lexical material relating to the semantic fields of the symbols in question.

The symbolism of "home": *family, mother, father, relatives, wife, husband, children, estate, house, dwelling, habitation, abode, room, chamber, rest, bedroom, study, reception room, attic; furniture (desk, cabinet, table, sofa, bed, chair, curtains, rugs, paintings); kitchen, meal, food.*

The symbolism of "way": *walk (go out), wander, run, gallop, cross, move, step over, run over, shift, flip over, stop, pull out, take out, wean, leave, return; movement, road, steps, trip, journey, abyss, whirlpool.* This symbolism is represented in the opposition of movement/rest. The image of the way symbolizes "human life", "destiny", helps to reveal the nature of the characters.

The symbolism of "light": *sun, dawn, illuminate(s), moon, star, fire, flash, blaze, burn, flame, comet, spark, explosion, beam, light, illuminate, candle, lamp, lightning, fireworks, flash, lamplight, glitter, shine, sparkle, shine, glow, zenith, clarity, burn, fade, extinguish, flicker, scorch, dazzle.*

The mythological cyclic nature of time, the symbol of the circle can be traced in the composition of the novel, inscribed in the annual circle; in the architectonics (the last lines of the novel refer to the beginning of the story); in the plot (the end of the hero's life in Pshenitsyna repeats the beginning of life in Oblomovka); in the repetition of the name and patronymic (Ilya Ilyich) and the last name of the hero (Obly – round). "Graphically, the letter 'O' in all languages looks like a disk of the sun, symbolizing perfection" (Symbols, Signs, Emblems, 2005, p. 336). Oblomov and Oblomovka are associated with the symbolism of the sun and the circle. "Correctly and unperturbedly the annual *circle* is made there" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 108). "- Now the day has passed, and thank God! – The Oblomovites used to say, going to bed, groaning, and lighting themselves with the sign of the cross. – *We lived safely; God grant that tomorrow too!* Thank you, God!" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 120). In Oblomovka's world time is "static"; it is measured not by hours, days or years (the Oblomovtsi even confused "the names of months and the order of numbers"), but by holidays, seasons, and domestic occurrences.

It is no coincidence that the name of the main character is associated with the symbolism of "light" (the sun), with the symbolism of "way" (the cycle), with the symbolism of "home" (fertility, food). Elijah in the Old Testament legends is a prophet; in the folk tradition of the Eastern Slavs – the lord of thunder and rain, a character on whom fertility and crops depend. "...In folk songs under the name of Elijah appeared a saint – the patron saint of crops and fertility, sower, reaper, and giver of blessings. One of the most

noticeable events of Il'jn's Day was the "bratchina" or "supper" – a collective meal that brought together the inhabitants of several neighboring villages. ...On Elijah's Day, they served bread from the flour of the new harvest: 'Peter with a spike, Ilya with a pie' (Славянская мифология/Slavjanskaja mifologija, 1995, pp. 205-206). "Elijah ("my god Yahweh") in the Old Testament lore (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> books of Kings) is a prophet. ...It is a miracle worker gifted with almost divine power, a prophet through whose mouth God speaks, a preacher who predicts the future in the name of God. ...Different versions have been made of Elijah's fate after his ascension to heaven: he dwells in heaven where human deeds are recorded; in paradise, he accompanies the righteous and extracts the souls of sinners from Gehenna. He is called "the bird of heaven," for he, like a bird, flies around the world and appears whenever divine intervention is needed. ...Elijah appears as a miraculous healer, counselor in marriage disputes, reconciler of children and parents" (Мифы народов мира/Mify narodov mira, 1992, p. 237).

When depicting the inner world of Il'ja Oblomov, the author constantly refers us to the symbolism of light and the motif of a bird, which is associated with the name of the hero. "Thought *walked like a free bird* across his face ... and his soul *shone* so openly and *clearly* in his eyes, in his smile, in every *movement* of his head and hand" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 3). Oblomov's thought is like a bird, it "walks", and it is "free". The image of the bird runs through the whole novel, symbolizing the hero's desire for space, for the will, for home, for the nest. The nest symbolizes home, family, hearth ("to make a nest" means to arrange his family life). The wing is a symbol of air and flight. Not coincidentally, "...beautiful screens with embroidered *birds* and fruits unprecedented in nature" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 5) in Oblomov's St. Petersburg room. Štol'c, on the other hand, "Torn from his pointer, ran to ravage *birds' nests* with the boys, and not infrequently, amidst class or at prayer, the *squeaks of loonies* were heard from his pocket" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 158). From Štol'c's point of view, Oblomov had "wings," but Oblomov himself unleashed them.

The need to move already at the beginning of the novel disrupts the hero's settled, peaceful life and frightens him. The symbolism of the "path" here appears as the final chord: the hero has gone through everything, experienced a lot, he is uncomfortable with the hustle and bustle of modern life, and would like to build a house and live in peace and at rest of patriarchal cyclical time, as his fathers and grandfathers.

The big house in Gorohovaja Street is not the hero's home, although he does not want to move out of it. It is a house where many people live, and in its content, it does not encapsulate the idea of family, warmth, coziness for Oblomov. In the house on Gorohovaja, the hero's idyll is unattainable. "How is it possible not to leave *someone else's house* if he is persecuted? *If it were my*

house I would move with all my pleasure" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 14) – says Zahar Oblomov. In general, it is impossible to have a hero's house in St. Petersburg. This is evident from Oblomov's conversations with Volkov, who describes to Oblomov the secular houses, luxurious salons known in aristocratic and official Petersburg, and there – balls and solemn dinners, but the hero is calm because in these houses there is no idea of a happy family nest, where warmth, comfort, intimacy, idyll, peace would reign. "One of the burning problems solved in the novel through the fate of the main character is precisely the problem of his home, his abode, his corner, his own nest. ...Oblomovka has spawned, released into life her pet, which, fledged, yearns and dreams of it hourly, but does not know the way back there" (Пырков/Pyrkov, 1998).

The symbols of "journey" and "home" are linked in the novel. The move is not a return. It is a replacement of one place of residence with another, maybe better, but not ideal, not as it appears to Oblomov. The reluctance to move is symbolic of the nature of the main character. On the one hand, it symbolizes the typical traits of the lazy, indifferent baron looking at everything. On the other hand, the desire to move and change something would suggest the possibility of solving the problem of Oblomov's finding his lost paradise, but, as events in the novel show, an idyllic circle and eternal return only happen in fairy-tale dreams: one cannot go back to childhood, one cannot find paradise on earth, hence, the hero's home on earth is also impossible.

The hero tells all the guests about the impossibility of moving. "Imagine having to move out: all the breaking and bothering... *it's scary to think about it*" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 33)! The verb "persecute" in the hero's speech conveys Oblomov's perception of the external world about himself: the external world is hostile, it gives no peace. Oblomov, in his conversation with Zahar, constructs a whole series of reasons for his inability to move. All this looks comical and ridiculous. Oblomov forbids Zahar to remind him of the move. Moving, walking, leaving, running, fiddling in the hero's mind is tantamount to changing the world order. The pathos-filled phrases "it will suck all the soul out," "you won't want to live," "boredom will gnaw," "will the human strength to bear it all" emphasize the comicality of the situation: an ordinary thing (moving) causes so much suffering.

The description of the biography of the hero, his life, and his dreams is carried out through the symbolism of "home", "way" and "light". Thus, it is said that Oblomov lives in St. Petersburg "without a journey" for twelve years, "days go by", "years flash by", the "turn" from youth to maturity has taken place, with the "rays of eyes" (youthful romanticism) replaced by "dim dots" (disappointment), and the hero "stands at the threshold, not moving forward a single step" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 56). At the same time,

"In his early years in St. Petersburg, in his early, young years, the resting features of his face come alive more often, his eyes *shine with the fire of life, rays of light, hope, and strength pour out of them*" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 59). The hero gradually becomes disillusioned with secular life, with bureaucratic work, with love:

"He is *not accustomed to movement, to life, to crowds and bustle*" (*idem*, p. 61).

The main character realizes not everything that is associated with movement, with the attempt to get somewhere and achieve something.

In Oblomov's reflections on history and human life, everything is also understood through the prism of "home," "way," and "light":

"History, too, depressed him terribly: you learn and read that at a certain date the people *were overtaken by all sorts of calamities and were unhappy, then they summoned up their strength, worked, took infinite care, endured great hardships, laboured in preparation for better days. At last they came – one would think history might take a rest, but no, clouds gathered again, the edifice crashed down, and again the people had to toil and labour... The bright days do not remain, they fly, and life flows on, one crisis follows upon another*" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, (p. 63) parallel translation).

In the perception of the hero, the constant running and bustle do not allow for the construction of a solid, eternal home as in Oblomovka. The building constantly collapses to be built again, hence the metaphor "life is a river" that flows without ceasing, it is no coincidence that the word "flow" is repeated twice-in Oblomov's monologue. Oblomov's happiness comes when tomorrow repeats today, and today repeats yesterday.

If Štol'c himself follows the road of life and seeks new impressions, then Oblomov must be "dragged out", "taken out":

"Despite all these quirks, his friend, Štol'c, managed to get him out into the world" (Гончаров/ Gončarov, 1981, p. 61).

Although Oblomov and Štol'c were united by the same ideals in their youth, they "burned" with a thirst for activity and were going to follow the same path together:

"The poets touched Oblomov to the core... *Mind and heart were enlightened: he shook off his slumber, his soul demanded activity... Taking advantage of the enthusiastic flight of the young dream, Štol'c inserted other goals than pleasure in reading the poets, pointed more strictly into the distance the ways of his and his life, and carried them into the future. Both worried cried and made solemn promises to each other to walk a sensible and bright road*" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 63).

"Štol'c's youthful fever infected Oblomov, and he burned with a thirst for work, a distant but charming goal. But the flower of life blossomed and gave no fruit" (*idem*, p. 64).

Fear of moving, traffic and the lack of a real rather than imagined plan for building a house prevent the hero from realizing his dream. "Oblomov's "trip" to Oblomovka is seen as a "feat. Oblomov does not know how and does not want to "ride headlong". Here is a vivid antithesis to Štol'c, who does nothing but ride around the world, and whom the author compares to a horse. "Ways of traveling" symbolically emphasize and reveal the essence of the characters, their way of life, and ideals.

The advice of the doctor who visits Oblomov is particularly comical. He appears as the last in a line of Oblomov's visitors and predicts much of how the hero's life will end. The doctor in a "dead coat" comes himself, no one has called him, and, describing the illness of Oblomov's neighbor, utters the prophetic phrase "the end is known" in the first pages of the novel. The doctor gives Oblomov unenforceable prescriptions: move, ride, dance, jump, do not think, do not suffer, avoid passions and abundant food, only then will Oblomov be healthy. Many things in the doctor's advice contradict Oblomov's inner essence: Switzerland, Paris, England, America – all this does not fit Oblomov's image as well as the advice "not to think", "not to suffer", to lead a secular lifestyle. Oblomov's "path" does not go beyond the borders of Oblomovka, so the doctor's advice given to Oblomov sounds comical and ridiculous.

This is not at all, what Oblomov is like in his dreams: movement, light, and desire appear here. The basic idea of the plan has long been ready in the hero's head, only details and numbers remain. The plan-dream gives the hero hope for the future, makes his thought "sparkle" and "boil":

"He worked *untiringly* on the plan for several years, thinking it over continually as he was *pacing* his room or *lying* down or visiting friends; he kept adding to it or changing various items, recalling what he had thought of the day before and forgotten during the night; and sometimes a new, unexpected *idea* would *flash* like *lightning* through his mind and *set* it simmering – and the work would start all over again" (*idem*, p. 66).

Oblomov's plan includes the construction of the village house, the arrangement of rooms, windows facing the garden, and the sun. According to his plan, he lives there without a holiday. Summer, homeland, home, wife, children, friends – it is all permeated with the symbolism of "light": the girls play burners, in the dining room sparkles and shines not only crystal but all-around – clear days, clear faces, bright blush.

A careful reading of the first part of the novel reveals that streams of light are present only in Oblomov's dreams and in his dreams. The St. Petersburg spring day, about which Oblomov's visitors talked so much, inviting him for a ride to Yekaterinhof, is not described at all. The day appears here more like a period than as a bright, sunny, springtime of the day. None of Oblomov's guests uses the words "the sun," "sunny" to praise the beginning of the day.



The phrases that "the day is good" and "there is not a cloud in the sky" are heard. Alekseev speaks well of the lack of light in Oblomov's room:

"One cannot see the light of God" (*idem*, p. 32).

The windows in the rooms are curtained. As I. Pyrkov remarks: "Word by word, phrase by phrase, Gončarov weaves the rhythm of muted light, color monotony, monotony, carrying it out with regular repetitions of strictly chosen definitions, verbs, subject nouns. There is no escape from Zahar's gray surcoat, in some paragraphs of the text it is repeated many times; and next to "the gray paper of the letter," the letter itself is "so dirty," just gray paper, pale letters, a pale ink stain, "a cobweb full of dust," dust itself, prolonged talk about it, rubbish, piles of rubbish, "a pile of the old worn- out dress." "yellowed pages" of some book, oily notebooks, some dirty paper from Tarrantiev's pocket and the wavering smoke from his cigar, the dark stone of the ring on the doctor's finger – all the micro details of this rhythmic yarn cannot be enumerated. Thus, in the textual space of the first part of the novel, everything that, so to speak, is "dusty and faded" is evenly dispersed" (Pyrkov, 1998). All this is the antithesis of the hero's dream and desire.

Oblomov, locked in his apartment, has a dream. "Oblomov's Dream" is a huge breakthrough of light, portrayed by Gončarov by a variety of artistic means. "The inhabitants of Oblomovka, living by the sun. The sun in all its possible positions and manifestations: spring, summer, winter, autumn; morning, noon, evening. Solar birches. Sunny spaces. The morning shadows, the river reflecting the sun and dazzling the eyes. A land where one wants to live forever, to be born and die in this corner – this is the solar, sensual outcome of the perception of "Oblomov's Dream" after the monotonously dull lighting that prevailed in the previous chapters of the first part of the novel" (Pyrkov, 1998):

"The *sun* there shines *brightly* and hotly for about half a year and then removes from there not suddenly, as if reluctantly, as if turning back to look once or twice more at his favorite place and giving it a *clear*, warm day in the fall, amidst inclement weather" (*idem*, p. 103).

"The sandy and sloping banks of the *bright river*" (*idem*, p. 103).

"The peasant throws off his half-coat, goes out into the air in one shirt, and, covering his eyes with his hand, *admires the sun* for a long time, shrugging his shoulders with pleasure" (*idem*, p. 103).

"...There look for *clear days*, slightly burning, but not scorching rays of *the sun* and almost for three months of *cloudless skies*. As the *clear days* go, they last for three or four weeks; and the evening is warm there, and the night is sultry. The stars blink so amiably, so friendly from heaven. Will it rain, what a wholesome summer rain! It will pour down briskly, abundantly, bouncing merrily, like big and hot tears of a suddenly rejoiced man; and as soon as it stops – *the sun* is again,

with a *clear* smile of love, inspecting and drying the fields and hills: and the whole country is again smiling with happiness in response to *the sun*" (*idem*, p. 104).

"Only in the distance, the field of rye *burns with fire*, and the river *glistens* and *sparkles* in the *sun* so much that it hurts the eyes" (*idem*, p. 112).

"The *sun* was already sinking behind the forest; it threw some slightly warm *rays*, which cut a *fiery* streak through the whole forest, *brightly* showering gold on the tops of the pines. Then the rays went out one by one; the last ray remained long; it, like a thin needle, thrust into a thicket of branches; but that too was extinguished. ...The first *star* in the sky *sparkled brightly*, like a living eye, and the lights in the windows of the house flickered" (*idem*, p. 119).

Pyrkov notes that the light palette of "Oblomov's Dream" is also formed by other layers of functionally identical vocabulary, creating an image of a luminous environment: "a blinking star; a starlet that looks like a living eye; the nanny's eyes sparkling with fire; a crackling fire; hair crackling on the head; sparks from a splintering lighter; a cloudless sky; clear days, a bright river, a birch grove; someone's mysterious lantern; eyes sparkling in the dark, etc. Even seemingly, tertiary details are subordinated to the author's luminous strategy: the Oblomovs' healing plant is called "dawn," their favorite game is "burners" (Пыркoв/Pyrkov, 2000). Most of the scenes take place in the open air. The airy background determined the exceptionally strong light concentration created by the author in this fragment of the novel.

The most vivid and joyful images of Russian folk tales combined with the poetic image of ancient mythology enabled Gončarov to create a metaphor double in its luminosity, which became winged. Only once named, it throws light reflexes over the entire text of "Oblomov's Dream": "Listening from my nanny to tales of our 'golden fleece – the Firebird...". The writer highlights this expression in italics as if to reveal its semantic and emotional and aesthetic halo (Пыркoв/Pyrkov, 2000). Zhar-ptitsa (the Firebird) is a wonderful bird in the East Slavic fairy tale. According to a Russian fairy tale, each of its feathers "is so wonderful and bright that if you bring it into a dark room, it so shines, as if a great many candles were lit in that resting place." The golden coloring of the Firebird, its golden cage are associated with the fact that the bird comes from another ("thirty") kingdom, where everything colored in gold comes from.

Associatively, one can refer to the mythological notion of the Golden Age that existed in the ancient world, of the happy and carefree state of primitive humanity. This idea is most clearly expressed in the poem "Labor and Days" by Hesiod and in Ovid's "Metamorphoses". The descriptions of the Golden Age by ancient authors resemble those of Oblomov, while the descriptions of the later (Silver, Copper, and Iron) Ages, filled with toil and sorrow, refer back to the reader's perception of Oblomov's life in St. Petersburg. "According to Hesiod (Hes. Opp. 104-201), the first generation of men in the

reign of the supreme god Kronos enjoyed complete bliss. "Those men lived like gods, with a calm and clear soul, sorrowless, knowing no toil. Moreover, sad old age did not dare to approach them... In addition, they died as if enveloped in sleep... A great harvest and plentiful gave themselves the grain-growing land... " ... But after the Golden Age came the Silver Age, then the Copper Age – each heavier and more miserable than the last, ... and finally came the present – the Iron Age, when "neither toil and sorrow cease during the day nor night (Мифы народов мира/Mify narodov mira, 1991, p. 471). A peculiar version of the myth of the golden age is the biblical account of the life of the first people in paradise, from which they were later expelled by God for disobedience

It is no coincidence that Oblomov's utopian dreams of the possibility of building a new home and a happy life away from the world of vanity and passions, in an earthly paradise called Oblomovka, in the land of quiet childhood and good fairy tales, where milk rivers and fairy banks flow and where the beautiful wife, Militrisa Kirbievna, is waiting at home. It is not by chance that Oblomovka is described as "a place blessed by God" and "a marvelous land," that is, God and the miracle created this part of the world, not people. Here reigns "peace, silence, and undisturbed tranquility," so not only do the inhabitants of Oblomovka lie and sleep, "deep silence and peace also *lie* in the fields" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 107). "Dead sleep," silence, peace, and the joy of bodily existence, embodied in abundant food, are combined and unified. In Oblomov's dream, as in Oblomovka itself, the pagan joy of earthly existence is intertwined with the Christian symbolism of a heavenly, divine, bright paradise. "Paradise is an ideal region of eternal happiness and bliss of being with God, *accessible only to virtuous people*. In Christianity, paradise is perceived as a '*good place*': a garden, according to the Bible...The origin of the Russian word paradise is associated with the ancient Iranian name, which translates as '*a place fenced off from everywhere*,' and with the Avestan word for '*wealth, happiness*'" (Символы, знаки, эмблемы/Simvoly, znaki, èmblemy, 2005, p. 399).

Oblomovka, as an epoch of humanity's childhood, where there is no sense of history and movement yet, as a paradisiacal, "out-of-the-way" place, where there is no great road or connection with the world, where wealth and happiness are associated with God and wonder, is included in the opposition Past/Present and the opposition West/East. Oblomovka is not accidentally located in the East. This emphasizes Russia's greater connection to Eastern values than to Western values.

"...On the death of his father and mother, he became the sole owner of three hundred and fifty souls inherited in one of the remote provinces, *almost in Asia*" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 55).

In the dimension of symbolic geography, the closer the country is to the East, the closer it is to the sacred, to tradition, to spiritual abundance. "As a sunset country, the West, where the sun goes down, symbolizes spiritual decline, degradation, materialization, profanation, the transition from life to death" (Символы, знаки, эмблемы/Simvoly, znaki, èmblemy, 2005, p. 178).

Endowed with a medieval consciousness, the Oblomovites live in their own space and cannot imagine life outside their topos, so anything that goes beyond the boundaries of their world is alien and not close to them. The world of the Oblomovites is permeated by duality: their "own" world is opposed to the world of the "alien", "distant" world:

"The inhabitants of those villages *lived far from other people...* They knew that the administrative city of the province was sixty miles away, but very few of them ever went there; they also knew that farther away in the same direction was Saratov or Nizhny-Novgorod; they had heard of Petersburg and Moscow, and that French and Germans lived beyond Petersburg, and the world farther away was for them as mysterious as it was for the ancients - unknown countries, inhabited by monsters, people with two heads, giants; farther away still there was darkness, and at the end of it all was the fish which held the world on its back" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 107 (parallel translation)).

"If paradise is located in the east and is called 'sunny,' hell is localized in the west and is immersed in darkness. By illuminating the earth's surface, the sun as if handing it over to the power of the divine forces, and hiding at night, leaving it in the power of evil. In hymns and spiritual poems "svyatorusskaya" or "svetorusskaya" land is depicted as an open, boundless space flooded with light; cf. the expressions "white light" or "free light" – about the world as a whole. In spiritual poems the epithet "light" is generally close to "holy": luminosity is seen as a manifestation of truth, righteousness and holiness (cf. halo in icon painting)" (Славянская мифология/ Slavjanskaja mifologija, 1995, p. 349).

The East is the side of the world associated with the symbolism of the rebirth, the West with the symbolism of the sunset. Heaven is located in the east. It is no coincidence that prayers, temple altars, and red corners of huts face to the east:

"The ratio "good" – "bad" determines the semantic symbolism of the east – holiness, righteousness, justice, prosperity and abundance, vitality, primordiality, and the west – uncleanness, unrighteousness, mortality, completeness. According to the beliefs of the Russians, the east was the home of God, the west of Satan, so the east should be addressed with a prayer" (*idem*, p. 121).

When describing the inner world of the hero in his moments of reverie, the details of light, fire, and sun symbolically appear:

"...he was *consumed* by a desire to point out to man his sores, and suddenly thoughts were kindled in him, ... *setting* his blood on fire, ... *moved by a spiritual force*, he would change his position two or three times in one minute, and half-rising on his couch *with blazing eyes*, stretch forth his hand and look around him like one inspired... Oblomov turned on his back quietly and wistfully and, fixing a sorrowful gaze at the *window* and the *sky*, mournfully watched the *sun* setting gorgeously behind a four-storied house. How many times had he watched the *sun set* like that!" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, pp. 67-68 (parallel translation)).

As I. Pyrkov states, "Oblomov, the window, and the sun appear in the form of an indissoluble triad, where the window plays the role of a borderline, the boundary between the man on earth and the source of life spilling "pacific light" and blazing "in a hundred and forty suns" (Пырко́в/Pyrkov, 1998). The hero and the sun are inseparable, Oblomov always turns his gaze to the sun, and his name refers to the symbolism of the sun:

"He was inclined toward tenderness and dreams; he turned his eyes to the sky, *looking for his favorite luminary*, but it was at its zenith and only cast a *dazzling luster* on the lime wall of the house, behind which is rolled up in the evening in Oblomov's sight" (*idem*, p. 77).

While Oblomov speaks of time, fixed by the clock, with horror, watching the sunset and the day fade is a pleasure for him. The setting of the sun, like any recurring natural phenomenon, does not bring him a bitter sense of loss.

Oblomov's dream is associated with the midday sun or its evening light: "The river is slightly splashing; the spikes are stirring in the breeze, the heat... To sit in the boat, his wife rules..." The place of his unfulfilled idyll is under the open sky, on the cut grass, on a carpet spread "between the stacks." Oblomov says: "One side of my house faces east", to the sunrise. He imagines "Oblomovka, as bright as a holiday, all in splendor, in sunlight." His dream has "rainbow colors." He and Olga walk hand in hand "on a hot afternoon." Oblomov "is lost with her in the grove at hot noon..." They have "a hot summer reigning." Oblomov thinks that love, "like a sultry noon, hangs over the lovers and nothing moves..." He sets his eyes on Olga "like a kindling glass." Oblomov is constantly searching for "his favorite luminary."

Stoltz's words about "the inner *hard* work of Oblomov's *ardent* head and humane heart" emphasize the symbolic significance of "fire" in the character of the hero. After Oblomov recalls the details of the scene with Zahar, "his face *erupted in a fire* of shame". Note how the symbolism of light metaphorically reflects the essence of the hero's nature:

"... there was in Oblomov's nature something good, *pure*, and *irreproachable*, which was deeply in sympathy with everything that was good and that responded to the call of his simple, unsophisticated, and eternally trustful nature. Anyone who once looked, whether by accident or design, into his *pure* and childlike soul – however gloomy and bitter he might be – could not help

sympathizing with him and, if circumstances prevented them from becoming friends, retaining a good and lasting memory of him" (*idem*, 1981, p. 171 (parallel translation)).

The antithesis of Oblomov's "light" is the absence of "light" in the society to which Štol'c calls the hero:

"Not one of them has *clear*, calm eyes, ... They all infect each other by a sort of tormenting anxiety and melancholy; they are all painfully searching for something. And if only it were for truth or their own and other people's welfare – but no, they *turn pale* when they learn of a friend's success" (*idem*, p. 181 (parallel translation)).

However, the "light" portrait of Oblomov also has a tragic side. Confessing to Štol'c, Oblomov laments:

"And where did it all *disappear* to? Why has it become extinguished? I can't understand it! There were no storms or shocks in my life; I never lost anything; there is no load on my conscience: it is *clear as glass*; no blow has killed ambition in me, and goodness only knows why everything has been utterly wasted! ... You see, Andrey, the trouble is that *no* devastating or redeeming *fires* have *ever burnt* in my life. It never was like a morning which gradually fills with light and colour and then turns, like other people's, into a blazing, *hot day*, when everything seethes and shimmers in the bright noonday sun, and then *gradually grows paler* and more subdued, *fading* naturally into the evening twilight. No! My life began *by flickering out*. It may sound strange but it is so. From the very first moment I became conscious of myself, I felt that I was already *flickering out*. ... You appeared and disappeared like a *bright and swiftly moving comet*, and I forgot it all and went on *flickering out*..... Yes, I am an old shabby, worn-out coat, but not because of the climate or hard work, but because for twelve years *the light has been shut up within me* and, unable to find an outlet, it merely *consumed itself* inside its prison house and was extinguished without breaking out into the open" (*idem*, p. 190-191 (parallel translation)).

The repeated ten times verb "to go out" in Oblomov's confession emphasizes how painful and difficult it is for the hero to realize the meaninglessness of his life, in which there was "neither a saving nor destructive fire." "Work", "friendship", "love" in their secular sense do not bring the hero satisfaction, "light". "Life is burning" is a traditional metaphorical archetype; "life is extinguishing" is an individual-author metaphor. Štol'c is a "comet," living "brightly" and "quickly." It is interesting that the feeling of "extinguishing" begins in St. Petersburg, there is not a word about Oblomovka, the hero remarks that "twelve years the light was locked in me", that is, we get to know the hero when he is 32-33 years old, and hence 12 years ago is 19-20, the time of arrival in St. Petersburg. I. Gončarov, in a letter to P. G. Ganzen, notes:

"You have perfectly summarized Oblomov's character or dominant trait with the word 'extinguishing'. ...The motif of 'extinguishing' is predominant in the novel, the key or overture to which is the chapter 'Sleep' " (*idem*, p. 473).

Why is it that the "dream of the sun" serves as the key to unlocking the "extinguishing" motif? Because "The Dream..." shows the formation of the character of the hero, the reasons that led to the "extinguishment". And here the symbolism of the "way", associated with the belief in "fate" and "luck" is important.

The key concept of the cultural archetype of the Russian man is "avos" (let us hope)-the tendency to tease happiness, to play the game of luck. Oblomov's image is woven from the Russian predilection for indefinite particles. He is the living embodiment of all the "either, either, or, either, or".

In Oblomovka, everything keeps happening at random. The gallery and porch are not repaired, even though they are dilapidated. And the repair itself, if you can call it that, reinforces the hope that it will stand for many years. And the porch with steps, through which "not only cats and pigs crawl into the basement," not fixed, although it wobbles, and the hope will last, especially since it has always wobbled.

In the hero's reflections on the two "misfortunes" (the headman's letter and the move), Gončarov focuses on the significant words of the hero's mentality, highlighting them in italics:

"The troubles the bailiff is threatening me with are still far off,' he thought. 'All sorts of things can happen before that: the rains *may* save the crops, the bailiff *may* make good the arrears... 'And *perhaps* Zahar will succeed in coming to some arrangement so that it will not be necessary to move at all. *Perhaps* it could be arranged somehow! They might agree to put it off till next summer or give up the idea of conversion altogether; well, arrange it in one way or another! After all, I really can't - move. So he kept agitating and composing himself in turn, and, as always, found in the soothing and comforting words *perhaps, somehow, in one way or another*, a whole ark of hope and consolation as in the old ark of the Covenant, and succeeded with their help in warding off the two misfortunes for the time being " (*idem*, p. 98 (parallel translation)).

We can see that Oblomov always relied on the "luck" and that his fathers (let us stress the pronoun "our", i.e. the covenants which are characteristic not only of Oblomov but also of the author and the people for a long time) did the same, they believed more in a miracle than in themselves. Having told Alekseev of his "two misfortunes", Oblomov looks at him questioningly, "in the vain hope that he *might* think of something to *allay* his fears" (*idem*, p. 34 (p.t.)). It is interesting the very combination of "sweet hope", sweet because there may be some means by which to solve all the problems and misfortunes:

"Oblomov would have liked to have his rooms clean, but he could not help wishing that it would all happen *somehow of itself, without any fuss*" (*idem*, p. 13).

Belief in fate, in the life path, which determines the main moments of life, including the time and circumstance of death, is peculiar to Oblomovtsy. Hence the notion that wealth and happiness depend not so much on a person's efforts and labor as on God, fate, and destiny. In Slavic mythology "share" is the embodiment of happiness, luck, given to people by the deity.

Originally, the common Slavic word "god" had the meaning "share" and was associated with the concept of good, wealth; with a person who endows with good, wealth. "With the designation of a share, luck, happiness, is connected with the common Slavic "god": rich (having a god, share) – poor (not having a share, god)" (Славянская мифология/Slavjanskaja mifologija, 1995, p. 451).

Along with the good portion as a personification of happiness in mythological and later folklore texts are evil (unclean, bad) portion, misfortune, woe, trouble, need, grief, and beggary as an embodiment of the absence of a portion, a bad portion.

Wealth – the abundance of earthly goods, associated with the notion of a share, destiny, good luck, favor of God, ancestors, and other forces. Achievement of wealth, abundance, fertility, prosperity is the main objective of numerous rituals within the calendar and family ceremonies associated with the magic of the first day, the beginning of the cosmic or life cycle (New Year, Christmas, homeland, wedding), as well as fortune-telling (about fate, marriage). The Oblomovites are more convinced that luck, happiness, and richness do not depend on a person's hard daily work or effort, but on whether God grants a person a share or not. Pagan rites and superstitions are combined in the minds of Oblomovites with Christian, Orthodox rites and beliefs. Paganism and Christianity in their perception do not contradict but naturally complement each other. At the same time, in the minds of the Slavs, excessive wealth is associated with unclean forces. Great wealth is owned by the devil (evil spirit), the serpent (snake). The devil is devilishly rich. He buys souls for riches. Cf. the proverb: "If you don't put your soul in hell, you won't be rich!"

Oblomov's parents wished that Ilyusha (Oblomov) would not have to work too hard and would have achieved everything thanks to fate, his share, God, and not through hard work. Oblomov's "way" was obvious to them:

"They saw that it was *only education that made it possible* for people to make a career, that is, to acquire rank, decorations, and money... *A gulf opened up* between the higher and the lower grades of civil servants which could be *bridged* only by something called a diploma... They dreamed of a gold-embroidered uniform for him; they *imagined* him as a Councillor at Court, and his mother even imagined him as a Governor of a province. But they *wanted to obtain* all this *as cheaply as*



*possible, by all sorts of tricks, by secretly dodging the rocks and obstacles scattered on the path of learning and honours, without bothering to jump over them – that is, for instance, by working a little, not by physical exhaustion or the loss of the blessed plumpness acquired in childhood. All they wanted was that their son should merely comply with the prescribed rules and regulations and obtain in some way or other a certificate which said that their darling Il'ja had mastered all the arts and sciences*" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, pp. 144-145).

Making up various excuses not to send Oblomov to the German to study led to the fact that Oblomov both studied and later served feebly, believing that not hard work brings happiness, but "avos" and "miracle":

"He *somehow or other* managed to stay in the service for two years" (*idem*, p. 58).

Ilya's parents resort to tricks to circumvent difficulties, trying to keep their son from studying and working too hard. And this also reveals one of the traits of the Russian cultural archetype. "From ancient times, the Russian man has adhered to the principle that "you can't beat a wall with your forehead" and "only crows fly straight." Nature and fate, writes V. O. Ključevskij, led the Great Russian so that he accustomed to go out on the road by roundabout ways" (Černeva, 1998, p. 9). What Štol'c's mother dislikes about the Germans is that they always go straight to the goal and do not know how to circumvent the law and rules:

"She could not discover any softness, delicacy, or true understanding in the German character, nothing that makes life so agreeable in good society, which makes it possible to *infringe some rule, violate some generally accepted custom, or refuse to obey some regulation*. No, those boorish fellows insisted on carrying out whatever had been assigned to them or what they happened to take into their heads – *they were determined to act according to the rules if they had to knock through a wall with their heads*. ...men who were capable only of hard work, of earning a living by the sweat of their brows, *of keeping commonplace order, living dull lives and fulfilling their duties in a pedantic manner*" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 161).

Oblomov is deceived by his countrymen, finding roundabout ways to achieve wealth and well-being. The very name of the headman, Vyt'jaguškin, and his brother-in-law, Krivoj, who writes a letter to the landlord at the headman's dictation, show that they are not clean in their hands. Deceiving Oblomov, they use all the same constants of Russian existence, referring to God and "avos" and the fact that they are not to blame for the crop failure, but "drought", "worm", "frost". Sunny Oblomovka gives the world not only the honest Oblomov but also the swindler Tarantjev, who in some ways, along with Zahar, is Oblomov's double. Tarantiev points out to Oblomov that the headman is lying. Il'ja Il'jič asks Tarantjev to help him, again shifting the responsibility from himself to the other:

"...*think of something so that I need not leave this flat or go to the country and so that everything should be settled satisfactorily*" (*idem*, p. 50).

And it does not matter that he appeals to the same crook as his headman, the main thing is to shift responsibility to the other, to escape from anxiety. Tarantjev is just as eager to circumvent the law for personal gain as the headman Vyt'jaguškin is not to work.

Wealth and prosperity, obtained by long, hard work, not by miracle or deceit, raise doubts and distrust in Oblomov. Oblomov believes that only Stoltz can settle all his affairs, again relying on someone. And in the eyes of Tarantjev, Štol'c is a "damned German, a scoundrel," because Tarantjev does not believe that one can earn an honest living, that it is not the position ("the court counselor") that gives prosperity but study and work:

"...that *German of yours robs you of your last penny what it means to give up a neighbour of yours, a true Russian, for some tramp...* A nice fellow! All of a sudden he makes three hundred thousand out of his father's forty and then becomes a Court Councillor, a man of learning – and now he is away travelling! The rogue has a finger in every pie! *Would a good Russian, a real Russian, do all that? A Russian would choose one thing, and that, too, without rush or hurry, in his own good time, and carry on somehow or other – but this one – Good Lord! If he'd become a Government contractor, then at least one could understand how he had grown rich, but he did nothing of the kind – just got rich by some knavery! There's certainly something wrong there!* ...What does he go knocking about in foreign parts for? – He wants to study, to see everything, to know! – To study! Hasn't he been taught enough? What does he want to learn? *Can you think of any decent man who is studying*" (*idem*, pp. 52-53)?

Tarantjev, like Il'ja Il'jič, embodies Oblomovka, and it turns out that the "way", destined to such heroes, can lead not only to moral purity and family traditions but also to laziness, deceit, meanness.

The symbolism of "way" in "Oblomov's Dream" is connected not only with the hero's future path in life, not only with the fact that "Meanwhile poor Oblomov had still to go for his lessons to Štol'c. As soon as he woke up on Monday morning, he felt *terribly depressed*" (*idem*, p. 142), but also because everything in little Ilya resists statics and is directed toward motion. Only the atmosphere of Oblomovka does not allow the "forces seeking manifestation" to develop in the child. The author, describing little Ilyusha's day, uses such combinations as "ran from the nanny", "ran up the gallery", "ran around", "climbed the dovecote", "climbed into the back of the garden", "rushed" "climbed the steep stairs", "ran out", "days and nights filled with turmoil, running around", "rushing around". The unrecognizable Oblomov is presented here: climbing, jumping, running, jumping, rushing. However, Ilya is forbidden, constantly being taken care of, and at the same time, "Not a single detail, however trifling, escaped the child's inquisitive attention; the picture of his homelife was indelibly engraved on his memory; his malleable mind absorbed the living examples before him and *unconsciously drew up the*

*programme of life in accordance with the life around him" (idem, p. 113). Constant prohibition eventually leads to a sad future program of the hero's life.*

The longing to find the lost paradise is not only a desire to return to peace, family, and stability, it is also a longing for the unfulfilled in the life of the hero, for the not brought to completion. Oblomov's monologue through the symbolism of "path" and "light" expresses the pain of losing something important in life and unrealized. The wide road of human existence becomes "a narrow and pathetic overgrowing path" and the hero's bright beginning is "locked" in the grave:

"He felt sad and sorry at the thought of his own lack of education, at the arrested development of his spiritual powers, at the feeling of heaviness which interfered with everything he planned to do; and was overcome by envy of those whose lives were rich and full, while a huge rock seemed to have been thrown across the narrow and pitiful path of his own existence. ... he was painfully aware that something good and fine lay buried in him as in a grave, that it was perhaps already dead... Something prevented him from launching out into the ocean of life and devoting all the powers of his mind and will to flying across it under full sail. Some secret enemy seemed to have laid a heavy hand upon him at the very start of his journey and cast him a long way off from the direct purpose of human existence. And it seemed that he would never find his way to the straight path from the wild and impenetrable jungle. The forest grew thicker and darker in his soul and around him; the path was getting more and more overgrown; clear consciousness awakened more and more seldom, and roused the slumbering powers only for a moment" (*idem*, p. 100).

In all his "misfortunes," Oblomov primarily sees not his fault, but the fate that made him this way, and, consequently, he cannot correct or change anything in his life himself. Reflecting on why his life was not successful, especially since everything was given to him by nature and the light was burning inside, the hero concludes that it is not fate:

"After seeking in vain for the hostile source that prevented him from living as he should, as the 'others' lived, he sighed, closed his eyes, and a few minutes later drowsiness began once again to benumb his senses. 'I, too, would have liked - liked,' he murmured, blinking with difficulty, 'something like that - has nature treated me so badly - no, thank God - I've nothing to complain of... 'It's fate, I suppose - can't do anything about it'" (*idem*, p. 101)?

The hero shifts the responsibility for his unsuccessful life onto fate and concludes that nothing depends on his participation. And when Štol'c asks what prevents Oblomov from going to the countryside and getting married, he replies:

"Well, it can't be helped. ...I'm too poor to marry" (*idem*, p. 182).

As we can see, in Oblomov's mind "fortune" does not depend in any way on deeds, on labor, it is either given or not given by fate.

In our article, we have characterized the symbols "home", "way", "light" and demonstrated their artistic role in the structure of Oblomov's image. When describing other characters in the novel (*Štol'c, Il'inskaja, Pšenicyna*), the author also refers to the symbols "home", "way" and "light", using lexemes included in the semantic fields of these names, which we will demonstrate in our next article "The polysemy of symbols in the novel "Oblomov" by Ivan Gončarov".

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