

THE ARTISTIC STRUCTURE OF OBLOMOV'S IMAGE

Vladimir BRAJUC

Associate Professor, Ph.D.

(Alecu Russo Balti State University, Republic of Moldova)

vladimir.brajuc@usarb.md

Abstract

The article examines the artistic structure of the image of Oblomov, the protagonist of the novel "Oblomov" by Ivan Gončarov. The dominant artistic method of creating the image in Gončarov's novel – antithesis – is considered.

Keywords: *image, type, character, antithesis*

Rezumat

În articol, supunem cercetării structura artistică a imaginii lui Oblomov, protagonistul romanului lui Ivan Gonțarov „Oblomov”. Metoda artistică de bază în crearea imaginii în cauză este antiteza.

Cuvinte-cheie: *imagine, tip, personaj, antiteză*

The unity of "type" and "character" in the structure of Oblomov's image

In our previous article "The Problem of Interpretation of Oblomov's Image" (Brajuc, 2018a) we wrote that the interpretation of Gončarov's novel "Oblomov", especially of the main character, seems controversial. We came to the conclusion that Oblomov is an integral artistic image, the unambiguous interpretation of which leads to a simplification of the meaning of the novel. The main character in the novel "Oblomov" should be studied as an integral artistic image that combines features of type and character in equal measure. In order to show the unity of "type" and "character" in the structure of Oblomov's image, it is necessary to examine the artistic techniques used by the author to create the image. One of the dominant techniques in the novel "Oblomov" is the antithesis. In I.A. Gončarov's work the antithesis is multi-staged: in the novel everything is built on comparisons and oppositions. The peculiarity of the antithesis lies in the fact that it conveys not a total disconnection and nonconformity, but paradoxically expresses synthesis, unity.

From the first pages of the novel, when describing the portrait of Oblomov, the author avoids unambiguous interpretations of his character, using modal words "as if", "seemed", "maybe", the negative particles "not", "nor". He does not insist on any definite features of the hero, but describes Oblomov in detail, unhurriedly, ironically and lyrically. The description of the protagonist of the novel is built on the contrast, on the opposition of external and internal: on the one hand, dark gray eyes, lack of idea in the

facial features, an expression of fatigue and boredom in the gaze, on the other – a thought walking like a free bird on the face, softness – the dominant and basic expression of not only the face, but the whole soul, which shines openly and clearly in the eyes, in a smile, in movements.

The hero does not live in a large house on Gorohovaâ Street, but lies in bed there:

"In Gorohovaâ Street, in one of the big houses ... in the morning Il'ja Il'ič Oblomov *was lying* in bed in his apartment" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 3).

Moreover, lying down is the norm:

"Ilya Ilyich's lying down was neither a necessity, like the sick man or the man who wants to sleep, nor an accident, like the tired man, nor a pleasure, like the lazy man: it was his *normal* state. When he was at home – and he was almost always at home – he was lying down all the time, and all the time in the same room" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 4).

And in this case there is no certainty: he is not sick, he is not tired, he is not lazy, but he lies down, this is the way of his existence. The lexical-semantic repetition (lying down) emphasizes his "normal state". The amplifying and separating repetitive particle "all" (he lay all the time, and all the time in the same room) actualizes the continuity of the action. But if the hero is neither sick nor lazy, why does he lie down? Why is it normal for him to do what others think is unnatural?

On the first page of the novel we find two possible views of the hero, which are expressed through the semantic opposition ("a superficially observant, cold man"/"a deeper and more sympathetic person") – a device of contrast:

"And a *superficially observant, cold man*, having looked at Oblomov in passing-by, would say: "He must be good-natured, a simpleton! A *deeper and more sympathetic person*, gazing into his face for a long time, would step back in pleasant reflection, with a smile" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 3).

Let us pay attention to the definitions of the two people looking at Oblomov. One, a cold person, which indicates his callousness, relying only on facts, observations, but these observations are superficial, that is, he notices what clearly catches his eye. First of all, these are the typical features of the landlord, lazy, unwilling to take care of the affairs of his estate, flabby beyond his years, who lives in the dirt, and dust and resembles the thing itself, like Gogol's landlords: it is not by chance that the noun "folds" is used in the description of the hero's coat and forehead, the coat is soft and supple, like the hero himself. The use of the perfect participle "having looked", expressing the meaning of the briefness and finality of the action with the adverb "passing by" emphasizes the superficiality of the look: *passing-by* means –neglectful, not stopping to understand and get to the bottom of it, in this

way the "cold man" (the reader) draws conclusions. The description of the other person uses the imperfect participle "gazing", which expresses the meaning of incompleteness, duration of action, with the adverb "long", and therefore, attentively, so when defining the second person, the author uses not the dry, close to the scientific term "observant", but the metaphor "the deeper man". In other words, the second person looks long and, accordingly, penetrates deeper into the essence. The "deeper man" also has a second definition, "more sympathetic". What does this mean? To whom is he more sympathetic: to the author, to the narrator, to the reader? And why is he more sympathetic than the first one? In all likelihood, the use of these non-conjugated definitions with emotional-expressive connotations (deeper, more sympathetic) expresses the author's attitude toward the hero. Since he is able to see through the dirt, dust and cobwebs not only the "man-coat" lying on the couch, but also the softness of Oblomov's face, the light of his soul, the "grace of laziness".

The "colder" person expresses his opinion about the hero: "*He must be good-natured, a simpleton!*", where the very word "simpleton" suggests that to the superficially observant person Oblomov is not complicated, not difficult, easily understandable, a silly hero. "The deeper and more sympathetic man" does not define the protagonist; he does not give his opinion, but withdraws in "pleasant reflection, with a smile." The lexeme "reflection" suggests that the hero is far from being simple and one cannot interpret his appearance unambiguously, especially since contemplation is pleasant, bringing joy, or a smile. The first man's expression and the second man's silence convey the peculiarity of the construction of Oblomov's artistic image: everything that is on the surface, that catches the eye, more often refers to the typical features of the landlord, to the social problems of the novel; everything that is hidden in the subtext (in the silence) refers to the complexity of the hero's inner world, to the "metaphysical" side of the novel. "Reproducing the full way of life, the novelist seeks to turn Oblomov not only by his comic side. This side is balanced in Gončarov's portrayal by the tragic fate of the hero, by his inner torment" (Пруцков/Pruckov, 1962, p. 91). The antithesis of the external (type) and internal (character) in the structure of Oblomov's image expresses the unity of the image, since without any of the opposition sides the very image of Oblomov disappears.

The description of the interior of Oblomov's study is also based on the artistic device of contrast. The reader sees the study from different points of view. At first glance: it is a beautifully decorated room. The experienced eye sees some effort of keeping up "unavoidable properties, just to get rid of them". The master of the room himself is indifferent to the decoration. On close inspection one notices neglect and carelessness: everything is covered with dust and cobwebs, the carpets are stained, on the table there is "a plate

with a salt shaker and a nibbled bone from yesterday's dinner... bread crumbs" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 5). If it were not for the plate and the lying host himself, one would think that "no one lives here", no "living traces of human presence" (*idem*, p. 6). Such a way of depicting the hero is characteristic of Gogol's manner ("natural school"). Gogol's reminiscences are evident in the depiction of Manilov's interior: unwrapped books, covered with yellowing and dust on the open page; newspapers of last year's issue lying around; an inkwell with a frightened fly flying out of it. It would seem that in the description of the interior, typical features of the life of a landowner who lives at the expense of others, running his own house, not interested in anything, indifferent to everything, lazy to the extreme are striking first of all. However, attention should be paid to the fact that Oblomov tries to observe decorum in his apartment, "just to get rid of it," so he looks at the room decorations coldly, and does not go into the other three rooms at all, where furniture is covered with slip-overs and curtains are pulled down. This is the difference between Oblomov and Manilov, who does not notice the vulgarity in the interior of his house. Further, when we get acquainted with Oblomov's idyllic dream of patriarchal life in his native Oblomovka, in the vastness of fields and birch groves, it becomes clear why the hero is indifferent to the decoration of his room. As in the description of the portrait, in the interior sketch the critical, condemning nominations of the hero's way of life are softened with humor, the author's irony. Colloquial proverbial words in Oblomov's statement ("Who *dragged* and *set* all this here?") are next to lofty, pathetic words and formal business constructions:

"Oblomov's cold *attitude* towards his *property*, and perhaps even colder *attitude* of his servant Zakhar towards the same *subject*..." (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 5).

Besides, Gogol's description of landlords is full of comic background, perhaps even "...direct, harsh, merciless satire, unraveling and defining the negative in Manilov's character, focusing the artist's attention exclusively on this negative, subordinating all other features of the character to it" (Пиксанов/Piksanov, 1952, p. 87). Whereas Gončarov aspires to a multifaceted (and not only ironic) portrayal of Oblomov's character: "In Gončarov, an impartial, strict, thoughtful and humane judge of Oblomov, one sees a deep sympathy, a cordial attitude towards his sadly funny hero, condescension towards him, dictated by a clear understanding of the social evil that has ruined him" (Пруцков/Pruckov, 1962, p. 89).

The author (and the hero himself) seeks to instill to the reader the idea that Oblomov is not only a type of landlord-lazybones, but also an individual character. From the beginning to the end of the novel the hero is opposed to the masses, the crowd, the population, society; he is different, not like everyone else. This implicitly follows from the very first sentence of the novel:

"In Gorohovaja Street, in one of the large houses, the dwellers of which would be enough for an entire district town, Il'ja Il'ič Oblomov was lying in bed in the morning, in his apartment" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 3).

The house is likened to a whole "provincial town". Further we learn that Oblomov is moved out from the house, because the owner, arranging the wedding of his children, wants to make repairs in the house. The wedding and repairs, as well as the place of residence (Gorohovaja Street is one of the central streets in St. Petersburg) are signs that life is boiling in the "provincial town," and only Oblomov alone does not want to move. He alone is not bustling, but on the contrary, he is afraid of the bustle surrounding him, trying to get away from it, to escape into a dream, where everything is quiet and calm.

The antithesis "hero/society" is also expressed explicitly. Thus, the guests visiting Oblomov "breathe life and movement" and "shine with health and merriment", in contrast to the hero lying peacefully on the couch; but it turns out that their movements (life) are an empty, meaningless pastime. Over the course of two and a half hours, Oblomov, having moved from the couch to an armchair, receives guests, and the appearance of each visitor reveals unexpected features of Il'ja Il'ič's nature, character and worldview.

The reader is faced with "all of Petersburg" – mundane, bureaucratic, "cultural" and "mass". Gončarov caricaturedly typifies the guests, endowing each one with a meaningful surname. The twenty-year-old Volkov (*wolf* – B.V.), "glistening in health," expresses the bustle of life (the wolf feeds due to his feet), mundane splendor, a jovial life, following fashion ("one is dazzled by the freshness of his face, underwear, gloves and tailcoat," a glossy hat, patent-leather boots). Volkov describes to Oblomov with gaiety and enthusiasm the balls and formal dinners in the luxurious salons of the aristocratic and officials' houses of St. Petersburg: the Tjumenev house, the Mussinskijs' house, the Savinovs' house, the Vjaznikovs' house, the Maklašins' house. A big number of houses indicates to Volkov's typical lifestyle in mundane St. Petersburg: visits, dinners, dancing, hunting, partying – with spiritual poverty and lack of work:

"Thank God my service is such that I don't have to be in office. Only twice a week I sit and have lunch at the general's, and then go on visits, where I have not been for a long time" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 18).

For the second visitor, the official Sudbinskij (*destiny* – B.V.), with whom Oblomov began to serve together, the main thing in life is a career, instead of destiny determining a person's life:

"Devil's service... One cannot dispose of oneself for a single minute" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 20).

Advancement on the career ladder is not always associated with professional growth and really meaningful affairs:

"It is pleasant to serve with such a man as Foma Fomič: he will not let one remain without rewards; he does not forget even those who do nothing" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 21).

The work becomes "erecting dog kennels near buildings belonging to... the department in order to preserve the state property from plunder" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 23). The ability to live and build a career is determined by the ability to use public funds for personal purposes:

"In the summer I will rest: Foma Fomič promises *to invent a business trip* on purpose for me... here, I will get money for five horses trip, daily allowance of three rubles a day, and then a reward..." (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 22).

In order to make a career, in marriage it is not love that matters, but the rank of the bride's father:

"Father is a full State Counsellor; he gives ten thousand, the apartment is government property. He gave us a whole half of it, twelve rooms; state furniture, heating and lighting also: one can live..." (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 23).

Sudbinskij is not alone, his typicality is revealed through a string of officials mentioned in the conversation with Oblomov, who live by the same interests: Foma Fomič (a reminiscence from A. Griboedov's play: "Here is Foma Fomich himself, do you know him?... He was head of a department by three ministers..."), Svinkin, Peresvetov, Murašin, Kuznecov, Vasil'ev, Mahov, Oleškin. N. A. Nikolina pays attention to the "speaking" surnames of officials in the novel, they openly characterize the activity of these characters (Gogol's tradition): the surname Mahov converges with the verb "to sign sth. quickly, without reading", the surname Zatertyj is motivated by the verb "to wipe out" in the meaning "to hush up the case", and the surname Vitjagušin – by the steady combination "to draw out the soul". The surname Muhojarov converges with the word "muhryga" – "a blowhard deceiver and knave", as well as reminding of the fluttering of flies (Петров/Petrov, 1951, p. 198).

Oblomov's third visitor is the literary writer Penkin, an omnivorous journalist, eager to make noise, speaking in the stamps of denunciatory literature of the 1950s. The surname Penkin is associated not only with the word "foam" and "froth", but also with the phraseological phrases "to foam" and "with foam at the mouth" and "actualizes the image of foam with its inherent signs of superficiality and empty fermentation" (Николина/ Nikolina, 2003, p. 198). Oblomov's fourth interlocutor Alekseev is a man without a face and a name, "of indefinite years, with an indefinite face... neither handsome nor unkempt, neither tall nor short, neither blond nor brunette" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 29). Alekseev is a generalizing portrait of an impersonal society:

"Many people called him Ivan Ivanovich, others called him Ivan Vasilievich, others Ivan Mikhailovich. His surname was also called differently: some said he was Ivanov, others called him Vasiliev or Andreev, others thought he was Alekseev... All this Alekseev, Vasiliev, Andreev, or whatever you want, is some incomplete *impersonal hint of the human mass*, a deaf echo, an indistinct reflection of it" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, pp. 29-30).

The guests call Oblomov to the park Ekaterinhof for a walk. The main argument in favor of going is the formula "everyone is there". The lexemes "all" and "everything," the most frequent in this chapter, encapsulate a kind of sign of society with its interests and needs:

"Everyone!... They!... Let's go there...! To them... Everybody thinks so... There they talk about everything... Everybody wears it... We need... There's everything...". "We should go to Ekaterinhof on the first of May! What do you say, Ilya Ilyich!" said Volkov in amazement, "Yes, everyone is there!" – "Do you really think so? No, not everybody! – Oblomov remarked lazily" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 16).

"Where are you from, Oblomov? Don't you know Dashenka! The whole town is crazy about how she dances!" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 17).

"Half the town goes there... It's such a house, where they talk about everything..." – "That's what's boring, that it's about everything," said Oblomov" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 18).

Society is impersonal. Everything that society is interested in is boring and unacceptable to Oblomov.

The visitors represent a stage in Oblomov's life that has already passed, which brought him disappointment and condemnation:

"From the first minute when I became conscious of myself, I felt that I *was* already *going out*! I began *to go out* while writing papers in the office; *I was going out* while reading in books the truths that I did not know what to do with in life; *I was going out* with my friends, listening to speculation, gossip, mockery, evil and cold chatter, emptiness, looking at friendship, supported by meetings without purpose, without sympathy;*I am extinguished* in dull and lazy walking along Nevsky Prospect, among raccoon coats and beaver collars; ...*I am extinguished* and wasting my life and mind on trifles, ...defining ...all life – by a lazy and peaceful slumber, *like others*..." (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 191).

"Life is burning" is a traditional metaphorical archetype; "life is extinguishing" is an individual-author metaphor. Where Volkov "glitters" and "burns with life", Oblomov "goes out". The recurring lexeme "extinguish" emphasizes the hero's rejection of life, where book truths do not work, where there is no true friendship and love, and where people, dehumanizing themselves, turn into "raccoon coats and beaver collars".

Oblomov repeats the same phrase to each of the guests: "Don't come up, don't come up: you have come from *the cold*", although the time of action is spring (the first of May), and the guests say that the day is good, "there is not a cloud in the sky". The lexeme "cold" symbolizes the outer world, which is in opposition to the inner world of Oblomov's house. Oblomov responded with annoyance to Alekseev's repeated offer to go to Ekaterinhof by saying:

"Do you really need that Ekaterinhof! Can't you sit here? Is it cold in the room or does it smell bad that you just stare outside" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 32).

None of the guests wants to listen to Oblomov when he starts talking about his "two misfortunes"; the outside world is indifferent and cold to the hero's problems. Everyone is primarily interested in himself, the guests drop in at Oblomov's place — and disappear. Here the image of the "superficially observant, *cold* man" who glanced at Oblomov in passing and gave him a characteristic (on the first page of the novel) appears associatively.

Note that the opposition between interior and exterior is reinforced by the description of the clothing. Oblomov's wide robe is contrasted with the guests' tight tails:

"Oblomov always went about home without a tie and without a vest, because he loved space and freedom" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 4).

Volkov's remark that Oblomov's dressing gown has long gone out of fashion does not bother the hero. He only clarifies that it is not a dressing gown, but a robe, "*lovingly* wrapping oneself up in the *broad* flaps of the robe" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 16). The author's remark reveals Oblomov's priorities, his preferences in life: his love for freedom and space, his avoidance of the obligation to obey the social norms and regulations.

Oblomov feels sorry for his guests, unhappy, restless, fidgeting, running around, wasting human dignity on trifles:

"They visit ten places in one day — *miserable!* — thought Oblomov. — *And that is life!* — He shrugged his shoulders vigorously. Where is *the man* here? What is he crumbling and crumbling into... — *miserable!* — he concluded, turning over on his back and rejoicing that he does not have such *empty* desires and thoughts, that he *does not wander*, and lies here, preserving his *human dignity* and his *peace*" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 19).

The guests consider themselves happy people, while Oblomov views their lives as emptiness, "extinguishment". Although at first glance it is Oblomov's life that seems devoid of meaning.

The author reveals the philosophy of Oblomov's peace, which allows for the preservation of man in man only away from the hectic world. It is no coincidence that the word "man" appears so often in Oblomov's monologues and the word "all" in the speeches of his guests. The hero's rejection of

society is due to the fact that society dehumanizes a man, turns him into "everyone":

"We also call it a career! And *how little a man needs here*: his mind, his will, his feelings – what is that for? Luxury" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 24)!

That is why Oblomov gets into an argument with Penkin, who tries to cover "everything" in his literary opuses, forgetting the most important thing – the man. A man is not only a representative of the environment, but also its victim, hence, according to Oblomov, he must be understood and loved already for the mere fact that he is a man, a creature of God, the highest beginning:

"...portray a thief, a fallen woman, a puffed-up fool, and don't forget a *man* here as well. Where's *the humanity*? You want to write with one head! Do you think that no heart is needed for thought? No, it is impregnated with love... A *man*, give me a *man*! (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 27).

Each of the visitors illustrates Oblomov's thesis about the "fractionality" of man, who has lost his "wholeness." But note that the pathos of Oblomov's "denial" of any "vanity" is reduced by the author's irony. Yes, and the very "unhurried" "lying poses" of Il'ja Il'ič to some extent make his pathetic speeches senseless. This again indicates the impossibility of a one-sided interpretation of the hero's character: he is exalted and beautiful and at the same time ridiculous and pathetic. And these characteristics not exclude each other, but complement each other, revealing the unity of type and character in the image of Oblomov.

The answer to the question of how and why Oblomov departs from a life in society and comes to a philosophy of peace is also found in the fifth and sixth chapters of Part One, which tell us about some facts of the hero's biography. He was like everyone else: "...full of different aspirations, he kept hoping for something, expected a lot from fate and from himself, ...thought about his role in society; finally, in the long run, ...family happiness flashed and smiled upon his imagination" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 56), but all this could not come true, because life turned out more prosaic than it had seemed in his youth.

Thus, the co-workers were not one family:

"He believed that the officials of one place formed a *friendly, close-knit family* among themselves, indefatigably caring for each other's peace and pleasure" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 56).

And the chief was not a "father" and only instilled fear and terror into his subordinates:

"He had heard at home about the chief, that he was *the father of his subordinates*, and so he made himself the most laughing, most *familial notion of this person*. ...Ilya Ilyich thought that the superior would enter into the position of his subor-

dinate to such an extent that he would question him *anxiously*: how did he sleep at night, why were his eyes cloudy and did he not have a headache? But he was cruelly disappointed on the first day of his service" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 57).

One had to pretend and not be natural, just the way one is:

"And Il'ja Il'ič was suddenly timid, not knowing why, when the chief entered the room, and *his voice* began to disappear and appear *the other, thin and ugly*, as soon as the chief spoke to him" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 58).

Two artistic senses of the word "voice" are realized: voice — sound, voice — individuality, personality. The expected combination "the voice was missing" isn't there, an attribute-pronoun "his" is inserted, and the noun "voice" it explains is not used in its direct meaning, so that not only the sound was missing, but also, and most importantly, the personality was missing; and the attribute-pronoun "the other" reinforces the figurative sense of the statement by a semantic opposition, the negative evaluation increases thanks to qualifying attributes-epithets — "thin and nasty".

Il'ja Il'ič, on the other hand, was waiting for the warmth, understanding, and caring that he had been accustomed to receive since his childhood, living in the idyllic Oblomovka:

"Raised in the depths of the province, among the gentle and warm manners and customs of his native land, passing for twenty years from hug to hug of relatives, friends and acquaintances, he was so imbued *with the family spirit* that future service seemed to him like some *family activity*, such as lazy note-taking of income and expenses, as his father had done" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 56).

Positive, most important feelings in life — warmth, "the customs of the motherland" — are associated with the image of the family. Family, mutual understanding and kinship support were necessary to Oblomov. Gončarov, however, moves away from the unambiguous justification of the hero and from the portrayal of lofty feelings, immediately using the connective conjunction "and", passes to mockery, irony: the family's excessive care for the little Ilyushenka led the adult Oblomov to fear the hardships of life.

As a refrain in Oblomov's mind, the phrase repeats:

"When shall I live? (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 57).

Life in labor is not perceived by the hero as a real and authentic life. After all, the work of officials is shown in the novel as vanity and meaningless running around, and such work imposes on the hero "fear and great boredom":

"Oblomov became even more pensive when he saw packages with the inscription '*necessary and very necessary*,' when he *was forced* to make various references, extracts, *dig through* the files, write notebooks two fingers thick, which, just for fun, were called notes; besides, everything *was required quickly*, everything *was in a hurry* somewhere, nothing was left to chance: no sooner had they got away with one thing than they were already rushing *furiously* into another, as if that

was where all their strength lay, and when they had finished they would forget it and *rush off* to a third — and there was never an end to it!» (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 57).

One can see that the hero does not work of his own free will, but he was "forced", "demanded", "rushed". Everything is in constant motion — "packages flashed", there is no time to get to the heart of the matter, and the officials themselves rather resemble the world of beasts, where the strongest survives: "they grab with fury", "throw themselves". Oblomov's idea of peaceful tranquility is naturally opposed to this kind of labor. "Il'ja Il'ič suffers from fear and longing in the service..." (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 58), which is why "life in his eyes was divided into two halves: one consisted of labor and boredom, which were synonyms for him; the other consisted of peace and peaceful merriment" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 56). Oblomov quits his service because he sent "some necessary paper to Arkhangelsk instead of Astrakhan". Moreover, the author gives an important clarification for understanding the character: Oblomov leaves not so much out of fear, as because "*his own conscience* was much stricter than a reprimand" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 59). If in the author's descriptions of the bureaucratic life, where Oblomov's non-self-direct speech and condemnation of vanity are presented, we see the hero as different, both lazy and philosophical, then in the author's account of his conscience the reader is clearly presented with an important feature not of type but of character, a feature that the author speaks of already without humor or irony.

And so Oblomov gradually withdraws from public activity into himself, into his "robe," "into his solitude and seclusion". "He was not accustomed to movement, to life, to crowds and bustle. In the cramped crowd he felt stuffy" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 61), it did not suit him to be like everyone else, it was difficult "...to reciprocate, to take part in what interested them; ...everyone understood life in his own way, as Oblomov did not want to understand it, and they drew him into it too: all this displeased him, repulsed him, was not to his liking" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 61). There is no poetry and peace in reality, only turmoil.

In this position, Oblomov is naturally defeated by Stoltz, who tries to bring Oblomov back to life by suggesting that the means of treatment is what he is running away from, i.e. society. Štol'c literally pulls Oblomov from the confined space of the room by force, repeating: "Hurry, hurry!" He has to give up his favorite roomy robe and put on a cramped tailcoat. "Where is he going? What for? — Oblomov said *longingly*. — What have I not seen? I've fallen behind, I don't want to... I don't like this St. Petersburg life of *yours*! Everything, the eternal *running around*, the eternal *game* of trashy passions, especially greed, knocking over each other, *gossip*, rumor, snapping at each other... *Boredom, boredom, boredom!*.. *Where is the man here?*

Where is his integrity? Where has he gone, how has he wasted himself for any trifle?" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 179).

St. Petersburg life (running, games, gossip) is not acceptable to Oblomov. The hero says that this is "your" life, that is, "not mine".

"Beau monde, society! ...All these are *dead men, sleeping men*, worse than me, these members of the beau monde and society!" — "No one has a clear, peaceful look, ... all are *infected* from one another by some painful concern, longing, *painfully* searching for something. And if only for the truth, for the good of themselves and others — no, they pale at the success of a comrade. — "*What kind of life is this? I don't want it. What will I learn there, what will I learn*" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, pp. 180-181)?

Behind the screams of the bored Petersburgers Oblomov sees "a sleepless sleep," the "disease" of the whole society, a sleep even more disgusting than his own: at least Oblomov does not do evil to others. For Oblomov, there is no natural norm, no ideal in St. Petersburg life:

"I do not touch them, I do not seek anything; I just do not see *normal* life in it. No, it is not life, but a *distortion of the norm*, of the ideal of life, which nature has indicated the man's purpose" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 182).

Thus, Oblomov's life around him is "not genuine", "not real", it is a "distortion of the norm": there is no family life, humanity, morality.

Shut up at home, Oblomov does not write, does not read, and does not study. Gončarov ironically reveals the typical features of the lazy bourgeois who is not interested in anything. And here we see not only society's fault, but also the very way of Oblomov's life, the very Oblomovšina (Oblomovizm), when Il'ja is not interested in school, when science has no connection with life in his mind, when his fathers and grandfathers lived by "God's blessing," relying more on God than on himself and his own labor.

It should be noted that Oblomov's lying down was never equal to the vanity of society, for Oblomov's lying down itself is active, which is confirmed by the text. If the figure of the hero is shown in a static state, his inner world, on the contrary, is depicted in dynamics: implicit oppositions of external and internal. Not once in the novel do we encounter the words expressing that Oblomov is simply lying on the couch. Even at the beginning of the novel, the author notes that Oblomov's lying down is neither laziness nor fatigue, but a normal state. All of his "lying down" is accompanied by sometimes ironic, sometimes serious explanations: "thought walked a like free bird on the face, flitted in the eyes, sat on the half-open lips"; "the gaze darkened", "the soul glowed in the eyes", "a cloud of concern came over the face", "the gaze was foggy"; "plunged into thoughtfulness", "I was preoccupied", "thoughts tormented me", "plunged into reflection", "tormented by the tide of restless thoughts", "I was awake — thinking", "I was torturing myself with consciousness"; "deep in my soul I wept", "experienced... suffering and longing", "suddenly

thoughts light up in him, walking and walking around in his head". The frequency of process words that actualize additional evaluative meanings, close to the various semantics of the state category words (light, foggy, sad, longing), gives dynamism to the seemingly static description. "No one knew or perceived this *inner* life of Ilya Ilyich: everyone thought that Oblomov was nothing, just lying around and eating to his heart's content, and that there was nothing more to be expected of him; that he hardly had any thoughts in his head. This is the way they talked about him wherever they knew him. Only Štol'c knew about his abilities, about this *inner volcanic work* of his ardent head and humane heart" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 68). The hero's inner work is defined as "volcanic", i.e. similar to a volcano, where the dreams and inner power are juxtaposed. It is no coincidence that the hero tells Štol'c about himself that there was a light trapped inside him, which sought an exit, but could not break free and died out.

More often than not, Oblomov has debates and dialogues about the good, about happiness, about truth with himself, about himself. Il'ja Il'ič Oblomov is most fully realized in inner speech and in the author's indirect speech. The volume of internal monologues and dialogues in Oblomov's discourse, according to a rough estimate, occupies more than fifty percent, which in itself can qualify this individual as a person leading an intense inner spiritual life, filled with moral experiences and emotional reflection (see Краснов/Krasnov, 2003).

It is impossible to determine exactly who Oblomov is — a sloth or a philosopher? Irony removes seriousness, seriousness limits irony, and we see an artistic image, in which the typical and the characteristic are in complex interaction and complementation, one reveals the other. On the one hand, the author ironically tells us how the hero, "not sparing his strength", works while lying on the sofa, and on the other, we see the beauty and poetry of the hero's inner world and can no longer smile indulgently, but sympathize and experience together with Oblomov, thinking about the fate of the world. Thus, Oblomov combines, on the one hand, a poet and a philosopher (Štol'c gives these nominations in the text) with an honest and kind soul, "with a passionate head and a humane heart", and on the other hand, a landlord and a lazy man, not willing to do anything to get closer to his dream, hoping that everything in his life will somehow happen by itself, by magic.

The peculiarity of the author's narrative lies in the special approach to his hero, a hero unusual for artistic depiction — on the one hand, experiencing suffering and longing from the imperfection of the world, "human sorrows," and on the other — capable of the maximum "feat" to correct human vices — "to rise to half on the bed". It turns out that Oblomov's enthusiasm, his moral impulses are sincere, pure-hearted, but empty: he is only able to "change

poses". The depth of the author's portrayal lies in the fact that the positive and negative evaluation of the thoughts, feelings and actions of the hero flow one into the other, intertwine.

The possibility of viewing the hero from different points of view is also proven by the surname, which embodies all the possible meanings of interpreting Oblomov's artistic image, both social and metaphysical. Let us present several points of view expressed by different researchers regarding the hero's surname. A. F. Rogalëv believes that Gončarov foresaw fundamental changes in Russian life, which would lead to a break in continuity and tradition, to a "break" or "knock down" of traditional Russian society and the whole way of life (Рогалёв/Rogalëv, 2004). V. Mel'nik notes the correlation of the words Oblomov and Oblomok (fragment – B.V.) and refers to the poem by E. Baratynskij *"Prejudice! It is a fragment of ancient truth..."*, which raises the question of the loss of established moral values in connection with the onset of the "Iron Age". Oblomov in this interpretation is a fragment of the "ancient truth" left in the past (Мельник/Mel'nik, 1985). According to P. Tirgen, the parallel "man-fragment" characterizes the hero as an "incomplete", "unfulfilled" man, "signals the dominant fragmentation and lack of wholeness", in place of the whole are the decaying remnants of what was once laid down and could have become a whole (Тирген/Tirgen, 1990). T. Ornatskaja sees in the words "Oblomov", "Oblomovka" a folk-poetic metaphor "dream-oblomon". The image of sleep in this metaphor is associated with the "enchanted world" of Russian fairy tales, with its inherent poetry, and with the "Oblomov dream", destructive for the hero, which crushed him with a grave stone (Орнатская/Ornatskaja, 1991). N. Nikolina writes that the hero's surname can be motivated both by the noun "splinter" – a thing broken off round (Vladimir Dal), a chipped or broken off piece of something, a remnant of something that existed before, disappeared, and by the adjective "obly" (round). "In this case the hero's surname is interpreted as a contaminated, hybrid formation, combining the semantics of the words "obly"(round) and "break": the circle, symbolizing the absence of development, static, unchanging order, appears torn, partially "broken"" (Николина/ Nikolina, 2003, p. 200). All the multiple motivations of the surname Oblomov complement and reveal the essence of the artistic image of the hero. One cannot be limited to one interpretation, because the hero is not unilinear. There is a lack of wholeness in him, expressed in the unrealized way of life, in Oblomovščina, and at the same time – the integrity of a man who lives in a circular cycle, the dream of family and home, not squandered on the vanity of society, believing in the moral values of good old times.

At times Oblomov is ridiculous and pathetic. For example, when, offended at Zahar for comparing him to "the other," he pathetically and pompously begins to lecture Zahar, proudly emphasizing his landlord

prerogatives, which do not adorn the hero at all, but, on the contrary, humiliate him. "Wait, look at what you're saying! ...Haven't you been following me since childhood? You know all this, you have seen that *I was brought up gently, that I have never suffered cold or hunger, I have never known want, I have never earned my own bread and in general have never done black work*. So how is it that you got the guts to compare me to others? Am I as healthy as these "others"? Can I do and bear all this (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 95)? The comic situation is created by the discrepancy between Oblomov's hotness, excessive excitement, and the very subject of the conversation: "I" don't work, I don't run, I don't rush, I don't even pull a stocking over my legs myself and at the same time I don't starve, I don't know the need – and the earning itself is a "black job" that "the other" does. From the hero's point of view it is impossible to compare him with the "other" "low people" doing the work. The naturalness, the justifiability of the labor of "others" is the humiliation of the "I." The author's portrayal of Oblomov's "anger" reaches the apogee of irony in the content of the last phrase, which at first glance seems insignificant (adjectival construction), but in fact creates the highest degree of ridicule: even "my health" is not the same as "others" – such strains "I" cannot endure. The hero's "righteous" anger turns out to be, against his will, a farce: the comic destroys seriousness.

Oblomov tries to point out to Zahar how he has "bitterly offended the landlord," who toils day and night, taking care of the peasants so that they "do not endure any need," that they "pray and remember the landlord with kindness. When Oblomov describes how in his plan he has set Zakar a special house and a vegetable garden, appointed a salary, made him a steward, a majordom and an attorney, to whom all the peasants bow at the waist, he is so moved by his own kindnesses that his voice trembles and tears come to his eyes. Oblomov and Zahar do not hear each other. Oblomov is intoxicated with his poetic pathos, but Zahar's crying and misunderstanding of his speech removes the pathos of his speech:

"Zahar lost absolutely all ability to understand Oblomov's speech; but his lips were pursed with inner turmoil; the *pathetic scene* was booming, like a cloud, over his head" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 96).

"Father, Il'ja Il'ič!" pleaded Zahar. – Enough of this! What in God's name are you talking about! Oh you, Mother Holy, Mother of God! *What misfortune suddenly happened out of the blue...* Both of them *stopped understanding each other*, and finally each of them also stopped understanding himself" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 96).

By the way, Zahar's words are an accurate assessment of the landlord's hotness: "you carry such a load". Oblomov is both ridiculous and pathetic: his lofty pathological phrases ("Is it humanly possible to bear it all" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 91)?), gestures of an offended and injured man, his attempt to present himself as a martyr – all that combined with the

subject, the theme of the conversation look ridiculous and comic. Yes, and the whole pompous recitation ends with the prosaic and everyday address of the baron to the servant: "Give me some kvass!" We see first of all the type of landlord, proud of the fact that he does not work, and that others do it for him.

But left alone, Oblomov "*thought, thought, thought, worried, worried*" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 98). "He went deep into comparing himself with 'the other'. He began *to think, to think*: and now he was forming an idea quite opposite to the one he had given to Zahar about 'the other'" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 99). The author says that "there came *one of the clear conscious moments* in Oblomov's life" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 99). This minute is worth much, we see Oblomov from a different side, we see once again the inner world of the hero, the special features of his character.

"How *terrible it became* for him when suddenly in his soul a vivid and clear idea of human destiny and purpose arose and when a parallel between this purpose and his own life flashed... He *became sad and pained* for his underdevelopment, a stop in the growth of his moral strength... In his timid soul he developed a *painful consciousness* that many aspects of his nature had not awakened at all, others were just a little touched, and none of them was developed to the end ... Meanwhile, he painfully felt that in him *some good, bright beginning is buried, as in the grave*" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 100).

An important technique of the author: the "deepening" of the hero into himself, that is, reflection, which Oblomov constantly does, allows us to "justify" him by showing his moral suffering.

The hero is frightened, sad, and hurt. An agonizing consciousness reveals to him his wrong, nasty, disgusting landlord's life, which has led to sleep and apathy, although a moment ago Oblomov was proving the opposite to Zahar. In a strange way, Oblomov's speech that he is not "the other" comes down not on Zahar, who does not understand his master anyway (the author does not accidentally constantly emphasize this), but on Oblomov himself. This is expressed lexically and semantically. Thus, the greatest punishment in Oblomov's speech for Zahar are the "pathetic words", those lofty words that Zahar does not understand and which therefore have the power of punishment over him. The author italicizes the repeated construction "*pathetic words*". In addition, Oblomov calls Zahar a "poisonous man" and a "snake":

"That's what kind of *snake* he warmed on his chest" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 96).

"- What a *poisonous* man you are, Zahar! — Oblomov added with feeling. Zahar is offended. — Here," he said, "*I am poisonous!* What kind of *poisonous person* am I? I have not killed anybody. — Why not *poisonous!* — Il'ja Il'ič repeated, "*You're poisoning my life.* ... — What is this, Il'ja Il'ič, this punishment! I am a Christian: why do you call me *poisonous*? No way: *poisonous!*" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 82).

After Oblomov's conversation with Štol'c (in the second part of the novel), when the word "Oblomovščina" is uttered, the metaphorical epithet "poisonous" appears again:

"*Oblomovščina!* "One word," thought Il'ja Il'ič, "and how... poisonous!..." (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 193).

Pathetic, sting, poison, snake are metaphorically and phonetically transformed in Oblomov's reflections, and it turns out that this "ugly" speech of Oblomov was not poetically sublime, as he imagined it, but *pathetic*. It was not Zahar *who stung the hero*, but himself. It is not Zahar who poisons him, but he himself:

"He became bitter from this secret confession to himself. Fruitless regrets of the past, *bitter reproaches of conscience plagued him like needles*, and he strove with all his might to throw off the burden of these reproaches and find the guilty one outside himself and turn *the sting* of them on that person. But to whom? — It is all ... Zahar! — he whispered. He remembered the details of the scene with Zahar, and his face *burst into a fire of shame*" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 100).

The hyperbolic metaphor "fire of shame" speaks of the power of the hero's suffering. Pity, compassion, sadness, regret replace the mockery and irony of the preceding pages. Even in the gesture of the hero, no longer sitting proudly on the couch and issuing maxims, but hiding under a blanket, one can see the desire to escape from himself, to hide from his unsightly behavior, to get away from the questions that torment and do not allow to live peacefully:

"Why am I like this? — Oblomov almost *tearfully* asked himself and *hid his head under the blanket again*, — why indeed?" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 101).

The hero never finds an answer to his question. But the following ninth chapter of "Oblomov's Sleep" makes it possible to get closer to the answer to this question.

How to distinguish between the typical and the characteristic in Oblomov's image? If the hero did not have the traits of a serf landlord, an *oblomovščina* that believed in a miracle, in a fairy tale, in fate ("It must be fate... What can I do here?" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 101)), in the fact that not he himself, but "someone", "something", "some" had prevented him, ruined and broke his life, there would be no suffering and remorse about his failed life. What would remain would be the metaphysical, philosophical component of the artistic image, where the hero is opposed to society, searching for the truth, revealing its flaws, but not identifying himself with society in any way, and in this form being close to the Romantic hero. The tragedy of the hero is largely due to his social position. Oblomov, on the one hand, is not identical to society, this is shown in the fragments depicting the arrival of guests, walks with Štol'c, when Oblomov does not accept all that concerns

the hustle and bustle of St. Petersburg. But, on the other hand, while telling Štol'c about his extinguished and meaningless life, Oblomov remarks:

"Am I alone? Look: Mihailov, Petrov, Semenov, Alekseev, Stepanov... you can't count: our name is legion!" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 192).

Oblomov is part of this world and especially of the world of the patriarchal Oblomovka, where he is both a landlord ("Oblomovščina") and a simple man who can easily merge with the world of other people, ordinary relations and feelings.

The Antithesis "Life/Paradise" as the Semantic Dominant of Oblomov's Image

In the complex interweaving of Oblomov's diverse features a special role is played by the way the character is represented, when the antithesis as an artistic device is brought to the forefront. It is primarily the antithesis that reflects the character's philosophy of existence — "life/heaven".

What does Oblomov think and dream about, what does he want and expect, what does he see as the natural norm, the ideal and goal of human life? This is a very important question for understanding the hero's personality, because after a superficial reading of the novel, one is still left with the feeling that Oblomov is like everyone else. It seems that his lying down and their bustling are the same thing in essence. And what does he dream about? Peace, a wife, a samovar, friends with double chins. Why is that better than what his guests, his society, have? But we should not rush to conclusions, for there is a danger of absolutizing outward signs and facts without noticing the inner idea of Oblomov's philosophy.

Let's look more closely at the hero's dream. What details-nominations accompany it? Oblomov dreamed of various things, he saw himself as a brave general, or a famous poet or artist, or just a man mourning the fate of the unfortunate and destitute. But the main dream of his life was the idea of building a new home away from the world of vanity and passions, in an earthly paradise called Oblomovka, in the land of quiet childhood and good fairy tales.

In "Oblomov's Dream" the reader is faced with a wonderful, vivid, imaginative, poetic, fairy-tale and socially concrete world of the landlord estate. The perspective of "double vision", that is the representation from different sides of the hero and his way of life is preserved in the dream style: descriptions of nature, people, customs, manners, order, on the one hand, lyrical and poetic, on the other hand — imbued with the author's irony. The author both poetizes the fairy-tale and idyllic existence of the hero and shows the reasons why Oblomov was not ready for life.

Oblomovka is described as a world alien to Romantic consciousness and close to idyllic consciousness, a point that has been made many times in criticism (see Бахтин/Bahtin, 1975; Ляпушкина/Ljapuškina, 1996; Отра-

дин/Otradin, 1992). The signs of the idyllic chronotope were described by M. M. Bahtin. Let us list them:

"...An organic attachment, an attachment of life and its events to a place — to one's native country with all its corners, to one's native mountains, native dale, native fields, river and forest, one's native home. ...This spatial world is limited and self-sufficient, not essentially connected with other places, with the rest of the world. ...The unity of place brings together and merges the cradle and the grave (the same corner, the same ground), childhood and old age (the same grove, the same river, the same lindens, the same house), the lives of different generations who lived in the same place, in the same conditions, who saw the same things. ...The combination of human life with the life of nature, the unity of their rhythm, the common language for the phenomena of nature and the events of human life. ...Love, birth, death, marriage, labor, eating and drinking, ages are the basic realities of idyllic life. ...Eating and drinking in the idyll are most often familial, generations and ages coming together over food. Typical of the idyll is the proximity of food and children, ...this proximity is imbued with the beginning of growth and renewal of life. ...Death is devoid of tragedy. ...Patriarchal household" (Бахтин/Bahtin, 1975, pp. 374-376).

In the world of Oblomovka all the signs of the idyll, noted by M. M. Bahtin, are realized. The landscape is ideal, man and nature are united, a person is comfortable, it is good to live in such a world, there is no feeling of unsettled and unprotected. "The description of Oblomov's nature is dominated by the anthropomorphic principle: winter — "unapproachable beauty," the moon — "round-faced village beauty," the rain — "the tears of a suddenly overjoyed man." This nature, as it were, is oriented to man, man is a module of this world" (Отрадин/Otradin, 1992, p. 6). The sky, like a domestic roof, "presses against the earth", protecting the Oblomovs and their "blessed", "chosen", "wonderful" land, where the sun always shines, the river runs "merrily" and "sweetly", where the atmosphere of love, harmony and accord reigns. There is no place in this world for romantic individualism of poets and dreamers, no mountains, sea, cliffs, abyss, forest; no passions, shouts, vanity; no "wild" and "grandiose":

"A poet and a dreamer would not be satisfied even with the general appearance of this modest and unpretentious area" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 106).

Everything here is quiet and sleepy, cozy and comfortable:

"...Deep silence and peace also lie in the fields. ...Silence and imperturbable tranquility reign also in the characters of the people in that land. Neither robberies, nor murders, nor any terrible accidents occurred there; neither strong passions nor daring ventures worried them" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 107).

The world for the Oblomovites is mysterious, sacred and logically unexplainable, all of which speaks of the mythical consciousness of the

residents of Oblomovka. Space is closed and has no connection with the outside world, which, like everything unknown, frightens and scares the Oblomovites. Time is cyclic and conventional:

"The annual circle is made there right and unperturbed" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 103).

This is how fathers and grandfathers lived, and how children and grandchildren will live. The independent, integral and complete world of Oblomovka lives according to its age-old traditions, laws and rituals: love, marriage, birth, labor, death – this circle is unchanging;

"And so to the imagination of the sleeping Il'ja Il'ič the three main acts of life, played out both in his family and with his relatives and acquaintances, began to open in turn, like vivid pictures: the birth, the wedding, the funeral. Then a motley procession of merry and sad subdivisions of his life followed: baptisms, namesakes, family celebrations, starting fast, breaking fast, noisy dinners, family gatherings, greetings, congratulations, official tears and smiles" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 127).

The little Oblomov is surrounded by close people (his mother, father, nanny, numerous relatives), who take care of him, caress, nourish, cherish him. His mother is especially close to him:

"Oblomov, having seen his mother who was dead long ago, even in his sleep trembled with joy, with a burning love for her: two warm tears slowly came out from under his eyelashes and became motionless" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 110).

The memories evoke tenderness and an extraordinary spiritual uplift. His mother showered passionate kisses on him, examining him with caring eyes, praying with him, putting her whole soul into the prayer, slowly brushing Ilyusha's soft hair, dreaming of finding a girlfriend (who is also healthy and beautiful) for him when he grows up.

The main concern of the Oblomovs was the kitchen and dinner. Eating together was a motif of family unity. "For the Oblomovites, eating together is a confirmation of feelings unaffected by time, a testimony of kinship that cannot be undone" (Отрадин/Otradin, 1992, p. 7). The sense of family determines one's attitude to the world and to people. "Many oddities in the behavior and consciousness of the adult Oblomov are explained by this unquenchable family origin in him, which is sharply discordant with the norms of St. Petersburg life" (Отрадин/Otradin, 1992, p. 7).

Oblomov's dream helps to reveal the essence of the character's artistic image. The overprotection of the mother, the nanny, the servants leads to the fact that loving and caring people have raised a completely passive, voiceless and helpless man, not ready for an independent life, relying on fairy tales told by the nanny and the Russian "maybe":

"...He is always drawn to a place where they only have to promenade, where there are no worries and sorrows; he forever has the disposition to lie on the stove, walk in a ready-made, unearned dress and eat at the expense of a good sorceress" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 121).

In this case we see the author's reflections, they are serious in contrast to the lyric-comic presentation of the hero's thoughts and feelings. The hero himself in the author's representation comes to the idea that it is easy, pleasant not to earn and eat as if by magic. But on the other hand, "The boy's imagination is inhabited by strange ghosts; dread and longing have settled for a long time, perhaps forever, in his soul. He looks around sadly and sees all the harm in life, misfortune, all dreams of that magic side, where there is no evil, troubles, sorrows, where Militrisa Kirbievna lives, where they feed and clothe so well for free..." (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 123). Sorrow also appears in the midst of bliss. A new antithesis: there are no sorrows, but the hero is sad.

Studying makes you bored, you have to part with your beloved family, you cannot eat well, you cannot sleep well, you have to work. The ideal of Oblomov's life is peace and inactivity:

"They endured labor as a punishment imposed on our forefathers, but they could not love it, and where there was a chance, they always got rid of it, finding it possible and proper" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 126).

At fourteen, Il'ja is already quite barbaric and can afford to kick Zahar in the nose, and if he wants something, all he has to do is blink and the servants rush to fulfill his wish.

This is how the typical traits of the landlord in Oblomov are formed. But this is only one side of the artistic image. The warmth of family relations, the poetry of ordinary simple life, without worries and fuss, love for the child, fairy tales, mystery – all this developed in the character of Oblomov a broad soul, good nature, softness, refinement, features of dreaminess, imagination, poetic perception of life, the desire for quiet family everyday joys. As M. Bahtin notes, the novel "...shows the exceptional humanity of the idyllic man Oblomov and his 'pigeon-like purity'" (Бахтин/Bahtin, 1975, p. 383).

Chapter IX, "Oblomov's Dream," allows us to get closer to the essence of the protagonist's image and to understand his dream. Let us pay attention to such words-concepts, which occur and recur throughout the novel, as "home, family, peace, paradise". In these words lies the basic meaning of Oblomov's philosophy, which could be formulated as "In Search of Paradise Lost". According to the Bible, life on earth is suffering, and therefore man always seeks peace. To Štol'c's accusations of a wrong life and bourgeois dream, Oblomov replies:

"Yes, the purpose of all your running, passions, wars, trade and politics is not the attainment of rest, not the pursuit of this ideal of a *lost paradise*, is it. ... All seek rest and peace" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, pp. 187-188).

From his nanny's tales "about some unknown land, where there are neither nights nor cold, where all miracles are performed, where rivers of honey and milk flow, where no one does anything all year round", life and fairy tale are mixed in Oblomov's mind, "and he is unconsciously sad at times, why a fairy tale is not life, and life is not a fairy tale" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 121). For Oblomov there is no natural norm, no ideal in St. Petersburg life:

"I do not touch them, I do not seek anything; I just do not see a *normal* life in it. No, it is not life, but a *distortion of the norm*, of the ideal of life, which nature has indicated as the purpose of man" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 182).

For the Oblomovites the ideal of life, the norm is peace, inactivity, stability, quiet love, family life, unity with nature, tradition. The Oblomovites avoided fuss and haste, did not wrestle with unsolvable mental or moral questions:

"That is why they always bloomed with health and gaiety, that is why they lived long lives; men at forty were like young men; old men did not fight against the difficult, painful death, but, having lived to the point of impossibility, died as if stealing, quietly settling down and imperceptibly letting out their last breath. That is why they say that previously people were stronger" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 126).

"*The norm of life* was ready and taught to them by their parents, and they accepted it, also ready, from their grandfather, and their grandfather from their great-grandfather, with a will to guard its integrity and inviolability, like the fire of Vesta. As what was done under the grandfathers and fathers, so was done under Il'ja Il'ič's father, so, perhaps, is still done now in Oblomovka" (ibidem).

In his life in St. Petersburg Oblomov does not want to be like everyone else and live like everyone else, he withdraws from the worldly bustle, for it is a violation of the norm in his understanding. However, in Oblomovka, where peace, quiet, true love and understanding reign, Oblomov is part of this world. And here the pronoun "all" no longer realizes its negative semantics, but is evaluated as a natural normal collective life. In Oblomov's dream the world is viewed and seen not from the perspective of an individual, but through the eyes of the collective. In this world, there is not an "I," but a "we":

"*Happy people* lived thinking that it should not and could not be otherwise, certain that *all* others lived the same way and that to live otherwise was a sin" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 108).

Until noon, food was cooked and "*everything* was bustling and caring, *everything* was living such a full, ant-like, such a conspicuous life" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 115). Then everyone eats and goes to bed.

Nature is inseparable from the collective consciousness and lives by the same experiences as humans:

"Neither tree nor water moves; there is an imperturbable silence over the village and the field — *everything* is as if it had died out. ...And *dead* silence reigned in the house. The hour of *universal* afternoon sleep has come" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 115).

"*Everyone* scattered to their corners; ...in the servant's room, *everyone* lay down to sleep. ...It was a kind of *all-consuming, unconquerable sleep, the true likeness of death. All was dead*, only from all corners came a variety of snoring in all tones and modes" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 116).

After universal sleep, they gather for tea, and again:

"*All of this* sniffing, groaning, yawning, scratching his/her head and stretching, barely coming to their senses" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 118).

And in the evening all have dinner, and afterwards get back in nature again:

"*Everything* is silent. ...There are moments of *universal, solemn* silence of nature, ...in Oblomovka *all* rests so firmly and *peacefully*" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 120).

Oblomov dreams of the idyllic life of Oblomovka, despite the fact that this life is monotonous and similar to a "dead dream". He has one desire: to escape the hustle and bustle of Petersburg and return to the world of childhood, warmth, care, and family. To build his own home, where he would live with his beloved wife and children, and where he would meet with friends and have long pleasant conversations with them:

"A heart worn out with worry, or not at all acquainted with it, yearns to hide in that corner, forgotten by all, and live a life of unknown happiness. Everything promises there a peaceful, long life until yellow hair and inconspicuous, sleep-like death" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 103).

When asked by Štol'c what, in his opinion, is the ideal and the norm of life, Oblomov describes in detail his long-held dream. A wife, nature, food, space, freedom. No cares, passions, worries. Nature and man are one, harmony and happiness in everything. In Oblomov's dream there is no place for rain, bad weather, cold, hunger, burning passions, no place for cramped tailcoat and St. Petersburg vanity, no thoughts of toil and work. In his world peace, satiety, sunshine, quiet and tender love reign. Nature, home, family, friends, food are the idyllic constants of the hero's happiness; one cannot exclude, refuse at least one thing. All the components of the dream are

closely intertwined and connected to each other. Without an idyllic landscape there is no family happiness, and family happiness, in turn, according to Oblomov, is possible only in such a landscape, in unity with nature. Without home there is no family, and without family there can be no home; without family there is no joy of food or friends.

Oblomov's world is sincere, honest, there is no need to lie, to deceive, to be a hypocrite, to fit in. Food unites everyone at one table, both family and friends. Everyone gathers at one table not for profit, as in St. Petersburg, when a trip to Ekaterinhof for a common celebration is a necessary ritual of politeness, but because they love each other sincerely and want to share the joy of family happiness at one table, satisfy their desires and enjoy conversation, jokes, silence. Let us recall the talk, the jokes, the laughter, the silence one evening in Oblomovka, when they talk about everything and at the same time about nothing, when they remain silent for a long time, when they laugh long, "like the Olympic gods," about the sledding three years ago. "Such 'coupled with openly trusting human communication,' laughter testified to the 'idyllic potential of life.' Laughter in this life is a joyful sense of one's 'balance' in this world, or a joyful experience of victory over fears" (Отрадин/Otradin, 1992, p. 7). The unity of man, nature, and food reaches its climax by evening:

"Then, as the heat goes down, we would send the cart with the samovar, with dessert to the birch grove, or else in the field, on the mowed grass, we would spread out carpets between the stacks and so we would bliss until the okroshka (cold soup – B.V.) and steak" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 186).

In fact, the hero's dreams depict paradise as it is presented in the Bible: eternal summer, everyone is fed, happy, only joy on their faces, no worries about daily bread. Even the men and women who come from the meadow in Oblomov's dream (hence, someone is still working to create a sweet and peaceful life for Il'ja Il'ič) are happy. Life is patience, labor, and distress, which Oblomov considers "a punishment sent down by heaven for our sins."

Let us build the lexical-semantic fields of the lexemes "life" and "paradise", that is, find in the text semantically and associatively close lexical units, reflecting the conceptual sphere of these lexemes. Here is how Oblomov sees life and paradise (dream):

- *life* – "abyss", "trouble", "gossip", "chitchat", "unhappiness", "vanity", "work", "torment", "lies", "hypocrisy", "boredom", "worries", "running around", "play", "anxiety", "longing", "sleepless nights", "deception", "passion", "battle";
- *paradise* – "childhood", "fairy tales", "dream", "ideal", "goodness", "love", "peace", "tenderness", "understanding", "silence", "happiness", "poetry", "books", "piano", "family", "wife", "children", "friends", "sun",

"fields", "vastness", "food", "sleep", "fullness of satisfied desires", "reflections of pleasure".

Lexical units reflecting the conceptual sphere of the units *life/paradise* enter into an antonymic semantic relationship in the novel (*life* – "trouble", "vanity", "battle"/*paradise* – "good", "peace", "love").

All his conscious life Oblomov has lived in other people's homes. A new home for the hero does not just mean the construction of a building. The dream of a house is a dream of peace, of a family, of a paradise life. But it is impossible to stop time, to return to childhood, to build a family paradise on earth, and therefore it is impossible to find happiness and fulfill Oblomov's dream. In reality, to have a home and a family one must work, earn money, which means, according to Oblomov, a lifetime of hustling, running, searching, adapting. So there is not and cannot be a home for Oblomov here and under such conditions. And only in dreams do visions of a lost paradise arise, and only in dreams is Oblomov truly happy, because there he finds what he lacks in life: warmth, kindness, love, understanding, a home, a wife, children:

"Oblomov's face was suddenly flushed with a blush of happiness: *the dream* was so *bright*, so *vivid*, so *poetic*... He suddenly felt a vague desire for *love*, a *quiet happiness*, suddenly longed for the fields and hills of his homeland, his *home*, *wife* and *children*... His face *shone* with a meek, touching feeling: *he was happy*... He thought of the little colony of *friends* who would settle in villages and farms, fifteen or twenty versts around his village, how they would alternately come to each other every day to visit, have lunch, dinner, dance; he sees *all clear days*, *clear faces*, without cares or wrinkles, laughing, round, with a bright blush, with a double chin with an unfading appetite; there will be *eternal* summer, *eternal* merriment, *sweet food* and *sweet laziness*... – Good god, Good god! – he uttered from the *fullness of happiness* and woke up. And there came a five-voiced boom from the yard: "Potatoes! Sand, don't you want some sand? Coal! Coal!... Donate, merciful gentlemen, for the building of the temple of the Lord!" And from the neighboring, *newly-built house* came the clattering of axes and the shouting of the workers. – Ah!" sighed Ilya Ilyich sorrowfully aloud. – "*What a life!* What an *outrage* this capital city noise! When will the *paradise*, the desired life, come? When to the fields, to my native groves...?" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 78).

The writer's thoughts, feelings, his inner monologue merge with the author's narrative, which at first is identical in tone to his monologue, but then suddenly turns into irony, even sarcasm: the hero perceives reality once again as evil, an obstacle to his ideal. The passage below particularly vividly demonstrates the contrast between Oblomov's inner dream and the outer space of his daily life. Outside the window, life is boiling and houses are being built, but this is not paradise; it is "ugliness" that disturbs the happiness of sleep and dreams in which, as in a fairy tale, houses are already built and there is no shouting, running around and bustle. It is no coincidence that the

antithesis of paradise — hell arises in the moments when the guests come to Oblomov, when they describe St. Petersburg life. In response to Volkov's tales of fun in the noble houses of St. Petersburg with a large number of invited guests, Oblomov reacts:

"What a bore it must be!" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 17).

Sudbinskij says of his activities: "*diabolical service*", "*hellish work*" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 20).

But the greater the desire to escape to the expanse of his native fields, the more and more the space around Oblomov narrows. Thus, from the large estate in Oblomovka he finds himself in a house in Gorohovaja Street, then a summer cottage, then Pšenicyna's cottage, and finally the coffin, the last house where there is no space but peace.

Štol'c calls Oblomov's dreams "Oblomovšina", seeing in them "the same things that were with his fathers and grandfathers. Oblomov, taking offense, objects:

"...where is that? Would my wife conserve jams and mushrooms? Would she count skeins and sort out country linen? You hear: notes, books, grand piano, fine furniture" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 186).

In dreams of a samovar and a wife one usually sees only the idea of bourgeoisness and does not notice that the main thing for Oblomov is that there is no hypocrisy in paradise, it is not bourgeoisie, but the search for purity in relations between people. In other words, paradise is a place where there is no need to think about daily bread, and therefore, there is no need to lie and cheat to get something to eat, and, therefore, there is an opportunity to be yourself and to be surrounded not by envious and hypocrites, but by those with whom "... Everything is to your liking! What is in one's eyes, in one's words, is in one's heart..." (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 186). In such a world of Oblomov, culture, art (notes, books, piano) supplant everyday life and become the basis of an idyllic existence. It is not by chance that in Oblomov's dream everyday life and poetry, food and music coexist:

"Damp in the field", Oblomov concludes, "it is dark; the fog, like an overturned sea, hangs over the rye; the horses shudder with their shoulder and beat their hooves: it is time to go home. The house lights are already lit; five knives are banging in the kitchen; a pan of mushrooms, cutlets, berries... there is music... Casta diva... Casta diva! — Oblomov sang. — I cannot indifferently remember Casta diva..." (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 186).

As the researcher M. Otradin notes, "Oblomov's thinking is not analytic, but figurative, poetic; therefore the dream comes so vividly to life in his conversation with Štol'c; associations, comparisons, and figurative approaches come so easily to him" (Отрадин/Otradin, 1994, p. 75-76). It is no coincidence that, listening to Oblomov, Štol'c says: "You are a poet, Il'ja!"

and Oblomov replies: "Yes, a poet in life, because *life is poetry*. People are free to distort it!" (Гончаров/Gončarov, 1981, p. 185). Oblomov's dreams express his position in life, in which the objects of everyday life are poetized as well. After all, in the basis of everything is the hero's good heart, his desire for an ideal.

Based on all of the above, we can draw the following conclusions. The dominant artistic method of comparison and contrast (multi-stage antithesis) is used by Ivan Gončarov to reveal the essence of the main character, his ambiguity, complexity and contradiction. The writer's peculiarity of the antithesis lies in the fact that it conveys not a total disconnection and mismatch, but paradoxically expresses synthesis, the unity of irony and lyricism in the image. The name of the hero, the portrait characterization, the description of clothes, house, interior, high society, the representation of the thoughts, dreams, behavior, actions of the hero – everything is built on the technique of contrast and unity. The antithesis of external (type) and internal (character) in the structure of Oblomov's image expresses the unity of the image, since without any of the sides of the opposition the image of Oblomov itself disappears. The antithesis "life"/"paradise" is the semantic dominant of Oblomov's image. Peace, stability, nature, home, quiet love, family, friends, food, traditions – the idyllic constants of Oblomov's happiness (the dream of paradise) are contrasted in the novel with the life realities of vanity and labor. All components of the dream are closely intertwined and related to each other. Without an idyllic landscape, there is no family happiness, and family happiness, in turn, according to Oblomov, is possible only in unity with nature. Without home there is no family, and without family there can be no home; without family there is no joy of food or friends. But this happiness is elusive. The hero's tragedy is that all aspirations and impulses end not in exploits, but in a dream, which is like death, and also that the harmony of idyllic patriarchal Oblomovka, which the hero dreams of, is not attainable, the world cannot stop and sink into peace. The antithesis "life/paradise" becomes the semantic dominant of Oblomov's image.

References

- Brajuć, V. (2018a). On the Problem of Oblomov's Image Interpreting. *Speech and Context. International Journal of Linguistics, Semiotics and Literary Science*, 1(10), 27-44.
- Бахтин, М. М. (1975). *Вопросы литературы и эстетики*. Изд-во «Художественная литература» / Bahtin, M. M. (1975). *Voprosy literatury i èstetiki*. Izd-vo «Hudožestvennaja literatura».
- Бражук, В. (2014). *Образно-символическая система романа И. А. Гончарова «Обломов»*. PIM / Bražuk, V. (2014). *Obrazno-simvoličeskaja sistema romana I. A. Gončarova «Oblomov»*. PIM.
- Гончаров, И. А. (1981). *Обломов*. В: И. А. Гончаров. *Собрание сочинений в 4 томах* (том 2). Правда / Gončarov, I. A. (1981). *Oblomov*. In I. A. Gončarov. *Sobranie sočinenij v 4 tomah* (tom 2). Pravda.

- Краснова, Е. В. (2003). *Специфика повествовательной структуры романа И.А. Гончарова «Обломов»*: диссертация кандидата филологических наук. Псков / Krasnova, E. V. (2003). *Specifika povestvoatel'noj struktury romana I.A. Gončarova «Oblomov»*: dissertacija kandidata filologičeskikh nauk. Pskov.
- Ляпушкина, Е. И. (1996). *Русская идиллия XIX века и роман И. А. Гончарова «Обломов»*. Изд-во С.-Петербург. гос. ун-та / Ljapuškina, E. I. (1996). *Russkaja idil'lija XIX veka i roman I. A. Gončarova «Oblomov»*. Izd-vo S.-Peterb. gos. un-ta.
- Мельник, В. И. (1985). *Реализм И. А. Гончарова*. Изд-во Дальневост. ун-та / Mel'nik, V. I. (1985). *Realizm I. A. Gončarova*. Izd-vo Dal'nevost. un-ta.
- Николина, Н. А. (2003). *Имя собственное в романе И. А. Гончарова «Обломов»*. В: Н. А. Николина. *Филологический анализ текста*. Академия, 197-207 / Nikolina, N. A. (2003). *Imja sobstvennoe v romane I. A. Gončarova «Oblomov»*. In N. A. Nikolina. *Filologičeskij analiz teksta*. Akademija, 197-207.
- Орнатская, Т. И. (1991). «Обломок» ли Илья Ильич Обломов? К истории интерпретации фамилии героя. *Русская литература*, 4, 229-230 / Ornatskaja, T. I. (1991). «Oblomok» li Il'ja Il'ič Oblomov? K istorii interpretacii familii geroja. *Russkaja literatura*, 4, 229-230.
- Отрадин, М. В. (1992). «Сон Обломова» как художественное целое (некоторые предварительные замечания). *Русская литература*, 1, 3-17 / Otradin, M. V. (1992). «Son Oblomova» kak hudožestvennoe celoe (nekotorye predvaritel'nye zamečanija). *Russkaja literatura*, 1, 3-17.
- Отрадин, М. В. (1994). *Проза И. А. Гончарова в литературном контексте*. Изд-во С.-Петербург. ун-та / Otradin, M. V. (1994). *Proza I. A. Gončarova v literaturnom kontekste*. Izd-vo S.-Peterburg. un-ta.
- Петров, С. М. (1951). *И. А. Гончаров. Знание* / Petrov, S. M. (1951). *I. A. Gončarov. Znanie*.
- Пиксанов, Н. К. (1952). *Мастер критического реализма И. А. Гончаров* / Piksarov, N. K. (1952). *Master kritičeskogo realizma I. A. Gončarov*.
- Пруцков, Н. И. (1962). *Мастерство Гончарова-романиста*. Изд-во Акад. Наук / Pruckov, N. I. (1962). *Masterstvo Gončarova-romanista*. Izd-vo Akad. Nauk.
- Рассадин, Ст. (1980). Обломов без Обломовки. *Искусство кино*, 5, 40-50 / Rassadin, St. (1980). Oblomov bez Oblomovki. *Iskusstvo kino*, 5, 40-50.
- Рогалёв, А. Ф. (2004). Имена собственные в романах И. А. Гончарова. *Литература в школе*, 3, 19-22 / Rogalëv, A. F. (2004). *Imena sobstvennyye v romanah I. A. Gončarova. Literatura v škole*, 3, 19-22.
- Тирген, П. (1990). Обломов как человек-обломок. К постановке проблемы «Гончаров и Шиллер». *Русская литература*, 3, 18-33 / Tirgen, P. (1990). Oblomov kak čelovek-oblomok. K postanovke problemy «Gončarov i Šiller». *Russkaja literatura*, 3, 18-33.