



COLOR VOCABULARY IN M.A. BULGAKOV'S NOVEL "WHITE GUARD"

И.Ю. АВВАКУМОВА

магистрант 2 курса ФГБОУ ВО «БГПУ им. М. Акмуллы» (г. Уфа)

Annotation

The article is devoted to the analysis of color vocabulary in M.A. Bulgakov's novel "The White Guard", which are able to perform various semantic and stylistic functions.

Keywords: color, color in the works of M. Bulgakov, color vocabulary, black, white, red.

Mikhail Bulgakov's use of color is an important distinguishing feature of the writer. Color vocabulary in the novel "The White Guard" is an important element of artistic images, therefore, without color analysis, it is impossible to fully understand and appreciate the poetics of the work, to assess the depth of images, to understand the artistic space of the novel – this determines the relevance of the study.

Color vocabulary is an important element of a literary text. Color concisely and multifacetedly depicts the details of artistic images, reveals the ideological content, and contributes to the expression of the author's thought. Vocabulary with the meaning of color is widely used by various writers and poets. However, of particular interest in this regard is the work of M.A. Bulgakov, whose works are saturated with color vocabulary, often acquiring a symbolic meaning. Among literary critics, color vocabulary has been studied mainly on the material of the novel "The Master and Margarita", while in the novel "The White Guard" color images have been studied to a much lesser extent.

According to S.I. Ozhegov's explanatory dictionary: "Color is all the colors of the rainbow. Dark, light c. Bright, faded c. Red c. (the color of blood). Green c. (grass color). Black c. (charcoal color). White c. (snow color). C. Skin of Eloquence (ironic) - on high rhetoric. To scatter flowers of eloquence in front of the audience. These are still flowers, and the berries will be ahead (I have eaten about something bad: it's nothing, it will be much worse in the future)" [9].

According to color theory, I distinguish primary, secondary, and tertiary colors. Primary colors are colors that cannot be obtained by mixing. The main ones are red, yellow and blue. Secondary colors – green, orange, and purple – can be obtained by mixing primary colors. Tertiary colors are colors that are obtained as a result of mixing the primary and one of the secondary colors, for example, yellow-green, blue-green. White, black, and grayscale are a separate group of achromatic colors.

In the novel "The White Guard" there is a color designation 1333 times: 210 times there is a mention of white, 202 times – black, 176 times in the novel there is a red color, 121 times – gray, 131 times there is a golden color and its embodiment in yellow. 551 lexical units fall on the colors lilac, pink, red, silver, crimson, crimson, cherry, cream and other single color uses, for example, the shade built on the oxymoron blue-pale, the color-author's neologism cartilaginous-white.

Within the framework of this article, the most common colors of the novel are considered: white, black, red, gray, gold with its yellow embodiment. These colors are fundamental in the artistic world of the novel and have a great semantic weight in relation to others in the poetics of the work.



In modern science, a number of classifications of color designations have already been developed from their functional side.

For example, A. Vezhbitskaya distinguishes three types of nominative color adjectives that are used in works of art:

- 1) neutral nominativity – the word fulfills its main function – naming, determining the color of any object or phenomenon of reality;
- 2) author's nominativity;
- 3) aesthetic nominativity is manifested in all the work of this or that artist of the word [3].

Let us single out these groups in M.A. Bulgakov's novel and define their role in the novel.

"There are white curtains on the window of the glazed door...", "a white starched tablecloth" [1]. The word "white" in this context has the meaning of "the color of snow, milk, chalk", [9] it is a direct nominative meaning, and the author uses the adjective in order to create a detailed visual image.

"Here are these tiles, and the furniture of old *red* velvet, and the beds with shiny cones, the shabby carpets, mottled and crimson, with a falcon on the arm of Alexei Mikhailovich, with Louis XIV..." [1], "In March 1917, Thalberg was the first, understand, the first to come to the military school with a wide *red* armband on his sleeve" [1], "... There was a gentle sound in the drawers, and in front of Vasilisa on *the red* cloth there were bundles of oblong papers..." [1]

The linguistic unit "red" is used in its direct meaning "having the color of one of the primary colors of the spectrum that comes before orange; the color of blood" [9]. The adjective is also used in its direct meaning to create a detailed artistic space and to detail the image.

«... They went out on the resounding slabs of the porch and escorted the mother through the huge city to the cemetery, where *her father had long been lying under a black marble cross*", "*Myshlaevsky, in the dirtiest cambric shirt, crossed with black suspenders...*", "Thalberg pricked both brothers with brushes of *black* trimmed moustache", "In the afternoon trams with yellow straw plump seats, on the model of foreign ones, ran with a pleasant even hum. From slope to slope the cabs were shouting, and dark collars - fur silver and *black...*» [1]

"Black" here has the meaning of describing appearance, objects, and at the same time it has a direct nominative meaning.

Of scientific interest for this work are lexical units that have figurative meanings and symbolic meanings, that is, they carry a certain aesthetic function or author's task.

Metonymic transfers of lexical units with color meaning in the prose works of M.A. Bulgakov, including the novel "The White Guard", correspond to the traditional schemes of trope construction, such as: material - a product of this material, the whole - a part, etc.

- 1) Material - a product made of this material:

- "*The White Guard*" is the title of a novel where the word "white" refers to an army made up of troops who wore white uniforms.

"The house was covered with a hat *White* In the ground floor (the first floor facing the street, the courtyard under the Turbins' veranda being the basement) lit up with faint yellow lights...", "At that time, the writer was thinking about another problem – the problem of the possible unity of the



"Reds" and the "Whites",...", "Killed on the battlefield *White*" and *Red*"Not only do they find themselves together in paradise because of Christian charity and justice." [1, 96] "Fluttered lightly *Red* cockerels" [1, 97], "Gallic roosters in *Red* pants, in the distant European West, they pecked fat forged Germans to a pulp" [1, 91];

2) Whole - Part:

- "*Red Army*" is the name of the army, where the word "red" refers to the color of the army uniform and symbolizes their affiliation with the Communist Party;

3) ЦВЕТ - СИМВОЛ:

- "I firmly believe that soon the *red flag on the high towers of the Holy Kremlin*, spattered with the innocent blood of numerous victims of rapists, will be replaced by the glorious tricolor banner of the Great, United Indivisible Russia..." [1, 57]

"Red Flag" is a description of the symbolic flag of the Red Army, where "red" refers to the color of the flag that symbolizes communism;

4) Color is an object that symbolizes certain qualities:

- "*Red Zrazy*" – here "red" is used in the sense of "revolutionary" or "radical" (color), denoting the Zrazy as opponents of the White Guards.
- "*black uniforms*" - here "*black*" is used in the sense of "sad" or "mourning" (color), symbolizing the uniforms of the White Guards who fought in the Civil War;

Thus, it can be concluded that metonymy is a style-forming stylistic device of M.A. Bulgakov. In his literary texts, metonymic constructions are often used as an artistic device for nominating an object in a certain situation according to the attribute that is important for the author. Often, instead of soldiers and warriors, M.A. Bulgakov refers to them by their colors: "the gray barbed wall barked so that the windows trembled" [1], "gray man", "gray figures". Bulgakov depersonalizes this force, because it is not their individual traits that are important, but what they carry in themselves – death, destruction, grief, anguish.

The most common colors in the novel – red, white and black – form an entire artistic space, embodied in the images of blood, cold and death. The city appears before the readers either "in the coal darkness", or "in a heavy gray-blue curtain", or "shining like a pearl in turquoise", in red, black and crimson tones. The artistic space of the City is contrasted with the cream curtains in the Turbins' house. Home is a place where the values of family, faith, and love are still alive. Proof of this is the fact that throughout the novel Mikhail Bulgakov contrasts gold and yellow. Yellow in M.A. Bulgakov's artistic world is, which has been devalued by war and death. This is clearly seen in the episode in Madame Anjou's shop: "On the left window was painted a colored lady's hat, with the golden words 'Chic Parisien', and behind the glass of the right window there was a large yellow cardboard poster with two crossed Sevastopol cannons..." [1]. In this way, M.A. Bulgakov contrasts what was the golden age, and what came with the war is only vaguely reminiscent of gold, in fact it is completely different.

In the same way, in the Turbins' house, the "golden" Elena does not leave the house throughout the novel, because what goes outside the house will become yellow, depreciate and be trampled on by the gray mass.



The word "white" in various grammatical forms has 210 units in the text of the novel. In addition to the adjective "white", the novel uses names and signs associated with the idea of white, namely, the adjectives chalk, alabaster, pale, snowy.

Despite the positive connotations associated with the color white, in the novel this color in some cases accompanies circumstances hostile to man. As a rule, these are natural phenomena (snow, snowdrift, frost, blizzard) that create danger, threat, require overcoming an obstacle and are combined with the words coffin, grave, blockage, tie up, collapsed, buried. For example, the white coffin of his buried mother, "And Maxim was not the same then as he is now – white, sorrowful and hungry", "... white in face, naked and yellow to the waist, smeared with blood, wanting to live..." [1]

The word *black* and its derivatives appear 202 times in the novel. Along with the direct naming of the color by the corresponding adjective, the novel uses associative designations of the color black, among them the nouns night, darkness, gloom, mourning, shadow, haze, soot, iron, failure; adjectives charcoal, ink, moonless, iron, cast iron, coffin, mourning, gloomy, funeral, dark, blind, dark, bottomless, midnight.

It should be noted that in the second part of the novel "The White Guard" the color white is practically not mentioned: 7 mentions of the color white against 22 mentions of the color black. In the second part, M.A. Bulgakov to a large extent describes the actual fighting, the predominance of black characterizes the general picture of the world of the novel - darkness, victims, murders, betrayal. The whole old world is black with grief for its children. The author's position is also reflected here: war is the mourning of the universe. There is no power, there is no way of life that can be achieved through war, violence and such widespread sorrow. "There was peace. And now the world is killed" - this quote can be a separate title for the second part of the novel.

There is very little "white" in the second part of the novel: white huts, white hats, a white museum building, a white marshmallow shirt, a white curtain at the Shcheglovs' house, behind which the mother preserves a peaceful way of life for her little son. The "white" phenomena of life in the second chapter are hooks, signs of the past calm life, to which the consciousness of the characters clings. Even the pallor of the characters of the second part, which in its semantic nature tends to white, is sometimes gray, sometimes bluish.

As we can see, the confrontation between good and evil, the confrontation between white and black in the novel is always on a very fine line – there are only 8 more lexical units of "white" in the novel. A difficult struggle is described in the novel, a very thin line between heroism and betrayal, between good and bad, but, nevertheless, it is "The White Guard" that is put in the title. M.A. Bulgakov believes that while preserving the moral image, preserving the faith, the good still wins.

Despite the widest palette of images in the novel *The White Guard*, the most frequent colors that mark the beginning and end of the color spectrum are white and black. We see a number of reasons for this. First of all, white and black as symbols of the beginning and the end, the beginning and the end of life, the beginning and the end of the struggle, the beginning and the end of the world order. Secondly, these colors symbolize the eternal dialectic of white and black in man. Inscribed in certain historical



conditions, the characters of the novel "The White Guard" are an appeal to the eternal themes and images of Russian literature.

LITERATURE

1. Bulgakov M.A. *Belaya Guard*. – Bradda Books, 1969. - 246c.
2. Bulgakov M.A. *Izbran syndicates*: in t.3 - M., SPB.: Literature, Crystal, 1997. -T.1.- 688 s.
3. Vezhbitskaya A. Designation of Color and Universals of Visual Perception // *Language Culture. Cognition*. –Moscow. – 1996.– S. 231–291.
4. Vysotskaya V.V. Symbolism of color combinations in M. Bulgakov's novel "The White Guard" // *Art Logos*. – 2019. – No3 (8) – p. 92-103. URL: <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/simvolika-tsvetovyh-sochetaniy-v-romane-m-bulgakova-belaya-gvardiya> (accessed: 23.09.2023).
5. Ivens R.M. *Introduction to the Theory of Color* / Ivens R.M. – M.: *Kniga po Trebovaniyu* [Introduction to the Theory of Color]. – 2013. – p. 15.
6. Irdubaeva A. A. Interior in Bulgakov's Works: Symbolism of Color and Light // *Young Researcher: From Idea to Project*. – 2022. P. 352-354.
7. Kadyrova N. S. Semantic Core of the Concept "City" in M.A. Bulgakov's Novel "The White Guard" // *Bulletin of the Chelyabinsk State University*. – 2012. – No. 6 (260). P. 77-79.
8. Petrov V. B., Petrova E. D. Tsvetovye epithets v kontekste mirovozreniya Mihaila Bulgakova [Color epithets in the context of Mikhail Bulgakov's world view]. 2016. No2. – pp.155-160.
9. S. Ozhegov I. *More words of Russian: / under the common red*. L.I. Skvortsova. - 28 thru izd., pererab. - M.: World and Education, 2015. -1375, c.