

SYMBOLS OF THE MOTHERLAND IN RUSSIAN POETRY

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Annotation. This article examines traditional vocabulary associated with the theme of the Motherland and identifies related motifs. Groups of words are identified that are particularly effective in expressing the generalized, abstract meaning of the concept of the Motherland. The connection between symbols of the Motherland and spatial landmarks, intergenerational memory, and family history is explored. Particular attention is given to the names of trees as attributes of the conventional image of the Motherland. These groups of words form the thematic core and ensure the semantic integrity of the work, reinforcing the connection between the concepts of "Motherland," "land," "memory," "people," and the corresponding emotional and evaluative meanings.

Key words: theme of the Motherland, details of the rural landscape, space, motifs of childhood and family, motif of time and continuity, names of trees, epic nature, historical memory, folk song

In the works of Russian poets, the theme of the Motherland is one of the key dominant themes. In poetic texts where the theme of the Motherland is the primary one, a stable semantic field is formed, manifested through the regular inclusion of certain lexical units. This allows us to identify groups of words that are especially active in expressing the general, abstract meaning of the concept of the Motherland.

1. Nominations of the Motherland – names of the country and its cultural and symbolic designations, including lexemes such as "Motherland," "Rus'," "Russia," "Otchizna," etc.

2. Vocabulary of spatial and territorial significance, reflecting the image of "land" and its geographic characteristics (land, region, side, field, road, steppe, etc.).

3. Words of belonging and affective-evaluative components that actualize the feeling of "one's own" and kinship (dear, fatherly, ours, dear, etc.).

4. Vocabulary associated with the people and historical memory, including designations of the collective subject and cultural heritage (people, ancestors, memory, fate – depending on the author's intent).

5. Natural-figurative vocabulary that forms the poetic landscape of the Motherland and acts as a regularly reproduced artistic code (river, wind, forest, snow, birch, etc.).

In the poetry of the early 19th century, the most recurring lexical group are nouns denoting details of the rural landscape, naming rural residents, elements of their material and spiritual life, natural phenomena: shelter, hearth, house, corner (corner), forest, river, stream, hill (hills), oak (oak grove), fields, meadows, fields, plowman, herd, shepherd, villager, lark. The listed nouns were traditional poeticisms and were combined with “canonized” definitions – epithets – “decorating” epithets of elegiac poetry [3, p. 358]. Let us consider some of them. See Table 1

Shelter,	Humble, secluded,	Come under your native roof, under your
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house, corner	inconspicuous, modest	secluded roof, happy and simple. (Vyazemsky)
dubrava	dark	And a sparkling stream in the steep banks, and bright meadows, and dark oak groves, and the friendly manners of the villagers. (Baratynsky)
river	transparent	
stream	sparkling, silvery	

The theme of the Motherland in the quoted lines is addressed in an elegiac vein. The Motherland, as depicted by poets of the early 19th century, is almost devoid of individual traits; the depicted scenes are similar. The descriptions had little in common with the real life of the Russian village and were conventional in nature. They expressed poetic generalization – a stable associative complex, "a certain structure of ideas, experiences, and evaluations" that existed before context as an element of style [2, p. 10].

Literary considerations dictated the presence of a diverse vocabulary, painting scenes of desolation and conveying a sense of sadness and grief.

O my homeland, O sweetness of bygone years! O fields, O cornfields, spoils of desolation! O mournful sights of ruins, destruction! (Zhukovsky)

Traditional vocabulary associated with the theme of the Motherland continues to be used in the poetry of A.S. Pushkin and in the poetry of the post-Pushkin period, but some changes have occurred in its composition. Well-known poetic expressions are sometimes replaced by synonyms; for example, the word "hut" is replaced by the words "izba" (hut), "khata" (house):

No fire, no black hut... (Pushkin)

I love the sandy slope,

In front of the hut are two rowan trees. (Pushkin)

The common perception of Russia as a northern land devoid of warmth has led to the widespread use of words like snow, frost, cold, fog, swamps, mist, blizzard, snowstorm, and winter. Poetry's focus on real Russian reality has led to the use of words like distance, breadth, expanse, space, and plains. Associatively related to these words are fields, steppes, roads, horse, and troika. For example:

Behind the snows, forests, and steppes,

I cannot see your face.

Is it only a terrifying expanse before my eyes,

An incomprehensible, endless vastness? (Blok)

There, everything will inspire you:

The wild smoke of your home,

The evening view of silent villages,

And the freshness of a golden morning (Grigoriev)

The theme of the Motherland in poetic texts is associated with vocabulary reflecting motifs of childhood and family. This group includes words denoting kinship and family ties: great-grandfathers, grandfathers, fathers, mother, brother, son, family. The use of such lexical units served not only a nominative but also a semantic function: they actualized the idea of the Motherland as a space where personal life is linked to family history.

The golden games of the first years

And the lessons of the first years,
What can replace your charm?
Oh, holy homeland,
What heart does not tremble,
Blessing you? (Zhukovsky)

Words denoting kinship relationships evoked the motif of time and continuity. The semantics of a number of lexemes reflected a past orientation (great-grandfathers, grandfathers, fathers), linking the image of the Motherland with the memory of generations and family history. At the same time, the inclusion of designations for the current family structure and composition (mother, brother, son, spouse) supported the idea of the continuity of life "here and now." As a result, the concept of the Motherland expanded: it became not limited to one time slice (the present), but acquired a temporal extension, encompassing the past and potentially directed towards the future.

In Russian poetry, tree names were often used to depict the native landscape. A particular tree served as an attribute of the conventional image of the Motherland. Thus, the phrase "under the shade of native (parental, grandfather's, or familiar) forests, trees (trees)" was a poetic paraphrase meaning "in the homeland." Compare:

<p>I will hide with the secret of freedom, With a siren, languor, and nature Under the canopy of my ancestral forests (Pushkin)</p>	<p>In the land of my fathers, under the shadow of familiar trees... (Zhukovsky)</p>
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Names of specific trees were used. The word "oak" was widely used in combination with the adjectives "native," "fatherly," and "parental." For example: *Returned to the fatherland from enemy shores, he listens with delight to the singing of familiar voices and rejoices in the shade of his parents' oaks.* (Vyazemsky)

The word "oak" is a traditional symbol. Firstly, the oak and oak branch symbolized strength and fortitude. Secondly, the oak crown commemorated "the merits of those whose heroic deeds saved the lives of their fellow citizens." Such an abstract concept as "love of the fatherland" was depicted on ancient emblems "as a man wearing a crown of oak leaves." It follows, then, that the oak was traditionally associated with the theme of the "Great Motherland," i.e., the state.

The oak is no less closely associated with the theme of noble family. Oak is a long-lived tree, symbolizing not only the might and strength of a family but also the connection between generations. Therefore, the word "oak" is often defined by the adjective "ancient": With its bare branches waving, the ancient oak grew black in the empty forest. (Vyazemsky)

The connection between the word "oak" and the motif of a noble family is especially clearly illustrated in the following lines from A.S. Pushkin's poem "Poltava": In Dikanka, an ancient row of oaks, planted by friends, blooms; They still speak to their grandchildren of their executed forefathers...

The use of tree names to explore the theme of the Motherland from the perspective of history and time has become traditional in Russian poetry. Thus, the hero of N. A. Nekrasov's poem "The Unfortunates," thinking of his native village, recalls an old elm: The old elm at the end of the village rustles like a century-old sentry; generations pass before it, changing in rapid succession. It is unharmed: greed, carelessness – nothing can crush it. The people's love preserves its sacred longevity.

In poetry, the theme of the Motherland is often linked with the linden tree. V. Raevsky, for example, writes in "Song of a Slave": Comrades and friends! And separated from you, I will no longer sing hymns to happiness under the shade of humble linden trees; the moment of joy has passed!

Along with oak, linden was the most frequently used tree in religious worship and was considered a sacred tree, especially among the Southern Slavs. In the second half of the 19th century, the word "linden" became a symbol of a noble estate, home, and comfort [4, p. 100].

The maple holds a special place in culture and folklore: it becomes a symbol of the Motherland, home, and family values. This tree seems to act as a guardian of the hearth, preserving peace and imparting a sense of tranquility. Through its image, people feel a connection to their roots and their native land, and the maple itself is perceived as a bright and kind sign, bringing peace.

The maple tree grows. The winds sway it,
Snowstorms rage, downpours lash.
Still, branches are born to the branches.
And the nightingales sing louder.
And the great earth listens to them.
The blue dome of the sky heeds.
Grow green, branches, raising up
The tree born of the earth. A. Chepurov

In Sergei Yesenin's poetry, the maple tree serves as a symbol of native nature, a part of the "peasant" world. It's not just a tree, but an element of everyday life, a lyrical environment: it evokes familiar rural images (house, yard, road, the air of the fields), while also conveying a sense of tranquility, rootedness, and closeness to the land.

The birch, initially considered a "non-poetic" tree, has gradually become a poetic symbol of Russia. However, this beautiful and useful tree has held and continues to hold a special place in the lives of the people – both spiritual and tangible. Since time immemorial, the birch's purity, freshness, and beauty have been associated with the image of a girl, a bride, and a woman [1, p. 21].

The image of the birch tree in Russian poetry is a multifaceted symbol, embodying the Motherland, purity, and life-affirming principles. It is associated with the native land, healing, and spiritual warmth:

Oh, birches, the silent distance, the sad fields...
You are my native, my poor land! (Merezhkovsky)

This tree, deeply revered in Rus' since ancient times, is associated with fortitude and symbolizes life and protection. Birch is not only an icon of beauty but also a "tree of four deeds" (healing, purifying, healing, and soaring), reflecting the thrifty nature of the Russian people. Birch is celebrated in poetry and painting, serving as an unspoken icon of the Russian landscape.

Her light attire is wonderful,
There is no tree dearer to the heart,
And many thoughtful songs
are sung by the people about her.
He shares with her joy and tears,
And her days are so good,
That it seems – in the rustling of the birch tree –
There is something of the Russian soul. V. Rozhdestvensky

The birch's prevalence in Russian lands is evidenced by the numerous village names: Berezovka, Berezovye Gory, Berezokino. The end of spring fieldwork was celebrated with a birch

festival. Girls would go into the forest and decorate birch trees with ribbons, dance in circles, and sing. This is why the birch is popularly known as the "merry birch" – "veselka" [1, p. 19].

The birch tree – both a reality and a word – has become a lofty symbol of the Motherland, while simultaneously preserving in its meaning the accumulated meaning of centuries.

Birches, birches of Russia –

You have all walked with us.

And there is no end to your strength,

coming from the Russian land! (A. Dementyev)

The symbol of the Motherland in M.I. Tsvetaeva's poetry is the rowan tree – blazing and bitter – a sign of loss, sadness, and, at the same time, the creative fire that defies the "winter of oblivion." The rowan tree becomes a given of "one's own" land: it is not an abstract landscape, but part of a spiritual space where Russia is experienced as personal:

Every house is alien to me, every temple is empty,

And everything is the same, and everything is one.

But if along the way a bush

Stands up, especially a rowan...

Symbols of the Motherland in Mikhail Lermontov's poetry evolved from a romantic rapture over the Caucasus to a profound, "strange" love for the real, simple Russia. Key images include epic nature (steppes, forests, rivers), historical memory (Borodino), and a spiritual connection with the people, contrasting official patriotism with a personal, soulful perception of the Fatherland. Lermontov fundamentally separates personal love for Russia from official patriotism (glory, thrones). He values simplicity: "*a pair of white birches,*" "*the smoke of scorched stubble,*" "*a wagon train spending the night in the steppe.*"

In describing the semantic field "Motherland," the word "song" becomes one of the key lexemes throughout A. A. Blok's work. Already in his early poems, song – a drawn – out melody resounding "from afar" – serves as an invariable poetic attribute of the image of the Motherland: "The clouds opened, the moon rose, // A song resounded from afar." This sound conveys not only the atmosphere of the native element but also a symbol of spiritual enlightenment: the song becomes a beacon that guides the lyrical hero to the truth.

Russian song evokes a dual feeling in Blok: it torments the soul with melancholy and despair, as if foreshadowing pain and inner breakdown. But at the same time, it becomes a moral compass along the way: the sound of the people's voice supports the hero, giving him strength and hope:

And the impossible is possible,

The long road is easy...

When the coachman's muffled

Song rings with prison melancholy!

Blok's finest poetic colors are given to song: it is with it that the warmest and purest associations are connected, even when the poet expresses his loneliness – constant, tormenting the soul – he still turns to this image, as if through song he finds the form of the most accurate sound of inner pain.

Russia, poor Russia,

Your gray huts are to me,

Your windy songs are to me –

Like the first tears of love.

An analysis of poetic texts focused on the theme of the Motherland reveals a set of the most stable lexical groups, repeated with increased frequency. These word groups form the thematic core and ensure the semantic integrity of the work, reinforcing the connection between the

concepts of "Motherland," "land," "memory," "people," and the corresponding emotional and evaluative meanings.

Thus, the theme of the Motherland in Russian poetry is characterized by its traditional vocabulary, which has undergone a number of changes. The main changes in the composition and artistic semantics of the lexical units associated with the concept of "Motherland" are associated with the transition from a stylistic word with stable, conventional associativity to a word with contextual meaning, the acquisition of "historical concreteness and everyday fluidity".

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