



THE FIGURE OF THOUGHT OF V. NABOKOV'S "THE GIFT"

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The paper presents the results of the study of the ideological structure of V. Nabokov's novel "The Gift" as a figure of thought, namely as a component structure of the concept GIFT. The investigation showed that the treatment of the word "gift" by Nabokov is within the tradition of Russian artistic and spiritual (Christian) literature. In the novel its meaning is "the gift of eternal life and the gift of word" the latter being used in a broad sense as the ability to create. The basic figure of thought is a triad: thesis - this world life according to spiritual values is life (the life of Farther), antithesis - life according to the values of utilitarianism and materialism is a state of being dead (life of Chernyshevski), synthesis - the life of the protagonist Fyodor Godunov-Cherdyntsev as a path of rejecting material values and gaining spiritual ones.

Keywords: Nabokov, "The Gift", Rhetorical criticism, Deep ideological structure, Triad.

Introduction

"The Gift" is Vladimir Nabokov's final Russian novel, and is considered to be his farewell to Russia. Nabokov wrote it between 1935 and 1937 living in Berlin. The novel was published under his pen name Vladimir Sirin. It is generally assumed that the novel is devoted to Russian literature and the title word "gift" is used to mean "the writer's talent", "Russian culture and literature", some authors also include the component "life" in the semantic structure of the word.

Methodology

Rhetoric is the method of morphing thought into word. Rhetorical analysis, namely the reconstruction of invention, disposition and elocution, is used to draw inferences about what is expressed in the text and how it is expressed. It allows to build a conceptual model of the text – its figure of thought. Rhetorical analysis is a study of the text in its historic communicative situation.

Communicative situation

Any significant literary and artistic work is a reply in the dialogue of literary texts. The dialogue in which Nabokov's novel is involved is most likely that of A. Pushkin and Philaret, metropolitan of Moscow.

In 1828 Pushkin wrote:

Дар напрасный, дар случайный, Жизнь, зачем ты мне дана?	<i>The gift in vain, the gift of chance, Life, why are you given to me?</i> ¹
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Philaret, metropolitan of Moscow's reply was:

Не напрасно, не случайно Жизнь от Бога мне дана; Не без воли Бога тайной И на казнь осуждена.	<i>Not in vain, not by accident Life from God's given to me; Not without the invisible will of God Is condemned to agony</i>
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In January 19, 1830 Pushkin dedicated "Stanzas" to Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow, concluding them by the following:

И ныне с высоты духовной Мне руку простираешь ты, И силой кроткой и любовной Смиряешь буйные мечты.	<i>And now from the spiritual heights You stretch your hand to me And by gentle and loving power Humble my wild dreams.</i>
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Rhetorical Analysis Results

The conjecture that *the Gift is life* can also be made from the juxtaposition of the title and epigraph.

The Gift	... death is inevitable
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Gift being opposed to *Death* can mean only *Life*. But the question arises if Nabokov is with 1828's Pushkin or with Philaret and 1830's Pushkin: Is death inevitable or is life eternal? The analysis of invention, disposition and elocution of the novel showed that the latter is true.

The concept of death is discussed in each of the five chapters of the novel in connection with the death of one of the key characters.

For Nabokov Death is a Door to the other world. But behind the door there are many worlds, the world of Yasha Chernyshevsky is dark and cold, while the world of Fyodor's father is golden and warm.

The world, one's door is going to open to, depends on the way one uses the Gift, which is treated as the Spirit (breath of life) or spiritual life or life. If the Gift of the Spirit is accepted, the person gains eternal life and the ability to spiritualize material world, besides he is granted the Gift of word and due to it the ability to create a relative eternity in this world. If the Gift of the Spirit is rejected the person is dead, as physical life for Nabokov is the inanimate. Those who discard the Gift of the Spirit are deprived of the Gift of word and for this reason are unable to create, to name the nameless.

The Basic Figure of Thought Is Triad:

- (1) Thesis: this world life according to spiritual values leads to eternal life. It is the spiritual life that is life, it is the gift of the Unknown (example – the life of the main character's father);

¹ A. Pushkin and Moscow metropolitan Philaret's texts are translated by the author of the article.

- (2) Antithesis: life according to the values of utilitarianism and materialism is a state of being dead (the life of Chernyshevsky);
- (3) Synthesis: life as a choice between (1) and (2) (the life of the main character Fyodor Godunov-Cherdyntsev as the path of rejecting material values and gaining spiritual ones).

The structures of world pictures (1) and (2) are practically identical in terms of the categories: they have the same number of components but with contraposed meanings.

The world of spirit Paradise	Category	The world of matter Hell
+	The gift of the Spirit	-
Light	Place	Dark, gloom
Harmony of colours		Catastrophe of colours
Warmth		Cold
Rose, iris		Sunflower
Eternity	Time	Present
Father	People	Chernyshevsky
Trust in the Unknown	God	To be a second Savior
Holy Ghost		Common sense
Hegel	Philosophy	Feuerbach
Unselfishness, innocent heart/soul, clear conscience, pure science, pure poetry; faithfulness to one's Gift, culture, destiny, profession; self-possession, moral stamina, virtue, independence, courage, even temper, humour, beautiful smile and laughter	Values Traits of character Spirit of Love, Power and a Sound Mind	Utility, pragmatism, mercantilism, rationality, science and art – means to reach utilitarian aim, cowardice, gloom, flatness, lack of humor, god-awful laughter, sentimentality, cornball, bad taste, bad temper
+	The gift of the word	-
All kinds of perception and cognition of the world. Physical: auditory, visual, olfactory, tactile, complex; emotional, intuitive, visionary, multi-faceted	Perception, cognition	Blindness, nearsightedness, lack of the blessing of sensory cognition and hence the inability to put a name to anything
Unbiased, open-minded, detailed, based on knowledge	Approach in cognition	Biased, general, vague
The pink and paragon of style	Pushkin	Producer of idle talk
Cognition and fixation of the discovered; Translation of the spiritual into verbal; embodiment of memory; communication of important information to future generations	The aim of naming	Practical aim, such as propaganda or gaining popularity

Unity of thought and form; thorough elaboration of every component of style; tastefulness; entrancing rhythm	Style	confusing, vague, serious, sluggish, mumbling, pecking style
Intense scrutiny	Preparation	Self-expression
Growing talent Growing recognition Future fame True love	Reward	The divine scourge in the form of: Decreasing talent Oblivion Lack of love

The figure of thought is manifested both at the level of story and the level of verbal style.

All the characters are between two extremes: Farther and Chernyshevky.

The rhetorical composition of the novel reflects the triad. The theses is “the Gift is the Breath of Life”. The argument for it is chapter two, the book about Father, the argument against it is chapter four, the book about Chernyshevky, chapters 1, 3 and 4 (synthesis) are the story of Fyodor’s moving into adulthood towards unlocking his Father’s values.

The key words are the groups of synonyms for categories:

Death – door, exit, hole, river Styx.

This world – house, flat, room, prison, wall

Paradise - home

Light and harmony of colours – sun, stars, rays, play of light and shadow, rainbow, pink, scarlet, purple, golden, elysian colours...

Dark and catastrophe of colours – gloom, muddiness, turbidity, blackness, inability to imbibe white...

Triad – circle, sun, rainbow

Gift – the gift of life as the gift of the Spirit, the Spirit Of Love, Power and a Sound Mind, the gift of tongues, memory, Russian culture, Russian literature, talent to create.

Literature Review

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