

Iconicity and Deconstruction: the Prose by Vladimir Nabokov and the 20th Century Post-Modernist Philosophy

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Introduction. This research aims at analyzing the novel by Vladimir Nabokov *Transparent Things* (1972) from the perspective of post-modernist philosophy. By post-modernist philosophy I mean the post-structural view of the sign theory, that focuses on iconicity, symbolic and iconic nature of the sign, the concept of deconstruction, the concept of rhizome, the concept of silence, the concept of *différance* (as stated by Derrida), the concept of difference and repetition introduced by G. Deleuze. This philosophy is linked to a more general view expressed, for instance, by Derrida (in his work *the Gift of Death (Donner la mort)*). The main innovative element of this research, therefore, is to study the prose by Nabokov as an example of post-modernist writing simultaneously applying the views and concepts introduced by cognitive linguistics, literary critics and post-modern writers like J. Derrida, U. Eco, R. Barthes.

Methodology and sources. The research method used is semantic and structural analysis of the novel by Nabokov *Transparent Things*. Its main tool is the use of ideas introduced by French poststructuralists regarding the theory of sign, the symbolic nature of language, study of multiple meanings generated by a word in the process of its use and decoding.

Results and discussion. The results of this research allow to outline main tendencies in the development of the 20th century narrative. It adheres to the general law of multi-level structure of the novel, play of words and sounds, which corresponds to the general view of difference (as coined by Derrida), deconstruction, rhizome, iconicity of sign. The rhizomorphic structure of the novel at the same time is mirror-like, which allows to apply the difference-repetition dichotomy put forward by G. Deleuze. If the micro-structure of Nabokov's texts allows to make generalization about the author's use of language, its macro-structure reveals deeper philosophical notions, implying that the death of the character in the novel leads to the study of the transcendental, or "the Other" in psychoanalytical terms, thus putting the plot on a different scale of values. The view of language and its structure in its relation to the notion of transparency, allows to see the sign in a Heideggerian way, as bearing the replica of the world, having more in itself about the world, than anything else.

Conclusion. The novel *Transparent Things* by Nabokov falls into the category of similar novels in which the author develops symbolic language and explores its potential, following the general pattern and establishing the rules of narrative construction in post-modern tradition.

Keywords: Nabokov, post-modernism, difference and repetition, deconstruction, theory of sign.

For citation: Shcherbak N. F. Iconicity and Deconstruction: the Prose by Vladimir Nabokov and the 20th Century Post-Modernist Philosophy. DISCOURSE. 2020, vol. 6, no. 6, pp. 37–48. DOI: 10.32603/2412-8562-2020-6-6-37-48

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Source of financing: the work was supported by a grant M1_2020 (project "Literary texts and its language vs qualitative, corpus and computer-assisted methods: testing and evaluation (Nabokov and comparative analysis)").

Conflict of interest. No conflicts of interest related to this publication were reported.

Received 19.10.2020; adopted after review 10.11.2020; published online 25.12.2020

Иконичность знака и деконструкция: проза Владимира Набокова и философия постмодернизма

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Введение. Данная статья посвящена анализу текстов Владимира Набокова (на примере романа «Просвечивающие предметы» (1972)) с позиций постмодернистской философии. Под постмодернистской философией понимается постструктуралистский взгляд на теорию знака, теорий, обозначенных Ж. Дерридой и его последователями. Изучается феномен различия (*différance* – концепт, введенный Дерридой), концепт «различие и повторение», представленные Жилем Делезом. Изучается процесс деконструкции знака, проблемы, обозначенные в работе Дерриды «Дар смерти» (*The Gift of Death*). Основным новаторским элементом данного исследования является комплексный подход, совмещение лингвистических, литературоведческих и философских концепций при изучении прозы Набокова как примера постмодернистского письма.

Методология и источники. В качестве метода исследования использован семантический и структурный анализ романа Набокова с использованием метода биографического анализа. Используются концепции, введенные французскими постструктуралистами относительно теории знака, символической природы языка, множественности значений, порождаемых словом в процессе его употребления и понимания.

Результаты и обсуждение. Результаты данного исследования позволяют наметить основные тенденции в развитии нарратива XX века, который следует общему закону многоуровневой структуры романа, игры слов и звуков, «исключения» вместо «включения», «открытости структуры», вместо «закрытости», «синтагматичности», вместо «парадигматичности», следа или жеста, вместо знака, и т. д. Таким образом, идея «различия» (*différance*) позволяет избежать традиционных оппозиций, являть собой «общий корень всех оппозиционных понятий, которые маркируют наш язык, быть в качестве единого означающего для любых парных смыслов метафизического порядка. Ризоморфная структура романа зеркальна, что позволяет применить дихотомию различия-повторения, выдвинутую Ж. Делезом и Ф. Гваттари, трактовать концепты «пустоты», «молчания», «белого шума». Если микроструктура набоковских текстов позволяет сделать обобщение об использовании автором языка, то его макроструктура раскрывает более глубокие философские понятия, предполагает изучение трансцендентного, применяя иную шкалу ценностей. Взгляд Набокова на язык и его структуру, его отношение к концепту «прозрачности» позволяет увидеть знак в «хайдеггеровском ключе», как знак иконический (подобный иероглифу), т. е. как несущий определенное знание о мире.

Заключение. Роман Набокова «Просвечивающие предметы» относится к разряду романов, в которых автор развивает символический язык и исследует его потенциал, следуя общей схеме и устанавливая правила повествовательного построения в постмодернистской традиции.

Ключевые слова: Набоков, постмодернизм, различие и повторение, деконструкция, постструктурализм.

Для цитирования: Щербак Н. Ф. Иконичность знака и деконструкция: проза Владимира Набокова и философия постмодернизма // ДИСКУРС. 2020. Т. 6, № 6. С. 37–48. DOI: 10.32603/2412-8562-2020-6-6-37-48.

Финансирование: работа выполнена при финансовой поддержке гранта М1_2020 «Литературные тексты и их язык vs количественные, корпусные и компьютерные методы: взаимное тестирование (Набоков и сопоставительный материал)».

Конфликт интересов. О конфликте интересов, связанном с данной публикацией, не сообщалось.

Поступила 19.10.2020; принята после рецензирования 10.11.2020; опубликована онлайн 25.12.2020

Introduction. This article aims at analyzing the novel by Vladimir Nabokov *Transparent Things* (1992) from the perspective of post-modernist philosophy. By post-modernist philosophy we imply the post-structural view of the sign theory, as well as the views expressed by J. Derrida and his view of difference and deconstruction of the sign. This philosophy is linked to a more general view of expressed by Derrida (for example in his work *the Gift of Death (Donner la mort)* which implies that death is the only real gift that is a gift, as in the hypothetical situation of an action or imagined action, it means that one doesn't expect anything back). The main innovative element of this research is to study the prose by Nabokov as an example of post-modernist writing simultaneously the views and concepts introduced by linguistics, as well as by J. Derrida, U. Eco, R. Barthes, other poststructuralist thinkers.

The title of the novel contains the term “différance” introduced by Derrida. It is the concept of postmodernism philosophy, which is “the common root of all oppositional concepts that mark our language”. As a single signifier for any paired meanings of the metaphysical order (for example: “presence” – “trace”), Derrida introduced the term in order to overcome a number of traditional foundations of metaphysics – the ideas of “presence”, “identity”, “logos”, etc.

Methodology and sources. The research method used is semantic and structural analysis of the novel by Nabokov with the use of some biographical details. Its main tool is the use of ideas introduced by French poststructuralists regarding the theory of sign, the symbolic nature of language, iconicity which accounts for multiple meanings generated by a word in the process of its use and comprehension (or decoding).

Difference and deconstruction: its application to the study of texts. Derrida first uses the term “différance” in his 1963 paper *Cogito et histoire de la folie*. The term “différance” then played a key role in Derrida's engagement with the philosophy of Edmund Husserl. The ⟨a⟩ in the word “différance” is a deliberate misspelling of difference. This misspelling highlights the fact that its written form is not heard, and serves to further subvert the traditional privileging of speech over writing, as well as the distinction between the sensible and the intelligible. The difference articulated by the ⟨a⟩ in “différance” is not apparent to the senses via sound (as the two words are pronounced in the similar way), “but neither cannot it belong to intelligibility”, and this is because the language of understanding is already caught up in sensible metaphors. The notion of “différance” allows to study the powerful and inexplicable power of the language.

Deconstruction is another important term introduced by Derrida that shakes up a concept like text in a way that provokes questions about the borders, the frontiers, the edges, or the limits that have been drawn to mark out its place in the history of concepts.

Theory of sign and its application to the study of Nabokov's prose. By “theory of sign”, I mean the transformations of the idea of Frege’s semantic triangle and, for instance, the realization (with further publication in the work *the Meaning of Meaning* (1923) by Ogden and Richards) [1, p. 4–8] the view about the relation of a symbol to reference and referent. An important vector of development in the “theory of sign” is the change of the structural view of sign to the post-structural view of sign, which is reflected in the former “break” with the referent, and, regarding the latter, break with the reference. In other words, the post-structural view of the linguistic sign (similar to any other sign) is its ability to generate a number of meanings in the context, sometimes simultaneously [2, p. 160–161]. This view allows to explore Nabokov’s prose as a constant play with signs, sounds, meanings, on a micro-level, and having numerous attempts of play within the plot, on a macro-level, exploring open ending and possible echoes of famous plots and story lines.

Symbolic or iconic view of the language sign. According to Pierce [3], there are three types of semiotic signs. They could be symbolic, iconic, or index kind of signs. Most signs of the language are considered to be symbolic, as the relation of a sign to what it signifies, is arbitrary. On the other hand, phono-semantic research has proved that there are a lot of exceptions, that is, a great deal of words, roots of words, parts of words have a direct correlation to what they signify (an open vowel or a closed one might signal about the positive or the negative connotation or change a pragmatic force of the whole sentence). Nabokov’s texts often act as icons, as the meaning could be embodied not only in words, but act “around the word”. The syntactic structure of the sentence, iconic proximity (that is lexical density) could also account for the construction of the symbolic language and play an important part in the process of generating extra meanings.

The unity of the form and the meaning. The famous, almost general view of Ferdinand de Saussure that the form is inseparable from meaning, is challenged by a number of researchers, for instance, prof. Archipov [4], when in his works, he addresses the notions of the form being transformed to the addressee, not the meaning. The form is then decoded by the receiver of the message. This allows to develop further the idea of “internal speech” (introduced by Vigotsky) and prove the ability of a human being to “think in images rather than only in words”. This almost revolutionary view has been supported by researchers like Zhinkin [5, p. 158], who modified the concept of “internal speech”, believing that there is a universal subject-schema code in which “there are no signs of natural language words, but there are images, schemes or images that can form a chain or grouping”.

This view is very important regarding the views that Nabokov expressed himself, and they concern the fact that, as he pointed out, he thought in images, rather than in words. To a reporter’s question: “What language do you think in?”, he answered in his interview for the BBC (1962):

I don't think in any language. I think in images. I don't believe that people think in languages. They don't move their lips when they think. It is only a certain type of illiterate person who moves his lips as he reads or ruminates. No, I think in images, and now and then a Russian phrase or an English phrase will form with the foam of the brainwave, but that's about all [6, p. 138].

Rhizome, time and space subsystems, schizo-analysis, “difference and repetition”. Apart from deconstruction, post-modernists concentrated on a number of concepts that allow to explain

the main rule of the narrative construction (art creation or music writing). Rhizome as a metaphor of different connections that were not considered before has been studied by Deleuze and Guattari in their *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1972–1980) project. The view of interwoven motives allows to look closely at Nabokov's texts and see the connections of almost anything to everything. This is in tune with ideas of schizo-analysis that is developed in the same work, that includes *Anti-Aedepus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1972) and *A Thousand Plateaux: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1980). Similar insights are provided by *Difference and Repetition* (1968). The philosophical notions outlined in these texts go along the lines of a general tendency of post-modern texts to change the canon, to introduce multitude of hidden agendas and playing codes. If the play with time and space subsystems allows to identify different perspectives of the characters, the orchestra of perspectives and the echoing capacity of language, the "difference and repetition" dichotomy allows to see the change of paradigm in the structural way. The "grand narratives" were making up the narrative by introducing "new" or different motives, whereas the Nabokov's text often contains a repetitive patterns of recurring events. The recurring illness, or event, or an action is a sign of a new artistic or aesthetic paradigm, rules of post-modern narrative adhere to it to its full potential [7].

Results and discussion. The results of this research allows to outline main tendencies in the development of the 20th century narrative. The narrative that adheres to the general law of multi-level structure of the novel, play of words and sounds which corresponds to the general idea of J. Derrida and his view of difference and deconstruction. The rhizomorphic structure of the novel at the same time is mirror-like, which allows to apply the difference-repetition dichotomy put forward by Derrida and G. Deleuze. If the micro-structure of Nabokov's texts allows to make generalization about the author's use of language, its macro-structure reveals deeper philosophical notions, implying that the death of the character in the novel is viewed not only as physical death, but points to the study of the transcendental, the Other. *The Gift of Death* places the plot on a different scale of values. The relation of language and structure to the notion of transparency, allows to see the sign in a Heideggerian way, as bearing replica of the world, having more in itself about the world, than anything else.

General characteristic of Nabokov's texts through the prism of linguistic and literary theories. Nabokov's texts, in general, adhere to post-modern tradition in a way that they differ tremendously from "grand narratives" and are a step forward from modernism. As pointed out by Hassan, post-modern texts differ from a more traditional form of the narrative as the closed form is generally changed into the anti-form. The aim becomes a game, the plan – an occasion, the hierarchy – the anarchy, the completed piece of writing – a process, presence turns into absence, God Father the Creator is turned into a Holy Spirit, presence becomes absence [8]. Therefore, the plot of the Nabokov's novel will always have a number of story lines developing simultaneously, a variety of different techniques combined together, a number of interwoven motives, borrowings, reminiscences, stated directly to indirectly.

Language developed by Nabokov is in a way similar to symbolic (the way that the Silver Age poets addressed it, referring to a word as "revealing its darker side in the depths of its meaning"). The wording Nabokov uses is also iconic in many ways, as each symbol or a paragraph adheres to what Ryaguzova coins a "palindrome" principle, that allows to read the word (or a sentence) from left to right and from right to left [9, p. 480–481]. This general

principle allows the author to view the word as bearing a lot of properties, including its form and acoustic properties. It allows to combine different languages, exploring iconic nature of the language as well as its symbolic dimension.

This attitude and view of Nabokov's language allows to explain the core value of his texts that explore not only the psychological, historical, literary tradition, but, above all, touch upon the study of the transcendental dimension. By transcendental dimension I mean the study of the unknown, in a broader sense, the study of the states (such as dreams) that allow to bring in the unconscious, the study of religious practices. Above all the transcendental is viewed in a Foucault tradition of looking at a "gesture to the eternity", which always addresses the ability for acute hearing, attention to minimal details of the narrative, paying attention to previously ignored items (such as punctuation marks, break of rhythm, echo-elements). As was pointed out by James Joyce, epiphany is a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in conversation, in gesture or in the process of thinking, that is worthy of remembering. Joyce's character thought it was necessary for a writer to put down such experiences with great attention thinking these were very delicate and passing states of one's being [10, p. 5–254].

The plot, the narrative, the meaning of "Transparent Thing". The novel *Transparent Things* (1972) was originally written by Nabokov in English and published in 1972. The novel tells us the story of an American editor and the memory of his four trips to a small village in Switzerland. The time span is two decades. During one of his trips (the third one) the murder is committed which, finally, leads to madness.

As it often happens in Nabokov's texts, it is not the plot, that is so important, yet the revelation, epiphany kind of impression one gets when reading it, as well as extra meanings generated within the texts. The main topic is always the topic of a "total memory recall" almost a psychiatric ability to remember the story of one's life incorporating it into the story or culture of continents and countries. In other words, what Nabokov explores here is the metaphysics of one's memory.

The title *Transparent Things* is metaphoric by its nature and in a way resembles the idea of a concept of an "icon" (or iconic capacity of the sign), as it bears in itself almost everything, the pattern of one's mind or the pattern of the universe. Transparent things are what allows one to see a concept or a phenomenon completely, making up the final jigsaw puzzle into a full and comprehensive entity. Building up a story from different fragments is, on the one hand, characteristic of any post-modern text, on the other hand, it is an ability of an individual, to recall one's experience and in an existential manner to see the relationship of this existence to the essence, or the essence to existence, answering the question posed by Sartre at one point, if the essence precedes existence or the other way round [11].

An important concept that explains general tendencies of post-modern literature to generate meanings in a different way, one could consider the "Vvedensky hieroglyph" which is similar in many ways to the symbol. This is material, a sensually perceived object (a phenomenon or, less often, an action) that serves as a representative of another object or a number of objects, properties, relationships. Similar to a symbol, a hieroglyph is characterized by polysemy, a real embodiment, and it has meaning. The symbol carries a reference to another object or a number of objects, but these objects, in one way or another, are logically connected in meaning with the symbol that expresses them. If, according to Vvedensky, the world cannot be comprehended

logically, if the mind does not understand the world, then no logic can start its work. The hieroglyph, unlike the symbol, is absolutely arbitrary, devoid of the rudimentary natural connection between the signifier and the signified [12]. One of the main features of the hieroglyph is absurdity, illogicality. But the absence of a logical connection between the signified and the signifier does not harm the hypothetical possibility of comprehending the hieroglyph. Derrida pointed out that “by its purely intelligible facet, the signified refers to the absolute Logos and establishes a direct connection with it. In medieval theology, this absolute Logos was an infinite creative subjectivity: the intelligible face of the sign was always turned towards the word and the face of God”, therefore, if in the case of a symbol the chain of movement of our understanding of this symbol is: “signified-object – absolute Logos/word of God”, then the hieroglyph refers to the last phase of this chain. However, this is not due to the fact that the hieroglyph removes an object from this chain, but, according to Vvedensky, each object is already initially an absolute Logos [12].

Time and space subsystems in Nabokov's texts and in “Transparent Things”. The concept of transparency implicitly introduced in the text (in the title) allows to explore the non-linear properties of time. Nabokov's texts are characterized by the combination of different space and time subsystems in the text, which has been largely studied [13]. The study of numerous time and space subsystems in Nabokov's texts allow to see the underlying principle of his narrative construction, that is the development of a narrator who partially gives the character the right for the speech acts (allowing such phrases as “*But he won't, oh no*” [14] to come into play, in which “the voice” of the character is similar to the voice of the narrator).

In most cases the narrator and the character are two different entities, which allow the narrator to reflect on the fate of the character and opt for the analytical type of writing, making the narrative not a story but “permanent reflection on the story”:

*But the future has no such reality (as the pictured past and the perceived present possess); the future is but a figure of speech, a specter of thought. **Hullo, person! What's the matter, don't pull me. I'm not bothering him.** Oh, all right. Hullo, person . . . (last time, in a very small voice).*

*When we concentrate on a material object, whatever its situation, the very act of attention may lead to our involuntarily sinking into the history of that object. Novices must learn to skim over matter if they want matter to stay at the exact level of the moment. **Transparent things, through which the past shines!** [14]*

In the above given example the analysis of egocentric elements allows to see that first the narrator and the character are two different people (realized in the text as “hello, person!”). Then the narrator as if “steps back” allowing himself to look at the character from a distance (realized in the text as “I am not bothering him”). Then, the author again reflects “uniting” with the reader by addressing himself and the readers by “we” (in the text realized as “when we concentrate on a material object”). This allows the narrator to hypothesize that there is no future, only the past (in the text “the future has no such reality (as the pictured past and the perceived present possess); the future is but a figure of speech”). This idea of “transcending time” is very characteristic of Nabokov. The idea of “total recall” and memory is what makes the story, not the predictions about the future. In this sense, “transparent things” are the absence of material, it is

the possibility to see through one's life, every moment of it up to the present (realized in the text as "transparent things, through which the past shines").

Transparency and its meaning. In many ways "transparency" is similar to the concept of "vanitas" or "silence", or the study of the "white color" explored at length by art critics [15]. The non-body, air-like sound material is related to the concept of silence [15, p. 17]. This is because the white color is an achromatic color, that together with the black one, and hues of grey, creates a full color scheme from different radiations with the assistance of different factors [15, p. 17–18]. As silence, transparency is a concept that is used in musical and art theories, as well as in literary analysis and philosophy and normally serves as a background to every detail that the text provides. Silence allows for acute hearing, for the so-called ecology of "reading" when every tiny detail is taken into account.

The view of the novel in relation to "silence" which is normally contrasted to hues of meanings and the orchestra of sound realized in poetry, for example, is problematic, as the novel is highly lexically dense. Yet, the contrast of the title to the lexically dense text is where the meaning is hidden. The meaning of the complexity of the Universe, full of details, rhizomorphic connects and paradoxes:

In his shop, and long before that at the village school, the pencil has been worn down to two-thirds of its original length. The bare wood of its tapered end has darkened to plumbeous plum, thus merging in tint with the blunt tip of graphite whose blind gloss alone distinguishes it from the wood [14].

In this example there is no white colour, the graphite and its dark colour (plumbeous plum) is described, as doing all the work. Yet the absent part of the graphite (the one third) that hasn't been used (realized in the text as "the pencil has been worn down to two thirds of its original length"), is what is "absent" from the text, that allows to make it up in one's memory or imagination. It is not what remains from the pencil, it is what has been used that is important! In a similar fashion Eagleton writes about Heidegger and his view of the language, that it is not the hammer that gives insight into matters, it is the "broken hammer" [2].

In the next example, we observe not a usual "contrast" between elements, but "blurring" and "changing the meanings" to its opposite:

It was not a ghost, however, that prevented him from falling asleep, but the stuffiness. He opened wide both casements; they gave on a parking place four floors below; the thin meniscus overhead was too wan to illumine the roofs of the houses descending toward the invisible lake; the light of a garage picked out the steps of desolate stairs leading into a chaos of shadows; it was all very dismal and very distant, and our acrophobic Person felt the pull of gravity inviting him to join the night and his father [14].

First the character sees a ghost, then "the invisible lake", "chaos of shadows", "dismal", "very distant". The "transparency" allows not to have clear outlines, allow for the change of objects and meanings, leaving a lot of space for imagination.

In art and music this phenomenon is often observed. "The move from silence to sound – the material that all my compositions dwell upon, writes Sciarrino, an Italian post-avantgarde composer, "instability that accounts for the appearance of the sound, the process of its existence, and finally – the stage of it dying out" [1, p. 31].

Mix of genres, noises and sounds, general heterogeneity. The general mix of genres allows to have a hybrid-like nature of texts. Nabokov however goes further, as in his writings living objects and man-made objects become one and the same entity. The author was criticized for his artificial kind of intellectual prose, yet the explanation for it is in general tendency of post-war music and art to mix “real object” and “manmade ones”, as musicians of post-avant-garde mix noises and musical sounds in their compositions. Groys in a similar fashion presents the process of continuous innovation in art by transferring objects from every day (profane) space to museum space. [16]. Nabokov adheres to this new tendency of the narrative (or art construction) by placing Person (the main character) among objects and making objects the central focus of his narration:

In his search for a commode to store his belongings Hugh Person, a tidy man, noticed that the middle drawer of an old desk relegated to a dark corner of the room, and supporting there a bulbless and shadeless lamp resembling the carcass of a broken umbrella, had not been reinserted properly by the lodger or servant (actually neither) who had been the last to check if it was empty (nobody had [14].

The text analyzed reveals that the author ascribes a lot of attention to commode, the drawer, umbrella. Such a view allows to “mix” together objects that were traditionally contrasted, that is “manmade” objects and the living ones, developing the world that possesses in itself objects of different kind. This is an important view, as was stated by P. Hallward, and it is important for G. Deleuze (as opposed to the psychoanalytical works written by Lacan in which concentration is on the psyche, not on a mix of living and manmade objects). Since the main strata that binds human beings together is the organism, meaning and interpretation, subjectivation and subordination, it is important to “know how the individual can transcend his form and his syntactic connection with the world” in order to become a transparent ark for this “non-organic life of things that burns us <...>, which is the divine presence in us, the divine relation in which we are alone with God as a source of light” (idea expressed by Deleuze in his work *Logic of Sense* (1969)) [17]. The main point here is the focus not on individual differences, as stated by Lacan and psychoanalysis, but an interchange and mingle of everything (following Deleuze and his idea of the “individual transcending the form”), which means when it is applied to Nabokov’s text, that any object described is partially a way of constructing the outer and inner self of a person, in general, and the main character, in particular.

Death of the character and its function in the novel. The view of Nabokov’s texts through the prism of psychoanalysis was attempted by many researchers, though Nabokov himself denied any relation of his novels to Freud. However, the view of his texts through the prism of psychoanalysis inspired many critics, for example by Orisheva in her work in *Otchayaniye* and the problem of the Other [18]. The psychoanalytic view allows to analyze the murder in *Otchayaniye* as an attempt of an artist to take full possession of his or her piece of art. In *Transparent Things*, similarly, the message that is passed on could be ascribed to the artistic action, or to a psychoanalytical one, in which “killing the Other” means getting rid of the “mirror stage” and maturing.

The death motive also echoes the famous *The Gift of Death* by Derrida, in which he famously considered deconstruction of sign not only as a linguistic problem but related it to most

fundamental metaphysical concepts. *Death of the Author* by R. Barthes brought another dimension to this motive, stating that the author has no more power over his writing, with interpreter being the key person. In this respect *Transparent Things* is an advanced piece of writing, as the story is not about the author, yet about the editor, which seems even to forecast the present times more than in his previous works. Attention to the editing stage of the novel construction seem to be very important for post-modern writing, as authors stop to be the only creator of the text. Thus, by making the main character the editor, Nabokov makes the novel even more innovative.

Post-millennial shift. It has become quite fashionable in art theory to talk about meta-modernism and neo-realistic tendencies in literature. This view is brought about as a change compensation for the “made up” world of intellectual authors. Nabokov has never opted for simplicity of any kind as the cosmic nature of his prose reflects or echoes the complexity of the world. It is the heterogeneity of his texts, multitude of meanings and motives, the unclear echoes and hues of his wording that makes up the texture of his texts about cultural history and collective memory.

Conclusion. The overall conclusion of the article is that Nabokov’s texts (the example analyzed in the article is the novel *Transparent Things*) adhere to rules of post-modern writing and correspond to the philosophy of post-structuralism. The “theory of sign” in its post-structural form, allows to consider the potential of sign, its ability to generate different meanings. The concept of deconstruction allows to view the texts as bearing the potential of multi-meanings that are actualized at the same time. The concept of “différance” allows to break the strict opposition of concepts and ideas and was introduced as a show the “trace” quality of sign, well recognized in Nabokov’s texts. The concept of “difference and repetition”, as well as the concept of rhizome as outlined by Deleuze, allow to see the change of pattern that Nabokov’s texts are characterized by. The development of the theory of sign allows to pay attention to the acoustic potential of the language used by the author, who also explores the iconic potential of the word. The general palindrome principle, attention to smallest detail in the text allow to generate a symbolic language that makes the texture of the novel lexically dense and full of motives. The amount of these meanings and polyphony of different themes create a kind of an icon in miniature, a text as an icon which simultaneously incorporates a variety of semantic and structural dimensions.

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