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AUTO-INTERTEXTUALITY IN THE NOVEL "LOLITA"

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Abstract: This article analyzes the phenomenon of auto-intertextuality (the author's internal dialogue with his own previous works) through the example of Vladimir Nabokov's novel "Lolita". The study examines how poetic, plot-related, and character elements from Nabokov's Russian-language prose such as "The Gift", "The Enchanter", "Mary", "King, Queen, Knave", and "Laughter in the Dark" laid the foundation for "Lolita". Additionally, the article explores the novel's ethical dimensions and postmodernist metafictional techniques.

Key words: V. Nabokov, Lolita, intertextuality, auto-intertextuality, postmodernism, chronotope, Russian émigré literature.

"LOLITA" ROMANIDA AVTOINTERTEKSTUALLIK

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada Vladimir Nabokovning mashhur "Lolita" romani misolida avto-intertekstuallik (muallifning o'z oldingi asarlari bilan ichki muloqoti) hodisasi tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqotda yozuvchining rus tilidagi romanlari "Дар", "Волшебник", "Машенька", "Король, дама, валет" va "Камера обскура" asarlaridagi poetik, syujet va obrazli elementlarning "Lolita" romanidagi shakllanish o'rni atroflicha yoritilgan. Shuningdek, asardagi ma'naviy-etik konsepsiya va postmodernistik metafiksiya usullari tahlil etilgan.

Kalit so'zlar: V. Nabokov, Lolita, intertekstuallik, avto-intertekstuallik, postmodernizm, xronotop, rus emigratsiya adabiyoti.

AUTO-INTERTEXTUALITY IN THE NOVEL "LOLITA"

Аннотация: В данной статье анализируется феномен автоинтертекстуальности (внутренний диалог автора с собственными ранними произведениями) на примере романа Владимира Набокова «Лолита». В исследовании подробно рассматривается влияние русскоязычной прозы писателя романов «Дар», «Машенька», «Король, дама, валет», «Камера обскура» и повести «Волшебник» на формирование поэтики «Лолиты». Также исследуются этическая концепция произведения и элементы постмодернистской метафизики.

Ключевые слова: В. Набоков, Лолита, интертекстуальность, автоинтертекстуальность, постмодернизм, хронотоп, русская зарубежная литература.

INTRODUCTION

Vladimir Nabokov's literary work is closely intertwined not only with modernistic but also with postmodernistic intertextual strategies. This, in turn, demonstrates that the writer abandoned the molds of traditional realism, transitioned to non-traditional forms of art, and developed a unique individual style. Literary scholar N. Fateyeva defines the concept of intertextuality as follows: *"Intertextuality is the 'living' of other texts within one text or referring to them. No work of art is created in a vacuum; it enters into a dialogue with the works that preceded it."* [3, p. 16]. While this idea was initially expressed by M. Bakhtin through the term "dialogism," J. Kristeva later introduced the term "intertextuality" to science. In the case of V. Nabokov's English-language novels, the author's auto-communication in the "I-You" and "I-He" models where he interacts with himself during the creation of a new text occurs through the dialogue of his "alter ego" [2, p. 20] with previous literary traditions or his own earlier written works. The phenomenon of auto-intertextuality arises when a new text emerges on the foundation of the author's own previous texts during the process of referring back to those earlier works. V. Nabokov's novel "Lolita" (1955) is a vivid example of transtextuality, as it displays an active dialogue both with "other" texts and with the author's "own" creative heritage. From a chronological standpoint, "Lolita" (the manuscript of which was completed on December 6, 1953) [3, p. 226] was the author's third novel in English. Its publication was far from smooth: four major publishers in the United States refused to print it due to its "risky" topic. As a result, the novel was published in the US only in 1958 (according to some sources, in 1959, after Pnin). The writer worked on this masterpiece for many years. Regarded as the pinnacle of V. Nabokov's creative evolution, this novel radically transformed the landscape of 20th-century world literature. Its artistic interpretation of a "forbidden" theme an unnatural passion of an adult man toward an underage girl caused a major sensation, sharp objections, and moral opposition in its time. Nevertheless, Lolita brought V. Nabokov global fame and financial independence. Curiously, even today, the

novel remains at the center of endless debates among literary scholars and the general public alike. The most paradoxical aspect of the writer's career is that although he was nominated for the Nobel Prize nine times largely because of this work, he was denied the prestigious award precisely due to the subject's "risky" nature and its perceived contradiction with the moral standards of that era. However, this very novel became his signature achievement, paving the way for international recognition of all his other works.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Why did *Lolita* serve as such a pivotal turning point in V. Nabokov's creative journey? To answer this question, one must look at the writer's multifaceted life experience during that period. First, by this time, V. Nabokov had lived in the United States for over ten years, as a university professor, he had meticulously studied not only the academic environment but also the domestic and cultural layers of the country. Second, his perspective as a professional entomologist allowed him, during his travels to the most remote regions of America, to discover details that an ordinary traveler would miss namely, the unique artistic character of roadside motels, cafes, and natural landscapes. In this way, the author's rich creative heritage from his Russian and European periods synthesized with his views on the "New World." As a result, a unique harmony of modernist and postmodernist traditions emerged, creating an unparalleled artistic world within the work. "*Lolita*" is not merely a novel, it is the product of a lively dialogue among V. Nabokov's multifaceted creative personas: a meticulous scientist, an experienced professor, a major representative of Russian émigré literature, and a masterful English-language writer. In revealing this multi-layered nature of his creative identity, the author skillfully employs not only classical intertextuality but also methods of auto-intertextuality. Regarding the fundamental importance of the intertextual method in the author's work, V. Nabokov scholar L. Strelnikova connects it to the author's personality as follows: "Intertextuality is a reflection of the writer's artistic

thinking, creating broad opportunities for the author's 'I' to manifest itself." [11, pp. 225–226] Indeed, according to V. Nabokov's aesthetic views, the artist's most important task is to shock and amaze the reader, bringing them into a state of unique "aesthetic shock" through the originality of the work. As Nabokov scholars point out, to achieve this very goal, the writer enriches the text with hidden meanings and various cultural codes, transforming it into a complex trans-intertextual space. Intertextuality primarily reveals the aesthetic potential of V. Nabokov's works, encouraging the reader to perceive the world as a unified artistic text and as a unique staged process that plays with various cultural traditions and codes. For this reason, researchers such as V. Shadursky, P. Tammi, A. Zlochevskaya, M. Medarich, and N. Buks often interpret this category as the central strategy of the writer's creative method. It is no coincidence that many scholars' interest in V. Nabokov's legacy began with searching for delicate and ingenious allusions that serve as a "key" to his intertextual references. V. Nabokov scholar A. Dolinin (drawing on the research of C. Proffer) writes about the intertextual devices in "Lolita" created in the form of allusions, paremiological expressions (proverbs and sayings), quotations, aphorisms, reminiscences, pastiche (imitation of the style of other works), the presence of characters from previously created works in the new text, and "text within a text" (the insertion of previously created fairy tales, legends, stories, and other genres into the plot) as follows: "Even without modern search engines, more than a hundred important intertextual layers of the novel have been identified, tracing back to the works of many poets and writers such as Edgar Allan Poe, Prosper Mérimée, James Joyce, Robert Browning, Arthur Rimbaud, Maurice Maeterlinck, and Alexander Pushkin. A total of 63 authors are recorded in the lists compiled by the researcher, covering a broad literary scope ranging from Louisa May Alcott to Virgil." Additionally, Amy Darrich notes that the scale of the writer's use of intertextual possibilities is extremely wide. She specifically investigated complex transformations ranging from the saturation of the text with literary allusions and reminiscences to conscious stylization and various forms of

literary parody. As can be seen, literary scholars have focused their main attention on general issues of intertextuality (its connections with classical literature). However, the phenomenon of auto-intertextuality in the novel namely, the issue of the author's internal dialogue with his own texts has not yet been sufficiently studied. Therefore, studying the characteristics of how "Lolita" was formed on the basis of the author's previously created Russian-language prose works is of great theoretical importance.

ANALYSIS

The idea for "Lolita" was born in the mid-1930s when V. Nabokov was still writing in Berlin as a Russian émigré writer. The emergence of the seeds of the "Lolita" theme in his Russian-language works is a rare example of auto-intertextuality. Thematic Evolution from "The Gift" to "The Enchanter". The first seed of the theme appears in V. Nabokov's last Russian-language novel, "The Gift" (1937), written between 1935 and 1937. A brief episode within this text a story about a passion for a stepdaughter serves as the starting point of the auto-intertextual chain in the writer's work: "Эх, кабы у меня было времячко, я бы такой роман накатал... Из настоящей жизни. Вот представьте себе такую историю: старый пес, но еще в соку, с огнем, с жаждой счастья, знакомится с вдовицей, а у нее дочка, совсем еще девочка..., — и конечно на старого хрыча не смотрит. Что делать? И вот, недолго думая, он, видите ли, на вдовице женится." [9, pp. 249-250] The words above belong to Shchyogolev, the stepfather of the main character Zina, they are not merely fiction, but a confession that exposes the stepfather's true nature. It is through this scene that the reader realizes why Zina feels such intense hatred toward him. Two years later, V. Nabokov developed this theme into a standalone novella. In "The Enchanter" ("Волшебник", 1939), a forty-year-old man, unable to control his secret passions, marries a sick woman who has a twelve-year-old daughter. After the woman's death, he attempts to carry out his vile intentions under the guise of a "magic game" [8, p. 511]. However, the character's intention is not realized, on the very first day, the girl screams in terror in the hotel room: "...как она теперь орала, как убегала

лампочка в своем красном куколе, как грохотало за окном, ломая, добивая ночь, всё, всё разрушая, — “Замолчи, это, по-хорошему, такая игра, это бывает, замолчи же!” — умолял он... Она была как дитя в экранной драме, заслонялась остреньким локтем, вырываясь и продолжая бессмысленно орать... Попыталась выбежать из комнаты, не могла отпереть, а он не мог ухватить, не за что, некого... “Ты у меня успокоишься!” — кричал он... Хорошо, я уйду. Он справился с дверью, выскочил...” [8, p. 77] This character’s end is tragic: fleeing from his own evil intentions and social retribution, he dies under a truck on the street. Both “The Gift” and “The Enchanter” are written in the modernist “stream of consciousness” style, in which V. Nabokov deliberately leaves the characters nameless. This imparts a universal tragic tone to the story. Unlike “Lolita”, the fact that no physical assault is committed against the girl in these early Russian-language attempts indicates that V. Nabokov searched for a long time for how to resolve this subject aesthetically. In “The Enchanter”, the antagonist is immediately punished with death.

“Lolita” enters into an integral poetic dialogue with V. Nabokov’s entire Russian-period output. Humbert Humbert’s memories of his first love, Annabel Leigh, directly recall the author’s first novel, “Mary” (“Машенька”, 1926), and its protagonist, Ganin. Ganin, like Humbert, lives with the desire to carry his beloved far away, in both cases, the memory of past love serves as the sole spiritual source of happiness for the protagonist. In “Mary,” the depiction of first love is presented as follows: “...Он замечал её издали и сразу холодело в груди... Ему казалось в эти дни, что у неё должно быть какое-нибудь необыкновенное, звучное имя... — Машенька, Машенька, — зашептал Ганин. Машенька... — он набрал побольше воздуха и замер, слушая, как бьётся сердце... Машенька, — опять повторил Ганин, стараясь вложить в эти три слога всё то, что пело в них раньше...” [7, pp. 72-73]

On the opening pages of “Lolita”, this exact same tone manifests in a more developed and stylistically polished form: “Lolita, light of my life, fire of my loins. My

sin, my soul. Lo-lee-ta... She was Lo, plain Lo, in the morning, standing four feet ten in one sock. She was Lola in slacks. She was Dolly at school. She was Dolores on the dotted line. But in my arms she was always Lolita..." [6, p. 5]

In these two passages, the author's skill in expressing lyrical feelings through the phonetic "music" of the beloved's name is clearly visible. While in "Mary" the delicate beauty of first love is compared to the image of a butterfly through "the black silk bow that spread its wings" ("да чёрный шёлковый бант, распахнувший крылья"), in *Lolita* this image deepens further into complex obsession.

The motif of "abduction" (carrying away) forms another structural parallel. There is a close similarity between Ganin's plans to carry "Mary" away from her husband Alferov, and Humbert's plans to carry Lolita away after her mother's death. However, V.Nabokov illustrates two different moral paths: "Ганин думал: "Какое счастье это будет завтра... Он увезёт её подальше и будет работать для неё без усталости. Завтра к нему приезжает вся его юность, его Россия." [7] However, Ganin realizes an important truth that there is no other Mary except the image he himself created: "И, кроме этого образа, другой Машеньки нет и быть не может". Ganin sets the past free and leaves for France without interfering with Mary's real life. Humbert, on the contrary, attempts to forcibly impose the "nymphet" image created in his diseased mind onto Dolores. To gain full possession of Lolita, Humbert marries Charlotte Haze and contemplates eliminating her: "I saw myself administering a powerful sleeping potion to both mother and daughter so as to fondle the latter through the night with perfect impunity." [6]

This motif of "removing an obstacle" also occupies a central place in V.Nabokov's 1928 novel, "King, Queen, Knave" ("Король, дама, valet"), where Martha and Franz plan the murder of Dreyer. In "King, Queen, Knave", fate intervenes to protect Dreyer, and Martha dies of illness justice prevails. In "Lolita", however, fate unexpectedly "assists" Humbert when Charlotte is struck by a car, opening a door of tragic freedom that leads to Humbert's complete moral ruin. Kretschmar's destructive passion for

sixteen-year-old Magda mirrors Humbert's obsession. When the blinded Kretschmar tries to shoot his rival, the chaotic shooting scene directly prefigures the climactic scene in "Lolita" where Humbert shoots Quilty: "I were tickling him, and every time I got him with those slow, clumsy, blind bullets of mine, he would say under his breath... "Ah, that hurts atrociously, my dear fellow..." [6]

DISCUSSION

The character of Humbert Humbert did not appear out of nowhere, rather, it is a perfected artistic archetype born from the synthesis of various characters in the author's Russian-language works (Garin's nostalgia, Martha's malice, Kretschmar's moral blindness). The answer to the question that troubles many readers "How could the author write about such vileness?" is that V. Nabokov had been exploring this theme for decades. In his Russian works, no matter how unhindered evil may seem, moral order ultimately reasserts itself. V. Nabokov's ethical principles were already expressed in his early play "The Tragedy of Mister Morn" (1922): "The world is a unified work of art in which every element is important... Morn's infringement upon the happiness of even a single person Gannus and causing him suffering, is sufficient grounds for the moral ruin of an entire state." Real-life events also provided creative impetus for "Lolita". V. Nabokov explicitly references the 1948 kidnapping of Sally Horner by Frank Lasalle: "...Had I done to Dolly, perhaps, what Frank Lasalle, a fifty-year-old mechanic, had done to eleven-year-old Sally Horner in 1948?" [6] Having paused writing after twelve chapters in 1947, V. Nabokov resumed the project in 1949 after this tragic news event. As William Faulkner noted: "Never mention vice merely to show vice itself. Vice should be used only for the purpose of revealing some truth that appears natural to your eyes." The most important distinction of "Lolita" is that, unlike his Russian-language works, V. Nabokov chose a first-person narrator speaking through the voice of the criminal himself. This was an intellectual trap set for the reader. The author structured the narrative so that the author is the prosecutor, the reader is the judge, and Humbert is

the defendant attempting to justify himself. Humbert's address to "gentlemen of the jury" aligns with the postmodern technique of "breaking the fourth wall." His poetic speech mesmerizes the reader, causing many to focus on Humbert's "aesthetic suffering" while missing the trampled life of the victim. The recurring motif of "Lolita" wearing dark sunglasses further symbolizes both the blindfolding of justice and the victim's attempt to hide her internal trauma. As V.Nabokov wrote to E. Wilson: "When you read Lolita, please remember that it is a highly moral work." This aligns with the foreword of the novel: "...the ethical impact the book should have on the serious reader; for in this poignant personal study there lurks a general lesson; the wayward child, the egotistic mother, the panting maniac these are not only vivid characters in a unique story: they warn us of dangerous trends; they point out potent evils." [6]

CONCLUSION

The analysis of auto-intertextuality demonstrates that the global success of "Lolita" was not a coincidence, but the legitimate product of the author's artistic mastery and philosophical views polished over decades in his Russian-language works. These auto-intertextual connections reveal that "Lolita" represents the apex of a quarter-century of artistic explorations. The character of Humbert Humbert synthesizes earlier archetypes from Russian-period work from Shchyogolev's cynical confession in "The Gift" to the nameless protagonist in "The Enchanter" and the morally blind Kretschmar in "Laughter in the Dark". Transitioning from third-person narrative to a first-person unreliable narrator enabled V.Nabokov to construct a complex postmodernist text that challenges the reader to look beyond stylistic seduction and recognize the underlying ethical tragedy. Without analyzing V. Nabokov's Russian-language prose, it is impossible to fully comprehend the deep philosophical and moral essence of "Lolita". The novel calls upon parents, educators, and society to remain vigilant in protecting the innocent, requiring from the reader high attentiveness and an understanding of the interconnected auto-intertextual layers across V.Nabokov's literary heritage.

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