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The Duality Phenomenon in 1920-1930's Small Prose of Vladimir Nabokov: Peculiarities of the Embodiment

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the study of duality phenomenon in the texts of Vladimir Nabokov, its peculiarities and functioning. Investigation of the phenomenon helps to understand the interaction features between the author and his hero, the semantic content and the poetics of the text in a holistic unity. In the prose of V. Nabokov, the motive of duality is embodied through a split consciousness of the main characters. One of the main elements that accompany the bifurcation is the image of the mirror and the associated motive of mirroring ("Terror", "Eavesdropper", "Wing Kick"). The split often has a pronounced social character, when the consciousness of the hero creates exactly that double that is appropriate in a given situation ("Wing Kick", "Venetian", "Eavesdropper"). Self-reflection of sick consciousness of the heroes most often ends in death for them ("Terra incognita"). In this case, the hero tries to become "different for others" ("Venetian") or to hide his true face and intentions ("Eavesdropper"), or seeks to find a true "I", and his own place in the world ("Pilgram"), but not endures the resistance of twins who pursue him (imaginary or real) and dies ("Wing kick", "Pilgram"). In "Mashen'ka", besides the split consciousness of the main character, caused by self-reflection, duality is expressed by the appearance of the counterpart-twins who repeat each other literally (Kolin-Gornotsvetov), antagonist-twins (Ganin-Alferov), and the split-image of Mashen'ka-Russia.

Keywords: Duality phenomenon, Nabokov, Split consciousness, Perception, Hero, Author, Small prose.

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1. Introduction

At the turn of the 20th-21st centuries, the existence of separate traditions becomes apparent; the sources of them can be traced from the beginning of Russian literature to the present day. First of all, this is the tradition of duality. A close study of the phenomenon helps to explore the arsenal of techniques that the writer has, to comprehend the mechanisms of interaction between the author and the reader, between the author and his characters. Researchers of literature have repeatedly noted: the development of fiction and the obtaining its own language is inextricably linked with the needs of self-consciousness. The 20th century actualized duality as one of the forms of literary reflection. This circumstance determines the need for its scientific description and research. The phenomenon of duality, having undergone the significant evolution and transformation, is one of the fundamental in the historical and cultural space of human existence – from the real mythological practice (duality as the oldest archetypal model of confrontation between chaos and the cosmos; spirit and soul as a human double, etc.), Romantic literature (E.T.A. Hoffman, A. Chamisso, G. Byron, etc.) up to the 20th century (modern discursive practices, writer's experience of V. Pelevin, E. Radov, T. Tolstaya). Although the overwhelming majority of Russian and foreign researchers agree that the duality phenomenon is the crucial one in the prose of V. Nabokov, there are no works where his detailed understanding is presented. Researchers of Nabokov's work unanimously note that one of the most important in his poetics is the motive of duality and the theme of "twins." The well-known American literary scholar J. Connolly rightly points out that the "main" theme of Nabokov – it develops in the novels "Despair" and "Eavesdropper", is clearly tracked in all subsequent novels – becomes the central theme of Dostoevsky "Doppelganger": "obsession character on his alter ego and concern about the possible shift or even change of identity" (Connolly, 1992). At the same time, however, the theme of the "doppelganger", as well as the phenomenon of duality, in Nabokov's art remains virtually unexplored. A detailed analysis of the phenomenon in Western and Russian works about Nabokov (with the exception of studies by O. Osmukhina (2014)) is stayed out. There are mentions, but they mostly exist as the stating of well-known facts in the context of the plot-thematic features characteristics of a work or are present at the level of enumeration in a number of other motives that are decisive for the prose of the writer (Mulyarchik, 1997). For the first time in literary criticism, theoretical and historical-literary understanding of the duality phenomenon is presented, the prose of V. Nabokov of the 1920s and 1930s is explored in this context, and the nature of the perception of the phenomenon in the 20th century is revealed.

2. Materials and Methods

The article is directed to understanding the most important aspect of reflection – the character's reflection in the literary consciousness of the Russian Diaspora of the 1920's and 1930's on the material of Vladimir Nabokov's art. This is explained as follows. First, the work of the older generation of emigrant writers through the prism of reflection was analyzed in detail by M. A. Khatyamova (2008). Secondly, it was in the prose of the emigrant writers of the younger generation, to whom Nabokov belonged, that personal and creative development was, to a large extent, culminated by the emigration itself. The existence outside of Russia, according to the unanimous opinion of the researchers, is characterized by a special quality of "perception and attitude": "The feeling of double exile and abandonment, the heightened tragedy of the world view contributed to the hypertrophy of contemplative meditative beginning and total reflection. <...> The real goal and desire of emigrant writers of the younger generation was actually only the one thing – dialogue, dialogue with another consciousness, another memory and imagination, a full-fledged dialogue with another person" (Dolinin, 1999, p.138).

The general methodological basis of the research is the systemic unity of the approaches developed by literary scholars to the consideration and analysis of both the historical and literary process as a whole, and individual phenomena in fiction. The methodology is based on the principles of Russian comparative historical literary criticism, implemented in the works of M. Bakhtin (1979), D. Likhachev (2000), and Y.

Lotman (1992). In our work, we used comparative-historical, typological, and sociocultural methods, as well as the method of holistic analysis of a work of art. Monographs and articles concerning the poetic features of V. Nabokov's prose were particularly important in solving our tasks (V. Alexandrov, N. Anastasyev, B. Boyd, N. Buks, S. Davydov, A. Dolinin, A. Mularchyk, O. Osmukhina), as well as works (literary, philosophical, and cultural) devoted to the study of the phenomenon of duality (S. Agranovich, N. Berkovsky, E. Meletinsky, N. Osipov, A. Panchenko, N. Rymar, I. Samorukova, O. Freudenberg, J. Fraser, etc.).

3. Literature Review

The problem of duality becomes transparent in the philosophical and cultural studies of the 20th century. It suffices to recall the works of O. Freudenberg (1997), who analyzed the semantics of the doppelganger and linked the emergence of this image with the "phase of death" and E. Meletinsky (1994), who viewed duality as a "literary-mythological story archetype" in attempt to understand not only the origin but also its historical and cultural options. D. Likhachev (2001) and A. Panchenko (2000) investigated the genesis and realization of the dualism in the historical and cultural practice of Russia of the 17-18th centuries. The phenomenon of duality and doppelganger as a philosophical-aesthetic, psychological and literary category ("I for others" is one of the incarnations of the image of the subject when articulating its integrity ("split") into "I" true (internal) and alter ego ("I" external) becomes also the object of scientific understanding of M. Bakhtin, who throughout the whole creative way turned to this topic, having studied in detail the duality phenomenology (Bakhtin, 1979, 2000, 2002, etc.). To understanding the phenomenon of duality (not only in the context of literary scholarship, but also in cultural issues) addressed Lotman, who, like Bakhtin believed that the double theme is "literary adequate" of mirror motive (Lotman 1992, p.23).

Considering the perception of duality in the Russian humanitarian consciousness of the 20th century, it is necessary, in our opinion, to mention the studies that have cultural, philosophical and psychological background. So, poet and critic Vyacheslav Ivanov, having experienced the distinct impact of Nietzsche's philosophy and being an author of the original philosophical and aesthetic concept of "modern Dionysia", he is recognized in Russia and in the West as one of the main figures who determined the originality of humanitarian thinking of the 20th century, exploring the ideology and worldview of M. Dostoevsky, distinguishes in the personality of the writer the division into the inner "I", spiritually reborn, and his "double" "I" that is external. Ivanov notes: "Having left an external person to live as he used to live, he [Dostoevsky] indulged in multiplying his counterparts under his many-faced masks, now no longer associated with a certain face, but of a great, all-human self" (1994, p.116). It is obvious that the problem of duality is very significant to the 20th century Russian humanitarian consciousness. Despite the obvious "usage" of the term "doppelganger" in the scientific literature (both in literary and cultural studies) and its active use by our researchers (most often, we note, with reference to characterizing the system of characters: so, V. Propp indicates a wide distribution of twins pairs in folklore (1997, p.62)), no definition of the "duality" / "doppelganger" is presented in any scientific literature work. The burden of duality interested many representatives of humanitarian knowledge of Russia abroad and was implemented in various scientific works. So, the famous psychiatrist, active propagandist of Freud theory of N. Osipov investigated the problem of "doppelganger" and split personality from the point of view of psychiatry, and on the basis of methods of psychoanalysis. Interestingly, the estimates and characteristics of Osipov apply not only to the hero of the analyzed work, but also to the author. He considered the double "modus" (option) of his own author's "I" (Osipov 1999, p.73). An active participant in the cultural life of the "Russian Paris", the elder brother of Mikhail Bakhtin, Nikolai Bakhtin, considered the problem of split personality, "disunity" in human consciousness. He considered the dualism to be quite commonplace both in the cultural consciousness of the 19th century, and in the emigrant life of the 20th century (Bakhtin, 1992, p.47).

E. Meletynsky comprehended the genesis and various historical and cultural variants of the conflict. He considered the latter as a category that is directly related to the plot and characters. This category is “the original archetype of a dual nature (cultural hero-trickster) of the first literary mythological heroes” (1994, p.88). The phenomenon of duality, its functioning in the framework of the artistic text is partially considered by N. Berkovsky. He considered the duality as “a phenomenon of impersonal life”, calling the character that is completely interchangeable by another hero (2001, p.443).

It is very significant that Bakhtin’s dialogical concept, through the prism of which the scientist analyzed the phenomenon of dualism, had a noticeable influence on subsequent interpretations of the twin myths and was perceived by modern researchers.

In this regard, it suffices to recall the work of N. Rymar: scientist connects duality with various types of “plot and compositional deployment” of the hero’s image through “contact and distance” relations not only with another character, but also with an author in the system of dialogical interaction (1990, p.95). S. Agranovich and I. Samorukov (2001, p.9), relying on the Bakhtin approach to the consideration of the literary archetype of “duality”, understand not only the “language structure in which the human image is corrected by one of the historical versions of the binary model of the world”, but also as an important element of poetics. Scientists and there are three main variants of it: “antagonistic twins”, “carnival couples”, and “twins”.

The problem of duality that connected with the phenomenon of the mirror and mirroring becomes transparent in the western culture studies thought of the 20th century. It suffices to recall the works of J. Lacan, who investigate the role and functions of the mirror within their own psychoanalytic and structuralism concept. The mirror, more precisely, the “stage of the mirror”, as well as the doppelganger, and the “split” of the personality are considered by J. Lacan as the basic mechanism of self-identification. In the process of this, the construction of the “ontological structure of the human world” occurs, the creation of links between “the organism and reality” and “imago” emerges as an image of alienated ideality (1997, pp.7-14). The history of the phenomenon of mirroring and its intersection with the phenomenon of duality is elaborated in S. Melchior-Bonnet’s monograph “The History of the Mirror”. The researcher claims that the duality occurs only when “when relationships with other people are either perverted or interrupted, and a person feels their absence”. The scientist also associates the appearance of twins with the loss of the hero’s own shadow or when a connection between the hero and the broken mirror has taken place (2006, pp.383-390).

Thus, all researchers point out that dualism is an important element of poetics. It is one of the most ancient ways of creating a model of a person’s place in the world, and is being implemented at all levels of the artistic image development. Duality can have plot and style features as well. In a number of works it is emphasized that the origins of the dualism in Russian culture (as well as dualities on a “global” scale) include such categories as death and laughter. They entail a split world, leading to the emergence of anti-culture or catastrophe. Finally, the carnival culture, or the world of laughter, underlies in the phenomenon of duality.

4. Results and Discussions

The hero with a split consciousness first appears in Nabokov in the story “Wing kick” (1924). The author seeks, in the words of Bakhtin, “to be only different for others, to enter to the end into the world of others as another” (1979, p.352). It is important that the character’s self-perception and what he really is are different from how others see him. The fact that the hero is not only there, but was “different for others,” is confirmed by the following narration: “The whole past life presented itself to him as a shaky series of colored screens that protected him from cosmic drafts” (Nabokov, 1999, p.12). “Screen” is a means of self-defense, a way to hide your true face from others. This is a kind of “shelter”. This “being for others” is a burden for hero, he realizes the purposelessness of his “not me – being”: “It’s impossible to go further, I’m

losing my mind. Instead of the future a black wall I have. There is nothing" (Nabokov, 1999, p.14), – the way Kern thinks. The hero's agonizing melancholy complicates the fact that the woman he likes does not pay attention to him, and the very stay in the hotel makes him feel the same. The hero's being is devoid of wholeness; it is fragmented, as, indeed, his consciousness. The bifurcated consciousness of the hero gives rise to the idea of suicide: "And it all is snowing," Kern thought randomly. "And I have in my suitcase ..." And, like a spring, it unwound in his brain: "Parabellum" (p.16). It is symbolic that he is sharing his plans with Monfiori, who is the distorted reflection of Kern, his "twisted" mirror counterpart. It is indicative that "mirror" is a characteristic feature of writer poetics: the world reflected in others, objects and people appearing in distorted reflections will appear in the writer's work more than once in the future, for example, in the image of Humbert-Quilty ("Lolita"), etc.

The "doppelgänger" is constantly around, he "looms" next to Kern. On the day of his acquaintance, Monfiori "immediately showered him with quotations from the Holy Bible" (Nabokov, 1999, p.12). Kern collides with him in a billiard room ("Monfiori, pale, red-haired man, recognizing only the bible and cannons, bent down to the emerald cloth" (p.12)) in the hotel lobby ("He turned and saw: melancholic goat eyes, ears in red down" (p.16); "From the wings of the nose two deep furrows went to the corners of the thin mouth" (p.17)). It is Monfiori who takes Kern to a bar in order to "go about the journey of Bacchus"; here the hero shares his thoughts about suicide with him. Monfiori is not surprised at all: "I thought so <...>. Today, when you looked at the dancers, and earlier, when you got up from the table ... There was something in your face ... A wrinkle between the eyebrows ... Especially ... I immediately understood ... I am looking for people like you everywhere – in expensive hotels, trains, seaside resorts, – at night, on the embankments of large cities ..." (p.17).

Kern feels uncomfortable with the presence of this "scary" person, he feels "cold in his chest." The "doppelgänger" annoys the hero; he is a source of torment and fear for him. Kern feels that while he himself is tormented and suffering by the aimlessness of his being ("I <...> have reached such a point ..." (Nabokov, 1999, p.17); "It's impossible to go further, I'm going mad. Instead of the future is a black wall. Nothing." (p.14)), an intelligent and skillful Monfiori (the image, by the way, fits perfectly into the romantic Hoffmann, and, in part, Gogol tradition) enjoys life. In addition, the hero looks in the mirror, trying to find "material for self-objectification" (Bakhtin, 1979, p.31), "a value position in relation to himself," but he does not find it. As Bakhtin pointed out: "we remain in ourselves and see only our own reflection that cannot become the immediate moment of our vision and experience of the world" (1979, p.31).

Kern sees only a "shaved heavy face, bloody threads on squirrels, a checkered bow tie" in the mirror (Nabokov, 1999, p.12) or "a strand of hair that descended on an eyebrow, a starched cutout in red splashes" (p.19). This is not by chance. Hero's "being for others" seeks to merge with his "self-consciousness." This gives rise to Monfiori ("doppelgänger", whose name, it should be noted, is no coincidence: in Italian, it means "my little flower", that is, my favorite hidden "I"). Kern's reflection in the "friend" becomes his "double", which "bursts" into his "self-consciousness stirs up his purity and deviates from a direct value relation to himself" (Bakhtin, 1979, p.54).

The hero appears before others in the role of the "other" in short story "Venetian" (1924). However, unlike other Nabokov characters, Frank "double" quite consciously, seeing that his inner "I" is incomprehensible who rounds him. University friends, inhabitants of his father's estate, notice only the "external" manifestations of the hero's image, the way he presents himself before them, but none of them can comprehend his true, "inner" essence. Father considers Frank to be an idler and worthless rake, capable of having an affair with a married woman practically in front of her husband. "I am displeased with you, Frank; I am terribly displeased with you. There is something in you that I do not understand. At university you study badly. In Italy, you did God knows what. They say you are doing painting. Probably not worthy of you show me your scribble. Yes, scribble. I imagine ... Genius! After all, you probably consider yourself a genius,

or even better – a futurist! And then there are these affairs ...” (Nabokov, 1999, p.35). He was known as an excellent athlete and “fun small” at the university. He was considered the “pride” of the college: “He rowed in torpids and flew across the field with a leather watermelon under his arm and knew how to strike <...>, who was suspiciously acting on the enemy,” he “sang and drank willingly and abused” (p.30), - and no one in here knew about his passion for painting (with the exception of his apartment mate Simpson), when he, engulfed in “sudden dusk,” retired in his room and painted. However, he either destroyed or hid everything created for “two or three days of evil solitude,” and then, “as if giving a painful tribute to vice, again became cheerful and simple” (p.30). Frank, who considered art, especially painting, “something feminine, painful, unworthy of a strong man,” only once tried to talk about with Simpson. “I try to fight this devil, because I know how it ruins people. If I give in to him completely, I’m not expected to have a quiet and measured life <...> with exact rules, without which every game loses its charm – but sheer confusion, a storm, God knows what else” (p.30). But the “storm” and unpredictability attract the hero. He wants to accomplish the feat, considers the ability to desperate, reckless act to be the most valuable in a person’s life to the “valiant act”, “exalted deed”. This motive develops in the novel “The Act of Bravery”. Martyn Edelweiss, novel’s protagonist, seeks to translate his own “I” to self-realization, he is ready for a “valiant act”, “an exalted act.” He suddenly says to the colonel: “In one book <...> I read about what you did then and for which you received your medal. It was completely stupid, extravagant, and suicidal – but it was a feat. This is the main thing” (p.35). Frank also dreams of something like this: young, dissatisfied with himself (or rather, with his insurmountable passion to painting – and not so much to her as with the consciousness that he has not yet succeeded in creating something great), he is looking for a way of worthy self-embodiment that would strike surrounding. And, it should be noted, he succeeds. At the end of the story, the colonel, angry with his son’s pranks, who paint a portrait of Simpson on masterpiece by Sebastiano del Piombo (“You wanted me to show you a sample of my art: so I draw for you a portrait of my former friend” (Nabokov, 1990, p.41)) and took the wife of his friend Magor (“You wished you had no romance in the house, so I leave, taking a woman without whom I cannot live”), he suddenly finds out that his new acquisition “The Venetian” by Lucciano, is merely the “marvelous imitation” made by Frank. Startled, the colonel realizes that his son created a masterpiece (even he, a fine connoisseur and collector of painting, did not recognize the imitation!), And, looking at the Venetian woman, on her softly glowing forehead, beautiful fingers, seeing “lynx fur”, “charmingly” falling from the shoulders, a secret grin “in the corners of his lips, he says: “I am proud of my son” (Nabokov, 1999, p.41).

One of the first in Nabokov’s small prose in a very clear form the process of hero self-reflection expresses the story “Horror” (1926). In this sense, it is to some extent similar to the “confession of a patient at a psychiatrist” (Nosik, 1995, p.216). The hero sees himself through the “prism” of his soul. The hero tells the story in the first person; he not only captures and analyzes his impressions and experiences, but becomes “different” in relation to himself. The hero’s mirror twin appears in the story, and it is himself.

The narrative opens with a description of the “fleeting sense of alienness” from its mirror reflection. The hero says: “And the more closely I looked at my face <...>, the more insistently I told myself: this is me, so-and-so, - the more incomprehensible it became for me, why this is me, and the harder it was for me to identify with incomprehensible “I” the face, that reflected in the mirror (Nabokov, 1990, p.397).

The hero feels bifurcated, because his sense of self does not correspond to the image seen in the mirror. The process of “introspection”, according to Bakhtin, is “getting used to” some kind of “possible other”, and this “other” creates a hero as a “seemingly complete” person, and so the hero of the story realizes the presence of the “other” in himself. It is the feeling of duality that helps the hero in a different way, as if from the outside, to look at the world, at those around him and at himself – a moment of insight comes, because the character’s vision now is “objective, all-encompassing”: “I suddenly saw the world as it is in fact. <...> my connection with the world was broken, I existed on my own, and the world was on its own, and there was no point in this world. <...> I looked at the houses, but they lost their usual meaning for me

<...> with the trees it was the same, and it was the same with people. I realized how scary the human face is. <...> the more closely I looked at people, the more senseless their appearance became. I think that no one has ever seen the world, as I saw it in those moments. Terrible nudity, terrible nonsense" (Nabokov, 1990, p.401). The hero is now on the verge of madness, only the news that his beloved is seriously ill is "sobering" him. Emotionally devastated, standing at the bedside of the dying, he suddenly realizes what he is for himself and for others: "I felt by a smile, <...> that she, in her quiet delirium, sees me in her deathbed imagination, - I myself, whom she did not know, and my counterpart, who was invisible to me. And then I was left alone, - my twin died with her" (p.402). This episode reveals the true appearance of the hero – a doppelganger ("which was invisible to me") turns out to be in a real way. The mirror on the first pages of the story, according to N. Anastasyev, "with merciless X-ray accuracy shines through to the very soul, revealing the hidden: absurdity, deformity, poverty" (1992: 144).

"The Eavesdropper" (1930) was recognized by emigrant criticism as "fundamentally new" in Nabokov/Sirin creative experience. The writer's "maturity" begins with this book, according to N. Berberova book marked by "intuition of the wrecked world, the open "gateways" of the subconscious mind, the continuous fluidity of consciousness and the new poetics that emerged from symbolism" (1997, p.284). The modern scholarship calls "The Eavesdropper" the "most outspoken" text of Sirin. In the book, the leading lines of the plot – the past and the future – came together and exposed (Dark, 1990, p.445). "The comprehensive aesthetic principle" becomes here "the splitting of life facts into the real and imaginary, their interweaving and opposition" (Mulyarchik, 1997, p.106). In some research works (not without reason), drawn a parallel between "Eavesdropper" by Nabokov / Sirin and "Doppelganger" by Dostoevsky (Basilashvili, 1997, pp.806-814; Mulyarchik, 1997, p.105; Connolly, 1999, pp.101-103). It is noted that Sirin continued to develop the motive of "dualism" after Dostoevsky, being under the influence of the novels of the latter. It is significant, however, that some literary scholars and critics have attempted to analyze and assess the hero's personality. So, V. Khodasevich considered Smurov to be a "fake writer", "charlatan", "impostor", "mediocrity", "trying to impersonate an artist" (1997, p.249). V. Weidle had the opposite point of view: on the contrary, he saw in the hero a creative person with a "poetic" vision of the world. These opinions are shared by modern researchers. A. Dolinin, for example, identifies the hero of the "Eavesdropper" with Herman from "Despair". He notes that Smurov "claims the role of a genius – a seer", but is an "impostor", an "imitator", who "projects outward his hypertrophied "I" (1995, p.296). O. Konechnaya considers "The Eavesdropper" as a parody reminiscence of "Wings" by M. Kuzmin. The researcher relates Smurov to Kuzmin hero and notes that, despite his rallying in "romantic clothes" and "imposing" on the world of all his various faces, Smurov remains "smug vulgar" and "petty liar" (1996, p.209). The most comprehensive analysis of the hero image gives K. Basilashvili. He believes that Smurov is "the social face of the narrator," "he puts on various faces on this face" (1997, p.813). The American researcher J. Connolly believes that "the narrator in "The Eavesdropper" assumes the function of the creator, considers himself the author of the world he created" (1999, p.11).

Smurov, in his "posthumous run-up" of thought, goes through possible variants of his own existence. "The consciousness of the emigrant literature hero turns inward himself, hoping there, at the very bottom, to find the desired joy," notes V. Varshavsky in consonance with Nabokov (1936, p.413). Indeed, Sirin's hero sees "some sharp fun" in looking back at the past, "asking yourself what it would be like <...> to replace one accident with another, and to watch how from some gray minute of life that passed imperceptibly and fruitlessly, a marvelous pink event grows, which at one time did not hatch and did not shine" (v.2, p.310). In the character's imagination capricious game, it becomes possible to mutually identify the very distant from each other characters and, conversely, at the same time, the whole, seemingly integral, image (the figure of the narrator himself) becomes "crushed". The narrator decides to "get to the bottom of the essence" of Smurov and finds "the most acute sensation" in the "systematization of his masks". There are several "masks". They exist depending on the attitude to himself and of other characters to Smurov. The

mask that the hero puts on imposes his way of action on him, and his style of thinking. The personality of the character, therefore, begins to split. "A vulgar, miserable, trembling little man" (v.2, p.305) – is the way how Smurov sees himself in a mirror. This represents the hero's "I" as a reflection and is "the absolute sign of self-identification". The mirror is necessary for Nabokov's hero of: it is "an organic means of identifying oneself in the shadow as the unique contour of his being here" (Isupov, 1992, p.58). However, the hero is prone to self-reflection (this is what the author endowed him with), he needs to look at himself from the side, through the eyes of the "other". Thus, the first image of Smurov appeared – the image of a man visiting Khrushchovs' house: "He was short, but he was fine and dexterous, his modest black suit and black bow tie seemed reluctant to hint at some kind of secret mourning. His pale, thin face was young, but a sensitive observer could find traces of sadness and experience in his features. He was fine, smiling at his calm, somewhat sad smile, slow on his lips. He spoke little, but everything he said was clever and appropriate, and his rare jokes were too elegant to cause a violent laugh, and opened a secret door in the conversation, letting in unexpected courage" (v.2, pp.312-313). But the "vigilance" does not end with this. On the contrary, the author continues to show Smurov to the reader in other "perspectives" and other persons. Probably, this technique (the appearance of the hero in front of the mirror at the first part of the story) is not an accident: in the course of narrative, Smurov uses the people around him as "mirrors", trying to "reflect" in them. "Cultural woman", medicine doctor Marianna Nikolaevna sees in him "a young thug with iron nerves, pale from previous sleepless nights in steppe beams, at stations destroyed by shells" (v.2, p.314). And Smurov eagerly begins to split in this direction. He shows with all his appearance that, "despite the outward modesty and quietness," he "harbors a certain ardor and is able to make a kebab out of a man in a moment of anger and in a minute to steal his passion under a raincoat" (v.2, p.314). Vanya gives in to mystification, sees in a hero "beloved Smurov" with a "noble, mysterious modesty, pallor of the forehead and narrow hands" (v.2, p.313).

Smurov appears in a "neat black suit, sleekly combed, with a clean, pale face", when he "gives valuable advice" to customers in Weinstock's shop. And buyers "take away" his "attractive image: the delicacy of hands, a little awkwardly taking money, serene voice, sliding smile, beautiful manners" (v.2, p.318), without even knowing that in front of them there is one of the many twins of the main character.

Evgenia Evgenievna notices "shyness", "great impressionability", "youth, ignorance of people" in Smurov (Nabokov, v.2, p.323). Thus, the true "I" of the hero dissolves into a multi-stage self-reflection: nothing is known about him either to the readers or to himself. Even the narrator, "a cold, persistent, tireless observer" (v.2, p.328), takes on the "systematization of Smurov's faces" and tries to "get to the bottom" of his true "essence", that is, to consider the image of the hero "from outside" and "from the inside". Differently than other characters of the story, Vainshtok thinks of Smurov, he considers the hero to be a "strange figure", a man "woven from omissions and hiding some secret", "dark personality", "adventurer", "Don Juan", "Casanova".

Roman Bogdanovich thinks of the hero as a "thief" and a "sex robber": "The whole look of Mr. Smurov, his fragility, decadence, gesture charm, love of powder – all this confirmed me long ago in my guess" (v.2, p.336). And Smurov, in fact, turns one more person to a reader – a suspicious fellow capable to read other people's letters, to make little intrigues, not to mention lies and theft. In the image of a liar, Smurov appears before Mukhin, exposing his next stupid and senseless lie. "It was unexpected and terrible," – narrator notes. Smurov, already miserable, was crushed. He could "wriggle out somehow", turn the situation into a joke. But the hero asks Mukhin not to betray him, fearing that he would probably appear to be a "petty lie" in the eyes of others (deftly fooled), and is afraid of denunciation. Twins, meanwhile, is becoming more and more: Uncle Pasha, who arrived to Berlin, sees in him a well-earned "young engineer" and his niece fiancé. Smurov does not refute the views of Uncle Pasha about himself. This is indicative. He, "without going into details," confirms that "he earns well" and also embraces the old man "from an excess of happiness" (v.2, p.328)

According to a fair comment by A. Mulyarchik, Smurov “takes the posture of Lermontov’s Grushnitsky and Chekhov’s stabs-captain Solyony.” But through these images, “banality” and “vulgarity” are constantly visible (Mulyarchik, 1997, p.106).

The hero fails to lose all his twins. But in the course of the narration, there is still a “disruption” of mask from the narrator himself. Smurov looks at himself in the mirror again. “I saw my side rushing to my side, a young man in a bowler hat, with a bouquet. The reflection merged with me, and I went out into the street” (Nabokov, v.2, p.342). That, by the way, is the hero sees himself at the beginning of the story. Now, when the character’s “I” (his reflection) and the image imposed on others and readers merge together, it becomes clear that the narrator and Smurov are one and the same person. This is confirmed by subsequent events: his appearance in the old apartment, to see the trail of bullets in the wall and to make sure that he actually committed suicide, as well as a meeting with Kashmarin, asked him for forgiveness and friendly calls him Smurov. Nabokov himself wrote about in preface to the English translation of the novel: “The Eavesdropper” is the investigation undertaken by the hero, who leads him through a hell arranged by mirrors and ends with the fact that two faces merge into one”. Smurov, the narrator, reflecting on the fact that Kashmarin “took with him another image of Smurov,” concludes: “Does it really matter what image was? I don’t exist – there are only thousands of mirrors that reflect me. With every new acquaintance is growing the number of ghosts that resemble me” (Nabokov, v.2, p.344).

In the story “Terra incognita” (1930), the duality motive is realized at the level of the main character narrator, Valier, who describes the expedition through “unknown terrain to the hills of Gurano” (Nabokov, v.2, p.361), “the region has not yet been explored by anyone” (v.2, p.360). In the course of the narrative, however, it turns out that the narrator’s consciousness is split (as, however, in “Horror”, “Despair”, and “The Eavesdropper”): the description of events alternates with the hallucinations tormenting him caused by the local fever. Hallucinations, moreover, consist of “a mirror cabinet with hazy reflections” (v.2, p.362), “whitish plastering ghosts, stucco arches and rosettes like ceilings in Europe” (v.2, p.363), “window curtains”, “paper wallpapers”, “big chair”, “misty ceiling lines”, “bed bumps”, “decanter” - that is, quite ordinary accessories of any room. In the “painful fog of feelings” the hero claims that “the annoying room is falsification” and the true ones are “this marvelous and terrible tropical sky, these brilliant reed sabers and this pair over them” (v.2, p.367). But it is unlikely, we think, to trust the words of a character that is in the grip of delirium and painful hallucinations. Together with J. Connolly (see: Connolly, 1997, pp.354-357), we must assume that Valier is in the real room, and “strange tree trunks”, swamp marshes, tropical forests are “delusional visions” and the result of his sore imagination. The following points confirm this in the first place. First, it seems to the hero that “Gregson and Cook become transparent, and that through them paper wallpapers are seen in reed-like, ever-repeating patterns” (Nabokov, v.2, p.363). Secondly, the hero, who in his opinion, is in the jungle, “rose from the pillow” (v.2, p.364) (not from the ground) and in search of a notebook, “fumbled for a blanket” (v.2, p.367) (not by land). In addition, on Cook’s forearm, Valier finds a “strange” tattoo (“a faceted glass with a shiny spoon — very well done” (v.2, p.364)), which “floated” (“and the glassy tattoo slipped off his skin aside, hung in the air and swam, swam...” (v.2, p.364)), that is, it turned out to be an ordinary glass, which is placed at the bedside of the patient. According to Connolly, one of the author’s intentions was to “play with the concepts and play around the reader’s understanding, emphasizing the details of the unsteady essence of reality and the difficulty of understanding what is real and what is illusory in the mind of a person” (Connolly, 1997, p.356).

In short story “Pilgram” (1930) appears a new hero and tells about the life of a small shopkeeper, entomologist. Pilgram, “a heavy, rude man”, a passionate entomologist who lives a dull life in “a small, dim apartment, with gloomy windows into the courtyard” (Nabokov, v.2, p.400), but through it you can immediately get into his “butterfly shop”; he goes on Saturdays to a tavern, and grumbles at his wife. But he has the only thing that has “magical” power over him – butterflies, “that he has loved since he exists” (v.2, p.401). He also has a “grueling” and “blissful” dream, that “he has been ill since he remembers himself”

(v.2, p.400): “so that with these hands, with this light muslin bag, stretched out on the hoop, catching the rarest butterflies of faraway countries by himself, seeing their flight with their own eyes, swinging the net, standing to the waist in the grass, and feeling the rapid beat through the muslin” (v.2, p.403). Pilgram dreams of escaping from dull and gray Berlin, “the immense knowledge in Lepidoptera class, teased him, and looked for a way out” (v.2, p.404). But Pilgram, who lived all his life in Prussia, does not have the opportunity to travel the world, to visit “some glorified area” (v.2, p.404). But in dreams he “visited Tenerife, the neighborhood of Orotava, where in a hot, blooming ravine <...> a strange kind of cabbage butterfly flies, and that other island <...>, where on the railway ramp, near Vitsavona, and darker in the pine forests, dark, stocky, Corsican swallowtail is found” (v.2, p.405). But when, after earning good money from selling the collection, Pilgram is finally ready to go on a long-awaited journey, when the “ghost of shrill happiness” becomes real, he dies. But this death is beautiful, because the hero dies happy: “It seemed to Pilgram that there was even something terrible in his happiness – this amazing happiness came down like a heavy mountain” (v.2, p.409). His connection with the world alien to him is broken. The hero finally finds the integrity of being, plunges into the other world, the world of his illusions, but for him it has always remained authentic: “He probably visited Granada, Murcia, and Albaraci, and probably saw <...> on Seville Boulevard swirls pale moths; he probably came to Congo and Suriname, and saw all those butterflies that he so long dreamed to see” (v.2, p.410).

The long story “Mashen’ka” (1926) requires special consideration to identify the specifics of duality motive. The author settles his hero in a cheap German guesthouse of Lydia Nikolaevna Dorn among other Russian immigrants. This is a rather strange gathering of people (“seven Russian that lost shadows” (Nabokov, v.1, p.50)), who are at a crossroad of their being. This is the old poet Podyagin, who dreams to leave Berlin as soon as possible; disgusting Alferov, “cheeky”, cynical and slippery person; yearning Clara; “pigeon couple” – Colin and Gornotsov. They live as if in a waiting room at a train station, surrounded by random, ridiculous furniture (“tables, chairs, creaky cabinets and bumpy couches”), under the windows there are rails and trains of the city railway that shake the building, on the doors instead of numbers there are sheets with numbers from the old calendar.

Ganin, a former officer of the White Army, is a person to be not very pleasant, sharp, rather reserved, but not devoid of charm, clever, ironic, thinking, and noticing a lot. Among the inhabitants of the guesthouse, he stands alone. Clara, who is in love with him, says: “He is not a good man, he deceives women, he is capable of a crime ... And yet he is all – miraculous” (Nabokov, v.1, p.92). Lidia Nikolaevna Dorn considers him “not like all Russian young people who lived in her boarding house” (v.1, p.39). Ganin sympathizes by dancers, with confidence and warmth treats him Podyagin. Ganin feels his distance from others by himself: his surrounding vulgarity, inaction, connection with a woman who is no longer interested in him, “scattering of the will” – “it was a painful and terrible state, somewhat like <...> like a heavy boredom <...> he did not have a certain desire <...> Nothing adorned his colorless longing” (v.1, p.47).

The hero, recently still cheerful and energetic, suddenly became “lethargic and sullen” from idleness and the impossibility of self-realization. He is tormented by “longing for a new foreign land”, and at times he dreams of creating a partisan detachment and raising a rebellion in Petrograd. For a more detailed characterization of the inner state of the hero, the author introduces into the structure of the narrative the motive of “duplicity”: in the cinema, looking at the screen, Ganin suddenly recognizes himself “among these people who clap by request <...> Ganin's doppelganger also stood and clapped” (Nabokov, v.1, pp.49-50). However, if in other texts (“Wing kick”, “Horror”, etc.) the double destroys the integrity of the character’s image, then in “Mashen’ka” the doppelganger helps Ganin to feel for the first time and see his life “along with other people and their lives, on the same plane with them” (Bakhtin, 1979, p.54). The hero, seeing himself on the screen, acts as a “contemplator” and, at the same time, is as if he “inside” the object being contemplated. According to Bakhtin’s definition, it becomes “value outside of his life” (Nabokov, v.1, p.54). Prone to self-reflection, Ganin only now fully aware of his resemblance to others (“the thin appearance,

sharp, upturned face and clapping hands disappeared in the gray circulation of other figures, and after a moment the hall disappeared, he turned around like a ship, and gone" (Nabokov, v.1, p.50)). The hero feels "not only shame, but also transience, the uniqueness of human life," realizing the need for change, since the role of an extra, "shadow" is not for him.

Constant visits of the hero's consciousness to the past suggest that a new attribute of the realization of the phenomenon of duality has been introduced into the text – an image of the hero's past, his childhood. The past is shown bright, joyful, and carefree, as opposed to the present. The past fills the hero's ghostly reality with meaning. However, the invisible border between the "ghostly" present and ideal unreality is impenetrable: when Ganin finally decides to act and, determined to go, he meets Mashen'ka to take her away – away from her vulgar husband, from dirty Berlin – just before the train arrives he realizes that his plan is meaningless, because Mashen'ka present can never reach the perfect Mashen'ka from his memory: "the image of Mashen'ka remained with the dying old poet there, in the house of shadows, that itself has already become a memory" (Nabokov, v.1, p.112).

The ideal image of Mashen'ka appears as the personification of the motherland image, Russia. It is not by chance that there are such lines in the story: "Fate <...> gave him in advance to try his future separation from Mashen'ka, separation from Russia" (Nabokov, v.1, p.83), or: "only then he felt piercingly and clearly how far the warm mass of the homeland and that Mashen'ka, whom he fell in love with forever, <...> Tomorrow his whole youth, his Russia, comes" (v.1, p.104). Ganin alone is trying to get rid of his dependence on Russia that no longer exists. Thinking about her, longing and suffering, the hero is not looking for a reunion with her, he is probably afraid of being rejected and misunderstood. In addition, Ganin's escape is the fear of a discrepancy between dreams and reality (the hero needed to keep in mind the bright, clean, and perfect image of Mashen'ka-Russia).

Summary

Thus, in the prose of V. Nabokov, the motive of duality is embodied through a split consciousness of the main characters. One of the main elements that accompany the bifurcation is the image of the mirror and the associated motive of mirroring ("Terror", "Eavesdropper", "Wing kick"). The split often has a pronounced social character, when the consciousness of the hero creates exactly that double that is appropriate in a given situation ("Wing Kick", "Venetian", "Eavesdropper"). Self-reflection of sick consciousness of the heroes most often ends in death for them ("Terra Incognita"). In this case, the hero tries to become "different for others" ("Venetian") or to hide his true face and intentions ("Eavesdropper"), or seeks to find a true "I", and his own place in the world ("Pilgram"), but not endures the resistance of twins who pursue him (imaginary or real) and dies ("Wing kick", "Pilgram"). In "Mashen'ka", besides the split consciousness of the main character, caused by self-reflection, duality is expressed by the appearance of the counterpart-twins who repeat each other literally (Kolin-Gornotsvetov), antagonist-twins (Ganin-Alferov), and the split-image of Mashen'ka-Russia.

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