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The Ambivalence of the Sentiments and the Clairvoyance of the Thinking of Vladimir Nabokov in the Novel "The Gift"

Svetlana Radtchenko-Draillard

Abstract

"The Gift" summarizes Nabokov's Russian-speaking heritage, emphasizes his characteristic clairvoyance and motivations, deepening and expanding the usual currents of thought, illustrating the idea of this classic on the cyclical nature of events throughout the world and in the literary novel as its reflection, in particular. In my psychological and psychoanalytic research of this masterpiece I analyze the impact of the mirror effect on the description of the author's similarities and dissimilarities with his central hero, the symbolic and imaginary meanings given by Nabokov as well as his ambiguous and ambivalent sentiments towards the central and secondary heroes and anti-heroes. During my analysis I observed Nabokov's complex reflections in relation to his memories of the past, his positioning in the present and projections on the future. Finally, I could see that this novel is a real creative treasure and a kind of metamorphosis of Nabokov's literary interests where all his hobbies accompanied by lyrical verses and all his thoughts - creative keys - whether it is entomology, the problem of Russia and Russian emigrants, sweet memories of his childhood , of his family, especially his admiration for the father. Nabokov's sentimental and rational clairvoyance is complete with the analysis of national literary traditions, views on Russian and foreign policies, judgments on the structure of the universe, the distinction between good and bad literature, questions of vocation and publication for writers, the relevance and legacy of each individual book, etc. All these diverse themes find its well-structured place in the novel "the Gift".

Key-words: mirror effect, symbolic, imaginary, ambivalence of the sentiments, clairvoyance of the thinking, vocations, nostalgia.

Introduction

“The Gift “ (Дар) is the last novel of Vladimir Vladimirovich Nabokov written in Russian, is undoubtedly one of his most completed works. This lush text mixes a faithful painting of the Russian émigré circles in Berlin after the revolution in 1917, the imagination of the great outdoors of Asia in the memories of the expeditions of the father of the central hero Fyodor Konstantinovich Godunov-Cherdyntsev, the story of the birth of a vocation as a writer in this central character as well as his romantic sentiments and the biography of the Russian philosopher and revolutionary Nikolai Chernyshevsky. “The Gift” is a meta-roman written in prose mixed with poetry. It should be noted that his novel "The Gift" Nabokov dedicated to his wife Vera Evseevna Nabokov (née Slonim) and their only son Dmitri Vladimirovich Nabokov devoted his whole life to editing and translating all the novels of his father. The novel was published in five issues of the Parisian almanac of Russian emigration “Sovremennye Zapiski” Nos. 63 - 67 in 1937-1938. Due to its harshness of tone, the fourth chapter, devoted to Chernyshevsky, was omitted from this first edition.

“The Gift” is not only a novel - autobiographical or not - but also a literary study, a book within a book, in which are carefully analyzed all the mechanisms of creation, and the bases on which it is based: memory, in poems about childhood; imagination, in the attempt at interpretation concerning the paternal universe and the historical reality. The central hero, Fyodor Godunov-Cherdyntsev has biographical characteristics of the author: he is a young

novice writer and poet, son of a famous researcher missing, he lives in Berlin in a rented apartment. The fourth chapter of The Gift is a "book within book": the biography of the writer Nikolai Chernyshevsky, written by the central hero of the novel. Nabokov expressed his little sympathy for the figure of Chernyshevsky.

In order to avoid all the controversy regarding the autobiographical description of the main hero's features and his family and personal histories, Nabokov clear clarifications in the Foreword": I had been living in Berlin since 1922, thus synchronously with the young man of the book; but neither this fact, nor my sharing some of his interests, such as literature and lepidoptera, should make on say "aha" and identity the designer with the design. I am not, and never was, Fyodor Godunov-Cherdyntsev, my father is not the explorer of Central Asia that I still may become some day; I never wooed Zina Merz; and never worried about the poet Koncheyev or any other writer (…) In the days I worked on this book, I did not have the knack of recreating Berlin and its colony of expatriates as radically and ruthlessly as I have done in regard to certain environment in my later, English, fiction". However, his sentiments, his reflections and his judgments coincide with those of his hero or they pass closely in the strict parallel of the mirror. Vladimir Nabokov transfers the right to his own youth poetry workshop to the central main hero Godunov-Cherdyntsev. Note that Godunov-Cherdyntsev is with the author in a close relationship: not Nabokov himself, but, perhaps, his twin brother, who passed a similar, but still different from the author's, life path. In my analysis I sought to explain clues to Nabokov's complex charades, descriptions of literary associations and allusions of current events in Nabokov's filigree work with many sources as he attempted to restore the voluminous and complex historical and cultural context of the 1920s and 1930s, in which the novel was created. The history and philosophy of the writer shines through literary art. According to Nabokov, Fyodor's attitude towards Germany may reflect a primitive and reckless contempt, which the Russian emigrants fed to the "natives" (Berlin, Paris or Prague). Nabokov adds in the Foreword: "My young hero is moreover influenced by the rise of the nauseous dictatorship belonging to the period when the novel was written, and not to the one it patchily reflects. The tremendous outflow of intellectual that formed such a prominent part of the general exodus from Soviet Russia in the first years of the Bolshevik Revolution seems today like the wanderings of some mythical tribe whose bird-signs and moon-signs I now retrieve from the desert dust. We remained unknown to American intellectuals (who, bewitched by of Communist propaganda, saw us merely as villains-generals, oil magnates, and gaunt ladies with lorgnettes. That world is not gone". [1] Consequently, Vladimir Nabokov expresses in this novel his ambiguous sentiments with his resentments and hopes, his clairvoyant reflections on several and much differentiated subjects of which I analyze from the psychological and psychoanalytic points of view in this article.

1. The effects of the mirror on the description of the qualities of the central hero and his sentiments in the novel

At the very beginning of the novel, Fyodor Godunov-Cherdyntsev pay attention to the mirror cabinet unloaded from the van. As in the poem, the image of a moving mirror, raised above the earth and clearly reflecting the sky, is the character of an automatic writing path deployed by Nabokov. Nabokov complicates and dynamics the traditional comparison of the

novel with the mirror. Combining the motif of the mirror with the motive of the movement, Nabokov, fields with the declaration of realism, transferring the accent from the object of reflection to the atypical properties of the moving reflector: its unusual turn, the special rhythm of vibrations caused by the individuality of the "carriers", the appeal to the invisible source of light, whose beams mirror "sends" the central hero. I want to make it clear that the mirror, a reflective surface, covers a rich, complex and ambivalent symbolism, the mirror returns our own image: it can be faithful, illusory or unexpected. But, the mirror is not only an object, it is above all the other (like us) is the mirror of ourselves, as the reflection of our body, our face and also of our personality. From the spiritual point of view, it reflects spiritual advancement, the state of consciousness: a) the little advanced individual will see only the image of what he thinks he is; b) the more advanced individual will seek the truth, c) the awakened individual will perhaps see the reflection of the divine, etc. Finally, the mirror is above all the symbol of "reflection". Reflection is the act of thought that comes back to itself in order to examine and re-examine it. This is why the mirror is the symbol of Prudence: one of the four Christian cardinal virtues.

In psychoanalysis, the mirror refers to the Super-ego (the inner overseer who censors low instincts in order to allow social integration), to the ideal of the Ego (narcissistic interests of the individual) and to the Ego (ego seen as a mechanism for reconciling the contradictory psychic expectations of the individual). Consciously or unconsciously, the individual looks at himself as in a mirror to adjust his social behavior: he tries to perceive his image in the eyes of others. From the psychoanalytic point of view, the mirror can finally represent: a) the reversal (the reflected image is reversed, evoking a different point of view, a reversal of thought, a new meaning), b) the hidden (the mirror evokes the lost world, the paradise that we are no longer able to see) c) the crossing point (a mysterious door in the other unknown world, etc.). In addition, the mirror invites to discover the hidden meaning of things. To think is therefore to question one's own answer, then to re-examine one's own answer. In fact, the body is not enough to produce a body, it also requires an image. Although this image, for its subjective assumption, requires the intervention of a third term, the symbolic. Here are the three dimensions – real, imaginary and symbolic – whose knotting inaugurates that Lacan defines in 1936 with the *mirror stage*, namely "the transformation produced in the subject when he assumes an image that of his own body". Later, Lacan writes (1949): "It is enough to understand the stage of the mirror as an identification in the full sense that the analysis gives to this term: namely the transformation produced in the subject, when he assumes an image, - whose predestination for this phase purpose is sufficiently indicated by the use, in the theory, of the ancient term of imago. " Lacan adds: "For the imagos, in fact, whose it is our privilege to see emerging, in our daily experience and the darkness of symbolic efficiency, the veiled faces, - the specular image seems to be the threshold of the visible world, if we trust the mirrored arrangement that presents in the hallucination and in the dream the imago of the body clean, whether it is his individual traits, or even his infirmities or his object projections, or if we notice the role of the mirror apparatus in the appearances of the double where psychic realities are manifested, moreover heterogeneous". [2] With the stage of the mirror, from our youngest age we discover a first version of its otherness; let us say, in short, that one enters into a self-identification where the opposition stands out: the self and the not self. According to Lacan, the construction of our personal identity occurs through the capture of oneself in other people. Just as there are parts of our body and image that we do not like when we look in a mirror, there are aspects of our personality that we do not accept.

Concerning this Lacanian conception Vanier (2006) gives the following details: "He thus distinguishes the Ego, imaginary instance of the subject (at that time still designated as the "I"...) as a symbolic instance related to speech and language. This identification that founds the Ego, also determines it as another, and thus situates the other as an *alter ego*. With the subsequent introduction of a third party that names a symbolic instance- it is necessary to conceive of the "mirror stage" as the time of a knotting between the three registers identified. The Ego is therefore constituted as another from this first identification". [**3**] Therefore, we find in others reflections that we do not accept, all this matter being repressed by our unconscious. In other words, we identify in ourselves some of the traits that we like least in others, even if only symbolically. The other simply serves as a mirror: it reflects us and gives us the opportunity to find ourselves. The mirror theory can act directly or inverted. In a direct way, it may be that we project on the other this part of us that we reject. In reverse, the other person could reflect how little importance we place on our interests. Every man has emotional wounds. Emotional wounds are all those emotions, sentiments, thoughts and ways of acting that were born during one or more painful moments in life and that we have not been able to overcome and accept. We became prisoners of these emotions by keeping ourselves in a fictional prison. Our well-being depends on transforming these emotions and ways of thinking into wisdom and experiences, so that they can serve as a driving force for us to move forward. When one forgets one's wounds, they end up remaining in the unconscious and having an influence on thoughts, sentiments and behaviors. Emotional deficiencies begin to reside within the being, which come from early childhood but which wake up and / or strengthen when we do not treat ourselves. This is why the links that we maintain with the other or others, taking into account the theory of the mirror, can bring very valuable information about oneself and about the state of these wounds that we have not yet integrated into personal history. The repercussions of what the mirror reveals on our physics can affect us in our relationships with others and even with ourselves.

Therefore, the central hero of the novel, Godunov-Cherdyntsev, represented by Nabokov, as I mentioned above, is the imaginary twin brother of the writer- in the mirror. Much of Nabokov's biography was given to Godunov-Cherdyntsev, in a transformed form, but close to reality. The action takes place in Berlin, in a literary and near-literary expat environment. The novel begins with the fact that Godunov-Cherdyntsev has the first book of poems. The plot of the novel is the development of the literary gift of the central hero. All other themes of "The Gift" are reeled on this rod. And here we should turn to the most important topic of Nabokov: the attitude of art to reality. According to Nabokov, everything in the wild reveals artistic redundancy. The writer sees this as an example of his favourite lepidoptera. In "The Gift" his father, a famous scientist entomologist, tells about this central hero. Nabokov knew what he was writing about when studying lepidoptera, he was particularly interested in the evolutionary changes of their marvellous patterns for this purpose, not to be lazy to count under the microscope scales on lepidoptera wings. Nabokov argued that mimicry in the world of lepidoptera (for example, imitation of a dry leaf) is full of redundant details, which are simply not perceived by the senses of a potential eater. Thus, evolution and - more broadly - the creation of the world is the game of higher artistic forces. Nabokov conveys to Godunov-Cherdyntsev's father not only his passion for lepidoptera (one of his dearest spiritual treasures), but also the dream of a large entomological expedition to Central Asia, which the writer cherished the young men he planned to implement when the Nabokov family lived in Crimea. The dream of an

expedition did not come true. Lepidoptera became for Nabokov and the subject of passionate scientific interest, and a constant source of creative writer's energy.

Thus, Godunov-Cherdyntsev, a Russian immigrant, from an aristocratic family, is poor in Berlin in the second half of the 20s, earning his living through private lessons and nostalgic publications about his childhood in Russia in Russian émigré newspapers. He feels a huge literary potential, he is bored of emigrant gatherings, his only idol among contemporaries - the poet Koncheyev (probably, Pushkin’s ghost). With him, he conducts a relentless internal dialogue "in the language of imagination." All as Nabokov, Godunov-Cherdyntsev, strong, healthy, young, full of happy premonitions, and his life is not overshadowed by poverty or uncertainty of the future. All as, Nabokov, he constantly catches in the landscape, in a fragment of tram conversation, in his dreams signs of future happiness, which for him consists of love and creative self-realization.

In addition, one can observe the "self-criticism of the first book of poems related to the childhood of the central hero (it is Godunov-Cherdyntsev who mentally analyzes his own poems). Meanwhile, Nabokov writes with sentimental precision that the air of his poems has warmed up, and the sweetness of this innocent childhood fills the body and soul of this uprooted and lonely young writer. To paint a picture of creativity from within, "from the head" of the creator is one of the most difficult and grateful tasks that can be faced by the author of the novel. Thus, Berlin gives the young author the best opportunity to publish and gain fame. Godunov-Cherdyntsev (all as Nabokov) in a short time becomes the leader of young expat literature. In addition to prose publications and poems, the source of income of his hero (just like for Nabokov) was different translations and private lessons of English and French, which he gave to all kinds of people of different categories, etc. However, the main hero of the novel is presented as a sensitive and phlegmatic man, a little vulnerable, sometimes lazy. These traits of his character and of his personality clearly distinguish him from his creator: during his youth, Nabokov was a determined and attractive man, sure of himself and his convictions, and physically strong, athletic; he played well in football, chess, tennis and boxing. From my point of view Nabokov projected on his creation- his hero Fyodor Godunov-Cherdyntsev (his imaginary twin brother) certain defects that he never wanted to accept in himself, because he absolutely wanted to forge his strong and far-sighted personality, ready to face all the difficulties to come and succeed in his profession as a writer and in his personal life.

The external impetus to change of his life is the move of Godunov-Cherdyntsev to a new apartment. *Fräu* Stoboy, his first owner of the rented apartment, found herself more reliable, monetary and well-intentioned guest: Godunov- Cherdyntsev's idleness, his writing confused her. Godunov-Cherdyntsev chose the apartment of Russian emigrants - Marianna Nikolavna and Boris Shchyogolev- not because he liked this couple (an elderly burgher and a former attorney, a cheerful man with a Moscow reprimand and Moscow's own table jokes), he was attracted by a lovely girl's dress, as if inadvertently thrown in one of the rooms. This time he guessed the call of fate, for nothing that the dress belonged not to Zina Merz, daughter of Marianna Nikolavna from her first marriage, but to her cousin. Fyodor's acquaintance with Zina, who has long been in love with him in absentia according to the poems, is the subject of the third chapter. They have many mutual connections, but fate postponed the rapprochement of the characters until the favorable moment. Zina is hurtful, witty, treatable, and reedy, she is terribly irritated by her stepfather (her father - a Jew, the first husband of Marianna Nikolavna - was a musical, brooding, intelligent man). She categorically opposes the fact that Shchyogolev and her mother learn something about her relationship with Fyodor. It is limited to walks with

him in Berlin, where everything meets their happiness, resonates with him; followed by long languory kisses, but nothing more. In the description of the heroine Zina one can note her certain resemblance to the personality of Nabokov's wife: both women are strong, faithful, intelligent and, ready to make all sacrifices to help their life companions- their beloved to accomplish their goal- succeed in becoming famous writer. Precisely, in Berlin, at one of the Russian expat's charity evenings, he met Vera Slonim, who became his loyal wife, ideal muse, permanent assistant, mother of their beloved son Dmitri. From Nabokov's point of view happiness is something more than the sum of the circumstances of life, it is the blessed, it is the inheritance of his parents and it is the sense of his whole life. According to eyewitnesses, Vladimir and Vera Nabokov in their sixties looked like young lovers – a tender and romantic couple.

However, I also observe the difference in the description of the heroine of the novel "The Gift" and, unlike Nabokov's wife who did not have discords in her family life with relatives, Zina Merz lives in Berlin in the apartment with her mother and her stepfather with whom she has difficult relations. Zina and Fyodor love each other, but their relationship does not arrive at the stage of a real proximity, out of modesty and because of the presence of the parents of a young girl. According to Zina talking about their love to her parents would mean the pinnacle of vulgarity. The theme of modesty in the in the intimacy of amorous relationships of the central heroes crosses much of the novel and finds its culmination in the apotheosis of the novel. Probably, for Nabokov's heroes, the protection of intimacy and modesty involves individuals in love before themselves and also protects them in front of others and the Other, ensuring both a social function and a psychic function. This intimacy and modesty are presented as a protective secret vis-à-vis others. Intimacy therefore implies a delimitation of this inner space, a discontinuity in a context of continuity between "We" and "Them" which are the opposite of confusion, transparency and appropriation. On the other hand, its non-respect has a perverse dimension, especially in the family space. The construction of intimacy and modesty thus responds to a protective function by allowing a space of freedom protected from the intrusion and grip of others and vice versa. As expressions of intimacy, modesty and shame also manifest each in their own way: while shame arises in an unassimilable experience of total unveiling of one's subject being, modesty comes to reveal by hiding it the preciousness of what is kept secret and which must be missed. At the same time, intimacy is not a solitary self-perm according to a purely intrapsychic process but necessarily unfolds in intersubjectivity, especially in early romantic relationships, then in touch with interpersonal intimacy. Intimacy therefore exists only shared and recognized by another lover who respects it. The example of modesty and shame clearly shows that the intimate has a relational dimension: no one is modest or ashamed alone. With tact and discretion, modesty in loving relationships is part of the conditions of an authentic encounter that do not come under a duty or a law but an ethic of responsibility of each and every one: it is the recognition of the figures of otherness by which the other remains both similar and close, while being radically alien in the mystery of its difference and complementarity. For Nabokov, as a result, respect for someone's intimacy as well as one's own intimacy testifies to one's relational mode to another: he says for whom one takes it and for whom one takes oneself. The Nabokovian intimacy in the novel thus manifests the relationship to otherness in that it is constructed from what escapes from it, the irreducibility of the human to the representation of a dyad of himself and the other (very near and very expensive).

2. The vocations in the name of the Father, the Homeland and Russian literature

Memories of Fyodor Godunov-Cherdyntsev of his father's life occupy an important place in the novel “the Gift”. In the second chapter, Godunov-Cherdyntsev receives in Berlin his mother, who came to him from Paris. His apartment mistress, *Fräu* Stoboy, found a spare room for her. Mother and son evoke Godunov -Cherdyntsev Sr., the father of the hero, missing in his last expedition, somewhere in Central Asia. His nostalgic mother still hopes he's alive. This nostalgia refers to a feeling related not only to the evocation of such a blessed and bygone era or to the precious memory of a deceased, it also implies the desire for a return to what has been lost. Nostalgia has developed the arcana and contradictions, especially in their relationship to the perverse organization: double polarity of the nostalgic object, both dead and alive. The father of Godunov-Cherdyntsev a famous explorer, an entomologist, a scientific researcher of Tibet, Mongolia, the Far East. By the author's will, this fictional hero is among such Russian scientists as Nikolai Przewalski, Grigory Grumm-Grzymaylo and others. In the novel Fyodor describes with tenderness and a lot of love his mother: the beautiful, loving, strong and extremely devoted woman to her husband: all their family life she shared his goals, her interests , her wishes and she faithfully awaited him with their children when he was in his scientific expeditions. The son, who had long sought out the hero for his first serious book, conceives to write a biography of his father and remembers his childhood paradise in Russia- excursions with his father around the estate, catching butterflies, reading old magazines, tackling sketches, sweetness of lessons - but feels that from these disparate notes and dreams the book does not emerge: he remembers his father too carefully, and therefore is not able to paint his real image. Moreover, in the history of his father's expeditions, his son is too poetic and dreamy, but he also wants the scientific rigor of his father's discoveries. The material to write the book dedicated to his father deviates both too close to him at the same time, and sometimes foreign.

From the psychoanalytic point of view, the father organizes the relations between humans within the family psychic space but also within the social space. The father is not only the father, he is not only the husband of the mother, he is, above all, a reference that allows the child to get out of the infantile and narcissistic omnipotence, the fantasy of self-generation to reach his position as a talking and desiring subject. The father makes the child a social subject. For Lacan (in the essay “The Real, the Symbolic, the Imaginary”, 1974-1975) there are at least three fathers: a) the real (the one closest to the biological dimension of need is the progenitor, the breeder, the one who strives to provide for the primordial needs of his family); b) the symbolic (it is the one who is the guardian of the law and its representative); c) the imaginary (the ideal father, the one to whom everyone tries to conform; it is that of the family novel, that of the fantastical projections of the father, the mother and the child too). These three fathers are usually one, although each register can be distinguished. The father is the knotting of these three registers into a singular entity that ensures the paternal function an importance that goes beyond the pure functionality of reproduction that goes beyond the individual dimension to also become a cultural and social signifier. It is their knotting that gives the father its authentic consistency and great efficiency.

The father in the novel with great love written off from the father of the writer Nabokov. But, Vladimir Dmitrievich Nabokov was, as we remember, not a scientist, but a politician - but it was he who introduced his son into the world of entomology, it was his faded collections that served as the primary capital to Vladimir Nabokov’s fascination. The writer's father and mother loved each other all their lives, how much each of them was released. The light of this love extended to children - there were five of them in the Nabokov family, Vladimir the elder. The

point in time and space where the writer's father proposed to his mother (during a bicycle ride, on a steep road climb near the estate of Vyra in Russia), always caused Nabokov creative and human excitement. Despite the loss of estates, emigration and poverty in emigration, the writer's personal fate, charged from childhood by family happiness, repeated the parental fate. A member of an illustrious family of the Russian aristocracy, the father of Vladimir Vladimirovich Nabokov was a prominent jurist, politician resolutely opposed to the despotism of the Tsar. However, in 1917, the Nabokov family was forced to flee. Head for the Crimea, then for London and Prague. Unfortunately, the theme of his father acquires a special drama because on March 28, 1922, Vladimir Dmitrievich was shot dead at a public lecture of his party comrade, cadet Milyukov: he shielded the lecturer from the terrorist's bullet. The writer's mother, Elena Ivanovna, never recovered from the blow: her sad widowhood in Prague, broke Nabokov's heart. The pain, the nostalgia, the trauma of loss filled his soul. For this reason the writer Nabokov resurrects in the novel thanks to the power of literary art his deceased father, presenting him as the father of his central hero- Godunov-Cherdyntsev. In the novel Nabokov writes that Godunov-Cherdyntsev's father did not tolerate hesitations, insecurities, lies, betrayals, calumnies and execrable cowardice. All this was in the character of Vladimir Nabokov's father: his independence, his integrity, and his high human demands on himself and on others. A happy son who can be so proud of his father, and Vladimir Nabokov, despite all the difficulties of his life, was a happy man. And if he was able to become happy - it is always a great merit of the man who has his own destiny and the priceless legacy of his beloved father.

The tragic roll call of the novel with reality is that Godunov-Cherdyntsev's father also dies: he does not return from the last expedition, just before the October revolution. And the family does not know for sure whether the father died: rumours about his death are unreliable and contradictory. Already in emigration the family is waiting for his return - and the more time passes, the more difficult it becomes to explain the natural earthly reasons for such a long absence of a loved one, the more piercing and dangerous for the heart is made a dream. Godunov-Cherdyntsev (as happened with Nabokov himself) evolves from verse to prose. He's thinking about his father. Fyodor Konstantinovich seems to set himself a metaphysical task: in the imagination, in prose to follow in the footsteps of his father, with the hope that the prose will tell - what happened to his father in fact, whether he is alive or not. Nabokov conveys to Godunov-Cherdyntsev's father not only his passion for butterflies (one of his dearest spiritual treasures), but also the dream of a large entomological expedition to Central Asia, which the writer cherished the young men he planned to implement when the Nabokov family lived in Crimea. The dream of an expedition did not come true. Nabokov writes in the novel: "His father often appeared to him in the dream, as if just return from some monstrous penal servitude, having experienced physical tortures with it was forbidden to mention, now changed into clean, linen- it was impossible to think of the body underneath –and with a completely uncharacteristic expression of unpleasant, momentous sullenness, with a sweaty brow and slightly bared teeth, siting at the table in the circle of his hushed family". [**4**] The hero of the novel did not finish the book about his father: Godunov-Cherdyntsev in his creative journey never found the place, time, circumstances of his father's death. Artistic logic did not bring him there; artistic logic lacked information. Possibly, Nabokov, who always thought of his father and who never accepted his death, gave his central the opportunity to suspect the disappearance of his father and to refuse to begin mourning. I thinks that these accounts of the death of the father have in common the narrative or dramatic fragmentation, the creation of a frame of the novel which, in addition to making tangible the identity breakdown caused by the death of the father, ensures

frequent passages between memory and mourning, between death and life, between the past and the present, between the childhood and the adult life, between his fatherland and his exile, etc. At the end of the novel Nabokov describes a strange dream of Fyodor who meets his missing father and supposedly dead in the apartment of *Fräu* Stoboy. In this dream, Godunov-Cherdyntsev sees his smiling and radiant father leaning on him, kissing him and congratulates him for writing his very good book. Tenderness and happiness fills Fyodor's heart but suddenly his father disappears and Fyodor is alone in the cold as in the coffin. Upon waking up Fyodor realizes with painful nostalgia that there is no longer any hope of one day finding his father alive, that he must finally accept the fact that he is dead and now begin the 'work of mourning'. Undoubtedly, alongside this 'work of mourning' for Godunov-Cherdyntsev, there will be room for a 'work of reconstruction' that uses in particular the evocation, even if it is nostalgic, of past hopes, that of utopias producing ideals and motivations that have been linked to them. Certainly, for Fyodor, it is only one solution in order to move forward and start his new life with the close being- his beloved Zina. This probably the beginning of his passage into in the unknown future.

With the theme of the loss of Father Nabokov examines the theme of the loss of the Homeland in the novel "The Gift". I think it is possible to start by looking for analogies between two objects, in this case the death of a loved one - the father and the loss of the Fatherland; two events supposedly identical by the character of the loss (mourning and exile). One can deduce from one element (mourning) to another (exile) the presence of a common whole, namely the psychic work described under the expression "work of mourning" in the Nabokovian novel "The Gift". However, the notion of Homeland does not only belong to psychoanalytic discourse, it also refers us to political terminology. Any discourse on the Homeland inevitably emphasizes the differences, the otherness of the other that does not belong to the Homeland; but it reflects personal conflict and confrontation with the environment, as well as sadness, discord, insurmountable traumas. These human emotions and the personal history of the writer cannot leave anyone indifferent in the sentiments of belonging to the Homeland. The language of the Homeland and the Fatherland always include different images for identifications. It is fascinating and mystifying character is opposed to the idea of exchange, which language embodies as a means of communication. The discourse of the Homeland then includes the units of mystified meanings inaccessible to analysis and translation, which are not subject to a symbolic exchange. Moreover, the dream of a Homeland is a way of denying, of disavowing this exile. The Homeland, as the history of mankind shows us, is the best way for the other to bear the exile instead of the subject. In the dream of a Homeland the subject can believe in a secure place and forget his own exile in the language. This explains why Nabokov says "goodbye" to his homeland and in particular to his homeland - Russia and his mother language - Russian in this novel. Subsequently Nabokov wrote all his other literary works in English - his new adopted language.

However, he chose to translate or co-translate into his new language of creation - English - all the Russian novels of his European period (as well as about fifty short stories and some poems). From Guy's point of view (2012): "This tearing of the exiled from his original niche and this projection forward underlies the entire work: if in his Russian texts Nabokov- Sirin did not stop facing the nostalgic dream of a return to the source, his passage in Anglophone marked the beginning of a re-creation of oneself made possible by a brilliant and voluntarist betrayal of the origin, now revoked in favour of an art of the beginning. Such a "Nietzschean" bet was far from being won in advance". Guy adds: " This Nabokovian interlingua would therefore make no more secret of its multilingual matrix than of the bilingualism of its Russian-American creator: because a good translator does not completely erase in the host language the otherness of the original language (theory of the decentring of Walter Benjamin), Nabokov thus gave a

glimpse in his *apostatic* prose the memory of his Russian original and the "biographical" traces of his status foreign nationals in English-speaking territory".[5] Nabokov, the most cosmopolitan of writers, would later say "I am an American writer, born in Russia and trained in England, where I studied French literature before spending fifteen years in Germany". However, the Russia of the beginnings emerges and refracts itself in almost all his works; the Resurgences of the native language abound everywhere, like the shadow of his father, his homeland and his unforgettable childhood. In the novel "The Gift" Godunov -Cherdyntsev recalls his childhood , his homeland and everything that took with him to emigration (like Nabokov himself): all the impressions, colours, images, which were imbued with his Russian childhood: the huge wheat fields in the countryside, the splendour of birch woods, the purity of winter snow and the majestic beauty of Saint-Petersburg. This Russian treasure carried away brings him (also to Nabokov) an immense gift of writing and allows to later become a great writer in exile.

The theme of Pushkin and Russian literature is connected with the father's theme in the novel. In Pushkin, of which Nabokov was an unconditional and passionate reader, he saw the "singular example of a man whose outer life blends so gradually with his inner life that the story of his real existence seems a masterpiece out of his own pen. In the novel, Nabokov summarizes that Godunov-Cherdyntsev's father was a "Pushkinian" man: deep, clear, light. Thus, Nabokov accurately describes the memories of his hero -Godunov-Cherdyntsev: "My father was not interested in poetry, making an exception only for Pushkin". Godunov-Cherdyntsev began to write a book about his father, inspired by the rhythm of Pushkin's "Journeys to Arzrum". It can be said that almost all writers, when working on something big and difficult, have to have an example or an ideal of self and this is not an imitation, it is exactly the help that the writer needs to find his own style. This phenomenon is recorded by Nabokov when he shows how Godunov-Cherdyntsev grows with the help of Pushkin and writes in the novel "Pushkin entered his blood. With Pushkin's voice merged the voice of his father". [6] Pushkin in Nabokov's "The Gift" is the ultimate case of creative freedom, this is the perfect poet. In addition, playing as a virtuoso with the melody alternately ironic, sentimental and passionate, Nabokov summons in the pages of his novel the shadows of his great predecessors - Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol, Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy and Turgenev, Chekov in the lead. He borrows from them his dazzling style - or better to say his dazzling styles - because the novel "The Gift" continually changes its face: romantic, lyrical, bucolic, satirical, melancholic, nostalgic, mysterious, etc. In this sense "The Gift" becomes the reception of life in its beauty and kindness and Fyodor, the young man who has the vocation and talent of a writer and whose first name means "gift of God" , is all penetrated by it. Similar to Nabokov himself, he has the gift of writing, he takes the pen to thank God for the grace to feel and the talent to express.

3. The impact of the symbolic and the imaginary in Nabokov's reasoning through the novel

The themes of the symbolic and the imaginary fills abandonment the whole novel. Thus, to understand the symbols and the symbolic in Nabokov's imagination, we must also take into account the explanation given by Lacan (1954) who explains: "The human order is characterized by this, that the symbolic function intervenes at all the moments and at all the degrees of its existence (...) Totality in symbolic order is called universe. The symbolic order is given first in its universal character. (...) As soon as the symbol comes, there is a universe of symbols. (...) But no matter how small the number of symbols you can conceive of at the emergence of the symbolic function as such in human life, they imply the totality of what is human. Everything is ordered in relation to the symbols that have arisen, the symbols once they

have appeared”. [7] In addition, Tisseron (2003) analyzes the imaginary and the image as the process and writes: «The constitution of a container for thoughts is a moment essential to the psychic development of every human being. The imagination associated with this wrapping function, both physical and psychic, is that of the continuous which opposes the discontinuous. (...) Thus, on the one hand, images are an individual psychic envelope that reinforces our identity and our ability to think of our psychic processes as belonging to us; and, on the other hand, they are also a groupal envelope that covers collective thoughts by giving them a form in which everyone recognizes themselves, and, sometimes, is involved”.[8]

From the beginning of the novel "The Gift" in prose and poems, the image of a moving mirror, rises above the earth, clearly reflecting the sky, as the character of an authentic writing path deployed. Nabokov complicates and energizes the traditional comparison between the central hero and the mirror. Combining the motif of the mirror with the motif of movement, Nabokov polemics with the declaration of realism, transferring the focus of the object of his own reflection on the atypical properties of the moving reflector: this unusual turn, the particular rhythm of vibrations caused by the individuality of the "wearer", the call to the invisible source of light, whose beam mirror "sends" to the hero, his imaginary twin brother-Godunov-Cherdyntsev. Another conundrum: Why is there an X-ray machine in the shoe store where Fyodor buys shoes? "In the store a saleswoman-young woman in a black dress, who sat at her feet, sideways on a stool, quickly pulled out of the box a narrow shoe and then, she turned to Fyodor's shy and badly stamped big leg and she took him to an x-ray, showed him where to put his leg. Looking down at the end, he saw his own dark, neat and separated joints on a bright background. Nabokov wants to tell readers that in the 1920s, the machine of X-rays (other names-pedoscope, fluoroscope) in shoe stores was a fashionable innovation and was considered a symbol of technological progress and an "Americanization" of the daily life of Europeans.

Then, a following enigma: What mysterious "freckled liquid" used Fyodor’s first beloved instead of lipstick? In the third chapter Nabokov gives precise details -the beloved of Fyodor instead of lipstick used the Extract of roses for lips"), which the French cosmetics company “Guerlain” produced from 1853 to 1925 and which was the symbol of elegance and sensuality of the time. Another enigma: Could there be a real prototype of the artist Romanov's painting "Footballer" and how Nabokov himself treated football? "Looking at this picture has already seen the goalkeeper's desperate throw." In the third chapter - Football - in the 1920s-30s was a popular topic of fine art, especially in the communist USSR and fascist Italy. However, the best Soviet football paintings of this time (A. A. Deinek, J.I. Pimenov, P.V. Kuznetsov, etc.) do not look like Nabokov's fictional image, as they all interpret football as an expression of the collectivist youth spirit of the new world, a kind of aerial acrobatics. It should be remembered that Nabokov at Cambridge was the goalkeeper of his college's college football team and from the goalkeeper's point of view described the game in the poem "Football" (1920), in the novel "The Glory"(1932). Therefore, the goalkeeper absent from the Painting of Romanov, who nevertheless has to be seen by the viewer, can be correlated in the novel “The Gift” with his author Nabokov, which the reader must see.

Another theme of "The Gift" and the most important theme of all prose and all life of Nabokov – the chess. In Montreux, near Lausanne (Switzerland) at the end of his life, at the Palace Hotel, Nabokov lived in room 64 - by the number of cells on the chessboard. Nabokov's main novel on chess and chess thinking is called «The Luzhin Defense"(1930). There chess embodies the act of rock, the power of fate. In "The Gift" Godunov-Cherdyntsev is engaged, as

if on the margins of his main life, chess composition. According to Nabokov, chess and poetry are linked together - these are, in fact, two ways of developing the same abilities.

The additional symbol in the novel is the use of the number "5". It should be noted that the number “5” plays an important role in all cultures and religions of the world. The sum of the first even number and the first odd number (2+3), the 5 is often presented as a number allowing union and harmony: the union of man and woman, or the meeting of the celestial trinity with terrestrial duality. For Colin (2000): " The number 5 derives its symbolism from what it is, on the one hand, the sum of the first even number and the first odd number (2 + 3); on the other hand, the middle of the first nine numbers. (…). It will therefore be the number of hierogamy, the marriage of the celestial principle (3) and the terrestrial principle (2). It is still symbol of man (both arms, bust, centre - shelter from the heart - head, both legs). Symbol also of the universe: two axes, one vertical and the other horizontal, passing through the same centre; symbol of order and perfection; finally, symbol of the divine will that can only desire order and perfection”. [**9**] It also represents the five psychological senses and the five sensitive forms of matter: the whole of the sensitive world. Each of these primordial elements is related to an organ of the senses and its object: the nose and the smell for the Earth, the mouth and the taste for the Water, the eye and the vision for the Fire, the skin and the touch for the Air and the ear and the hearing for the Atmosphere- the fifth element. In Christianity, it is the number of wounds on the body of Christ. But also, with the Five Joys of the Virgin Mary, devotion to the Five Sorrows was born. The “5” is the symbol of man, especially through the pentagram. The pentagram represents the microcosm, that is, the world on the scale of man. Then, when we talk about the father and his place we evoke the figure in the pentagram of man: the father, the mother, the child, the family, society. Again, Freud uses the number “5” to explain the foundations of his analytical therapy in the five lectures of psycho-analysis (1910), as well as in his five case studies: 1) the Dora affair, 2) Little Hans, 3) the Rat man, 4) the Schreber affair, 5) the Wolf man. Moreover, Nabokov uses in several times the number “5” in the novel: 5 chapters, 5 fingers of hand, 5 objections of Zina not to reveal to his parents his relationship with Feodor, etc. I thinks that in the novel "The Gift" the number “5” also represents: 1) dynamism, 2) radical movement of transforming and metamorphosing nature, 3) imagination, 4) creativity, 5) spontaneity.

Let's add other enigma - the presence of the key in the novel. The key is the symbol of an ability, an inner wealth, an asset that you have but you did not know, it may be this curiosity or this open-mindedness that make you able to move forward. The key is a simple element of understanding. The key therefore has a very positive value and most often appears as a symbol of knowledge, which leads to knowledge. A second meaning gives the key a sexual connotation. It is the one that enters the keyhole that activates it. It is a representation of the phallus; the key is mainly a phallic symbol and this notion is even more accentuated when it comes to a contact key that starts an engine. If it starts well, at the quarter turn, the dreamer is in the expression of his power and able to give pleasure to his partner; there is a real physical understanding between them. If the key does not fit the lock or does not start the engine, this type of dream is indicative of a problem of love compatibility or frigidity. The key, for Jung, is the sign of a tension but also the possibility of a relaxation. It is the symbol of the search for oneself and the possible discovery of who one really is. Jung uses the term "the keys of the kingdom" - The kingdom in this case being the individual himself in all his power and beauty. Since Freud and his book, “The Psychopathology of Everyday Life, 1901”, psychoanalysis gives the keys to decode these very concrete "disturbances", these "failures" of everyday life: clumsiness, error of reading or writing, momentary forgetfulness of names and projects, slip of the tongue, loss of object and symptoms of all kinds. For Freud: “That unconscious something which worked against these resolutions found another outlet after the first road was closed to it. It requires something other

than the conscious counter-resolution to overcome the unknown motive; it requires a psychic work which makes the unknown known to consciousness ". [**10**] Freud, refer to them by the generic name of “faulty acts”. It should also be noted that the key is used to open the door. I would also like to add that for psychoanalysis-and Freud himself observed it (1926) it is important to know if the door is open or closed.

These elements unanimously indicate a direction of symbolic thought: the door as the beginning of a space. For the imagination, it is always the inside that is represented known and that it is on leaving that the beginning appears. For imaginary thinking, starting and leaving are therefore given in the same movement. They suppose a third term that completes the picture of externality: entering it. According to Raynaud (1992): "... the specific element of the door that drains the direction of the opening is not limited to the key. It can be as well the handle, the button, the clench (...) By exploring, all fields combined, the images that the dynamic schemes organize: finish, enter, close, we have spotted the broad symbolism of the interiority attached to the door. We noted - important point for a theory of the scheme - that this metaphysics of rest could be "redirected", twice, on images with negative valence or anxiety: ‘enter’ becoming capture, ‘close’ becoming enclosure”. Raynaud adds “: The door, acts by the beginning and by the end, integrates these dynamic orientations at the hours of the *coincidentia oppositorum*. It then becomes the symbolic place of change (finish and begin) (...) Changing it, when it is totally energized, triggers a new direction of the image, worked by the cyclical time of renewal”. [**11**]

Here there is an end-to-end theme "The Gift" - the theme of keys: moving to a new apartment, Godunov-Cherdyntsev forgot the keys to her mac, and went out in a cloak. In the fifth chapter, all of Godunov-Cherdyntsev's dreams come true: his book, written with all the brilliance of Nabokov's irony and scholarship, saw the light with the help of Bach's own genre. She was praised by the same Koncheyev (Pushkin’s ghost), about the friendship with which our hero dreamed. Finally, an affinity is possible: Zina’s mother and father-in-law leave Berlin (the father-in-law got a job), and Fyodor Godunov-Cherdyntsev with Zina Merz stay together. So, the theme of the keys appears in the fifth chapter: her keys to the Cherdyntsev and Zina apartment left in the room, the keys of Zina took away her mother-Marianna Nikolavna, and the young spouses after almost a wedding dinner find themselves on the street or most likely in the Grunewald forest. For Nabokov, Godunov-Cherdyntsev's love for Zina Merz is a love that has come close to its final happy resolution and it does not need keys and a roof over its head. Thus, I think that Nabokov decides to permanently close the symbolic door of his past and that of his hero (with the sweet images of his past childhood, of his deceased parents, of his lost homeland, with the metaphors, prose and verses in his native language - Russian, which he will no longer use to write) , to leave the keys inside this space of the past (and certainly inside its soul) and to advance towards the near and distant future, new and unknown to be to be reborn just like Sirin (his literary pseudonym and a mythical bird of paradise with the head of a virgin in Russian legends and fairy tales).

In addition, a very symbolic comparison made by Nabokov in the novel between the writing of verse and the circulation of air and light. For Nabokov the art and the reality are not opposite to each other, but initially consist of the same substance - colour, changeable, playful, and redundant. Giving a "review" of the main character's first poem book (it's Godunov-Cherdyntsev mentally going through his poems related to childhood), Nabokov writes about the warmth of the air of poems, that is, between verse and reality there is a direct message, the door is open, the air is common. To paint a picture of creativity from within, "from the head" of the creator is one of the most difficult and grateful tasks that can be faced by the author of the novel. Here is how, according to Nabokov, the poet writes poems: “He spoke with himself, walking on a non-existent panel; feet were ruled by the local consciousness, and the main, and, in fact, the only important, Fyodor Konstantinovich was already looking into the second

swinging, for a few saplings, a stanza, which was to be resolved by an unknown, but at the same time exactly the promised harmony." Here the oscillation of the poem born before the eyes is connected with the oscillation of light from the lantern, with the rhythm of Godunov-Cherdyntsev's steps, as the pitching of the ship is connected with the sea waves. The novel "The Gift" is also the reception of life in its beauty, the sun on the skin, the extraordinary lightness of sensitivity naked, attentive to sensations, the smell of honey from the lime trees of Berlin in the evening, Nabokov takes a theme of the Berlin landscape and develops it by expressing all its quintessence: We will go with Fyodor in the Grünwald , this park of woods and lakes that allows Germans who love to sunbathe and swim; we walk in the Berlin avenues under the lime trees and in the warm night of July, or under the storm; we dialogue on a bench with a critic writer in suit and tie who is basically only a German student with a vague resemblance to the one you are thinking. Because the truth is that of sensation but above all that of imagination. Godunov-Cherdyntsev, full of happy premonitions, and his life is not overshadowed by poverty or uncertainty of the future. He constantly catches in the landscape, in a fragment of tram conversation, in his dreams signs of future happiness, which for him consists of love and creative self-realization. Finally, for Nabokov literature is not realism, but the imaginary, the re-creation like a God of a personal world.

4. The deadly impulses of revolt of the Russian revolutionary Nikolai Chernyshevsky and its consequences on the decadence of Russian immigration to Berlin after the Bolshevik Revolution

In the novel "The Gift", there is an antipode of Pushkin, his double in opposition-Nikolai Gavrilovich Chernyshevsky. I want to clarify that Nikolay Gavrilovich Chernyshevsky (July 12, 1828 – October, 17, 1889) was a Russian literary and social critic, journalist, novelist and socialist philosopher, often identified as a utopian socialist and a theorist of Russian nihilism. He was the dominant intellectual figure of the revolutionary democratic movement of the 1860s in Russia, although he spent much of his life in exile in Siberia. Chernyshevsky was a founder of *Narodism,* Russian populism, and agitated for the revolutionary overthrow of the autocracy and the creation of a socialist society based on the old peasant commune. He exercised the greatest influence upon populist youth of the 1860s and 1870s. Chernyshevsky's ideas were heavily influenced by Alexander Herzen, Vissarion Belinsky, and Ludwig Andreas Feuerbach. He saw class struggle as the means of society's forward movement and advocated for the interests of the working people and he was later highly appreciated by Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin. It should also be remembered that Lenin praised his essay “What Is to Be Done?“ which was published in 1863 and which found it in the library of his older brother executed by the Tsar. In 1902 Lenin took up this title of the novel for his revolutionary work, advocating the workers' struggle, the foundation of an avant-garde party, leading to the centralization of everything and to lead in an authoritarian way the social movement until the revolution of the proletariat. Nabokov demolished this idol in the novel. The fourth chapter of the novel is a book in the book, written by Godunov-Cherdyntsev, which caused a literary scandal described in the fifth chapter of the novel. But it is in the essay on Chernyshevsky that the central hero of "The Gift" is closer to Nabokov himself: perhaps because here Nabokov lent the hero not only important parts of his biography and also a pen. Chernyshevsky, who called for putting art at the service of the public good (which inevitably predetermined the main misery of "socialist realism"), is unsympathetic to Nabokov, who understood art, literature mainly as a space of human freedom. From Nabokov's point of view "progressivism" can be as totalitarian as it is reactionary, and Chernyshevsky becomes an example of this. Chernyshevsky, pleaded for materialism, honesty, integrity, practical advantage - and in reality fought against "art".

Nabokov writes that Chernyshevsky, being deprived of the slightest notion of the true essence of art, but unfortunately this author of the famous “What Is to Be Done?" had a huge perverse impact on the minds of Russian intelligentsia. Slavnikova writes (2011): “Nabokov sees Chernyshevsky fundamental flaw in his literary style: cumbersome, clumsy (…) Nabokov notes Chernyshevsky predilection for the plans of the premises, where his prose takes place, to the painful definition of the mutual arrangement of the characters and furnishings. This oblique style is the exact cast of Chernyshevsky thinking - materialistic thinking, even as Chernyshevsky did not really see the luxurious diversity of the material world”. Thus Slavnikova adds “It was Nabokov's *sighting*, the opposite of Chernyshevsky's *blindness* that allowed him to reach the metaphysical depths of existence. Chernyshevsky at Nabokov is not only a literary disabled man, but also a. It is significant that Nabokov defines Chernyshevsky's views through advertising - and does not miss: Such means of cognition, such as dialectic materialism, unusually resemble unscrupulous advertisements of patented drugs, doctoring all diseases". [**12**] Nabokov, through his main hero in the novel, is ruthless with this Russian writer who loses the thread of the evolution of the country and of reality in general, by his "bogged down of thought", by his reasoned heaviness, by the useless rehashing of words in the essay, by the “viscous ineptitude of his actions”, not to mention also his “vulgar eroticism seasoned in pseudo-progressivism”. Thus Chernyshevsky, a tasker with little concern for style, assigning art and literature a utilitarian purpose, is ridiculed by a Nabokov who has often stressed, subsequently, his contempt and disgust for this kind of literature. A poor and pathetic writer whose fate has been decided, Chernyshevsky is the perfect counter-model and bad double of Pushkin: his art that is based, of course, on illusion, perversion and lies. However, in the novel Nabokov and his central hero Godunov-Cherdyntsev go further in prose than they might have originally anticipated. Scoffing at Chernyshevsky's aesthetic, his idyllic utopias, his naive economic teachings, Godunov- Cherdyntsev fervently sympathizes with him as a man when he describes his love for his wife, suffering in exile, heroic attempts to return to literature and public life after liberation. Chernyshevsky, being by design daring a figure of comic, gradually becomes a figure of tragicomic, then a tragic character: arrest, imprisonment in Alexeyevsky’s jail, civil execution, forced labour in the prison. From a psychoanalytic point of view, Villa (2013) considers that: «On the one hand, therefore, thought is ready, from a certain resemblance, to forge the illusion of a reality in accordance with desire and to act as if it were the case. On the other hand, it confronts the truth of the absence of the object and the expected satisfaction and makes it possible to act, outside the illusion, on the recognized reality as it is. There is therefore little scope for thought not to give way to illusion and for man to acquire the freedom to think and act, even when the world proves to be disappointing “. [**13**]

In the followed novel by his central hero in chapter four, Chernyshevsky's brain gradually transforms into a "factory of convicts" by the force of death impulses. In deduction, this novel within the novel, written by the author who has his hero written, Chernyshevsky is in literature the anti-Pushkin, the supreme nullity. Nabokov settles his scores with this Russia that degenerates under Lenin and that coquettes impotent in emigration. I thinks that, Nabokov chose this man to ridicule and to despise him because Chernyshevsky is one of those who was at the origin of the deadly process that led to the moral bankruptcy of Russian intelligentsia, the fall of Russian empire and tsarism and the forced emigration of Nabokov's family and hundreds of thousands of other families of Russian aristocrats. I want to add that Nabokov takes up the theme of the double-antagonist which was also analyzed by Dostoyevsky in the novel "The Idiot". For Radtchenko-Draillard (2019): “Dostoyevsky has created the double characters in the novel 'The Idiot' (beneficent - the incarnation of love; demonic - the incarnation of death), to starting from the single entity. Dostoyevsky here denouncing the perversion of philosophical ideas and criminal acts which cause the discomfort of the Russian society of the time and

defends the human moral values". [14] For his part, in his novel Nabokov presents two double opposites in Russian literature: Pushkin- embodiment of the beauty of Russian poetry and moral goodness; and Chernyshevsky embodiment of literary vulgarity and moral perversion. From the psychoanalytic point of view, Freud gives his opinion in the essay 'Uncanny" (1919) about the figure of the 'double': "The quality of uncanniness can only come from the circumstance of the "double" being a creation dating back to a very early mental stage, long since left behind, and one, no doubt, in which it wore a more friendly aspect. The 'double has become a vision of terror, just as after the fall of their religion the gods took on daemonic shapes". [15]

The decadent life of this Russian emigration to Berlin has been described in the novel "The Gift". In the novel Nabokov decides to recreate Berlin and its colony of Russian expatriates, this "formidable haemorrhage of intellectuals" that constituted such an important part of the general exodus from Russia in the early years of the Bolshevik Revolution. This decadence of Russian emigration is linked to the loss of its social status. Sorokin (1927) claimed that: "the social status is calculated based on the following concepts: family status, nationality, religious group, occupational group, political party, economic status, race, and finally the relative person of the individual within each of these groups". [16] According to Nabokov in Berlin, Russian emigrants kept crossing paths in the obligatory meeting points that were, among others, a Russian grocery store, a Russian bookstore, a Russian restaurant, all located in the same neighbourhood, where it is no longer clear whether one is on a Russian boulevard that encroaches on a German street or whether one walks in a street in Russia populated by Germans. We will meet here Russians of wealthy origin, such as Martin Martinitch, former landowner turned tobacconist, the young and beautiful Olga, who shines with her grace and intelligence before entering into an unhappy marriage and dying in childbirth, Anton Petrovitch, businessman who surprises his colleague with his wife, provokes him into a duel, dodges at the last moment and probably ends his days in a miserable hotel , or this young nobleman, graduate of geography, who dreams, in his misery, of all that he will not be, will not see, will not have, and dies wanting to save from the waves the garnement of which he was the tutor. But we will meet even more poor devils adrift: Grafitski, for example, a service rimailleur in a skeletal theater troupe in Riga, who is promised a job in a berlin film company, which will soon go bankrupt; an old widow whose only son, a simple worker in Paris, kills himself by falling from a scaffolding; the old Vasily Ivanovich, "recruited" in a tram by a narrator who wishes to use his memories and his decay; or a miserable alcoholic, etc.

The novel begins with a joke: Godunov-Cherdyntsev was invited to the party at the home of immigrant Alexander Chernyshevsky (Jew, who took this pseudonym out of respect for the idol of the intelligentsia) and his wife Alexandra Yakovlevna. He was promised to show during this evening an enthusiastic review of Godunov-Cherdyntsev's book that was just published. However, this evening turns into a farce: the attention of the public, including famous Koncheyev, is given to a philosophical piece by a Russian German named Bach, and this piece turns out to be a set of heavy curiosities. To top it off, Godunov-Cherdyntsev again did not dare to talk to Koncheyev, and their conversation, full of explanations in mutual respect and literary similarity, turns out to be a game of imagination. In the same chapter, the fiction writer Romanov invites Godunov-Cherdyntsev to another expat salon, to a certain Margarita Lvivna, who has Russian youth; flashes the name of Zina Merz (the future lover of the hero), but he does not respond to the first hint of fate, and his meeting with the ideal, he one intended woman is postponed until the third chapter. For Gascuel (1992): "The hero's almost zero interest in politics would reflect a more radical attitude of withdrawal, characteristic of Russian circles in

Berlin. There is no shortage of political discussions, but they always take place within the broader framework (at least for the protagonists) of a literary debate whose "ideological" abstraction is of course derisived". As much as the political debates in the Russian emigration newspapers are also ridiculed, whatever they may be, incidentally. Gascuel also remarks: «The fact remains that these intellectuals are trying to reproduce in foreign lands their Russian way of life, their customs among which are of course literary evenings. However, if these evenings allow Nabokov to camp colourful characters, the debates themselves are reported with a murderous irony that goes so far as to assimilate them to a chimera". [**17**] Basically, it might seem that the image of Berlin described by Nabokov is, after all, very realistic, and that the imaginary space in which the characters of the novel move is not so far removed from the "unreal", "deleterious" atmosphere, as the Nazis bruised the centres of power of German society and began their terrible propaganda of anti-Semitism. This pushed Nabokov and his young wife Vera Nabokov-Slonim to the second exile (via France between 1937 and 1940, in the U.S.A.) to arrive at a truly political vision of the Berlin reality of that time.

Then again, there was in this milieu of Russian immigrants a sordid history: In the first chapter of the novel Nabokov describes the causes of the tragic disappearance of the only son of the Chernyshevsky couple (remember that this couple organized the literary evenings of Russian immigration, in which the principal hero Godunov-Cherdyntsev participated). At the university, Yasha Chernyshevsky became close friends with the student Rudolf Baumann, a German, and the student Olya G., a compatriot. In his diary notes Yasha aptly defined the relationship between him, Rudolph and Olya as "a triangle inscribed in a circle." There was that normal, clear, "*Euclidian*" friendship, as he put it, the friendship that united all three, so that with her one union they would remain happy, and careless. Oddly enough, the idea to disappear all three, in order to recover - already in the unearthly - some ideal and immaculate circle, all the more passionately developed by Olya, although now it is difficult to establish who and when first expressed it; and Yasha, whose position seemed to be the most hopeless, came out to the poets of the enterprise. In an empty spring forest, not far from the blue lake, they easily found a comfortable wilderness and immediately got down to business; or rather, Yasha began: it was the honesty of the spirit, which gives the most reckless act almost everyday simplicity. Olya and Rudolph were silently standing in the wind, but something mysteriously changed: the fact that Yasha left them together and committed suicide, their union with three broke. It is also clear that Rudolph, because of the fact that for him opens a vacant place on earth, and because he was only a coward, lost all the wish to end his life by suicide, and that Olya, even if she persisted in his intention, could not do anything, because Rudolph immediately hid the revolver. It is necessary to specify that Seulin (2008) writes about betrayal: "He who has a feeling of betrayal is in between, he betrays himself, a part of his alienated Self by turning to the object of his desire while giving a stab in the back of another, the one he abandons, book, according to the Latin *tradere*, which he releases brutally. He betrays to get out of the lure and beliefs, to reorganize his impulse life with a defensive system less locked around denial and cleavage(…)The feeling of betraying or being betrayed testifies to an internal disjunction, with its objects, within the instances and, finally, to a clash of temporalities". [**18**] Thus, Nabokov describes with contempt and sadness the story of this tragedy marked by betrayal, cowardice, vulgarity and baseness of this farce of the friendship of three students. The enemy of the honest and free man are betrayal, cowardice, baseness and vulgarity. Vladimir Nabokov in his novel attempts to describe and neutralize these toxic phenomena. Just like does another Great Russian writer -Mikhail Bulgakov in his novel "The Master and Margarita" Unlike Nabokov who

describes the fall and decadence of Russian immigration in Berlin, Nabokov denounces the baseness and mediocrity of Russian society under the Stalinist regime at the same time in Moscow. From Radtchenko-Draillard point of view (2020): “Bulgakov describes with a sarcastic irony corrupt and docile people, especially in the literary environment or in the civil service, who serve the totalitarian regime and at the same time, try to make their profits using lies, betrayals, denunciations of others, etc.”[**19**] The causes and consequences of this decadence of Russian society at the time (inside the country) and outside (in immigration) lie in the loss of social solutions and the dysfunctions of the subject of the unconscious. As Zafiropoulos and Assoun (2001) indicate: " The social solutions of the unconscious refer here to the responses proposed by the "social Other" to the dysfunctions that seem to him to be a symptom; but also the way in which the subject of the unconscious can be identified in these responses - social, political, legal or cultural as the silent actor who motivates them". [**20**]

Certainly, the history of Fyodor Godunov-Cherdyntsev has something very characteristic of the structure of the mental nature of these young Russian emigrants. In the last chapter V, he goes to one of the last meetings of the "Committee of the Society of Russian Writers in Germany" where, despite the insistence of one of its members to integrate him into the management, he refuses to "take an interest in the fate of the Union". Fyodor replied that he himself aspired to trade unions "which were not at all dependent on massive friendships, on asine affinities, or on "the spirit of the time", nor on any organization or association of mystical poets where a dozen closely related mid-criteria "radiate by their common efforts". For Fyodor only a community of readers now interests him. To confirm this position Nabokov, with great clairvoyance but also filled with ambivalent sentiments, writes at the end of the novel: “Good-by my book! Like mortal eyes, imagined ones must close some day (…) And yet the ear cannot right now part with the music and allow the tale to fade; the chords of fade itself continue to vibrate, and no obstruction for the sage exists where I have put the End the shadows of my world extend beyond the skyline of the page, blue as to tomorrow’s morning haze- nor does this terminate the phrase”. [**21**]

Conclusion

The highest volume of the novel is realized on the account of excursions to the past, ambivalence of sentiments and thinking, different notes - all this has found a place in the generous and flexible text of the work. It will be true to characterize "The Gift" as a work intended not so much for readers as for writers, as creative experiences, thoughts about craft, comments, additions, references, clarifications and other things. In "The Gift," Nabokov reminds, with ambivalent sentiments, Proust more than ever, with a desire to stuff the text with side details that reveal and shape the whole reality of space and time. And yet this novel is a kind of metamorphosis of Nabokov's interests in the literary plane. All his hobbies, clairvoyance and key creative thoughts (entomology, the problem of Russian emigrants, chess, analysis of domestic literary traditions, views on politics, judgments about the structure of the universe, the distinction between good and bad literature, art, ideas, issues of publication, relevance and heritage of each individual book) are a large part of the novel. However, the famous literary critic Nazaroff expressed his opinion with some criticism before the publication of the novel (1934): “The book thus is a crazy quilt of bits of reality drowning in the author’s (or his hero’s) ‘inner comment’ on them. ‘The Gift’, no doubt, is a correct title for the work, for the

unconquerable urge of Cherdyntsev's mind to digest artistically and transfigure by his imagination all things (including the most trivial ones) with which he comes in contact is the leitmotif of his narrative ". [22] But Nabokov replies to him with philosophical clairvoyance: "The novel is not 'a crazy quilt of bits'; it is a logical sequence of psychological events: the movements of stars may seem crazy to the simpleton, but wise men know that the comets come back. I don't understand why the reader should be "astonished" at the "insertion" of my hero's work (Chernyshevsky's biography). The preceding chapters lead up to it and, as samples are given of all my hero's literary production, it would have been an impossible omission to leave his chief book out ". [23] I think that from Nabokov's point of view, his hero's interpretation of Chernyshevsky's life elevates the novel to a broader level, lending it an epic note because the defeat of Marxism and materialism is not only highlighted, but is complemented by the artistic triumph of its hero Fyodor Godunov-Cherdyntsev who is confirmed in literature as a notorious writer and poet.

It should also be noted that Nabokov gives clear conclusions in the Foreword of the novel: "The world of "The Gift" being at present as much of a phantasm as most of my others worlds, I can speak of this book with a certain degree of detachment. It is the last novel I write in Russian. Its heroine is not Zina, but Russian literature". It should also be added that, the main recipient of this work is Nabokov himself, because in fact he has created a grandiose receptacle of his own inventions, interests, research, almost transformed into a textual imprint of his personality, body and soul. Finally, "The Gift" is a polythematic novel that addresses a range of questions ranging from biology to socio-morality, through psychologies and philosophies in the dimensions of space-time. I thinks that this novel is a very magnificent masterpiece with increased volume due to excursions in the past, the construction of various main and secondary scenarios and the very informative filling of the work. Finally, it is a decisive novel: in which, Nabokov reaches the perfect and absolute complexity of the metatext of the ideal Russian language. Indisputably, the novel "The Gift" - is the real quintessence of the writer and poet Vladimir Vladimirovich Nabokov.

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