

2.6. MEANS OF EXPRESSING EMOTIONS OF FEAR: PSYCHOLOGICAL INFLUENCE ON THE READER (ON THE MATERIAL OF THE STORT NOVEL BY N. GOGOL)

Man as a creature influenced by emotions tries to reflect them fully in the works of art. Since a person can comprehend the world figuratively, he is able to transform and “translate” various emotional states from the mental sphere into the figurative one as a result of such a complex creative process. A person should master the material of the corresponding art form perfectly well to get such a difficult “transformation”.

It is known that artists recreate a complex world of experiences with the help of color and brushstroke in painting, sound in music and verbal material in literature. From this point of view literature often serves as material for scientific research in various fields including diverse fields of linguistics. It is wide known that emotions are special forms of interaction between a person and the world around him as cognition and self-determination take place there. Since in modern philology the problem of the emotional component of a literary text remains poorly understood and rather complex, we will try to analyze the linguistic side of the literary work which may allow us to expand our understanding of the methods and means of influence of the writer on reading experience. Considering the lexical, semantic, syntactic, and phonetic components of the language of a literary work we will try to explain the dependence of the reflected emotions on the context as well as to trace the influence of this context on the reader. It applies not only to literature but also to other arts (for more details, see: Muth & Briesen⁴⁰¹)

This aspect of the study involves the analysis of the psychological and emotional structure of human cognition and its influence on the choice of linguistic means for transmitting information. As, according to M. Ang. Thumala Olave⁴⁰², books do not simply communicate or represent social values and ideas. Aesthetic immersion in books materiality allows these values to be realized.

According to Paul Ekman's list, the emotional sphere of the human psyche is represented by seven basic emotions: joy, surprise, sadness, anger, disgust, contempt, fear. The latter which our study is devoted to is defined by Ekman as “*a negative emotion expressing tension in connection with the expectation of certain situations, actions that pose a threat. It can range from fear to real horror*”⁴⁰³.

In psychology fear is understood as “*emotion arising in situations of threat to the biological or social existence of an individual and aimed at a source of real or imagined danger. Unlike pain and other types of suffering caused by the real action of factors dangerous to existence, fear arises when they are anticipated. The range of shades of fear is the following: concern, fear, fright, horror*”⁴⁰⁴.

Consequently, man has learned to reflect all this variety of shades of one emotion in literary works. Since psychology and literature have one common object of study – the inner world of a person but different material, it is assumed that there is something that gives them entry points. We believe that such a unifying element is the language through which there occurs the expression of emotions, description, or the creation of an atmosphere where the reader can experience certain feelings.

The aims of our work are: 1) to study the emotion of fear as a complex mental unit based on its lexical, semantic, syntactic, phonetic analysis of the short novel by N. Gogol “Viy”; 2) to analyze the reader’s perception of a literary text on the subject of fear and horror. These aims involve solving the following problems: firstly, the study of the reader’s interests of students and teachers associated with the literature of “fear and horror”; the analysis of language tools and techniques that form the reader’s perception of information related to the emotion of fear.

⁴⁰¹ Muth, C., Briesen, J. (2020). “I like how it looks but it is not beautiful”: Sensory appeal beyond beauty. *Poetics*, 79.

⁴⁰² Thumala Olave, M. Ang. (2020). Book love. A cultural sociological interpretation of the attachment to books. *Poetics*, 81.

⁴⁰³ *Sistema bazovyh emocij Ekmana*. (2017).

⁴⁰⁴ Petrovskij, A. V., Yaroshevskij, M. G. (1990). Strah [Fear]. *Psihologiya. Slovar. [Phycology. Dictionary]*. Moscow: Politizdat.

The analysis of recent studies and publications has revealed numerous scientific studies of the phenomenon of fear in various branches of knowledge: literary works (D. Hapaeva, Yu. Kristeva, R. Lahmann, V. Vatsuro, N. Volsky, M. Yampolsky, P. Zolina), linguistic articles (L. Babenko, A. Bochkarev, O. Oparina), psychological studies (P. Ekman, S. Freud, E. Fromm, K. Horney, A. Petrovsky, Yu. Shcherbatykh, M. Yaroshevsky), philosophical papers (N. Berdyaev, M. Sinelnikova).

Moreover, there exist scientific conferences completely devoted to the phenomenon of fear in art (“All fears of the world: Horror in literature and art”, Pushkin House, April 24-25, 2014), that indicates the prospects of research in this area. Another significant event was the publication of a collection of articles on the semiotics of fear in France in 2005 (for more details, see: Buks⁴⁰⁵). And it also proves the relevance of our study because fear is an emotion that accompanies a person and humanity throughout their existence: from birth (fear of the first breath) to death (fear of death). Consequently, the nature of fear, its types, a change in attitude to this feeling and the phenomena that cause it in different eras, human behavior in situations associated with fear, and much more will always generate scientific interest in this phenomenon. Probably, the answers to such questions will allow us to come closer to solving many problems associated with the ability to manage fears. Our range of interests covers the means and methods of expressing fear in fiction which will help to understand what methods the author uses to make the reader experiences these emotions, how reader’s perception is arranged and how it changes depending on the age and baggage of knowledge that he has acquired.

Our work is based on the study of linguistic and human cognitive relationships involving the concepts of linguistic and conceptual worldview, since the latter are especially important in the perception and cognition of emotions.

The object of the study was the emotion of fear expressed through linguistic units (emotives), as well as extra and paralinguistic means. By emotives we mean special units of language and speech through which emotional states and experiences are transmitted (for more details, see: Shakhovskij⁴⁰⁶).

Using the continuous sampling method, we selected language units that reflect various conditions associated with the expression of the emotion of fear as well as language means by which an atmosphere of terrible is created with the aim of influencing the reader. We paid special attention to those places of the work pointed out by our recipients.

As part of our study, we conducted anonymous questioning among junior students as well as university professors to find out what works of world literature recipients consider to be scary. We also suggested correlating emotional states (excitement, fear, horror, joy, laughter, tenderness, pity, lack of emotions) with N. Gogol's romantic stories (“Sorochinskaya Fair”, “Evenings on the Eve of Ivan Kupala”, “May Night, or the Drowned Maiden”, “The Night Before Christmas”, “Missing Certificate”, “Terrible Revenge”, “Viy”, “Nevsky Prospect”, “The Nose”, “Portrait”, “The Overcoat”). If there were any emotions present, we asked the recipients to clarify exactly what events in these works could trigger the states indicated by them. The choice of this exact material is explained, first of all, by the fact that approximately at the same time these works were mandatory in the school world literature course.

Therefore, the first acquaintance of the recipients with the works by N. Gogol was at the same age and it allows us not only to analyze the difference in their perception among people of different generations but also to trace changes in attitudes of the interviewed towards “terrible” stories in connection with the acquisition of life experience. We also have every reason to believe that 100% of the recipients are familiar with the work of N. Gogol. Otherwise, the list of works would be too long and impossible for an adequate analysis.

At the early stages of the formation of scientific knowledge fear for an ancient person was associated with external factors in a particular situation in the present or in the nearest future.

⁴⁰⁵ Buks, N., Kont, Fr. (2005). *Semiotika strakha* [*Semiotics of fear*]. Paris–Moskow: Russkij institut: izdatel'stvo “Evropa”.

⁴⁰⁶ Shakhovskij, V. I. (2008). *Lingvisticheskaya teoriya emocij* [*Linguistic Theory of Emotions*]. Moskow: Gnizis.

And the eternal present turned it into eternal fear, the deliverance from which was not considered to be possible. Thus, the mystical fear of the unknown, the supernatural is found in Russian romantic stories, which constitute the literary context of the first half of the 19th century.

The title of the short novel “Viy” already sets the reader up for unusual even possibly scary events. First of all, it is clear from the author’s explanations that “*Viy is a colossal creation of lower-class imagination. This name is used by Little Russians for the head of the gnomes whose eyelids in their eyes go to the very ground. This whole story is a folk tradition. I didn’t want to change it in anything and I’m retelling it in almost the same simplicity as I heard it*” [translated by us, O. R. and N. I.]⁴⁰⁷.

Although the image of Viy is not found in East Slavic mythology but can be seen only in N. Gogol’s work, A. Kichenko⁴⁰⁸ has tried to trace the genetic connections of this character with similar ones in other mythologies. Such an ability to mythologize is confirmed by Gogol’s personality – his whole life and work are shrouded in mystery and myth not only during his life but after it as well. Probably such mystery together with the ingenious ability to mythologize affect the wary perception of the author’s texts. And we believe that all recipients are familiar with Gogol’s myths.

An interesting fact is that a relatively “new” encyclopedic publication contains an article on Viy as a demonological entity of East Slavic mythology (for more details, see: Vojtovich⁴⁰⁹). Another oddity associated with this mythological creature is that on the pages of the story he appears as an incidental character. After all, he is mentioned only three times: in the title, in the author’s explanation and in the climax. Ito Ichiro believes that “*the originality of Gogol’s story is not in the plot but in the artistic development of a philosophical theme – the fear of death from vision. Gogol, perhaps, used the title to point out not to the plot but to the main theme of his story because Viy is out of the plot as if symbolizing this theme*”⁴¹⁰.

Nevertheless, the following description of the life of poor, eternally hungry and, therefore, unprotected but cheerful Kiev seminarians distracts the readers from pessimistic moods.

And here the motives of gaze and eyes are especially important since the eyes like a mirror of the soul are, firstly, a marker of “infernal” in romantic characters and, secondly, they reflect their emotions and conditions. Moreover, this technique is also a characteristic feature of the work of most romantics but not only N. Gogol, addressing the themes of evil, demonism, the terrible. This fact allows us to talk about a certain steady tendency in the representation of the otherworldly in the Russian literature of the first half of the 19th century.

According to L. Babenko, emotions including those associated with fear have a fairly wide representative range in comparison with other objects of the nomination. They include vocabulary, phraseological syntactic constructions, special intonation, word order. However, the main role belongs to vocabulary⁴¹¹.

It is also an irrefutable fact that N. Gogol considered it possible to overcome fear with laughter. We do not experience fear or horror in many of his stories related to the representation of the otherworldly, infernal. This phenomenon is since the author often ironized portraying fantastic fiction or accompanied the “terrible” with the “funny”. For example, in the “Sorochinskaya Fair” the stories about the red jupe and the deuce that was looking for it are necessarily complemented by ridiculous comments describing the behavior of the characters or the situation. So, the deuce itself was so upset because of the expulsion from hell that it guzzled away the jupe in a tavern, and then had to not only redeem it, but also search for every piece of it all

⁴⁰⁷ Gogol, N. V. (1984). *Sobranie sochinenij. Tom 1-8. [Collected works. Vols. 1-8]*. Moscow: Pravda, Vol. 2, p. 147.

⁴⁰⁸ Kichenko, A. S. (2009). *Tvorchestvo kak mifotvorchestvo [Creativity as a myth-making]*. Gorlovka: Izdatel'stvo GGPIIY.

⁴⁰⁹ Vojtovich, V. M. (2005). *Ukrayins'ka mifologiya [Ukrainian mythology]*. Kiev: Lybid'.

⁴¹⁰ Ichiro, I. (1989). Obshheslavjanskij fol'klorny'j istochnik gogolevskogo “Viya” [General Slavic source of Gogol's “Viy”]. *Izvestiya AN SSSR. Seriya literatury i yazyka - Proceedings of the USSR Academy of Sciences. A series of literature and language*, 5, 454-459. P. 458.

⁴¹¹ Babenko, L. (1989). *Leksicheskie sredstva oboznacheniya emocij v russkom yazyke [Lexical means of designating emotions in Russian]*. Sverdlovsk: Izd-vo Ural. un-ta. – P. 3.

over the world. A terrible portrait and essence of the deuce is leveled by the life situation it got into. However, the possibility of its presence among people is scary, as evidenced by the panic in the company of the kum Tsybulia retelling a terrible story about the deuce. The appearance of pork snouts in the windows during the climax of the story turns out to be funny when N. Gogol describes the stupid behavior of the participants of the meeting. We can give one more example of ironic descriptions of lovers – the deuce and witch Solokha in “The Night Before Christmas.” In such stories we find a “fearless” description of the “terrible” which changes influence on the reader significantly.

Ironic descriptions in the “Viy” are designed in another way. It seems that they do not work but only complement the flair of the “Little Russian” narrative. For example, Homa’s attempt to escape to avoid a trip to the farmstead was written by the author with humour, but he does not grow into usual “Gogol’s humour”. It only enhances the “doom” of the Philosopher’s position: “*Scratching his ear the philosopher went out without saying a word, at the first opportunity trying to repose his hopes on his feet*” [translated by us, O. R. and N. I.]⁴¹². Everything is explained simply: “*a dark presentiment said <to a lively, cheerful young man> that something unkind was waiting for him*” [translated by us, O. R. and N. I.]⁴¹³.

Therefore, we can conclude that emotion as an experience has physiological (changes in physiological indicators) and social (behavioral) manifestations. Fear is a defensive reaction of a person when he or she experiences a real or imaginary danger. The feeling of anxiety and fear during anticipation or expectation of “bad” events are what distinguishes people from animals (the latter feel fear right at the moment of the occurrence of this event). But such emotions are not so easy to recreate verbally. However, thanks to the imagery writers successfully achieve their goal as it can be evidenced by the results of our survey.

An opinion poll held based on the material of romantic stories by N. Gogol among various age groups with different levels of education showed the change in attitude to “scary” places in the author’s works that, in our opinion, is associated with a number of reasons. Examples of “terrible” literary works proposed by the recipients also became indicative.

We had 100 respondents of different age groups and educational level. First of all, we noticed the following pattern: the higher the level of education the more significant social problems for recipients seem to be. The answers were often accompanied by verbal comments such as: “Well, what could be worse than a war ...” or “The worst thing is teenage cruelty ...”, and further: “The worst literature is about the war ...” or “The worst thing is the works about those abnormal, cruel actions that modern adolescents commit...” (mentioning transgressive literature). However, when it came to memories the recipients of older age group claimed that the stories by N. Gogol at the first reading caused unconditional fear and awe. This situation can be explained by the great life experience and the relaying of fears into the sphere of social problems which can and should be done through works of art. The unstable political situation as well as military events in eastern Ukraine probably add fuel to the flame.

Thus, the analysis of the literary works that the recipients called “scary” allows us to state that among readers of a young age (first-second year students, that is, having full secondary education), these are “Perfume: The Story of a Murder” (“Das Parfum. Die Geschichte eines Mörders”) by Patrick Süskind and “The picture of Dorian Gray” by Oscar Wilde. Among young people the author of the most terrible works is Stephen King.

The older generation pointed out that really “scary” can be called the novel “Fight club” by Chuck Palahniuk and “A Clockwork Orange” by Anthony Burgess. Interviewed 35-50-year-old respondents with a PhD or Dr degree have approached the survey quite professionally. There is more analytical than emotional component with greater degree in their answers. This is evidenced by answers like “the real beginning of horrors are the novels by A. Radcliffe and in the nineteenth century – W. Lewis, E. T. A. Hoffmann, Bram Stoker, etc.”.

⁴¹² Gogol, N. V. (1984). *Sobranie sochinenij. Tom 1-8*. [Collected works. Vols. 1-8]. Moscow: Pravda, Vol. 2, p. 159.

⁴¹³ Ibidem, p. 158.

Nevertheless, we have tried to find a point of intersection in the reading interests of various generations. Romantic novels by Nikolai Vasilyevich Gogol turned out to be such works.

To conclude, according to the respondent answers the short novel “Viy” has become the most terrible story of all. 17 out of 72 recipients with secondary education, 6 out of 13 with higher education and 9 out of 15 with a scientific degree called this work terrible; 5, 1 and 2, respectively - terrible. If we transform these figures in percentage, we will have 24%, 46%, 60% and 7%, 8%, 13% respectively.

There are also a few answers related to fear while reading the story “Nose”. The comments that accompanied this choice were mainly the following: “I would be very scared to find out that my nose was really missing” or “It’s scary for a man to find out that his nose went away on its own”. It is likely to be that the fear caused by the narrative is most likely associated with the loss of a part of oneself and this is not so much about the loss of a part of the body but rather about demutation. After all, we know that the work is based on the reception of the absurd where the logical connections of worldview are violated and what is happening can be interpreted by a sick perception or imagination as well.

However, we must not forget that younger generation takes the narrative less emotionally. It is obvious that modern technical means make it possible to visualize a more perfect picture of horror than it was possible in the 19th century. Therefore, classical literature evokes rather an ironic attitude in them.

How did N. Gogol create his “scary” paintings? First of all, he used a mythologized plot and a figurative system. N. Gogol was a mythologizer since combining the images of folk demonology (mermaids, goblins) he also introduced his own image of Viy into the plot and tried to convince the reader of his existence by referring to the Little Russian folk traditions. Although, in fact, such image cannot be found in any mythology. In addition, the writer used some of the most terrible folk beliefs according to which a witch took away the strength of a young man by riding on him. The only salvation in such cases was to lose the witch: that was what Homa Brut managed to do.

It is unconditional that to create the plot and images the author used linguistic means: vocabulary describing emotions (physiological manifestation of fear) which includes verbs, participles, nouns, adverbs, adjectives, phraseological unity. He also used extralinguistic means, for example, a description of various sensations (auditory sense modality, bodily sensation). Such emotional information allows us to realize the aesthetic function of a literary work, and a rich set of linguistic and extralinguistic tools help create an emotional background similar to modern horror genres.

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