

NATURE OF THE ARTISTIC WORD AND COMPREHENSION OF THE LITERARY WORK WITHIN THE “PHILOSOPHY OF NAME” (“SEMANTIC”) PARADIGM

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Abstract: The issue regarding the nature of the artistic word in connection with perception and comprehension of a literary work is considered within the “Philosophy of Name” (or “Semantic”) paradigm, which stems from Platonism and is determined by three categories: (a) name; (b) essence; (c) hierarchy, reflecting degree of *meonic* “contamination”. Thus comprehension of the primary meaning or pure idea of the word (text) can be represented as purification of both consciousness of the recipient and the word (text) from *meonic* layers. A good correlation is observed between key concepts of Sanskrit poetics and said paradigm.

Keywords: inner form, comprehension, katharsis, tasting rasa.

Regarding the issue on nature of the artistic word as a perception and comprehension of a work of art, one cannot but to mention importance of the “inner form” doctrine in literary critics and linguistics has largely determine a way of apprehension of said issue.

An evident dominant (which comes evident referring to respective works by W. Humboldt, A. Potebnya, P. Florensky, A. Losev, G. Vinokur, B. Larin) in respect of studies in the literary word is an idea/notion of its hierarchical three-level structure, namely:

“outer form”:

- acoustical aspect of the word and static, nominal, literal meaning;
- laws and rules of the classic logics can be applied, apprehension process might be likened to adjustment of stones when building a construction;

“inner form”:

- image-related aspect of the word, its “the immediate etymological meaning”, an indirect, oblique meaning providing
- suggestive aspect of perception/apprehension resulted in an intuitive resolution, i.e. apprehension of a particular situation in integrity as a system.

and, finally, “the idea”:

- the primary meaning, “the soul” of the word as a manifestation of what might be called the Primary Essence, Brahman, the True Being, etc.;
- is apprehended upon merging, coincidence of the subject of cognition and the object of cognition, or, to be more precise - “purified” consciousness of the subject with the initial meaning or the idea of the object - word in this particular case - thus revealing and manifesting their primary identity, i.e. making evidence of their common primary source;
- “illumination”, “satori”, “return home”, “finding of the true Self”, and the like.

As Pavel Florensky put it, “thus the cabalistic and Alexandrian, primarily, Philon-the-Jew’s, and then, through him and many other Holy Fathers, the teaching of the three-level meaning of the Holy Scripture” [Florensky 1973], particularly, that each word and/or fragment of the Scripture has the following meanings:

- perceptible (sensible and literal);
- abstract and moralistic;
- ideal and mystical or secretive.

Averintsev, referring to the words by P. Florensky, remarks the mentioned hermeneutics of the Alexandrian school with the Christian Theology, and which advocated an allegorical way of interpretation of holy scriptures, “significantly affected” the patristic and medieval Christian Platonism, and, to some extent, anticipated the romanticists’ theory of symbol [Florensky 1973, 369]. In general, this tradition stems from Platonism and represents apprehension of said issues within the “Philosophy of Name” (or “Semantic”) paradigm determined by the three categories: (a) name; (b) essence/substance; (c) hierarchy, and an image of light as its basic illustration.

Basic premises:

- Existence of a platonic “realm of light-bearing eidoses” (or “Primary Substance” or “the True Being”, or V. Nalimov’s “semantic vacuum”, or A. Blok’s “primary chaos”), which strives to obtain self-knowledge;
- a necessary condition for both communication and perception is existence of “Another”, i.e. any act of perception can be realized in dialog only;
- with said purpose eidoses are externalized through meon, involving human consciousness as well literary text and word, in particular;

- thus perception might be represented as the process of “purifying”:
- ◊ the idea from meonic (material) layers being represented as “the inner” and “outer” forms, representing, in their turn, respectively figurative and phonetic aspects, literal meaning;
- ◊ consciousness of a subject from perceptual and corporeal feelings, that leads to the true and final perception, which might be identified as “illumination”, “ecstasy” upon amalgamation, merging of the subject’s consciousness and the object’s “soul” - in this particular case - “the primary meaning” or “the idea” of a given literary word.
- Language in this case is a form of said meonic being, therefore essentially the art represents the idea rather than a real feeling, likewise the language represents ideas rather than tangible objects or corporeal, utilitarian feelings and emotions.
- We would also note that the term “*karharsis*” meaning “purification” in this case is a synonym for “comprehension” and even might be its “immediate etymological meaning” (in particular, the primary identification of catharsis and comprehension was pointed out by N. Braginskaya, who noted that the generally accepted “purification of affects” (*pathematon katharsin*) is what the manuscript dated XIV century reads; on the other hand, the manuscript of X century presents another variant - *mathematon katharsin*, thus replacing *pathematon* (“affects”) with *mathematon* (“knowledge”). Therefore the primary *mathematon katharsin* means to comprehend, reveal some knowledge, in our context - “knowledge of psyche” (*mathemata tes psyhe*.) [Braginskaya 1988, 318-319].

Inasmuch a necessary requirement of comprehension of the primary meaning, idea, is purification of both consciousness of the recipient and the word from “material/meonic/utilitarian layers,” so the following requirements related to such successive “removal” of said “layers” of the word might be indicated:

- First off, to lay on emotive constituent of the sense. With that purpose words are placed in different contexts to get rid of “ties” to a particular meaning or image thus providing the word to be turned into a symbol (“key word,” “*experessem*”.) It should be indicated that each word is potentially a trope, a “finger pointing at the Moon.” Specifically, metaphor, paronymy, poetical etymology, etc.
- Regarding recipient’s consciousness the requirement of the distance should be met thus to prevent bottom, “practical” emotions and feelings from interfering with the process of apprehending and identification of the recipient with characters of a particular work of art (short distance), or otherwise, it would remain unpacked, unidentified (long distance) (E. Ballough’s “psychological distance” concept, B. Brecht’s “*Verfremdunk*” concept.)
- In both cases technique of the method of puzzles, paradoxes is a quite effective method, because, being principally insoluble under a particular paradigm of thinking (in the sense of S. Hannabuss), thus entailing destruction, “unlocking” of it, an uniting, seemingly contrary and subject to no such identification at all (L. Vygotsky’s requirement of ambivalence as a necessary condition for catharsis in a literary work), thus merging) several literal meanings and images into a common one, and transferring the set of discrete objects into a field one, through which profiles/contours of It looms - one cannot define but get experienced.

- And when the primary light-bearing meaning comes into mind, or more precisely, it has been in the mind until is revealed, one can may call it the true comprehension: *Tat twam asi*.

Interestingly, a good correlation of the concept above is observed with the key concepts of Sanskrit poetics, belonging to the type of theories which might be defined as “poetics of word” [Grintser 1987, 272]) i.e. belonging to the “semantic” paradigm as well. Indeed,

- the key definition formulated by Bhamaha in his treatise “Kavyalamkara” and which has remained unchallenged in the Sanscrit poetical tradition, reads: “Poetry is word and sense combined.”
- Traditionally the literary work and the literary word have been assumed to have two levels: “body” (formal meaning of the word) and “soul” level of rasa (pure, deprived of any utilitarian aspect, aesthetic emotion), and dhvani (hidden, indirect meaning, through which rasa is revealed).
- The ultimate aim, of perception of the literary work by the recipient is to “taste rasa,” characterized by the act of self-knowledge: “the bliss of one’s own consciousness,” the realization of the unchangeable emotional essence of one’s own “ego”, having been purged from individual-related, utilitarian emotions and feelings. Anandavardhana in “Dhvanyaloka” emphasized the psychological aspect of this stage of perception: the universalization of the aesthetic object and subject and their subsequent identification, the concurrence of a reader’s subconscious emotional complexes with the emotional center of a particular literary work. “Tasting rasa” was identified by Bhatta Mammata (“Kavyaprakasa”), Abhinavagupta (“Dhvanyalokalocana”) and other prominent Indian scholars with “the tasting of the Supreme Brahman.”

In conclusion, the author would like to mention a widely spread misconception related to the Cartesian *cogito ergo sum*, which, in the author’s regard, is in good compliance with the semantic paradigm. Actually, R. Descartes in his letter dated October 16, 1639 to Mercenne, a friend of his, mentioned a “natural light of mind” (*intuitus mentis*) - some empirical ability, inherent “by nature” (*se conaissent naturellement*) to the human being, and revealing on the *cogito* level which was considered by Descartes as the level on which the light bursts into the human mind, and being in which, we are able to precisely and faultlessly apprehend; and knowledge, being obtained in state of mind, is true and subject to no doubt, inasmuch such knowledge is obtained directly - from the primary source - rather than through intellectual procedures being in compliance with certain cognitive logical operations [Mamardashvili 1994, 88-89].

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