

Abstract

The work focuses on the analysis of the poetics of Vladimir Nabokov's novel *Invitation to a Beheading* in terms of its cultural context. Specifically deals with its relation to the Soviet theatrical avant-garde, with mythopoetic symbolism and early avant-garde.

We approach to the novel as a parody of the post-revolutionary avant-garde Soviet theater experiments. Special attention is paid to the fact that due to the theatricalization of the text, i.e. assimilation of the novel space with the theatricals, diegesis of *Invitation to a Beheading* is divided into two equal opposing worlds, each of which represents particular poetics. World built around main character of Cincinnatus is comparable to symbolism, namely to the symbol and symbolistic perception of Andrei Bely. The central principle of this reality is semiotization of the world. The surrounding fictional world creates its opposite as it is shaped by the principle of desemiotization which - as a central aspect of formalistic-futuristic avant-garde – systematically dismantles hero's world. However neither of these worlds is winning. In the end it is the synthesis, which helps the hero get emancipated from the novel's world. The *Invitation to a Beheading* can therefore be interpreted as original artist's world manifesto which through presentation and ontologization of various conceptions and approaches gives polemic view on two different poetics.