Interpretation of the Beauty of "Lolita" from the Perspective of Cognitive Linguistics

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Abstract. Lolita, a famous black humor work of Nabokov, and readers normally find out that it is vague to grasp the meaning of this type of style. This paper illuminates a cognitive method to probe ideas in the work, brings you a new angle to find out meanings in Nabokov and his work. Getting ideas from the mechanism of cognitive linguistics, ideas in a fiction can be found to have a prototype or projection in its context. This paper tries to find "Lolita" from, both in form and content, has subverted the prototype category of “novel”, opened a new categorization process of “novel”, and established a new prototype.

Introduction

"Lolita” was the representative work of Vladimir Nabokov the American Russian writer, the meaning of whose words was too disoriented for normal readers to grasp. In this paper, I intend to interpret its unique beauty from the perspective of cognitive linguistics; thus I hope people can get a more clear understanding of Nabokov’s literature work.

First, start from the core concept of aestheticism. "Beauty is the form" was the outstanding expression of this group of writers in this area. They didn’t care too much about what was practically recorded in the writing, and what the reader really see in the pictures in their minds from the black humor works, what the writer concerned was whether their works could produce with the various facts they fetched from the world the beautiful effect in the readers’ minds, and if the writers could enjoy themselves the wonderful artistic product worked by wonder writer themself. And if reader understand it or criticize it, they didn’t care too much practically.

Most readers in the society misunderstood "Lolita" for its pornographic, eroticism rising minute description of man’s life with his woman. Many readers inclined to believe this is a novel about pornography, whose contents are full of vulgar descriptions and sayings. Misreading is a problem which we cannot go bypass; we can deal with it by see it from a new point of view.

Gotiye Said: "the Beauty of Art Is Purposeless."
Wilde said: "Form is everything." The relationships between art and nature, life, times and morality are all to get beauty by forms. Art pursue form so it gets beauty, form is the first thing people need to reach for.
Sanctus said: "art is the form." Art is self-contained, and it does not reflect life. Art is not utilitarian; he has nothing to do with morality. The key to art lies in the form, and the innovation of form is the pursuit of the artists in their lives.

On the Misreading of "Lolita"

Pornographic and vulgar words, sentences were scattered around in this book, readers could naturally get the idea that this is a work try to attract people to get the comfort of sexual life imaginations. And people easily could make a conclusion the book was not the one literature work which could make reader to form a serious idea about the world, the human society. The purpose of it was to invoke people to search for happiness through flirting with young women, and was virtually a bad book.
Random structure. When people read, they could not easily find in the novel a clear direction and plan for them follow, they somewhat just like see a paste-up picture before their eyes, and the design under it couldn’t be found out so soon.
"Although his works exuded his decadent mood, full of strange words, structure disorder, he is still a very important writer of prestige." [1]

**About "Lolita" Aesthetic Interpretation**

"In fact, Hebert's having good feelings for Lolita is the pursuit of artistic creation of aesthetic pursuit of Nabokov. Lolita symbolizes the beauty of art, and Hebert on behalf of the author, in the process of writing" Lolita" Nabokov experienced the beauty." [2]

**Nabokov's aesthetic literary criticism.** "Lolita" has no moral meaning. To me, the existence of a fictional work is mainly because it provides me with artistic enjoyment, art is the only standard." [3]

1) Through the memory and imagination to break through the "time of the prison" imprisonment, to build a transcendental, eternal "the other side of the world".
2) "The other side of the world" is the real world, while the real world is illusory and unreal.
3) With the "art theory" aesthetic tendency of literature. Nabokov advocates the pursuit of art and aesthetic ecstasy; he was "stubborn" said: "for me, a novel can only give me a straightforward aesthetic ecstasy something when it exists; it is the existing feeling in some way, at some moment linked with other living states. Art (curiosity, gentleness, kindness, in ecstasies) is the standard state".

**Wang Qingsong uses three key words to summarize Nabokov's literary and artistic aesthetics: Subjective imagination and game.** Nabokov to talk about art skills: "theme" or "main line", "structure" and "style"[4]


**The Aesthetic Interpretation of "Lolita"**

The diversity of "Lolita's" artistic style: (1) ambiguity and contradiction; (2) the theme orientation and choice: Memoirs & fiction; narrator & hero; tragedy & comedy; love story & absurd reality & fictional elements.

Superb language skills: "Lolita": the feast of English
1) Style Parody
2) A large number of intertextual information
3) The word game

"Lolita" Aesthetic Interpretation of the Cognitive Perspective

The experience of cognitive linguistics: mind, meaning, thinking, concepts, are derived from the experience of the body.

"Concepts are formed through the body, the brain, and the experience of the world. Was obtained, especially through the perception and muscle movement ability." [6]

Category can be defined as "a sufficient and necessary condition for the nature and properties of the decision", for example, "a bird": a long haired, two legged, flying animal. ---- Aristotle, Catullus

There is an asymmetry between the internal members of a linguistic category; there are typical, good members, atypical, poor members. [7]

[...] the focus of cognitive linguistics is prototype-based linguistic categorization, and the consequences of the categorization processes are semantic structures stored in our minds and reflected by language. [8]

The concept of prototype category in cognitive linguistics—the "literary archetype". We know that the written forms that we used to note down information for people to collect or enjoy include: documentary, travelogue, poetry, prose, novels, drama, memoir, of whose types we normally focus the four ones poetry / prose / novels / drama as the prototype of "literature".
Table 1. Prototype Category Theory in Cognitive Linguistics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>single</th>
<th>[+ANIMATE] + [+HUMAN] + [+MALE] + [+ADULT]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>man</td>
<td>[+HUMAN] + [+MALE] + [+ADULT]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>woman</td>
<td>[+HUMAN] + [+MALE] + [-MARRIED]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boy</td>
<td>[+HUMAN] + [+MALE] + [+ADULT]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>girl</td>
<td>[+HUMAN] + [+MALE] + [+ADULT]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*bachelor (光棍):* [+HUMAN] + [+MALE] + [-MARRIED]

"Novel" Prototype (Prototype)

And as for the style of fiction, we use narration as the means to carry the information. For elements of fiction, it include: character, plot, and context. These three elements work together to complete a whole body of a novel.

Digestion of “Novel” Style Prototype in "Lolita"

Novel, diary, memoir, poetry, drama, travel notes respectively belong to different literary forms, in "Lolita" Nabokov invested all these factors to create an “abnormal form” to satisfy his purpose, enjoying his great ecstasy by his combination. Thus his literature work digested all the other five literature forms in "Lolita".

Digestion of the "Novel" Elements in "Lolita"

Characterization, Plot formation, Environment description are the three compulsory elements in novel writing. "Lolita" used different tricks in describing these elements. Readers found that all the elements here in the novel were used to display writer’s imagination, that everything in or out of our understanding might be chosen to paste on the board to form a good picture or something shaking our mind.

Characterization here in a literature work include the building of Hero, Heroine and Foil.

From the perspective of prototype-based linguistic categorization, in our minds: Lolita reflected from the prototype of Annabel in the novel story. We know, from young time of Umbert, the previous love experience of him, existence of the flesh body of the beautiful twelve-year-old young girl always rooted deeply in his mind. When Humbert met Lolita, the existence was evoked again in his mind and psychology, projection of Lolita in his mind came from his previous younger lover Annabel, whom he loved so deeply and unforgettable.

Table 2. Resolution of the Elements of "Novel" by Lolita.

And Humbert or Quilty, the two were prototype-based projection with each other, only the first one got the first hand to catch the chance, but Quilty the playwright never lost will to forget Lolita, he didn’t wait to find a chance to be close to Lolita. Humbert was an overt lover of Lolita, and Quilty was a privy one.
So we from cognitive perspective we can be more clear to understand the functions of these characters in the novel.

**The Resolution of the "Novel" Elements on "Lolita": the Preparation of the Plot**

According to LanChun's chart, the development of the novel’s plot will go following the below disignment chart. Every part of the progress of the plot will answer readers the questions in the form, with yes or no. With this skill, we readers can possibly see how the realization of the projection of the prototype of the whole story procedure in readers ‘brains have been reached.

We clearly are aware of that on the progress on the plot, Lolita was always under the control of Humbert, because the later carefully and exactly planed the love story with Lolita, but Quilty no, and he was still Humbert’s strong competitor. Finally Humbert killed him. Desire of Humbert for Lolita was stronger than Quilty. With cognitive perspective, we can feel more confident to search and find Nabokov’s masterwork Lolita. [9]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Y want X?</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have X got Y?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have Y got X?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X continued owning Y?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y continued owning X?</td>
<td>No</td>
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Table 3. Plot Preparation

**The Resolution of the "Novel" Elements on "Lolita": Plot Preparation**

Environmental description. Include social environment and natural environment. They are used to explain the background of the story, render the story atmosphere, stand out prominent features of characters, imply the future destiny of characters, promote the development of the plot changes, and deepen the theme of the novel.

Before writing Lolita, the author prepared more than enough raw materials for authoring Lolita. We know that Nabokov was born in old, Russian aristocratic family and grew up Soviet society. After fleeing from USSR, he experiences much traveling in many areas of Europe and finally settled in USA. Much knowledge and much experience make him storing abundant materials to paste on his creation of fiction writing. In this novel, we find that Car hotel; countryside areas of the United States; the natural landscapes, European areas, the real world, and the other side of the world act all appear in small world of the novel. We feel we just enjoy a big delicious feast cooked by Nabokov. This is maybe something we felt about his black humor work.

**Conclusions**

The Nabokov of the art of the novel is equivalent to the "pursuit of aestheticism on the character of Lolita Lolita" in turn to portray, elegant art refers to (allusion), and the exquisite description of natural scenery, is the misunderstanding of Nabokov.

"Lolita", both in form and content, has subverted the prototype category of “novel”, opened a new categorization process of “novel”, and established a new prototype. This is the art of the novel highlights Nabokov’s pursuit of aestheticism.
References


