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The Study of Biological Metaphor in Gogol's *The Nose*

Rameshwar Suresh Rao Solanke

Assist. Prof.

Khare-Dhere-Bhosale College,

Guhagar,

Dist. Ratnagiri 415703 (MS),

India.

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Abstract:

Dostoevsky said 'We all came from Gogol's *The Overcoat*.' Gogol (1809-1852) is the precursor of many last half of the 19th and 20th century writers because of his depiction of satirical, bureaucratic, grotesque, black humour and darker side of human life. The missing nose of the protagonist Kovalev in *The Nose* is a biological metaphor which aspires higher civil service rank day by day. He becomes over ambitious like Shakespeare's Macbeth. Through this story, Gogol has innovated the new genre called magic realism. The present article highlights on Gogol's novella *The Nose* which is a biological metaphor that make the fun of provincial bureaucracies. He is the harbinger of the twentieth century European writers. His influence still continues as in Jumpy Lahari's **Namesake** has Gogol a character in this novel. His works are often introduced in the context of his own experience in Czar Dynasty in Russia and self-imposed isolation. He caught between a desire to live in literature and to live a normal life. He was self-critical and physically weak. Gogol nowhere found Russia a comfortable and spend his creative years (1836-1848) in Rome. He is both symptom and product of his age. He depicts satirical bureaucratic, grotesque black humour, obsessed world and darker side of human life in his works.

Keywords: Culture, Czar Dynasty, biology, metaphor, psychology, modernism.

Gogol's novella *The Nose* (1836) is a biological metaphor which makes the fun of provincial bureaucracies. It is a funny satire with a surreal or supernatural twist. One day protagonist Kovalev wakes up and finds out that his nose is missing. It is a biological metaphor which leads its own life as a civil servant. At the beginning of the story, one morning a barber and his wife were having breakfast when he finds a nose in his bread he identifies that it belongs to his one of the clients i. e. Collegiate Assessor Kovalev whom he shaves every Wednesday and Sunday. At first, both are in the state of dilemma. The Barber Ivan Yakovlevich's wife Praskovya Osipovna gets mad at her husband's carelessness, and

very angry with him. Yakovlevich felt totally crushed. He is just thinking without knowing anything. He is overwhelming and said finally whether he might have drunk yesterday or not. He was not sure about it. He points out that bread and nose both are entirely different things which happened at the same time. Gogol made this character that is in the state of dilemma and wandering in the chaotic world.

He himself was unable to explain why his nose is missing. Here we can see the biological metaphors in the change of his nose. Now, in this context, he is surprised to see his missing nose. It means the desire of Kovalev is taking the form or objective reality in the form of missing nose. He was so much frightened. Here we can apply the theory of Sigmund Freud who said – that unconscious plays a predominant part in human life. Kovalev was obsessed with a desire to have a higher rank in society. That desire he is getting satisfaction through the biological metaphor like missing a nose. The character reminds us Ben Jonson's *Volpone, The Fox* who is obsessed with wealth and gold. Kovalev was thinking so much about the missing nose.

He thought and went into a beauty shop to look at himself in the mirror. The boys were busy in the shop and taking pastries on trays, yesterday's newspaper, stained with spilt coffee, lay about on table and chairs. Here, Gogol is focusing light on the common people's lives as they didn't get newspaper's of present day at 19th country Czarist Russian government. With his outer appearance, it seems that he belonged to the rank of State Councilor. By all his indications, he was going somewhere on a visit. It means that the nose is a separate entity and searching out his own identity. He is establishing his own identity where Kovalev is not able to achieve. Kovalev deeply lost his mind. He is unable to think over such an expectable incident. How this is possible that yesterday his nose on his face and the very next day it disappeared from his face. He ran after the carriage which was fortunately stopped near the Kazan Cathedral. He hurriedly makes way into the cathedral. There were few people who were praying in the church. They all stood just by the entrance. Kovalev did not have the strength to pray. He is helplessly searching out in all corners for the gentleman. The nose had completely hidden his face in his big standing collar & was praying with an expression of the greatest devotion. Actually, the nose is pretending to pray the Almighty for fulfilling his wish which is hidden in his mind. Here in this encounter scene between Kovalev and nose, nose is indicating his own independent existence. He is unwilling to be a part of Kovalev, his master. He is a replica of Kovalev himself who is always longing much.

Kovalev overwhelms and said the newspaper clerk that the nose is calling himself a state councilor. He told the newspaper clerk to announce it for bringing him as soon as possible. One thing is clear that in this situation Kovalov is not willing to disclose his identity. He is so happy to exhibit his identity as a superior rank or councilor or same rank. In such nervousness and absurd condition, he is attracted towards the fair ladies. He said to the newspaper clerk that he called the wife of the state councilor Chekhtarev, Palageya Grigerievna Podtochina, a staff officer's wife and he said with pause that she had a very pretty daughter and emphasize the fact that they were his good acquaintances. He also said that in such helpless condition, he could not meet them because he is not having a nose on his place. Here the nose is a biological metaphor which indicates how without nose he is an insignificant fellow who is not only underestimated but also loses his identity.

He came to his apartment extremely helpless condition. He went into his bedroom and threw himself into an armchair and finally, after several sighs, said He thinks that if it would have cut off in a war or a duel, or if it would cause himself, there is no worry about it. But the guilty thing is that it was vanished of no reason. According to him, it was incredible that a nose has vanished from his face. The suffering completely reassured him that he was living in a waking state. He slowly approached the mirror and at first closed his eyes and then opened it to look his face. He thought that it was really incomprehensible. He thinks and blooms at last to Madame Podtochina, the staff officer's wife who wished him to marry her daughter. He himself enjoyed being with her but kept avoiding a final settlement. When her mother was ready to offer her daughter's hand, he himself avoid it softly by saying that he was still young and had to serve some five years more, the unit he turned exactly forty two. Therefore Kovalev is of the view that Madame is taking revenge on him, hired some sorceress and decided to put a spell on him. He wants to take a legal action against her in a court.

Kovalev was very eager see his own nose. The police officer told him that he had brought it with him so there is no need to be in trouble. He said that in such a strange event the crook of a barber on Voznesenskaya Street has a hand and he is sitting in a police station. Then the policeman took out a nose wrapped in a piece of paper. Kovalev's joy has no known bounds when he saw his nose and invited the police officer to have a cup of tea with him. He indirectly asked for bribery and Kovalev offered him a red banknote from the table. It is another Gogol's attack on bureaucracy. At that time, much corruption was prevalent in Russian life.

On the departure of the policeman, collegiate assessor remained in some vague state for a few minutes and acquired the ability to see and feel such obliviousness came over him an account of the unexpected joy. He carefully studied his own nose. He is suspicious to know whether it is right nose or not. When he was observing the nose, he kept repeating that the pimple popped out on the left side the last day. Gogol tells the philosophy of life in the above lines. It means, that everything in the universe is mortal. Our joy after a while can convert into a sorrow and vice – versa. He used a simile to connote the meaning that a ring which was born out of a store also finally merges with smooth surface. According to Kovalev, though the nose is found but it had to be attached in its place. He is worried what would happen if it does not stick. This event reminds us in P.B. Shelley's *To a Skylark*: "We look before and after and pine for what is not". It means, he is not happy or not able to get the happiness or not want to enjoy the moment but worried about what may happen if it is not attached to the place.

Kovalev with a feeling of inexplicable fear, rushed to the table and set the mirror before him to put the nose on its place. His hands were trembling but alas! The nose is not able to stick. For Kovalev, 'Man proposes, God disposes' such condition occurs due to his excessive desire for rank and status. He warmed it a little with his breath and again brought it to the smooth space bet his two checks but in vain. The nose is still wanting to be an independent entity. He was damn angry with the nose. Then after, he called his servant boy Ivan to invite the doctor who dwells in the same building. The doctor is a materialistic person who longs for outward satisfaction. He gives much importance to the appearance and standard living. The physician tells the many exercises to befit his nose but after performing the test, the physician shook his head and said:

The physician advised Kovalav not to attach it because it might be the worst for him. Kovalev wants to meditate and how he can lead a life without the presence of nose. He has many good acquaintances. He proposes to Chekhtareva, a state councilor's wife Podtochina, a staff officer's wife. He can't meet them alone except through the police. It may an insult to him because he doesn't have a status i.e. nose in its place. He wants to take care of him a lot because he is worried that any other organ might damage and create a great problem for him. The doctor kindly and frankly advised him not to attach the nose to his face. He said that he should leave it to the effect of nature. He also told him that he will be as healthy without a nose as with one. In case of a nose, he advised him to put it in a jar of alcohol or better still add two tablespoons of aquafortis and warm vinegar and he can purchase it. He is even

ready to purchase it if he doesn't put too high a price on it. When the doctor tells about purchasing the nose, he has cried desperately and says no to it. Actually, there was not a doctor came at all. Just his self is wandering in order to seek its importance. It's his nose.

Having given a piece of advice, the doctor went away. Kovalev did not even notice the doctor's face. He decided to write a letter to the staff officer's wife the very next day before filing a complaint on the chance that she might agree to return to him. In this letter, he blames her for having part of the missing of his nose. He writes in the letter that as an official, it's disgusting itself to vanish it suddenly. In the concluding part of the letter, he shows the respect as well. She has written back to Kavolev that she had no idea what he in telling about the nose. She doesn't know anyone who in having a name of a nose. If he wants to marry her daughter, she will welcome him to give her daughter's hand happily. She concludes her letter with utmost sincerity.

The rumors of this event spread all over the city. Kovalev becomes a small celebrity in the St Petersburg city. There were many such incidents were happening like experiment on the effect of magnetism story. The dancing chairs an Konyu- shennya street and this event people are tasting by telling that the nose of the collegiate assessor Kovalev went strolling on Nevsky Prospect at exactly three o'clock. Some people believe that the nose was in the Junker's shop a fashionable shop in St Petersburg located on the corner of Nevsky Prospect and Bolshaya Morskaya strict and police also intervene the shop because of its crowd. The people of the city are tasting such many incidents about the same nose, different rumor spread that the nose went strolling not an Nevsky Prospect but in the Tavricheslay garden and one respectable lady a led the owner of that garden to show the phenomenon of nose to her children.

All such charming events jay and amusement that people laugh with it and then completely exhausted. The intellectual people are displeased to know that such events which were occurring at an age of enlightenment. They are not only occurring but the worst thing is that people are being believed. They also think that the Government should take some action against such an event. Gogol in the chapter II of the *Nose* wants to say the entire journey of biology which is a nose. It is Biological metaphor wherein Gogol has interwoven the nose as a metaphor. Gogol wants to focus on the Tsarist regime where people are accustomed towards corruption as the police commissioner who brings the nose to In the III chapter of the story, at the beginning itself, Gogol has used a precise line which can be

applicable for being an entire story. The textual line as quoted from the text: "Perfect nonsense goes on in the world." The same nose had driven about in the rank and state councilor and made such a stir in town was back in place after two weeks that is on 07 April. The nose was vanished on 25th march and exactly after is 15 days, it came back to its own place. There is also the possibility that these 15 days, nose has become a biological metaphor and fulfilled his master's ambition. It is very ambitious nose whose journey in tragic one because he has to see many ups and down. He asked Ivan to say how the nose is looking. Ivan replied that it was looking clean. During the hide and seek game of both Ivan and Kovalev, the barber Ivan Yakovlevich peeked in the door. Kovalev first asked him whether he had cleaned his hands or not. After confirming, Kovalev was ready to shave his face as usual. Ivan Yakovlevich covered him with a towel and in an instant, with the aid of a brush, transformed his whole chin in an instant with the aid of a brush cream as he served on merchant's birthday.

The barber while shaving look at the nose for a long time. After a while, he completed his work to shave the face of Kavalev at ease. When everything is alright, he was very hurried to get dressed, hired a cab and done straight to the pastry shop. He cried from afar and said "A cup of hot chocolate, boy!" and instantly went up to the mirror and felt comfortable to see his nose. He just turned around with satirical air, looked at two military men, one of military man had a nose no bigger than a waistcoat button. Kovalev felt so happy that his nose is bigger than nose of that military man. After that he went to the office of the department where he has solicited a post as vice – governor or, failing that, as an executive. He was passing the waiting room, once again, looked in the mirror and feel comfortable. Then he meets so many high ranking people like collegiate assessor, or major, a great mocker, & underestimated them by saying: "Well, don't I know you, you sharp!" On his way, he met Podtochina, the staff officer's wife and finally he told her that he is not going to marry her daughter after spending a very long time with them.

Now major Kovalav has been behaving like nothing wrong has happened to him on Nevsky Prospect. The nose which is a metaphor sat on his face as if nothing was wrong. It was not even showing a sign that it had ever gone anywhere. He was seen henceforth is a good humor, smiling, chasing after all the pretty ladies and even stopping once in front of a shop. He doesn't learn anything from his previous experience. Suddenly the narrator which is a third person in the story stops his narration. He was surprised to know that how such topic might be came in the printed form. The narrator is of the view that how such

‘nonsense’ material might be printed. The narrator takes pauses and enforces the silliness of the topic.

Truly, Gogol’s important literary productions illuminate the problem of the human conscience and consciousness of the modern era. It’s perhaps no exaggeration to assert that Gogol’s artistic vigor and true independence of mind with which he endeavors in his novels and short stories to find answers to the eternal questions confronting mankind. In other words, Gogol’s keen psychological insight not only penetrated the drama of human life, but also defended the exalted human values and ethics starting a new era in Modern Literature.

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