Aesthetic Bliss as the Otherworldly Quality: The Birth of Nabokov's Aesthetic Metaphysics in *Invitation to A Beheading*

Similar to post-apocalyptic literature only in the sense that Forges its foundation mainly on destruction and melancholy, Vladimir Nabokov depicts the same tragic atmosphere in the presence of what he calls 'common people' *in Invitation to a Beheading* (2011a/1935). In other words, the dystopian world in the story is not limited to gruesome outcomes of human deeds; the apocalyptic world of the protagonist, Cincinnatus, is, in fact, the result of the negligence of what Nabokov calls 'Aesthetic Bliss,' the nature of which embodies four fundamental themes: common sense's perception of reality and *otherworldly* conceptions of imagination, knowledge, and timelessness. Whereas many researches try to correlate these themes to Nabokov's perception of metaphysics, the presentation argues that these themes in *Invitation to a Beheading* appear in the form of what this study calls 'otherworldly existential crisis.' It is to be explained in this presentation that the depiction of this type of crisis emerges in the form of rejection of specific worldly virtues, which bear more political connotations despite Nabokov's claim that he tried to keep his art distinct from political significations. It is worth noting that the illumination of the above stated themes in this work is not explicitly manifested, however, it is important to point to the fact that understanding Nabokov's latter works, especially *Lolita* and *Pale Fire*, requires redirecting the attention of readers to the primary texts of the writer in which the raw seeds of otherworldly themes emerge. The analysis of the themes in *Invitation to a Beheading* gains more significance when one also identifies the fact that the development of not only these themes, but also the main characters in other works of Nabokov have their roots in this work. As a result, the analysis of the present study brings into attention the very nature of the dichotomy of otherworldliness and worldliness, which finds its most sophisticated artistic expressions in the works following *Invitation to a Beheading*.