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European Slavic Studies Journal
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Echoes of Verifications (Voices of The East)

- 168 **Peripheral Modernism and the World-System:
Slovenian Literature and Theory of the Nineteen-Sixties**

*Periferni modernizem in svetovni sistem:
slovenska književnost in teorija šestdesetih let 20. stoletja*

✦ **MARKO JUVAN**

- 200 **From Narrative Parallelism to Prosaic Metaphor
(The Problem of Counterpart in the Short Story)**

*От нарративного параллелизма к языковой метафоре прозы
(Проблема дубликата в новелле)*

✦ **GÁBOR KOVÁCS**

VARIA

- 226 ***Selbstmarketing, Selbstmanagement, Selbstoptimierung,
Self-Branding, Self-Tracking: soggetto autorazionalizzante
e mercato del lavoro***

*Self-marketing, Self-management, Self-optimization,
Self-branding, Self-tracking: self-rationalizing subject
and the labor market*

✦ **GORANKA ROCCO**

APPENDIX

- 256 **Ivan Verč — Izbrana bibliografija**

Ivan Verč - Selected Bibliography

Metaphor is not a literary specificity. Metaphoric utterance (or meaning) is a common aspect of any usage of language. But the *production* of ambiguity reveals very special processes in literature. As (among many others) Roman Jakobson has emphasized ambiguity in verse language is created by “vocalic, grammatical, and semantic counterparts” (Jakobson: *Yeats’ “Sorrow of Love” through the Years*). Does literary narration and prose language also have specific and unique processes of producing ambiguity? Bakhtin has already elaborated an effective theory of the image in artistic prose on the basis of his well-known concept of polyphony, heteroglossia, and dialogism. In my essay I would like to propose another concept of ambiguity in narrative prose. In prose language narrative discourse and descriptive discourse always interweave. The first one usually refers to a person, the second one is about (material or immaterial) objects. Interweaving discourses attribute a story to the object. In artistic prose the story of the object becomes the *narrative counterpart* of the story of a person. And in the world of literary text such a narrative parallelism leads to a semantic parallelism – a very special type of ambiguity in prose language.

DESCRIPTION, PROSAIC METAPHOR,
NARRATIVE PARALLELISM,
SEMANTIC COUNTERPART

Метафора и полисемичность не встречаются только в литературе, они характерны для речевого поведения вообще, однако их образование в литературе связано с применением специфических приемов. В свое время Роман Якобсон (в том числе) уже выявил, что полисемичность стихотворного текста определяет «звуковая, грамматическая и семантическая эквивалентность» [counterpart]. Обладают ли литературное повествование и прозаическая презентация высказывания специфическими приемами порождения полисемии? Михаил Бахтин разработал теорию фигуративных образований в прозе, тесно связанных с полифонией, гетерогенностью и диалогичностью высказывания. Здесь я пытаюсь еще раз подойти к теории полисемичности повествовательной прозы с несколько иной точки зрения. В языковой презентации прозы повествовательный дискурс всегда находится в тесном взаимодействии с описательным. Первый, как правило, ориентирован на персонаж, второй на (материальную или нематериальную) вещь или деталь. Взаимодействие этих дискурсов превращает описание вещей в нарративный дубликат [counterpart] истории персонажей и нарративный параллелизм перерастает в семантический параллелизм.

ОПИСАНИЕ, МЕТАФОРА ПРОЗАИЧЕСКОГО
ЯЗЫКА, НАРРАТИВНЫЙ ПАРАЛЛЕЛИЗМ,
СЕМАНТИЧЕСКИЙ ДУБЛИКАТ

1
The essay was supported by the János Bolyai Research Scholarship of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

2

The similarities and the differences of literary counterpart-theory and philosophical counterpart-theory will be the problem of an other essay (see Lewis 1986).

Il discorso si fa secondo me molto più interessante, se invece di andare alla ricerca del codice che soggiace alla metafora, ci si chiede che tipo di codice »apra« la metafora, ovvero quali informazioni additive ci dà la metafora per capire il discorso nel quale essa è inserita e, di conseguenza, chi è il soggetto del discorso e chi il suo destinatario. Insomma, invece di un percorso che va dall'enciclopedia alla metafora, proviamo a percorrere la via opposta che va dalla metafora all'enciclopedia (Verč 2016: 306).

In my essay I would like to focus attention on the common problem of narration, prose language, and metaphor. I presume that prose language does have a very special process of creating metaphorical meaning. Metaphor in prose language leads us far beyond the general problem of metaphorical utterances as it has a unique concern in the devices of emplotment and narrative discourse. The production of metaphorical meaning in prose works has two main aspects. The first is a structural one: when prosaic metaphor and the phenomenon of narrative parallelism in emplotment coincide. The second aspect is a semantic one: when prosaic metaphor and narrative parallelism result in a special semantic parallelism. This is what I would call the production of *counterpart* in which the “hero”, the agent or the subject acquires a special kind of *alter ego* in objects.² Prosaic metaphor, narrative parallelism, and the production of counterpart work together in order to create an internal interpretation of the plot in a short story.

The whole problem arises from the function of objects and descriptive discourse in prose language. In the classical narratologies of the 1960's description was considered to be a “subordinate aid to narrative text segments” (Bal 1981–1982: 101). In the paradigm of narratology it was Mieke Bal who pointed out with the assistance of Van

Buuren's model that description works as a metaphor in novels. Descriptive paragraphs have special and unique connections with all those narrative sentences that represent agents in action. And these connections are not structural but semantic ones as the description of a landscape, a town, a room, an object or clothes becomes a metaphorical interpretation of the agent. Moreover by means of the analysis of the novel *Mme Bovary* Mieke Bal managed to demonstrate that "metaphoric contiguity" (129) between descriptive and narrative paragraphs can even be spread out to an entire novel: the successive descriptions of the city of Rouen spread a net all over the novel which results in a metaphorical interpretation of the main character and her narrated story. As Mieke Bal writes: "because the comparé of this metaphor includes the entire fabula of the novel, the description may also be regarded as a *mise en abyme*, a mirror-text" (130).

Now I would like to add some methodological comments to this metaphorical concept of description.³ The comments are derived from a slightly different method of reading literary texts. This method is concerned with poetic language. I read literary text as a consistent poetic discourse. In literary text every component of the linguistic material is subordinated to a dominant element or a constructive principle. It is poetic language that deforms and unifies all the other usages of language in a novel or short story. From this point of view I would like to emphasize that the separation of description from narration is only a result of a rhetorical and theoretical distinction. It is very useful to make distinctions between the words characters live by, the words used by the narrative devices of emplotment, and the world-making words, because this is the only method that enables us to separate subjects, acts, and objects logically. And of course interpretation may make use of the recognition of the obvious differences between

3
See also Bal 2004.

4

The production of counterpart in literary prose work rebuilds the initial unity of man and object. The nascent object is an extension of man; objects (as extensions of man) are media, and "all media are active metaphors in their power to translate experience into new forms" (McLuhan 1964: 57). This is the very short antropological essence of the literary theory of counterpart.

the language of a character, the phrasing of narrative discourse, and the sentence production of descriptive discourse. But we must not forget: first of all it is the prose language of a novel or a short story that we read. It is not the words of a character, it is not the narrative discourse, it is not a description that we read. It is only the book that we are confronted with. And because of the very special devices of poetic language a book, a work, a novel, or a short story acquires a unique, individual, and consistent discourse or text in spite of the fact that it may contain many languages. This discursive poetic unity of heteroglossia is called the "dialogical character" of prose language by Bakhtin (1981: 259–422), or the "concordant discordance" in the configurative act of narrative text by Ricoeur (1990, 52–90).

Why is it important to say that first of all there is only prose language? Because what narrative, descriptive and personal discourse may distantiate, prose language links together. In prose language subject, act, and object get involved in a mutual correspondance. Not only the agent has a story, but also the object has one. In a novel or a short story the object is not only the instrument of an action or a focal point of description, but also the protagonist of a story. In prose language the subject, the agent shares the story with the object. The object takes part in the subject's activity, and vice versa, the subject becomes an active part of the object's life. The structural realization of this mutual participation in each others' story is *narrative parallelism*. What is more, structural equivalence (see: Schmid 1992: 29–71) results in a semantic correspondance in prose language: the name of the agent and the name of the object get involved in a special poetic meaning-transaction or meaning-interaction even without a concrete metaphoric utterance. And in this mutual correspondance, in accordance with the narrative parallelism the object becomes the counterpart of the subject.⁴

There are two types of narrative parallelism. The first type is when at least two different stories take place simultaneously and the verbal presentation of the two sequences (the sentences) are interlocking like the two tapes of a zipper. In the second type at least two distinguishable stories take place, one after the other and a morphological (sujet) correspondance interweaves the two sequences.⁵ Both of these two types of narrative parallelism result in a semantic equivalence and develop new possibilities for the production of prosaic metaphors. This way the “hero” or the agent acquires a counterpart. And as a result, the similarities and the dissimilarities of the “hero” and its counterpart produce an internal interpretation of the story within the limits of the literary work.

Let me cite E. A. Poe (*The Oval Portrait*) and Jack London (1993, *Finish*) short stories in order to demonstrate the role of narrative parallelism and the production of counterpart in prose language.

NARRATIVE PARALLELISM IN POE’S SHORT STORY

In Poe’s poetics, short stories are based upon the principle of the unity of effect:

*A skillful literary artist has constructed a tale. If wise, he has not fashioned his thoughts to accommodate his incidents; but having conceived, with deliberate care, a certain **unique or single effect** to be wrought out, he then invents such incidents; he then combines such events as may best aid him in establishing this **preconceived effect**. If his very initial sentence tends not to the out-bringing of this effect, then he has failed in his first step. In the whole composition there should be no word written, of which the tendency, direct or indirect, is not to the one*

5
On the method of morphological plot-analysis see Propp 1958.

pre-established design. And by such means, with such care and skill, a picture is at length painted which leaves in the mind of him who contemplates it with a kindred art, a sense of the fullest satisfaction. The idea of the tale has been presented unblemished, because undisturbed; and this is an end unattainable by the novel. Undue brevity is just as exceptionable here as in the poem; but undue length is yet more to be avoided (Poe 1975: 568–588).

Thus, it's not the narrative act with which a short story starts. A literary work will become a whole and genuine unity only if all of its poetic devices are extended from a certain fundamental element, in Poe's terminology it is the "effect" which has already been found and preconceived. And there is only one heuristic element to be extended by verbal articulation. The extension of the unifier component is achieved by the selection of matching events and words, by the combination of events into plots and words into sentences, and by the narrative configuration of plots and sentences. And there is not even a thought before the discovery and the extension of the fundamental element – the poetic wisdom (Poe says: "picture") doesn't precede the text, it is the result of the extension of the preconceived semantic effect achieved by poetic devices.

The purport of this brief summery of Poe's poetics is that there is an equivalence between the minimal fundamental element and the whole literary work. In a short story all the literary devices of narrative discourse have only one aim: to work out this equivalence of the minimal component and the whole text. Discursive poetics conceives this specific correlation as the semantic equivalence of poetic word and poetic work. In this regard, Ricoeur asks, "Can we treat metaphor as a *work in miniature*? [...] Can a work, say a poem, be considered as a sustained or extended metaphor?" (1981: 167). The twofold question

contains the answer: every literary work presupposes the unbreakable unity of the creating act of a word's poetic semantics (metaphor) and the constituting act of the literary text-world.

It's not difficult to find the special "effect" which takes place at the center of *The Oval Portrait* and determines all the literary devices of narrative discourse. At the end of the text there are two sentences: the narrator says "This is indeed *Life* itself!" and turns suddenly to regard his beloved: – *She was dead!*". The dominant effect of the text arises from delirious eyesight, which confuses the attributes of life and death. The dizzy vision that abolishes the boundaries of fancy and reality is established in the initial sentence: "The chateau into which my valet had ventured to make forcible entrance, rather than permit me, in my desperately wounded condition, to pass a night in the open air, was one of those piles of commingled gloom and grandeur which have so long frowned among the Apennines, **not less in fact than in the fancy** of Mrs. Radcliffe". But the confusion of reality and fancy, existent and absent, life and death produces an effect that cannot mediate itself. This dominant effect is only a result of the special semantic order of words; the short story as a verbal design may produce artistic effect only through the mediation of the semantics of poetic language (see Beardsley 1981: 114–164). The effect is a *semantic* effect in a literary work. Thus, the dominant effect of the work arises from the semantics of a special verbal expression which becomes dominant in the order of the poetic text. And just as in the dominant effect, so the literary devices of the narrative discourse can be reduced to this expression.

The special characteristic of *The Oval Portrait* is that it connects two scenes and configures two plots into one narrative. The two plots reflect each other. The personal narration of the first scene is about

a man who analyses himself in his delirium: he contemplates on how the reception of a portrait can be so strange in delirium. The second scene narrates the production of the oval portrait with the words of a book which is read by the main character of the first scene. Thus, *The Oval Portrait* is a literary work that narrates the birth and the reception of a work of art. The effect that arises from the confusion of the attributes of life and death becomes dominant in the frame of a narration that presents the production and the reception of a portrait.

The Oval Portrait, as a twofold narrative has another specific discursive aspect. And this aspect is characterized much more by prose language than narrative devices. There is a twofold plot that is not only the result of narrative discourse but also of the metaphorical processes of prose language. Not only the duality of the production and the reception of the portrait becomes important. The twofold plot is placed into the frame of a spatial context which is presented by the descriptive and detailing devices of prose language. The description of the space is empowered by the metaphorical processes of prose language to create a plot. A multiple repetition puts an emphasize on a single detail and converts it into a dominant element. Than prose language introduces the dominant detail as the main character of a special plot. The dominant detail is the *light-ray*; and the movement of the light-ray results in a complex plot. The story of the light-ray runs parallel with the story of painting and contemplation. The narrative structure builds up a strict system in which every paragraph or sentence that narrates the story of the portrait is followed by a sentence that describes the status of the candle light. Eventually the synchronization of the two plots results in a narrative parallelism that interprets the act of painting and the act of reception

through the metaphor of light-ray and the narration of the movement of light-ray. Let's follow the narrative parallelism and the subsequent semantic parallelism!

The reception of the portrait has an unbreakable relation with the changes of light. In the dark château the objects can be seen only if the light-ray focuses on them; and this function of light-ray is introduced in the very beginning of the short story:

In these paintings, which depended from the walls not only in their main surfaces, but in very many nooks which the bizarre architecture of the chateau rendered necessary – in these paintings my incipient delirium, perhaps, had caused me to take deep interest; so that I bade Pedro to close the heavy shutters of the room – since it was already night, – to light the tongues of a tall candelabrum which stood by the head of my bed, and to throw open far and wide the fringed curtain of black velvet which enveloped the bed itself. I wished all this done that I might resign myself, if not to sleep, at least alternately to the contemplation of these pictures, and the perusal of a small volume which had been found upon the pillow, and which purported to criticise and describe them.

The correlation of eyesight, light and contemplation becomes so close that the movement of light-ray begins to displace sight and reception:

*The position of the candelabrum displeased me, and outreaching my head with difficulty, rather than disturb my slumbering valet, I placed it so as **to throw its rays more fully upon the book.***

But the action produced an effect altogether unanticipated. The rays of the numerous candles (for there were many) now fell within a niche

of the room which had hitherto been thrown into deep shade by one of the bedposts. I thus saw in vivid light a picture all unnoticed before. It was the portrait of a young girl just ripening into womanhood.

Only the rays of the candles are able to awaken eyesight and make possible reading and watching. These light-rays are filled with life. The “vivid light” is one of the main expressions of the short story as the portrait is able to come alive only if there is the *vivid* (*vivere*) metaphoric attribute beside the word *light*: “My fancy, shaken from its half slumber, had mistaken the head for that of a **living person**”. Due to the metaphorical process, light (not surprisingly) transforms into the symbol of life. In this text-world only those objects are able to come alive that are lightened by the rays of the candles; all the others in the shadow are dead and are waiting to awaken: “the flashing of the candles upon that canvas had seemed to dissipate the dreamy stupor which was stealing over my senses, and to startle me at once into **waking life**”. That is the reason why the reception of the portrait cannot be finished until a new movement of the light-ray occurs: “With deep and reverent awe I replaced the candelabrum in its former position”. The movement of the light-ray indicates the beginning and the end of reception; actually it is the light that transfers the portrait into the sphere of life.

The story of the reception can be related to the story of the movement of the light-ray only if the work of art is also connected to the relation of the act of painting and the movement of light. The second scene of the short story is a compact fiction which is based upon the correlation of vivid light and life. The metaphorical processes of prose language connects the movement of the light-ray and the act of painting in order to realize the confusion of the attributes of life and death. In this text-world the act of painting is not just an activity that applies colors to the canvas; it has a special correlation with the movement

of the light-ray. The death of the lady is related to the lack of light: she “sat meekly for many weeks in the **dark**, high turret-chamber where the light dripped upon the pale canvas only from overhead”. The metaphoric devices of prose language connect the lady’s agony explicitly to the changes of light: “the light which fell so ghastly in that lone turret **withered** the health and the spirits of his bride”. Finally, the text identifies life with light and the act of painting with the movement of light:

*... the tints which he spread upon the canvas were drawn from the cheeks of her who sat beside him. And when many weeks had passed, and but little remained to do, save one brush upon the mouth and one tint upon the eye, **the spirit of the lady again flickered up as the flame within the socket of the lamp.** And then the brush was given, and the tint was placed.*

The metaphorical process of prose language introduces the act of painting as the confusion of the attributes of life and death. The act of painting applies the vivid light of the lady’s face (“she a maiden of rarest beauty, and not more lovely than full of glee; **all light** and smiles”) onto the canvas – consequently the lady dies and the portrait comes alive. In this text-world, art is nothing else than the elimination of “reality” and the resurrection of the work of art in one act. Art is the ultimate way of confusing the attributes of life and death.

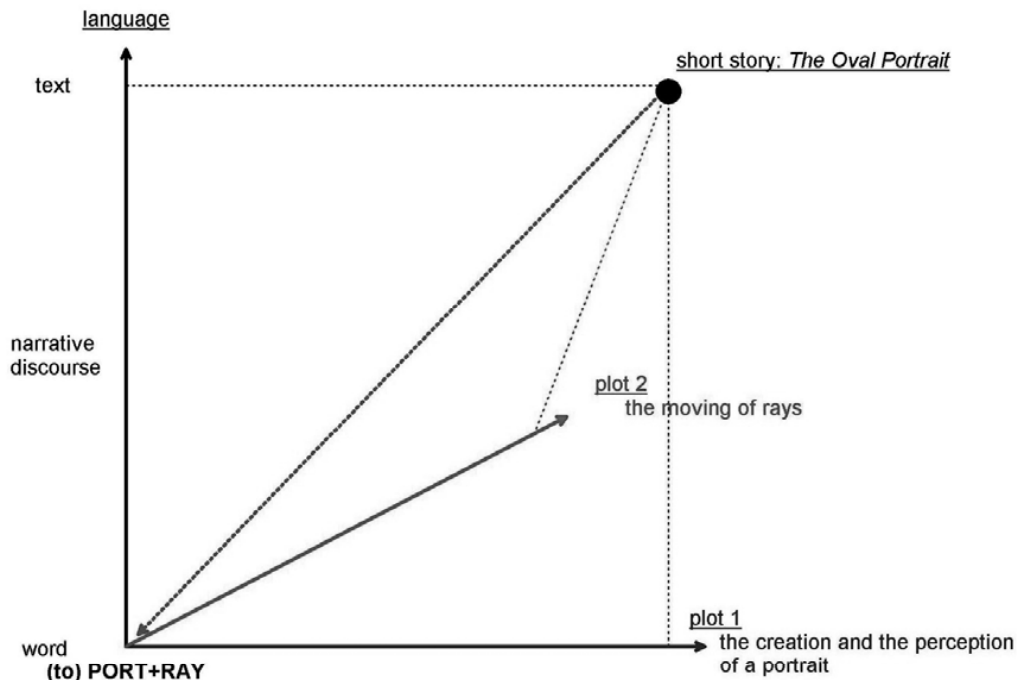
The light-ray has a successful career in the short story. First, light appears as a partial detail of the circumstances and the context of action. But the multiple repetitions introduce the rays of the candles as a motif. The metaphoric devices enrich the light-motif with special semantic fields. Due to this semantic innovation light transforms into an anthropomorphic character. Then narrative discourse connects the

story of the light-ray to the story of painting and creates a narrative parallelism in which the act of painting is interpreted through the metaphor of light. Finally, the narrative parallelism introduces light as the counterpart of art that creates a new reality and a new vision of life. That's how the complex semantic correlation works in the poetic discursive order of this literary work. There is no dominant effect to be mediated without the various ways of semantic innovation; the existence of the effect that arises from the confusion of the attributes of life and death depends on the poetic semantic innovation.

Although we have analyzed several levels of the text so far, there is still a problem we have not solved. We haven't pointed out exactly the minimal fundamental element that vitalizes the fiction of the whole short story. Where does that heuristic fiction come from which offers the possibility of narrative parallelism? There is a unique expression in the text. In English there is a special word to name the act of painting a portrait: this the verb is *portray*. The short story invokes this word in one of the sentences: "It was thus a terrible thing for this lady to hear the painter speak of his desire **to portray** even his young bride". The verb *portray* is the most important word-subject of the text. The poetic etymology of the word extends into the plot. Poetic semantics divides the word in two parts: *port* + *ray*. The meaning of the word *ray* is realized in the text by the expressions "the rays of the numerous candles" and "the flame within the socket of the lamp". The word *port* invokes the Latin verb *portare* which is represented in English by the word *portable* – it means 'to bring, to make move'. Poetic etymology invents a special metaphorical semantics inside the word, which is covered by its literal sense. Thus, the word *portray* means two things in this text: it means 'to paint a portrait' and 'to move the light-ray'. The fiction of the short story realizes these two

semantic aspects at one and the same time: the text introduces the act of painting as the movement of the light-ray. Actually the heuristic fiction that organizes the mechanism of the whole text is concentrated in only one word: *portray*.

On the basis of the semantic construction of *The Oval Portrait* a three-dimensional concept of short story can be worked out:



The three-dimensional model has two longitudinal or horizontal axes and one lateral or vertical axis. The two longitudinal axes consist of the two main plots of the short story. Every short story tells at least two stories. One of them is placed in the foreground, the other is pushed into the background. The former is always about human actions. The

latter creates a story about a detail, about an object that seems to be unimportant. At the end of the short story, the two discordant plots are suddenly integrated into a unity. And this unanticipated text event rehabilitates the significance of the back plot. That's how such a narrative parallelism is constituted, in which the story of a man is metaphorically interpreted by the story of a detail. But the two plots that merge into one at the end of the short story have already been rooted to the very same field from the beginning of the text. And this field is not a narrative but a textual and semantic one. The common root is a metaphor created by prose language: the two plots have already been connected to each other by a metaphoric expression long before the development of the narrative. It is the metaphor that rules poetic narrative discourse and provides the concordance of narrative parallelism; and the conclusion at the end of the story always points back to this metaphoric origin of the text. The lateral or vertical axis of the model of short story, which demonstrates the horizon of language, leads us through the metaphorical process of the text: it starts with the internal metaphor of the word (*port+ray*) and leads through narrative parallelism and the special poetic narrative discourse to the whole poetic text. The text-world of the short story originates and arises from the heuristic fiction of a metaphor; each and every process of narrative discourse points back to this metaphor. It is the metaphorical semantic correlation of word and text that provides for the wholeness, totality, reducibility and economy of short story.

In the case of the short story entitled *The Oval Portrait* the first type of narrative parallelism occurs. The story of a portrait, and the story of candle light (as an immaterial object) take place simultaneously; the verbal presentation of the two sequences (the sentences) are interlocking like the two tapes of a zipper, in the meanwhile the immaterial

object (light-ray) becomes a counterpart of the artistic creating act (the painting and the reception of the portrait).

In Jack London's short story the second type of narrative parallelism occurs.

THE PROBLEM OF COUNTERPART IN JACK LONDON'S SHORT STORY

In the short story entitled *Finis* or *Morganson's Finis* there are two narrative sequences that take place in rapid succession. The emplotment repeats the same series of events twice. Morganson is a border reaver. The narrator does not introduce the main character's life. We only get to know one thing about his life: "In all his life he had never pampered his stomach". The stomach illuminates Morganson's life. So the reader is thrown into the middle of the events, into Morganson's tortures, the tortures of his stomach. He is struggling against his own body in the middle of nowhere, in the frosty very far north. He is ill and has no food. Morganson eats the last of his bacon and tries to find an emergency exit from his situation. He walks into a bar in a little village called Minto in order to find alternative solutions. The bar-keeper offers him a glass of whiskey. The main character drinks the whiskey and leaves the bar. He has made a decision: he would like to solve his situation by a robbery with murder. Morganson returns to the snowy trail, builds an invisible hiding place on a hillside near to the main trail that leads to the south, and begins to wait for a victim, for a "sled loaded with life", a sled loaded with his own life. He is waiting for a victim for more than two months. But the trail is desolate, and usually he is just trying to recover his strength in his tent when a traveler comes, so he always misses the mark. After two months

an unexpected solution presents itself. He manages to kill a moose. This opportunity opens up a new prospect to him, as the moose meat costs a lot; and the meat for his body and the money for the travel to south means survival. But it is a difficult task to carry the huge carcass to the tent. So Morganson scaffolds a wooden frame, and hangs the moose up on it. He spends his night with a huge dinner. But next morning he wakes up to a horrible noise. When he steps out his tent he sees wolves devouring the body of the moose. So finally he loses his prey and his chance to survive. He has to resume his struggle for existence.

And the story restarts here. The plotment of the second half of Morganson's story repeats the morphological order of the first half of the story very strictly. There is a second last meal, a second departure, a second returning to the trail and going into hiding, a second waiting for survival, a second hunting, and a second failure or defeat.

FIRST SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

1. **Meal** – the last bacon
2. **Departure** – journey to Minto (bar, whiskey)
3. **Back to the trail, going into hiding**
4. **Waiting** for the “sled loaded with life”
(2 months)
5. **Hunting** – the moose
6. **Failure** – the loss of the prey (because of wolves)

SECOND SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

7. **Meal** – the last moose soup
8. **Departure** – journey to Minto (bar, whiskey)
9. **Back to the trail, going into hiding**
10. **Waiting** for the gold miners
(1 night)
11. **Hunting** – the gold miners
12. **Defeat** – the loss of the prey (because of sled dogs)

So, wolves destroy Morgenson's plans for survival by devouring the body of the moose. He also eats the last portion of his moose soup. So he has to make new plans for survival. In terrible conditions he returns to the bar in Minto in order to find alternative solutions. The

barkeeper offers him a glass of whiskey again. In the bar Morganson overhears a dialogue of a group of rich gold miners about their home-ward journey to the south. He makes a new decision: he is planing to murder and rob the gold miners while they are passing by his tent. So Morganson returns again to the snowy trail as fast as his tortured body can move. He sleeps for a few hours, and wakes up early in the morning. He cocks his rifle and aims his gun at the trail. Morganson doesn't have to wait for hours, as the gold miners arrive soon with their sleds and dogs and money. And Morganson seems to have a success: he manages to finish the gold miners. But the only problem is that he has run out of cartridge, and the sled dogs are still alive. He manages to find a possible solution for his difficult situation, but again, he can not make a use of it. He can't get close to the sleds, the dogs are stopping him. And what is more, the leader dog sinks its teeth into the calf of his leg. Morganson has no more idea. He is bleeding and he is beginning to break up. And finally he gives up. He failed, he suffered a defeat. Morganson falls down into the snow and soon he falls asleep. These are his last thoughts:

Now that he was down, Morganson was no longer afraid. He had a vision of himself being found dead in the snow, and for a while he wept in self-pity. But he was not afraid. The struggle had gone out of him. When he tried to open his eyes he found that the wet tears had frozen them shut. He did not try to brush the ice away. It did not matter. He had not dreamed death was so easy. He was even angry that he had struggled and suffered through so many weary weeks. He had been bullied and cheated by the fear of death. Death did not hurt. Every torment he had endured had been a torment of life. Life had defamed death. It was a cruel thing.

6

Both of them mean 'life'. See: "a sled loaded with life"; "he was glad that the sled had not passed before the coming of the moose. The moose had changed his plans. Its meat was worth fifty cents a pound, and he was but little more than three miles from Minto. He need no longer wait for the sled-load of life. The moose was the sled-load of life. He would sell it. He would buy a couple of dogs at Minto, some food and some tobacco, and the dogs would haul him south along the trail to the sea, the sun, and civilisation"; "a tall, broad-shouldered, black-whiskered man was paying for drinks. Morganson's swimming eyes saw him drawing a greenback from a fat roll, and Morganson's swimming eyes cleared on the instant. They were hundred-dollar bills. It was life! His life!".

7

Both of them mean 'death', as both have tooth, both can bite, and both deprive Morganson of the prey. See: "the big leader [dog], with a savage lunge, sank its teeth into the calf of his leg"; "the frost began to bite in", "the cold bit in more savagely", "the bite of the frost", "the frost sank its teeth deep into him".

The morphological structure of the plot emphasizes two basic artistic features of the short story. On the one hand it accentuates the special tragic aspect of the fin-de-siècle's short story. The same character just can not carry out the same action with two different outcomes. If the character fails at the first try, he or she has to fail again at the second one too (Смирнов 1987: 113). On the other hand narrative parallelism emphasizes some functional equivalence. The sled, the moose, and the gold miners have the same function in the plot: all of them are potential preys and as potential preys they could be the solution of the main character's difficult situation.⁶ The wolves and the dogs (and the frost) also have a common function: both of them deprive the main character of the chance of survival.⁷ But the repeated failure and the functional equivalences *together* result in a special *contradictory* semantic equivalence. The dissimilars are beginning to be similar.⁸ And the problem of counterpart emerges here. According to the semantic processes of narrative parallelism the different presences of the wolf become counterparts of the main character. On the level of emplotment there is a *functional* equivalence between the sled, the moose and the gold miners (on the one hand), or the wolves, the dogs and the frost (on the other hand). But on the level of text there is a *semantic* contiguity between the main character and the wolves or dogs. And this is the point where prose language puts itself into operation. At the very beginning of the short story there is an interesting sentence. When Morganson decides to solve his problems with a robbery with murder "his face becomes stern and wolfish". So, Morganson is wolfish. And, of course, wolfish animals deprive him of the chances of survival. But we should never doubt for a moment that in fact it is only Morganson who can be blamed for his own defeat. So wolves are Morganson's counterparts and the projections or extensions of his own sternness. This is what we call the metaphorical reference of prose

text. Prose language produces a very special semantic contiguity in the short story in accordance with narrative parallelism: enemies get united, dissimilars become similars. And when the object or the natural fact becomes the main character's counterpart, an internal interpretation of the story emerges within the limits of the short story's text.

When the problem of prose language is to be taken into consideration somehow dissimilarity always slips into the center of interest. As a special kind of emplotment, prose work always produces concordance in discordant – as Ricoeur writes. As a special kind of heteroglossia prose work always forces individual world views and discourses into dialogue – as Bakhtin writes. The problem of counterpart has the same significance in a novel or a short story. In prose language narrative parallelism co-ordinates the dissimilars by equalizing two inconsistent actions. And by the way the two different “heroes” of the two different events become each other's counterparts. This literary process reorganizes the entire text as a poetical work. The process derives from a special metaphorical utterance (in Poe's short story the internal metaphor of word “portray”; in Jack London's short story the metaphorical utterance “his face become stern wolfish”). The emplotment produces two divergent, nevertheless concordant (parallel) plot sequences on the basis of the metaphorical utterance (the story of a portrait on the one hand, and the story of candle light on the other hand; the story of Morganson on the one hand, and the story of wolves on the other hand). And finally narrative parallelism results in a semantic innovation, that is to say a metaphorical reference, a literary text, a fiction, a poetical world in/ from which the interpretative energy of counterparts emerges. ♡

8
“The dissimilarity requires a similarity in order to transmit ‘its own’, to create its own distinct system. [...] A changed feature in the the similar can change the entire system by its dissimilarity. Therefore, the dissimilarity of the similar is economical in its own way, because it uses the system as part of its new message without destroying the entire system. Tropes – uncommon applications of the word – don't destroy the quotidian, conventional meaning of the word-sign, but represent a new (found in the ordinary) consciousness of the dissimilarity of the similar” (Shklovsky 2011: 57).

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