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### PARALLELISM IN PROSE NARRATION: THE PROSE OF ANTON CHEKHOV

0. Ever since the pioneering work of the Prague Linguistic Circle, and particularly since the later formulations by Roman Jakobson, scholars have been preoccupied with questions regarding the relation of formal (in Jakobson's terms: grammatical) to semantic elements in the verbal arts. Jakobson's felicitous definition of the aesthetic function as orienting the text on to its own structuration so that the attention of the receiver is focussed upon the text's inner structuration, is closely linked to two other formulations by Jakobson, namely his notion that the aesthetic function projects the axis of selection upon that of combination, so that the line between the metaphoric and the metonymic is attenuated. As Jakobson punned: "the poetry of grammar and the grammar of poetry", the title of one of his most influential papers. These views which have been influential in contemporary poetics indicate Jakobson's emphasis on interpenetrations, relationships and feedback. Hence Jakobson's intense interest in the phonico-semantic knot. For Jakobson grammatical forms always serve the cause of meaning, and verbal meanings can never be understood as independent of grammar. Jakobson's position is in harmony with Saussure's formulation that the signans and signatum of the sign are as inseparably fused as the two sides of a sheet of paper. This interest led Jakobson to his studies of formal/semantic parallelisms which are at the basis of all the essays contained in the third volume of his *Selected writings* (Jakobson 1981).

Jakobson frequently refers to earlier formulations of Gerard Manley Hopkins, who stressed the role of parallelism and subordination (cf. Hopkins 1959 : 289), as well as those of Baudelaire, Verlaine, and Poe. Indeed, recognition of the focal role of parallelism has a longer history. For example, Herder in his influential *Wom Geiste der ebraischen Poesie* (1782, cited from 1825:18—19) describes Hebrew poetry as based on parallel juxtapositions of formal and semantic elements, a symmetry between hemistichs of a poem, in which "word is juxtaposed to word, and concept is juxtaposed to concept" and stresses the "parallelism of images and sounds" ("das Ebenmaas von Gliedern der Gedichte, Bildern und Tönen").

However, Jakobson's particular contribution was the concrete analysis of many specific poetic texts in a wide number of languages. However, Jakobson's examples were limited to poetry, and one wonders to what extent the principle of phonico-semantic parallelism is applicable to prose texts as well. Of course, parallelism falls more naturally within verse forms due to the formal structure of verse. Prose does not typically utilize regular rhyming structures, nor measured lines and stanzas, nor need tonal rhythm and meter be employed. Formal parallelism in prose could thus be merely accidental. Alliteration in prose has typically been seen as an attempt by the writer to make his prose more "poetic", to provide certain emphases, etc. Prose is, after all, closer to ordinary everyday speech than poetry, and it is thus historically a marginal form. However, all other artistic forms and modalities utilize parallelism, equivalence and opposition. For example, musical structure is founded on the repetition and variation of basic themes and motifs, or on opposition (e. g. by the inversion of themes, the juxtaposition of major and minor modes, etc.). And the principle of equivalence and opposition is also characteristic of all the visual arts as for example the division of the canvas into right and left and upper and lower, or the adherence to geometric principles in many periods of painting and sculpture. Architecture is no exception, and film depends on montages and many poetic devices of parallelism.

What then is the situation in prose? Jakobson implied that prose bore certain similarities to poetry, and he called for further examination of the poetics of prose (Cf. 1979). He suggested that parallelism is also an important part of prose; but he commented that in prose, which lacks the formal organization of poetry, parallelism is conditioned not so much by the formal as by the semantic structure of the text. But Jakobson did not attempt to analyze prose in this way. We can follow Jakobson's intuition concerning the relations of prose and poetry on the semantic level. Thus striking parallelisms and oppositions in *Anna Karenina* and *War and Peace*, as well as those in *Crime and Punishment* and *The Brothers Karamazov* seem to be motivated primarily by the action of the novels, where there are confrontations between characters, between actions and between settings. However, I believe that we can detect formal symmetrical structures intimately related to the semantic plane in these and other prose works. For example, consider tropes such as the repeated image of the flickering candle and the symbolic significance of the repeated image of the train in *Anna Karenina*. Are the above examples merely exceptions in a genre which, unlike verse, is structured primarily in linear fashion at the expense of the paradigmatic axis?

I think not. We may even advance the position that prose narratives also exhibit important equivalences, and that such equivalences function both on the syntactic-"grammatical" and on the semantic level. As a matter of fact, one could say that it is this combination and co-activity of the formal and semantic levels of such parallelisms which also in prose produces fundamental meanings of the text as a whole.

I wish to pursue this notion by looking closely at some texts. In this discussion



we will consider a relatively brief text which, it is to be hoped, will be a step toward the examination texts of greater lengths, such as novels. Imagine how rich the textual material of Joyce's *Ulysses* might be! However, to return to the smaller units, of course we know that the shortest prose forms, such as the proverb and the riddle, exhibit clearcut parallelistic structures.

So, let us begin with the genre of the short story. In a recent article on Chekhov's *The Lady With the Dog* (*Dama s sobakoj*), I noted that there exist semantico-formal parallelisms brought about by the confrontation of internal and external segments of the text (Winner 1984:609—622). It is true that *The Lady With the Dog* is one of Chekhov's pronouncedly lyrical stories, as are also such other works as *The Steppe* (*Step'*), *The Bishop* (*Arxierej*), or *The Betrothed* (*Nevesta*), and as such it is perhaps not quite typical of his work.

Here we look at *Anna on the Neck* (*Anna na see*) (1895), a mature prose work of Chekhov that is not as obviously lyrical in tone as are some of the above-mentioned narratives. Nor is its composition as simple as that of many of Chekhov's earlier anecdotes, such as *Thin and Fat* (*Tolstyj i tonkij*). Furthermore, its structure is not built on obvious semantic parallels as is, for instance, the construction of *The Darling* (*Dusecka*) in which the repetition of equivalent actions by the heroine, as she moves her affections and identifications from man to man, creates the basic formal and semantic structure of the narrative.

### 1. INTRODUCTION TO THE STORY

**Synopsis.** Anna, a poor young woman whose father, Petr Leontich, has taken to drink after her mother's death, marries Modest Alekseich, a pompous opportunistic bureaucrat several decades her senior, in the hopes of improving the impoverished state of her family, consisting of her father and her two small brothers, Petja and Andrjusa. In the beginning, Anna fears her husband, but later, as she sees how attractive she is to others in the very social circles in which her husband wants to climb, she reverses her attitude, resists her husband's demands, and social success eventually becomes her only aim. Central to the story is an anecdote about the Order of St. Anne which her husband relates to Anna in the form of a moral admonition. In the end, Anna defies the admonition in an event that gives the story a special twist.

From the point of view of the linear structure of the story, where event follows event, *Anna na see* is one of Chekhov's many stories that end with a surprise ending in the manner of Maupassant. However, what interests us here are the parallelisms, oppositions, and the musical playings of themes and motifs in variation form, as well as the complex relations of the story to other cultural codes and contextualities.

## 2. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE STORY

A basic opposition and its reversal structures the story. The action leads to a circular composition, suggesting repetition instead of the completion of linear narration. The story is divided into two chapters which foreground the opposition. In the first chapter the dominant theme is Anna's fear of Modest Alekseich's power over her which is evidenced by his psychological cruelty and his miserliness. In the second chapter there is a reversal: Anna no longer fears Modest Alekseich. Her social success gives her courage to resist him and, in turn, to dominate him as he had her.

The predominant point of view of the story is Anna's self-reflection, as she interacts with her family, her husband, and the new world opened to her after her marriage. Surrounding Anna are three actors or groups of actors that personify various sides of her ambivalent personality. This recalls Dostoevskij's novels, where the inner conflicts of the protagonists are objectivized and reified by secondary characters. The first group, in which Modest Alekseich is central, also includes "His Excellency" and other bureaucrats and their wives. This group is opposed by the *bon vivant*, and unconventional Artynov who later becomes Anna's lover, and an unnamed tall officer who dances passionately with Anna. The third group of actors includes Anna's father and her two schoolboy brothers, as well as her deceased mother, after whom Anna models herself. The drunkard father serves as a measure of the transformation Anna undergoes. Initially, Anna believes that she has sacrificed herself by a marriage with an unloved but socially secure man, in order to help her family, impoverished as a result of the father's drinking. But in the end she loses sympathy with her father, and no longer sees him as dignified in his misery.

Contextually, the story has affinities to *Anna Karenina* and *Crime and Punishment*. It is linked to the former not only by the common name of the heroines, but also by the character of Modest Alekseich, the unloved husband, who bears striking resemblance to Tolstoj's Karenin. Tolstoj's and Chekhov's Annas are both married to men who are bureaucratic shallow conventionalists whom both Annas come to resent. The resentment in both cases is objectified by a physical detail: Karenin's protruding ears, and Modest's cheeks which "quiver like jelly". In both narratives a train journey is an important element in the awakening of the heroine. The relation of the story to *Crime and Punishment* lies in similarities of Chekhov's Anna to Dostoevskij's Sonja: both believe that they are sacrificing themselves for their family by entering into a form of prostitution, both have lost their mother and are left with a drunken father. But the external similarities of this contextual relation serve to accentuate the differences between Chekhov's Anna and her two literary predecessors. For Chekhov's Anna is essentially a superficial person, and the resolution of her conflicts is hardly the passionate and tragic response of Tolstoj's and Dostoevskij's heroines.



## 3. THE STORY AS REVERSAL

As we have noted, the story is one of multiple reversal:

1. Anna fears || Anna dominates what she fears.
2. Anna is sorry for her family || Anna is indifferent to her family.
3. Anna is ashamed and sorry for herself || Anna is proud of herself and enjoys life.

The reversal takes place in three stages:

1. Anna is unhappy and controlled by her husband. She is fully subject to social and cultural constraints.

2. Anna, at the winter ball, a carnevalesque affair, finds herself in a liminal position, as she is pursued by the male social butterflies of the provincial town. She is free of all social and cultural constraints.

3. Anna changes as she returns to reality after the ball. She is now again part of the social world represented by her husband, but both socially and psychologically on a radically different level.

The story of Anna's changing self-view, dramatized by the fundamental oppositions described, resembles, both formally and semantically, a musical round. For the same theme is repeated and varied in various contexts, and the end of the story returns to its beginning. A motif repeats itself: the phrase uttered by Anna's brothers to their father: "Papocka budet... papocka, ne nado." ["Oh really, Father, ...do stop it!"]<sup>1</sup>, which reverberates throughout the story. It is this phrase which marks the closure of the story and returns it to its beginning.

A particular characteristic of *Anna On the Neck* is that its end is prophesied at the very beginning of the narration by Modest's anecdote about the Order of St. Anne which predicts his own downfall. For Modest's admonition that he hopes that when he receives the Order of St. Anne, "His Excellency will not have cause to pass the same remark"<sup>2</sup> is not realized since His Excellency repeats the same pun to Modest when the latter finally does achieve his goal, the Order of St. Anne. Somehow we suspect that when Modest tells the story to Anna, his anxiety is at the same time a statement predicting the inevitable, and again the story is circular. Ronald Hingley's translation of the Russian title of the story, *Anna na see as The Order of St. Anne*, instead of *Anna On the Neck*, which is its traditional title in earlier English translations of the story, while more elegant than the latter, fails to render the pun contained in the Russian title. We are thus retaining the more literal English title *Anna On the Neck*.

<sup>1</sup> All translations, unless otherwise indicated, are Ronald Hingley's (Hingley 1965: 29-42), although I have taken some liberties with his excellent renderings when a more literal translation was necessary.

<sup>2</sup> "His Excellency" says, "So you have three Annas now... One in your buttonhole and two around your neck" (referring to the bureaucrat's wife, whose name is also Anna).

## 4. THE SUBDIVISIONS OF THE STORY

The narrative is divided into two large chapters: Chapter One draws a portrait of an unhappy Anna subjected to the power of her husband. In Chapter Two, Anna frees herself of her unwelcome bondage. We may subdivide the text into smaller segments. From the point of view of our problem, it appears to fall into six sections that subdivide the formal chapter divisions of the text. These units bring to the fore a structure of parallelisms and oppositions which contribute to the story's multiple meanings. We can briefly characterize these segments as follows:

I. The stage is set, introducing the characters and their interrelations. The prophetic anecdote about Anna On the Neck, as well as the repetitive motif of *Papocka budet*... are introduced.

II. Anna reflects on her unhappy situation as she sits in the train compartment with her new husband on their honeymoon trip. She begins to doubt the wisdom of her decision as her husband appears increasingly repellent to her.

III. Anna is abruptly torn from her melancholy reflections as the train stops at a wayside station where a dance is in progress and a military band plays. Arty-nov appears for the first time as a counterpoint to Modest Alekseich. Now Anna fleetingly sees herself in a new light, and feels that she can, after all, be happy. The dance and festive mood is a polysemic sign to be repeated later in the context of the winter ball in segment V.

IV. In the fourth segment, the last part of Chapter One, time seems to be arrested as the basic oppositions and parallelisms of the story are in stasis, constantly played against each other as Anna, in her ambivalence, is drawn spatially and psychologically back and forth between her husband and her family. Anna remains in constant conflict, and nothing is resolved.

V. The fifth segment, which begins with the opening of Chapter Two, marks the start of a transition. This section parallels section III: the winter ball is another version of the dance of the vacationers as the train stops and Arty-nov appears, as he does also in the ballroom scene. A carnevalesque atmosphere prevails. Anna's success at the ball causes her to reject her family for high society. Now the two opposing sides are turned upside down as she opposes herself to her unimaginative husband.

VI. In the last section, Anna has been transformed and the story achieves a reversal. While Anna had still wavered in her attitude to her family in V (she brusquely rejects the ice cream that her father offers her, but then reflects on how nice he is when he is sober), she now rejects them and ignores their plight, as she rides by them in a carriage with her lover, Arty-nov.



## 5. A. DETAILED EXAMINATION OF THE SEGMENTS

We now take a more detailed look at the segments outlined above. We find an overall tripartite structure of the story (Anna unhappy and subject to her husband || Anna in momentary liminality on the train || Anna in a far more significant liminal state at the ball which was forecast in some ways by the events on the train. She is now freed from all her fears and constraints, and feels an intoxication as she is a great success at the ball; and as a result she changes. The story reverses itself: Anna wins over her husband. Throughout the story, we become increasingly aware of the two Annas, the one who is guilt ridden, fearful and who feels herself exploited, and the one who wishes to be a *femme fatale* and to dominate and control others. This second side, while repressed in the first parts of the narrative, becomes dominant in the last two segments (V and VI). These developments are presented here on various levels of the narrative structure: 1) on the plane of the plot; 2) on the plane of six narrative segments we have mapped; 3) on the plane of character; 4) on the plane of pervasive signs (anecdotes, extended metaphors); 5) on the plane of motifs; 6) and finally on the plane of the syntactic-phonetic level of the story. We will see that these segments, while related in a temporal-spatial fashion are also connected paradigmatically through a system of parallelisms and oppositions.

## 5.1. THE FIRST SEGMENT

The first segment of our reading of Chekhov's story begins with a statement about the wedding and ends with the anecdote about Anna on the Neck. The story begins with an objective "historical" narration told in the third person past, as we learn of the wedding, the ominous marriage between Anna and her pompous, bureaucratic husband, and as we are alerted to Anna's complex relation to her father who drinks and never succeeded in his world, but who is both a positive and a negative sign. His very failure is a comment on the hypocrisy of the world of Anna's husband. Events are related in the negative: instead of a wedding breakfast and a joyous wedding trip, the newlyweds went to a monastery to spend a week in prayer. This initial part of the first segment, and the final segment (VI) are different from the others formally, since they are the only ones not told from Anna's perspective; they lack direct or reported speech. Soon, however, we begin to see events through Anna's perception, as the couple enters the train compartment and the father blows his alcoholic fumes over Anna's face. Modest, Anna's husband, as seen by Anna, tells the key anecdote about the three Annas which acts as a warning and as a prophecy of what is to come, since Anna becomes, indeed, an "Anna around his neck":

"Pjat' let nazad, kogda Kosotorov polucil orden svatyja Anny vtoroj stepeni i prisel bladoratit', to ego sijatel'stvo vyrazilsja tak: 'Znait, u vas teper' tri Anny: odna v petlice, dve na see.' A nado skazat', cto v to vremja tol'ko cto vernulas' ego zena, osoba svarlivaja i legko-

myslennaja, ktororuju zvali Annoj. Nadejus', cto kogda ja polucu Annu vtoroj stepeni, to ego sijatel'stvo ne budet imet' povoda skazat' mne to ze samoe."

["Five years ago, Kosotorov received the Order of St. Anne, second class, and called on the Governor of the Province to thank him. 'So you have three Annes now,' declared His Excellency, 'One in your buttonhole and two round your neck.' I must explain that Kosotorov's wife had just come back, a bad-tempered, giddy creature called Anne. When I receive the Order of St. Anne, second class, His Excellency will, I trust, have no cause to pass the same remark."]

The anecdote is not only prophecy and warning, but it lays down the oppositions which structure the story: Modest dominates Anna who fears him. Anna feels that she has martyred herself for her family whom she loves and pities in spite of her father's shortcomings.

## 1. On the level of character and utterance:

A. The themes of the pompous Modest, his typically bureaucratic, cliché-ridden language. He is defined as a "man of rules" who "put religion and morality first" (*celovek s pravilami [...] otdaet pervoe mesto religii i npravstvennosti*). Modest forsakes the traditional wedding breakfast and honeymoon for a pious visit to a monastery. Such a characterization is fortified by a number of *Leitmotifs* on the level of description and characterization, that follow MA throughout the narration:

- his bare chin looks to Anna like the heel of a foot;
- his fat cheeks quiver like jelly;
- his movements are slow and dignified and his manners are mild;
- his lips are full and wet, and the thought that he will soon kiss her with these lips disturbs Anna.

B. The pathetic drunkard, Petr Leontich, Anna's father, a Marmeladov-like figure, who is an indexical sign pointing to the profound changes that Anna undergoes throughout the narrative. For these are measured against her attitude to her father and her two schoolboy brothers.

## 2. The level of utterance:

Modest Alekseich and Petr Leontich are defined by specific idiolects which contribute to a paradigmatic interrelationship of the segments.

MA's language is strikingly pompous and bureaucratic. E. g.:

ne mogu ne pripomnit' teper' odnogo obstojatel'stva [...] Kazdyj celovek dolzen imet' svoji ob'jazannosti [...] Ne mogu ne napomnit' vam obsceizvestnogo fakta [...] po mere togo [...] vvidu tol'ko cto skazannogo....)

[I feel obliged to point out a certain incident.... Every must have his responsibilities.... I feel obliged to point out what is generally recognized.... in so far as...in view of what has just been stated....]



Petr Leontich speaks in hectic, half finished sentences and exclamations. E. g.

Anjuta! Anja, na odno slovo!... Ja nikomu ne pozvolju nadzirat' za mnoj!... Mal'ciski! Devconka! Ja vas vse vygonju von!... Merzavcy! Negodjai! Isportili instrument! [Anjuta! Anja, one word only... No one orders me about... Young puppies! Wretched girl! I've a good mind to chuck you out!... Monsters! Scoundrels! They've ruined the instrument.]

and he shouts *ura-a-a!* at the slightest provocation.

### 3. Two motifs are introduced:

A. the "*Papocka budet... papocka, ne nado!*" [Oh really, Father, stop it] spoken by Petja and Andrijsa, as they tug on their drunken father's sleeve.

B. As Petr Leontich stands, wineglass in hand, at the train window, we read "tears shone in his eyes" (*blesteli slezy*).

Both motifs, as we will see, have an important role in defining parallelisms in the story. For they reoccur, like rhymes or musical motifs, in all segments of the narration, tying them together.

### 4. Level of syntax

The opposition of the story: unhappy and timid vs. bold and happy is reflected also on the level of syntax. The first two sentences of the story prepare the reader for the basic opposition of the story. As is typical of Chekhov's prose, certain sentences have two parts that iconically model an oppositionally based structure. Such sentences are often underscored by anaphoraic structuring and by systematic sound repetition, about which more below (5.). Thus in segment I we find:

Posle vencanija ne bylo daze legkoj zakuski || molodyje... poexali na vokzal.

[Not even light refreshments were served after the wedding || the newlyweds... drove to the station]

Vmesto veselogo svadebnogo bala i uzina, vmesto muzyki i tancev || poezdka na bogomol'e za dvesti verst (161).

[Instead of gay party and wedding breakfast, instead of music and dancing || — there was a trip to a monastery two hundred versts away].

Here the first part of both sentences suggests the end of the story where music, dance and food predominate, whereas the second part of the sentences marks the beginning of the story, a world in which hypocritical piety prevails: the newlyweds are going to the railway station to take the train to the monastery, where they will pray instead of having a traditional honeymoon. These sentences represent inversions of the thematic line of the story, exemplifying Chekhov's iconic use of syntax:

sentence: 1. food, music, gayness, dances || 2. greyiness of life, hypocrisy.

story: 1. greyiness of life || 2. food, music, gayness.

## 5. Phonic level

Important passages of the story are marked by a series of sound repetitions and inner alliterative rhymes. It is suggestive of Chekhov's intentions that many of these phonic parallelisms were absent in the first draft of the story that appeared in "Russkie Vedomosti", but were added by Chekhov when he re-edited the story for publication in bookform. The following are a few examples of such parallelisms<sup>3</sup>:

— Modest is defined three times as smiling: *ulybalsja*, *ulybaetsja*, *ulybajas'* (162).

In the first long description of Modest we find numerous systematic sound repetitions, predominantly labials and labiodentals, but also hushing sounds, which are paralleled throughout the narration:

polnyj, puxlyj, ocen' sytyj, s dlinnymi bakenami... i ego brityj... podborodok poxodil na pjatku (162). [The edition which appeared in "Russkie Vedomosti" had only dovol'no polnyj, omitting puxlyj].

[round, plump, well-fed looking with long whiskers...and his...chin looked like the heel of a foot]

Samoe xarakternoe ...bylo otsutstvie usov, eto svezebritoe goloe mesto, kotoroe perexodilo v zirnye, drozascie kak zele sceki. Derzalsja on solidno, dvizenija u nego byli... (162) ["Russkie Vedomosti" has only perexodilo v sceki].

The most characteristic part was the absence of a moustache, the freshly shaved bare patch that gradually merged into fat cheeks quivering like jelly. He bore himself with dignity, his movements were....]

— The presentation of Petr Leontich is also characterized by strong phonic marking:

septal ej... obdavaja ee zapaxom vinnogo peregara, dul v uxo...dyxanie u nego drozalo... (161).

## 5.2 THE SECOND SEGMENT

The second segment begins with "*ona vspomnila...*" (162) and traces Anna's mournful thought as she thinks about her marriage and self-sacrifice. The train pulls into a wayside station, ending the segment. A number of elements combine to perform paradigms of significant symbols throughout the narrative:

1. The theme of hunger and poverty, already noted in 5.1, is represented here.

2. Here the motif of clothes takes on significant iconic functions:

vencal'noe plat'e sili v dolg (162)... Ej kazalos', cto ves' svet vidit ee desevuju sljapku i dyrki v botinkax, zamazannye cernilami (163). (Note the added marking through diminutives: *sljapku*, *dyrki*, *botinkax*).

<sup>3</sup> All page references in parentheses are to A. Cexov, *Polnoe sobranie socinenii*, Vol. XX, Moscow.



[Her wedding dress was sewn on borrowed money.... It seemed to her as though the whole world must see her cheap little hat and the holes in her shoes that she had smeared with ink.]

3. The character of Anna's mother forms a special theme since Anna patterns herself more and more after her mother as she frees herself from her husband. (*dumala o materii, o ee smerti* [163]).

4. Tears. As in I, the motif of tears is an important element here. It is a pervasive iconic sign echoed throughout the text (*A po nocam slezy i neotvaznaja, bespokojnaja mysl'* [163]).

5. Syntactical level. The syntactical construction of this segment may again be seen as iconic of the story line as a whole: a bipolar sentence contains two juxtaposed parts, mirroring the story's oppositions:

Kogda xvalili ee krasotu, molodost' i izjasnye manery || ej kazalos', cto ves' svet vidit ee desejuju sljapku i dyrocki na botinkax (163)

[When her beauty was praised and her youth and elegant manners || it seemed to her the whole world must see her cheap little hat and the holes in her shoes....]

6. Phonic level. A striking phonic-semantic pun suggests the father. The sequence *-pi-* unites the verbs signifying drunkenness and the meaning of the resultant misery: (*otec*) *zopil...* *nastupila nuzda* [the father had taken to drink... misery arrived].

### 5.3. THE THIRD SEGMENT

In segment III the train stops at a wayside station, the music, noises and dancing again suggest the final reversal of the story. This segment pre-resonates the ballroom scene (V), in which Anna's transformation is effected through a kind of liminality, where she finds herself outside of cultural constraints. Segment III is thus in fundamental opposition to both segments I and II, in which Anna was clutched by social rules and constraints. It is set off against the somberness and sadness of the mood of the former by the gay atmosphere and Anna's cheerful mood and presentiment of happiness. Here the principal opposed sentences are: (II) *O, kak ja nescastna* (163) [Oh, I am so unhappy!'] and (III)... *i vernulas' ona v kupe s takim cuvstvom, kak budto na polustanke ee ubedili, cto ona budet scastliva nepremenno, nesmotrja ni na cto* (164) [back in her compartment, she felt that the halt at that country station had proved that she was bound to be happy in spite of everything].

1. Thematically, this segment is thus in harmony with both V and VI, in which music will be the cause of the transformation of Anna's *ego*. Motifs of music are here particularly significant:

poslysalas' vdrug muzyka, vorvavšasja v okno vmeste s sumom golosov (163)

[Suddenly music was heard, bursting through the window together with the noise of voices]...

bojko igrali na garmonike i na desevoj vizglivoj skripke (163)

[They were rousing playing an accordion and a cheap, squeaky fiddle.]

...donosilis' zvuki voennogo orkestra: dolžno byt', na dacax byl tanceval'nyj vecer (163)

[One could hear the sounds of a military orchestra. The summer visitors must be having a dance].

...i cto slysalas' muzyka (164) [...and that music could be heard...]

Ona...napevala pol'ku, zvuki kotoroj ej posylal vdogonku voennyj orkestr, gremevsij gde-to tam za derev'jami (164)

[She was humming a polka—the tune blown after her by the brass band blaring away somewhere behind the trees.]

This segant mirrors many focal psychological states and suggests the fundamental line of the narration. Its importance is underscored, since only here does Chekhov use lyrical nature motifs which are otherwise absent from the text:

Iz-za vysokix berez i topolej, iz-za dac, zalityx lunnym svetom... (163)

[From behind the tall birch trees and poplars, from behind the cottages, flooded with the light of the moon...]

Ona vysla na ploščadku pod lunnyj svet (164) [She stepped out onto the moonlit platform...]

...luna otrazalas' v prude (164) [the moon was reflected in the pond]

2. Level of character. On the level of character, an important theme is the appearance of Artynov, who is to become Anna's lover, and who is indeed a projection of the other repressed Anna. The bon vivant who is free and powerful, is a mirror image of Modest Alekseich, for he is exotic in looks (he looks like an Armenian), he is dressed unconventionally (his shirt is open at the neck). His whole mien also anticipates Anna's revolt in V, when—in spite of Modest's admonition—she sews herself a ballroom dress that is daringly décolleté, and thus breaks the taboos of Modest's command and social code.

3. Syntactic-phonetic level 1. Again we find the typical iconic bifurcated sentence:

U Anny este blesteli na glazax slezy, no ona uže ne pomnila ni o materi ni o den'gax, ni o svoej svad'be i pozimala ruki znakomym gimnazistam i oficeram, veselo smejalas' (164)  
[Anna's eyes were still bright with tears|| but now Mother, money problems, wedding—all were forgotten; she shook hands with schoolboys and officers that she knew, laughed merrily...].

To the tears in the first part of the sentence is juxtaposed the second part, especially the key phrase *veselo smejalas'*. Anna's repressed personality appears for a fleeting moment; she lets gaiety take hold and is outgoing (*pozimala ruki*).

Phonically, we find strongly alliterative and onomatopoeic passages. The marked repeated phonemes here are labial plosives and labio-dental fricatives:

...na polustanke... Za platformoj bojko igrali na... skripke...iz-za vysokix berez i topolej...zalityx lunnym svetom...zvuki voennogo orkestra... (163)

[At the wayside station... On the other side of the platform a rousing tune was played on...a fiddle...from behind the tall birches and poplars...bathed in moon light...a military band...]



## 5.4. THE FOURTH SEGMENT

While segment III included a moment of intense movement that pointed to the carnevalesque atmosphere of the Vth and VIth segments where the world is turned upside down, segment IV is essentially circular. We feel the tension of the two worlds, but neither one takes hold in this segment, where they are in a kind of stasis. Anna vacillates as she moves between her dull government apartment where she lives with Modest, and the apartment of her family. These two worlds are opposed by speech characteristics of the chief protagonists in them: the pompous clichés of Modest and the hectic shouting that marks the speech of Anna's father. Thus we have here:

## 1. Modest Alekseich:

govoril o politike, o naznacenijax, perevodax i nagradax, o tom čto...nado trudit'sja, čto semejnaja zizn' est' ne udovol'stvie, a dolg, čto kopejka rubl' berezet, i čto vyse vsego na svete on stavit religiju i nra<sup>st</sup>v<sup>st</sup>vennost'. I derza noz v ruke, kak mec', on govoril: "kazdyj celovek dolžen imet' svoji objazannosti!" (NOTE again the alliterative pattern on labials and labio-dentals)

[he would speak about politics, about appointments and staff transfers and honor lists, about how hard work never harmed anyone, about how family life is not pleasure but duty, and about how if you take care of the kopeks the rubles will take care of themselves, and how he thought religion and morality higher than anything else in the world. And, holding his knife in his hand like a sword, he would say: "Everyone must have his responsibilities".]

Ne mogu ne napominat' Vam obsceizvestonogo fakta (167)

[I cannot but remind you of the well-known fact].

Po mere togo (167) [inasmuch as]

isxodja iz etogo položenija (167) [basing ourselves on the assumption that]

vvidu tol'ko čto skazannogo (167) [in view of what has just been stated]

## 2. Petr Leontich shouts, as we have already seen:

Ja nikomy ne pozvolju nadzirat' za mnoj!...Mal'ciski! Devconka! Ja vas vse<sup>st</sup>x vygonju von...Merzavcy! Negodjai! Isportili instrument! (165)

[No one orders me about!...Young puppies! Wretched girl! I've a good mind to chuck you out!...Monsters! Scoundrels! They've ruined the instrument!]

Husband and father are juxtaposed thematically in many other significant ways:

MA: after dinner he rests and snores loudly.

PL: after dinner he draws, paints, plays the harmonium, or dresses up to try to look more elegant.

ML: is stingy with food. He refuses to buy Anna anything to eat at the theater buffet, while he himself drinks a whole bottle of seltzer water without sharing it.

PL: readily shares the little food he has with Anna.

## 3. Level of themes and motifs.

A. Food. As we know, in Chekhov's stories food is a favorite sign for *poslost'* (cf. Winner 1966: *passim*). In this section, the protagonists are delineated by their attitude to food. Thus Modest Alekseich is a glutton and greedy about food and drink:

...el ocen' mnogo (164) [he ate a great deal]  
 vypival on odin vsju butylku, i slezy vy stupali u nego na glazax (166). [he drank the whole bottle all by himself, and tears came to his eyes.]

Anna cannot eat while she sits with MA; but she can share the poor food of her family.

B. Clothes. Clothes are an obvious iconic and indexical sign of the protagonist's character or state of mind. Thus we see:

MA's world: the wives of the officials are tastelessly dressed (*bezyskusno narjazennye*, 165).

Anna: she feels that her family now despise her for her elegant clothes and jewelry (*ee sursascee plat'e, brasletki i voobsce damskij vid stesnjali, oskorbjali ix*. [Her rustling dress, her bracelets, her ladylike air—they found inhibiting and offensive].

Anna's family is poorly clothed, her father tries to make himself look more elegant by brushing his hair and twirling his moustache and sprinkling himself with perfume. He puts on a bow tie, gloves and a top hat, as he goes to give private lessons.

C. Money. Since Anna has married Modest Alekseich essentially for his money and social position, it is not surprising that riches play an important part in the story's reversal. In IV, Anna's family remains poor and Anna believes herself worse off than before her marriage, when her father would sometimes give her a few pennies as pocket money. Now Modest refuses her any money at all, while he buys her jewelry as an investment. He lends money to Petr Leontich, but unwillingly and accompanied by lectures on morality.

D. Tears. Tears which, as we have already seen, play a vital part in the motivational structure of the story, are important also here. We read that Anna lies on her couch at her new home and cries (*plakala*). Earlier tears represented Anna's suffering. Here they also act as a negative sign signifying Modest's selfishness, when he greedily drinks an entire bottle of seltzer water without sharing it with Anna, as tears appear in his eyes (*slezy vystupali u nego na glazax*, 166). Tears continue to act as condensed signs.

E. Tropes. While the story does not rely heavily on imagery, there are two highly important passages, crucial to our enterprise, which contain extended metaphors that are structured as reversals, which tell us obliquely of the revolution in Anna's personality and her attitude to Modest Alekseich and his world. The first extended metaphor occurs in segment IV, and the second in segment V. In both cases, the imagery is related to Anna's fears. In IV, Anna, strongly under the spell of her fears, although she has by now also begun to hate MA, reminisces about her childhood fears:

ej kazalos', cto strax k etomu celoveku ona nosit v svoej dusi uze davno. Kogda-to v detstve samoj vnusitel'noj i strasnoj siloj, nadvigajuscejsja kak tuci ili lokomotif, gotovyj zadavit', ej vseгда predstavljalsja direktor gimnazii; drugoj takozu ze siloj, o kotoroj v sem'e vseгда govorili i kotoruju pocemu-to bojalis', byl ego sijatel'stvo; i byl jeste desjatok sil pomel'ce, i mezdu nimi ucitelja gimnazii s britymi usami (cf MA's shaved off moustache), strogie, neumolimye, i teper' vot, nakonec, Modest Alekseic... I v voobrazeni Ani vse eti sily slilis'



v odno i v vide odnogo strasnogo gromadnogo belogo medvedja nadvigalis' na slabyx i vino-vatyx, takix, kak ee otec... (166—167).

[She felt as if her fear of the man had long been part of her. As a little girl she had always thought of the high-school headmaster as a terrifying, overwhelming force bearing down on her like a storm cloud or a railway engine that was going to crush her. Another menace of the same kind, continually, invoked in the family—feared too for some reason—was His Excellency. And there were dozen lesser horrors, among whom were schoolmasters with shaved-off moustaches, stern and unbending. Now they included this Modest as well, a man of principle, who even looked like the headmaster. In Anna's imagination all these menaces seemed to be rolled into one and she saw them as a colossal polar bear, terrifying as it advanced on weak, erring creatures like her father.]

This metaphor which depends on the stormcloud, the railway engine, and the polar bear, all of which *advance upon* its victims among whom Anna counts herself, is paralleled and opposed in a metaphor in V, where a light sailboat *moves away* from the threat, carrying Anna to a haven *away from* her husband who has now ceased to be a menace.

#### 5.5 THE FIFTH SEGMENT

The fifth segment which opens the second chapter, is of key importance. Anna is radically transformed at the carnival-like winter ball. Loud music, noise, dance, unfetter Anna from the constraints that had tied her. Speaking anthropologically, in this segment Anna briefly leaves cultural institutions with all their constraints for free nature, and then returns to culture initiated into a new level, in the final segment (VI).

Most of the themes and motifs that had orchestrated the earlier segments, are played again now, but frequently their meaning, both for Anna and for the reader, has changed, as for example the following:

##### 1. Level of character

A. Characters are transformed, or Anna's attitude to them is changed, and a number of new characters are introduced that act to provide depth to the changes Anna is undergoing. As Modest Alekseich sees Anna in her new ballroom dress, he forgets his formal speech, and addresses Anna in colloquial Russian: "*vot ty u menia kakaja... vot ty kakaja! Anjuta!*" (168) [I must say, Anne... you really are, er, quite a girl]. Then he returns to his old pompous speech as he asks Anna to present herself to His Excellency's wife to aid him in his quest for advancement.

Also changed is Anna's attitude to her father, whom she can now see with the distance that superiority breeds.

Anna's self-perception is mirrored in her attitude towards Modest Alekseich. In III, when she was compelled to walk in the theatre on the arm of Modest Alekseich, she felt imprisoned. Now, walking with Modest again holding her on his arm, "her husband's presence did not hamper her because the moment she stepped into the Assembly Room her instinct told her that she lost nothing by having an elderly husband at her side—far from it, for it lent her the very air of piquancy and mystery that men so relish."

The interaction with new characters elucidates Anna's distance from her earlier self. The wife of His Excellency is not fear-inspiring; but an external trait recalls Modest: she has a vast chin, so that it appears as though she had a big stone in her mouth (cf. Modest's chin which looks like the heel of a foot (II); And His Excellency himself is not the terrifying polar bear of the earlier metaphor (IV): rather, he has a sickly smile and chews his lips, "as always happened when he saw a pretty woman". Artynov reappears (see II), but through the prism of Anna's transformed self-perception, he no longer appears so dashing and exotic. He is now dressed, as are all the men in the ballroom, in the prescribed tailcoat. To boot, he is suffering from asthma.

#### B. Clothes

Again clothes signal the radical transformations taking place here. As the segment begins, a winter ball is being prepared, and Modest Alekseich asks Anna to sew herself a ballroom dress, and gives her money to buy the necessary materials, admonishing her, however, to consult with the wives of two of his colleagues in order to stay within the framework of cultural and social norms. We recall that clothes signified Anna's first rebellion. Now Anna sews, "not consulting anyone" (*ni s kem ne sovetovalas'*, 168), trying only to imagine how her mother would have dressed herself. She designs a ballroom dress which is décolleté, and she charms everyone, including Modest who exclaims upon it, and particularly herself who now feels "proud and self-confident" as she sees herself in a full-length mirror in her new dress, and she feels "that she was no longer a girl, but a grown woman". She moves into the ballroom, and she giddily dances, as fashionably dressed ladies (*dekol'tirovannye damy*) flash all around her.

#### C. Music, noise

Music and noise again are important motifs paralleling segment III. E. g.:  
uslysala muzyku (168) [she heard music].

...gremel orkestr i nacalis' tancy (169)

[the orchestra was blaring away and dancing had begun].

Posle kaznenoj kvartiry, oxvacennaja vcepatlenijami sveta, pestroty, muzyki, suma... (169)

[Plunged straight from her...official flat into this whirl of light, color, noise and music, ...]

Ona uze ponjala, cto ona sozdanna iskljucitel'no dlja etoj sumnoj blestjascej, smejuscejsja zizni s muzykoj, tancami, poklonnikami... (171)

[She knew now that this was what she was born for, this hectic, brilliant life of laughter, music, dancing and admirers.]

#### D. Imagery

An important indicator of Anna's transformation is the extended metaphor internalized in her thought as she dances away. This metaphor is opposed to the extended metaphor that had described her thoughts in segment IV. Whereas the former metaphor was characterized by images of heaviness (strom clouds, locomotive, polar bear) and threatened to crush Anna and those like her, the image that now forms in her mind is one of lightness, as she imagines herself on a sailboat that passes through a storm leaving the figure of her husband, now no longer threatening, behind:



ej uze kazalos', budto ona plyla na parusnoj lodke v sil'nuju burju, a muz ostalsja daleko na beregu (169).

[...feeling as if she was sailing a sailboat in a raging storm and had left her husband far behind on the shore.]

### E. Speech patterns

The strongest change in speech patterns is exemplified by Modest's conversation with Anna just described, and by Anna's ideolect. Anna, who speaks very little in the preceding segments, now speaks a great deal, as she had in segment III at the wayside train station. As she did then, so she now mixes "French and Russian, pronouncing the Russian *r* as if she came from Paris (*kartavja*)...". The main parallelisms are with segment III, where Anna is also depicted as speaking in affected ways (*priscurila glaza i zapovorila gromko po-francuzski, i ottoho, cto ee sobstvennyj golos zvuca tak prekrasno...* (164). [...she coyly fluttered her eyelids and began to speak loudly in French. The splendid ring of her own voice...])

### 5.6. THE SIXTH SEGMENT

The last segment, the sixth, portrays the final transformation of Anna, who is now strong and dominates her husband. Their roles have now been reversed, as Anna has reentered social conventions, but as "reborn" on a higher and "controlling" level. She now proudly shouts at her husband to leave her alone and calls him an idiot (*bol'van*). She now has as much money as she needs, her husband obeys her command to pay all her bills freely. Now Modest looks at her with an expression that is crawling and slavishly deferential that he had previously reserved for the elite in his world, which now also includes *her*. Her realization of her transformation prompts the only instance of reported speech in the story, as the objective narration is colored by Anna's own inner speech:

ne verja, cto peremena v ee zizni, udivitel'naja peremena, proizosla tak skoro (172).

[not believing that the change, *that amazing change*, had happened so fast]

The brief paragraph and one phrase of direct speech that opens the last segment passes into an epilogue, objectively narrated, as is segment I. We read of Anna's social success and of her new attitude to her father and brothers, whom she now no longer pities but ignores. The epilogue, and the entire narration, end with a double return to the beginning. The prophecy is fulfilled as Modest Alekseich receives the coveted decoration, and His Excellency makes the pun about Anna on the neck which Modest had related in I. There is, however, a joking variation:

Modest Alekseich prilozil dva pal'ca k gubam iz ostoroznosti, ctoby ne rassmejat'sja gromko i skazal: "Teper' ostaetsja ozidat' pojavlenija na svet malen'kogo Vladimira. Osmeljus' prosit' vase sijatel'stvo v vospriemniki."

[Modest laid two fingers to his lips for fear of laughing out loud. "Now we must await the appearance of a tiny Vladimir," he said. "Dare I ask your Excellency to be godfather"?]

While the first pun (about the three Annas) was explained by Modest Alekseich in Segment I, the second pun (a tiny Vladimir) was explained by the objective narrator who makes the point that must have been clear to every Russian reader of Chekhov's time, that Modest Alekseich was "hinting at the Order of St. Vladimir."

The epilogue ends with a motif with which the narration had begun: the two boys telling their father: "*ne nado, papocka... Budet, papocka*" which Hingley translates as "Oh really, Father. Please don't", and now we have gone full circle; but we have also arrived at a new plateau.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Has this analysis of the story helped us to elucidate the interstitial areas between poetry and prose? I believe that we may look at prose/poetry anew and see a wide arc from the most poetic verse to prose works where parallelisms, repetitions, oppositions and other devices uniting sound and meaning in metaphorical and other images are almost absent. Yes, Jakobson's projection of the axis of selection upon that of combination is one valid structural insight among others that unite prose and poetry in the middle of the arc rather than dividing these two genres, isolating one from the other. For example, the narration in the text we examined is *both* linear and circular, *both* syntagmatic and paradigmatic and the tension between the two is an important structural aspect of this text. For while the reader is led to expect that the story will proceed historically, with event following after event, in fact reversals and circularities are forever challenging linearity, "disappointing" the readers expectations.

While formal rhythms of prose have been examined before (cf. Baum 1952), it is the interrelation between the formal rhythms and parallelisms and the multiple meanings of a prose text which holds our attention here. Thus the phonico-semantic knot is an image applicable to both poetry *and* prose. Perhaps it is significant that verse appears to be the earliest verbal art, originating in oral form where the various formal devices (never isolated from meaning) helped commit the artistic text to memory. Artistic prose, flourishing in literate societies where writing became a new means for the committing of artistic texts to memory, nevertheless is, indeed, the child of verse (oral and written), reaching away from, and forever returning to, the heritage of verse.

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## PARALELIZM W OPOWIADANIU PROZĄ: PROZA ANTONIEGO CZECHOWA

### STRESZCZENIE

Artykuł zajmuje się zagadnieniem istnienia w tekstach artystycznych prozą tego rodzaju fonetyczno-semantycznych paralelizmów, jakich obecność zakładamy w poezji od starożytności, a w szczególności od czasów Herdera. Czy możemy twierdzić, że ujęcie Jakobsona, według którego w tekstach artystycznych projekcja osi wyboru na oś kombinacji, ma tak semantyczną, jak i fonetyczną wartość nie tylko w poezji, ale także i w tekstach artystycznych prozą? Jakobson uważał, że takie paralelizmy, choć stanowią ważny aspekt prozy artystycznej, były nade wszystko uwarunkowane właściwościami semantycznymi tekstów. Tezą tego artykułu jest, iż również i opowiadania prozą wykazują istotne paralelizmy tak na poziomie semantycznym, jak i fonetycznym tekstu, co zilustrowano na przykładzie szczegółowej analizy dojrzałego tekstu artystycznego A. Czechowa *Anna na see*.