COMIC CODES IN THE STRUGATSKYS' TALES

MONDAY BEGINS ON SATURDAY AND TALE OF THE TROIKA

DISSERTATION

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SPECIAL NOMENCLATURE

LIST OF FAIRY TALE AND OTHER FOLKLORE ENTITIES

RUSSIAN FAIRY TALE:

1. BABA YAGA, a character of Russian fairy tales, a personification of hostile and evil forces in nature and in human society. Sometimes a helper of the hero. Usually described as an incredibly ugly and deformed creature. The supreme ruler of the forest and the animals.

2. THE HUT ON CHICKEN LEGS, the dwelling of Baba Yaga, a hut revolving on animal legs, usually situated at the edge of the forest.

3. RUSALKA (MERMAID), 1. a fabled marine creature usu. represented as having the head, trunk, and arms of a woman and a lower part like the tail of a fish. 2. harlot. 3. Among the eastern Slavs especially among Ukrainians and southern Russians, a mythical image which combines the features of water spirits (river rusalka), fertility (meadow rusalka), and of the profane dead (self-drowned), and other.

4. PIKE, a character in several Russian fairy tales who grants wishes when her magical formula is pronounced: «пой мечень веленьку, по божень в благословеньк...»

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Sources for the compilation of the definitions of the entities:

5. **GOLDFISH**, a character of one of the most famous Russian fairy tales. The supreme ruler of the sea. She grants wishes to the old fisherman who has caught her but unselfishly releases her to freedom.

6. **THE LEARNED CAT**, a character of many Russian fairy tales, a personification of wisdom and skill. The graceful bard in Fuškin's celebrated prologue to the narrative poem *Ruslan and Liudmila*.

7. **ZMEJ GORYNYČ**, a fearsome, winged, many-headed dragon belching forth sparks, flames, and smoke. Often jealously guarding the treasures of the Other World. The concepts of Zmej-devourer and Zmej-seducer or death-god abductor of the soul are closely associated, for Zmej frequently spirits away the maiden to take her to his kingdom and marry her. The hero of the fairy tale engages Zmej in a mortal conflict over the guarded treasure.

8. **KOŠČEJ BESSMERTNYJ**, the image and the essence of death as represented by Koščej's skeletal figure. Called 'deathless' or immortal because his "death", his innermost soul, is to be found in an egg which is always hidden far away in a place almost impossible for any mortal to discover. He is the embodiment of all social evils and injustices of the world.

**OTHER FOLKLORE ENTITIES:**

1. **WATER-OF-LIFE** (transl. of LL *aqua vitæ* or Gk. *hylor zoes* as in Rev. 22:1), 1. something that gives spiritual refreshment or eternal life. 2. a strong distilled alcoholic drink (as brandy or whiskey). 3. magic liquid that brings the dead person back to life as in the fairy tale "Prince Ivan and the Gray Wolf". It also cures all illnesses, or bestows immortality. It appears in numerous quest tales in which the hero is sent to get the water of life from a well, spring, lake, river etc., at a great distance. It is not limited to any time or area; numerous peoples all over the world have had belief in the water of life from ancient times.

2. **THE SOFA OF BEN BEZALEL**, legendary rabbi of the Renaissance. His philosophical writings are mostly concerned with justifying the irrational and the supernatural in traditional cabalist teachings. The many legends about him are variations upon a motif of his alleged magical abilities. As the supposed magus of Faust, he constructed a 'golem', an artificial figure representing human being and endowed with life, similar to the homunculus
of the alchemist. In PNVS Ben Bezalel is the creator of the sofa which has the ability to transform everyday reality into fairy tale reality.

3. JANUS, Roman mythological god of doors, of entrance and of exit, thus of all beginnings. Depicted with two faces that face in opposite directions, as do doors—one face looking into the past, the other into the future.

3. MAXWELL'S DEMONS (after James Clerk Maxwell, English physicist, its hypotetor), one of the most celebrated images of modern science—a sorting demon (the term used by Maxwell himself in his scientific writing). A hypothetical being of intelligence but of molecular order of size imagined to illustrate limitations of the second law of thermodynamics. The gifted demon could sort out the slow- and fast-moving particles of a gas, thereby changing disorder (entropy, inertia) into order and converting unavailable into available energy.

Maxwell's demons belong not to the category of traditional myths but to the category of modern literary myths, as a method of an individual artist—a self-conscious use of such method to express something deeply felt by the individual artist. Using this device, Maxwell introduces a literary discourse into his scientific discourse.

LIST OF SCIENCE FICTION CONCEPTS AND INVENTIONS:

1. COUNTER MOTION, mutual interaction of the opposite time flows. Counter movers—aliens from space—perceive our universe as a film running backward.

2. LINEAR HAPPINESS, in PNVS, a scientific concept being researched in the Institute of Magic and Sorcery and the name of one of the departments of the Institute.

3. EVIL-SHREDDER, («элобобробитель») in PNVS a device built in the Institute of Magic and Sorcery for the purpose of fighting evil forces in man, as part of the Institute's larger research on happiness.

4. RE-MORALIZER («ренорализатор»), in SOT an experimental apparatus with functions similar to those of the evil-shredder. Its rays repress primitive human urges and bring to the surface all that is rational, good, and eternal. Used with a certain limited success in fighting the Troika's evil forces.
INTRODUCTION

Arkady and Boris Strugatsky's literary work has great diversity and can be divided into several periods. The period that I find of particular interest is the middle and late 1960s. Among several works of that period, the tales Monday Begins on Saturday (Понедельник начинается в субботу—abbr. PNVS, 1965) and Tale of the Troika (Сказка о тройке—abbr. SOT, 1968), form a sequel, the "Privalov cycle"; they also distinguish themselves from the other works by a dominant comic component. The comic can be found, in varying degrees, in most of the Strugatskys' works, but in the "Privalov cycle" it assumes the central and the most creative role as the authors use the comic effect, their basic device, to express their comic vision of the world.

SUMMARY OF THE TALES: PNVS has three parts. The first part covers the events of the first night and day spent by the narrator-protagonist Privalov at the Museum of the Scientific-Research Institute of Magic and Sorcery. He experiences a series of mysterious adventures which he reports in the narrative and then muses about in an inner monologue. The second part takes place in the Institute itself where Privalov stands watch on New Year's Eve night. He guides the reader through various Departments of the

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1Arkady Natanovich Strugatsky (1925–)
Boris Natanovich Strugatsky (1933–)
Institute, through a menagerie of fantastic, mythological, and imaginary creatures, and witnesses the experiments of a "mad scientist" Vybegallo. In the third part of the tale Privalov takes a ride on a time machine into the described future, that is, into the worlds of fantastic novels and utopias, and later participates in solving the mystery of the director of the Institute who lives a life of counter-motion, and a life of one man in two persons.

In SOT, which is a sequel to PNVS, Privalov and his colleague Amperian, equipped with the re-moralizing device are sent on a mission to a colony of the Institute, ruled despastically by the Troika.

The Strugatskys' two works appear as a coherent literary totality, but viewed from within they can be seen as a combination of different discourses. Literature has always sought sources of new momentum through incorporation and synthesis of various generic forms. As suggested by Linda Hutcheon, the novel today has been one of many art forms that has turned to popular art and culture for this democratization and potential revitalization.² Turning to popular literary forms, such as fairy tale, the Strugatskys, in PNVS and SOT, do exactly that. And their literature thrives because of their gift for combining and inverting the existing literary conventions. Among the different discourses constituting the Strugatskys' text, I distinguish three essential ones:

1. Traditional novelistic discourse, operating largely on "realistic" principles.³

2. Fairy tale discourse, "сказочность" (fairy tales and other related folklore discourses -- legends and myths).

3. Humorous, comic science fiction discourse. (This discourse is a result of the interaction of the first two).

4-6.

"Realism" or "Realistic", synonymous with "verisimilitude", are no longer acceptable terms in literary criticism, because of their ambiguity and inadequacy. "Realistic" is sometimes confused with "truth" which is the domain of philosophy and not fiction. It also easily confuses material and conceptual reality. Since, however, most of popular literature and also much of serious literature today are still written in what in the 19th century was called "realistic" style, there have been attempts to devise more appropriate terms as a counterbalance to the "fantastic". Scholes and Suvin suggest a term "cognitive", while Clayton adopts Husserlian term "noematic" (Greek noesia--'thought within the act of perception') and creates the opposition of "noematic"/"fantasmatic". I myself would suggest the label "novelistic" since "realism" is associated with the peak of the novel's development. Ian Watt in The Rise of the Novel points out that we find in nearly all novels, in comparison to other genres, an accentuation of the temporal and spatial dimensions. Novels give us a sense of man existing in continuous time, and locate him in his physical world more specifically than any other kind of literature.

All these labels --old or new, however, may be incurably provisional. Kolakowski suggests that as our knowledge and sensibility change, definitions, formulations, dogmas are historically relative and become obsolete: "New formulae would be equally provisional and as 'true' as the old ones, to be sure, but their provisional character can be perceived only when they are culturally dead."
The first discourse, which portrays the work of the scientists of the Research Institute, is a representation, a model of the contemporary social and empirical reality, and not, in any way, identical with it. According to Scholes, literature does not capture, imitate, or record the world. Instead, it constructs one. And "though all writing is construction, some models may bear a useful and quite direct relationship to certain aspects of our human situation." Part of the activity of the magi is centered on science and the use of science in pursuit of man's happiness. Thus it provides the third discourse--science fiction--with its necessary scientific component.

The fairy tale discourse, with its magical characters and events, introduces the element of the fantastic into the Strugatskys' third discourse. As the first two discourses interact, two incompatible realities--the empirical reality (the scientific work of the Institute) and the magical reality--create comic incongruities, the characteristic features of the third discourse--the comic science fiction. Much of science fiction has roots in and links with fairy tales:

SCIENCE FICTION: "A form of fantasy in which scientific facts, assumptions, or hypothesis form the justification and the basis, by logical extrapolation, of adventures in the future, on other planets, in other dimensions in time or

space, or under new variants of scientific law."

FAIRY TALE: (Волшебная сказка or simply сказка), a magic tale, a type of folktale related to the western fairy tale. It is a simple story with magic content, featuring humans, exotic characters, and supernatural beings and events. Fairy tales have vestiges of myths, to the extent that they represent man's primal ideas about life and universe and about good and evil. One of the common myths present in fairy tales is the myth of quest which is related to the rite of man's maturation. It is represented as man's adventure, a journey through life. The quest in fairy tale often contains the myth of social utopia, a dream for paradise, for happiness and perfection.

Russian fairy tales have a sunny, well-wishing, and optimistic character where miracles are performed routinely and the good hero meets a happy ending.

A fairy tale fulfills the role of a social utopia. According to the definition of Boris Sokolov, it is a type of dream compensation. It is a dream about the conquest of nature--about a magic world where "at the

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Robert Philmus, *Into the Unknown: The Evolution of Science Fiction from Francis Godwin to H. G. Wells* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University Press, 1970) 20. Philmus defines science fiction as "a rhetorical strategy for bringing about suspension of disbelief in some fantastic state of affairs by means of some more or less scientific explanation designed to justify the fantasy."


Eric S. Rabkin, *The Fantastic in Literature* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1976) 73. Discussing the fairy tale in the context of escape literature, Rabkin says: "When escape literature is not random but is rather the establishment of a narrative world that offers a diametric reversal of the ground rules of the extra-textual world, then escape literature is to an important degree fantastic, and, for its audience, psychologically useful."
pike's command, at my own request," all the pails will go up the hill by themselves, the axes will chop by themselves, the unharnessed sleighs will glide to the forest, and the firewood will poke itself into the stove.

The "urban fairy tale," as Zamyatin called science fiction admiringly, continues fulfilling the role of social utopia and of the dream of conquering nature. Its miracles are performed by technological devices which are the products of human power—intelligence and knowledge. Much of popular science fiction too is written in the optimistic spirit of a "brave new world". This theme has a strong presence in the Strugatskys' tale, but it has an anti-utopian orientation. Though some futuristic gadgets do appear in the Strugatskys' tales, the authors' emphasis is elsewhere. Their science fiction in general, and PNYS and SOT in particular, belongs to so called "soft science fiction" which deals mostly with human factors, stressing man's moral, intellectual, and spiritual affairs.

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As the intermixing of the everyday, empirical life of the Institute with the fairy tale magic takes place in the Strugatskys' text, the underlying structural or thematic features of fairy tale, as described in the quotes above, do enter the science fiction discourse. But it is more striking that the most concrete, reified images of fairy tales, such as Naina Klevna, cat Basil, Zmei Gorynich and many others also make their presence in this discourse. The intrusion of concrete magical beings into the empirical world of the Institute underscores the essential difference between the empiricism of the magi's science and the supernatural element of the fairy tale world. They represent two opposite world views, two civilizations--ancient and modern. It is this technique of relying on the similarities and dissimilarities between the two discourses and their respective ethoses that is the source of comic effect in the resulting third discourse--humorous science fiction. The dynamic force of the Strugatskys' comic art lies in the paradoxes and incongruities that create the many levels of the tales' narrative structure (The mechanism of the comic will be discussed in detail in Part I).

The Strugatskys dramatize both the incompatibilities of the two worlds and their kinship to create an original prose of highly aesthetic and comic qualities. Because of the technique of juxtaposing and intermixing of empirical
science and magic, both of these notions and the activities of the magi/scientists at the Institute acquire poetic ambiguity and double meaning. In the Privalov's narration, the fairy tale magic is supernatural power and craft, but it is also science and technology. And vice versa, the magi's science and inventions are both empirical activities and modern day magic and sorcery.

SOT is a sequel to PNVS. There are the obvious elements which link these two tales, such as the Institute, as partly the same place of the action; the same characters, including the narrator and the protagonist in the person of Privalov. Besides these obvious links, however, a thematic and stylistic continuity and a progression tie the two tales even more deeply together.

The common theme of the two tales is the Institute's explicitly stated and actively pursued goal of man's happiness, as portrayed in the narration. Both empirical science and sorcery are employed in this endeavor, as two distinctly different discourses comically interact with each other. The search for happiness develops a sub-theme which is also based on the mechanism of relative incongruity. This sub-theme is the creative perception of discrepancy between the faith in the perfectibility of human society and the futility of this idea. Inevitably this also generates more paradoxes or incongruities which are yet another source
of the tales' aesthetic and comic dynamics.

METHODOLOGICAL CONCERNS

My dissertation is divided into three Parts and each Part has two Chapters.

Part I

Chapter I is devoted to the theoretical aspects of the comic as they pertain to the Strugatskys' tales. Chapter II concerns itself with the definitions of the comic codes.

Part II and Part III contain the main body of my work in the form of analysis of the Strugatskys' text.

PART II

Chapter III--Russian fairy tales and their comic codes. Chapter IV--Other folklore (myths and legends) and their comic codes. In these two Chapters, I select and bring together several text units which represent a variety of comic images and episodes. In Chapter III, the common feature of the seemingly diverse episodes is their origin in Russian fairy tales. Chapter IV conjoins other, non-Russian, folklore entities.

In this Part, I try to demonstrate that the fairy tale and folklore entities having undergone comic transformations in the Strugatskys' text, form an intricate, meaningful, and aesthetic pattern, and subsequently serve as a rich source
of more comic effects. Consequently, in this Part, my
discussion is organized around small units forming larger
interrelated patterns. At the same time, as I proceed, I
consider their different comic coding. Each and every
unit is examined in terms of at least two and, sometimes, in
terms of all three overlapping comic codes.

PART III

Chapter V--Vybegallo's Models of Man.

Chapter VI--Troika on Rationalization and Utilization of
Unexplained Phenomena--Konstantin's Trial.

Part III differs from Part II in the organization of my
analysis. The organizing principle in Part III is the
division into the three comic codes. Each of the two
Chapters in Part III covers one event analyzed in terms of
the codes of comedy, parody, and satire. I have chosen two
major events which are central and most representative to
the tales (Vybegallo's in PNVS and Konstantin's in SOT).
In Vybegallo's affair, several major motifs of PNVS
converge, the principal techniques of the comic are present,
and the comic effects, the hallmark of the tale, are highly
concentrated. All of the above equally applies to
Konstantin's event in SOT. The plot of SOT is made up of
several "trials" of the strange and mysterious phenomena,
and Konstantin's trial is the most elaborate, significant
and representative of them all.
PART I--THE COMIC

CHAPTER I--THE THEORY OF THE COMIC

Socrates acknowledged that "comedy is a very serious subject of study, and one so difficult that developing a procedure for understanding it will make other problems easy to work with".¹ Since those times many volumes have been written on the theory of comedy and the comic, but anybody undertaking the task today still admits the same difficulty with the subject:²

Like everyone else who has ever written about comedy I have had trouble with terms since the minute I started working on the subject. By its nature the subject will not yield to clear, precise terminology; instead one must use familiar but hazy terms carefully, hoping that they will gradually become reasonably clear. When worst comes to worst, one must borrow or concoct unfamiliar terms, hoping that they will point with reasonable clarity toward the significance of matters that are rarely dealt with in words.³

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²G. R. Milner, "Homo Ridens: Towards a Semiotic Theory of Humor and Laughter," Semiotica (1972): 1. "For more than two thousand years scholars have given much time and thought to the nature and significance of humor and laughter, and they have put forward a large number of views on the subject. Yet at the end of it, we cannot be said to have advanced very far, and the riddle is still with us."
McFadden and Galligan⁴ argue that if we define comedy as a drama, as those in favor of clarity suggested, it becomes impossible to discuss other forms of a comic character under this term. Both suggest that comedy and its derivative adjective comic should be understood not as a genre but as a mode, a mode of imagination or a comic "quality" which expresses itself in various forms of literary art, whether the genre be a comedy, an anecdote, or a novel. Furthermore, after reviewing most of the major theories of the comic, one can conclude that the words comic and humorous are used interchangeably.⁵ This therefore, will be my method too. Another related term is laughter. It is a spontaneous response to the comic. Just as the comic can have a wide spectrum, from coarse to subtle forms, correspondingly, the response to the comic can range from a "leonine roar" and convulsion of the whole body to a barely discernible smile or a mere enlivening of the facial expression.


⁵The terms humor and comic differ etymologically. Humor derives from Latin humor 'moisture'. In Hippocratic physiology the admixture of body fluids determines man's temperament. Only since the 18th century we find 'humor' associated with laughter. The term comic derives from Greek komos 'revel, merrymaking'.

The sheer multitude of theories of the comic testifies to the complexity and elusiveness of the subject, and none of them has fully and adequately defined the comic. To advance in this area, I suggest, as a first step, a composite theory of the comic, by way of reviewing several major theories and emphasizing their common feature, the basic mechanism of the comic. Taking this approach, I also heed Bergson's caution: "We shall not aim at imprisoning the comic spirit within a definition...we shall confine ourselves to watching it grow and expand."\(^6\)

All we know of Aristotle's writing on the comic is his definition in his *Poetics*: "the ridiculous, he says, consists in some defect or ugliness which is not painful or destructive. To take an obvious example, the comic mask is ugly and distorted, but does not imply pain)."\(^7\) S.H. Butcher tries to stretch Aristotle's terms 'defects' or 'deformity' to include in it incongruities, absurdities and follies of human life. He, nevertheless, concludes that Aristotle's definition is wanting because incongruity alone is not always comic:

Incongruity, in order to be ludicrous, requires a transition, a change of mood, resulting in the discovery either of an unexpected resemblance where there was unlikeness, or of an unexpected unlikeness


where there was resemblance."

Among modern theories one of the most influential is Bergson's theory. He writes that laughter arises from the human condition in which man oscillates between two mental states of moral and mechanical behavior. This idea is best expressed in his often quoted phrase: "the mechanical encrusted on the living" which symbolizes the dualism of the spirit and of lifeless matter. In fact Bergson uses the word "mechanical" to encompass anything that is inhuman, both machines and animals. He thus contrasts the moral code of human behavior with the automatism of machines and the primitive world of animals programmed by instincts. When these opposites get mixed up it results in comic effects. The mechanical attributes of inertia and rigidity encroaching on life, according to Bergson, have their sources in three principal processes: repetition, inversion, and l'interférence des séries. The last term of the three corresponds to the principle of paradox. In this case, it is a clash between two normally distinct and disconnected series of associations when they are suddenly brought into contact. In general, however, Bergson's dualism applies only to one variant of a comic form. Thus

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*Butcher 376.


it is far from comprehensive. In his criticism of Bergson's theory, Koestler points out that if automatic repetitiveness in human behavior were a sufficient condition of the comic there would be no more amusing spectacle than an epileptic fit.\textsuperscript{11}

Freud made a very important contribution to the theory of the comic. As he relates the comic to the unconscious, he provides essential insights into the understanding of the comic: the comic effect functions like a dream, in the sense of dream solving inner conflicts and venting an aggression. According to Freud, the conflict consists in a pair of censored/liberated ideas, and a joke allows us to by-pass our own censor and move from the sphere of controlled ideas to the liberated ones, thus resolving the incongruity between the two incompatible spheres:

A joke will allow us to exploit something ridiculous in our enemy which we could not, on account of obstacles in the way, bring forward openly or consciously; once again then, the joke will evade restrictions and open sources of pleasure that have become inaccessible.... The joke then, represents a rebellion against that authority, a liberation from its pressure.\textsuperscript{12}

Bergson's and Freud's theories are the basis on which Arthur Koestler has developed one of the most comprehensive theories of the comic to the present day. Koestler's


theory of the joke applies to higher, literary comic forms and is also a part of his theory of creativity. Comic effect is produced by

the perceiving of a situation or idea, L, in two self-consistent but habitually incompatible frames of reference, M1 and M2. The event L, in which the two intersect, is made to vibrate simultaneously on two different wavelengths, as it were. While this unusual situation lasts, L, is not merely linked to one associative context, but bisociated with two [all italics in original].

![Diagram](image)

Figure 1. The mechanism of bisociation

Bisociation theory appears today the most authoritative theory of the comic, while its reinterpretation in terms of schema conflict done by Neal R. Norrick further clarifies and strengthens it. Frame theory expresses human knowledge in schemas. It represents these schemas as arrays of relations between variables that stand for agents, objects,

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13 Koestler 35.
14 Koestler 35.
instruments etc. Schemas for ongoing activities are often termed scripts:

In an introductory narrative context, *Once upon a time* introduces the fairy tale script and with it certain expectations about the characters, plot, and outcome; There's this traveling salesman suggests a rather different script with its own set of expectations. A joke prefaced with the former introductory line will fail as a joke, unless it involves a parody of some kind; a fairy tale prefaced with the latter will confuse its audience and fail to be recognized as a fairy tale. We expect *And they lived happily ever after* at the end of a fairy tale, but not at the end of a joke. The fairy tale script dictates this ending, just as the joke script dictates a punch line at its end. Exchanging the introductions or endings appropriate to heterogeneous scripts results in humor, parody.

The description of bisociations as schema conflicts on a single level suggests (the possibility of) conflict resolution on some other level. This leads to a hypothesis associating funniness with schema congruence revealed at a higher level. The idea of higher-level schema fit, in combination with lower-level schema conflict, lends substance to the traditional definition of humor as 'sense in nonsense' or 'method in madness' (cf. Freud 1905: 84, 146; Milner 1972: 27; Wilson 1979: 31, among others).

The principle of incongruity itself, the basic logical pattern of thinking on two planes, can be found not only in a comic form but also in any domain of creative activity.\(^4\)

Therefore, to define the comic more specifically, the

\(^4\)Norrick 229-230.

\(^5\)I. A. Richard, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (New York, 1965) 93. Two planes of thought intersecting is the essence of Richard's definition of metaphor: "When we use a metaphor, we have two thoughts of different things active together and supported by a single word, or phrase, whose meaning is a resultant of this intersection."
theorists try to highlight other conditions outside of the incongruity principle as essential to the comic effect. The same pair of interacting planes of thoughts can produce comic, tragic or intellectually challenging effects. What differentiates these three effects, according to Koestler, is the emotional climate associated with them. The comic smile has a touch of an aggressiveness or self-assertiveness, the poetic image is sympathetically inspired by a positive kind of emotion, and the scientist's work is neutral. The boundaries between these three activities may be as fluid as human emotions can be. The same pair of bisociated planes of thought can be changed from a comic to a tragic or purely intellectual experience by changing the emotional climate. A man falling on an icy pavement is comic if the observer's attitude is that of malice, tragic if the attitude is pity, or neutral if the attitude is analytical, like that of a physician. If the emotions are mixed, as they are in Gogol's Overcoat, the effect is tragicomic, Gogolian "laughter through tears."

The above theories present the attempts at defining the comic in terms of different scientific disciplines: philosophy, literary studies, psychology, semiotics, and this fact is probably one of the sources of the term's ambiguity. If there is a conflict between these definitions, it can be justified in terms of each specialist's need to fit the study of the comic to the
requirements of his own field.\textsuperscript{19}

Despite the fact that the theories focus on very
diverse phenomena of the comic, more importantly, they
reveal a common, unifying feature. They agree that there is
a basic mechanism of the comic, the logical structure of the
comic. That common feature, whether it is explicitly stated
or implied, is the principle of incongruity, but the kind
which is only apparent or relative, that is, a partially
reconciled incongruity, or what traditionally has been
called "sense in nonsense", or "method in madness."\textsuperscript{19}
Theoreticians find this principle in the structure of every
joke or anecdote, and an anecdote does lie at the root of
comedy. A single comic effect is characteristic of a joke
or of an anecdote, but higher comic narratives, such as
literary forms, are not built on a single comic effect but

\textsuperscript{19}Geoffrey Leech, \textit{Semantics} (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin
Books) 4. My argument here regards Leech's analysis of
various definitions of the term 'meaning': "So a philosopher
may define meaning, for his purposes, in terms of truth and
falsehood; a behaviorist psychologist in terms of stimulus
and response; a literary critic in terms of the reader's
response; and so on. Naturally enough, their definitions,
springing from diverse frames of reference, will have little
in common."

\textsuperscript{19}Leszek Kolek, "Toward a poetics of comic narrative: Notes
on the semiotic structure of jokes," \textit{Semiotica} 53-1/3
(1985): 152. Kolek, analyzing various theories of the comic,
sums up the conditions of the comic in the following way:
1. Apparent incongruity.
2. Adequate sign competence in the perceiver.
3. Logically sufficient clues allowing for a solution of the
contradiction.
on a large network of incongruities resulting in a series of comic culminations.\(^20\)

Having drawn from other sciences, I have tried to establish that one of the most important features of the comic is the principle of apparent incongruity. From this point on, my study of the creation of comic effects will be done solely within the field of literary study. I consider the comic effect a part of literature, a property of a literary discourse, and it will be studied as an integrated part of literature, independently from other sciences, except, of course, linguistics. Modern linguistics (de Saussure, Jakobson) has provided the basis for the modern literary theory.

We can start asking further questions about the comic the way Todorov asks questions about literature in general:

We read a book. We want to talk about it. What kind of phenomena can we observe, what type of questions will be raised? The variety of phenomena and problems appears such, at first glance, that we doubt the existence of any order whatever. But let us not feign innocence: discourse about literature is congenial to literature itself, and the question is not so much one of inventing an order as of choosing among the many possibilities available to us; of choosing in the least arbitrary manner possible.\(^21\)

\(^20\) Arthur Koestler, *The Art of Creation* 37. "The higher forms of sustained humour, such as the satire or comic poem, do not rely on a single effect but on a series of minor explosions or continuous state of mild amusement."

In that respect, modern linguistics have been crucial to the development of literary studies. Linguistics deals with laws and conventions of language which rule any utterance. Since language is the basis, the primary system on which literature is modeled, literature can be called a "secondary modeling system", a secondary structure built according to the rules governing the natural language. Linguistics, thus, can provide the elementary basis for literary study.

Essentially there are two structural principles at the basis of all linguistic and literary patterning. Language and literature are organized respectively on what is termed the paradigmatic and syntagmatic axes of linguistic structure:

The meaning of a single word in a sentence is determined by its relation to some groups of words not in the actual sentence but present in a paradigmatic (or "vertical," synchronic) relationship to the actual word. A word is thus defined partly by all the words which might have filled its place but have been displaced by it. These displaced words may be conceived as belonging to several paradigmatic sets: other words with the same grammatical function, other words with related meanings (synonyms and antonyms), other words with similar sound patterns.

In another terminology, the paradigmatic relations are called relations in absentia (relations between elements

23Leech 12.
present and absent) and are the domain of semantics:

To what does it correspond in our experience as reader? The relations in absentia (paradigmatic) are relations of meaning and of symbolization. A certain signifier signifies a certain signified, a certain phenomenon evokes another, a certain episode symbolizes an idea, another illustrates a psychology. In a given sentence the meaning of a single word is (also) determined partly by its position in the sentence and its relation to the other words and grammatical units of that sentence. This is the word's syntagmatic (linear, diachronic) aspect, often conceptualized as a horizontal axis along which the sentence is spread out in its necessary order. 27

The syntagmatic relations are also called the relation in praesentia (relations between copresent elements) and are the domain of syntax: 28

The relations in praesentia are relations of configuration, of construction. Here, it is by the power of a causality (not of evocation) that the phenomena are linked to each other, the characters form among themselves antitheses and gradations (not symbolizations), the words combine into a new relation—in short, word, action, characters to which it is essential that they be juxtaposed. 29

This division into relations in praesentia and relations in absentia cannot be regarded as absolute, particularly when applied to literary analysis:

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25 Emphasizing italics mine.
27 Scholes 19.
28 Todorov 13.
29 Todorov 14.
There are elements absent from the text that are to such a degree present in the collective memory of readers of a certain period that we are virtually dealing with a relation in praesentia. Conversely, segments of a sufficiently long book can be found at such a distance from each other that their relation is no different from a relation in absentia.\footnote{Todorov 13.}

Nevertheless, this general division provides a very useful starting point for literary analysis in general, and for comic and aesthetic effects in particular, because it is a primary principle for organizing the constituent elements of the literary work. It establishes that the meaning of a word, or the meaning of any larger unit of discourse, is determined by the influence of those that surround it in the text and by the memory of those that could have taken its place.

Besides the above two principles there is, however, a third generally acknowledged principle of linguistic organization, which is that any given piece of language is structured simultaneously on more than one 'level': phonology, syntax, semantics.\footnote{Leech 12.} In literary studies this principle corresponds to the three (with some differences and coincidences) basic levels of analysis, though they may bear different names:\footnote{Todorov 14-15.}
Russian Formalists: stylistics, composition, thematics.
Old Rhetoric\textsuperscript{33}: elocutio, dispositio, inventio
Todorov: verbal, syntactic, semantic.

I will be analyzing comic effects on all three levels of discourse, following the formalist classification:

Stylistics -- the comic of individual sounds forming words. (Verbal)

Composition -- the comic of words forming phrases and sentences (syntactic).

Thematics -- The comic of segments larger than a sentence. "One part of the text designates another: a character will indeed be "characterized" by his actions or by descriptive details, an abstract reflection will be "illustrated" by the totality of the plot."\textsuperscript{34}

Besides the incongruity principle and its emotive component, the comic depends very much on the dynamics or technique of the communication, therefore, the thematic level of the text plays a very important role in the creation of the comic effects. Koestler describes three main criteria of such technique: originality, emphasis, and economy. The measure of originality is its surprise effect, that is, the truly unexpected linking of two distinct planes of thought. Emphasis (focus) for him means selection, exaggeration, and simplification of the material for the purpose of suggestiveness. It creates suspense as it

\textsuperscript{33}Marcus Quintilian, \textit{Institutio Oratoria} (c. A.D. 95).
\textsuperscript{34}Todorov 17.
highlights aspects of reality considered to be significant for the comic effect:

Suggestion through emphasis is not enough; and it can defeat its own purpose. It must be compensated by the opposite kind of virtue: the exercise of economy, or, more precisely: the technique of implication.

The important thing is not what is said but what is implied, and the reader "has to work out by himself what is implied in the laconic hint; he has to make an imaginative effort to solve the riddle." All this creative process of communication is crucial for the incongruity to have a comic effect. Likewise, according to Bentley, "the intellectual content is not the essence. What counts is the experience which we call 'getting' the joke or 'seeing the point'".

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35Koestler 84.
36Umberto Eco author and ed. "The Comic and the Rule." Travels in Hyperreality (New York: Hartcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986) 272. This notion of economy or implication is central in Eco's definition of comedy: "There exists a rhetorical device, which concerns the figure of thought, in which, given a social or intertextual 'frame' or scenario already known to the audience, you display the variation without, however, making it explicit (italics mine) in the discourse."

CHAPTER II--THE COMIC CODES

The Strugatskys' texts are richly coded with comic effects. Among different codes of the comic I distinguish three: the code of comedy, the code of parody, and the code of satire. My distinction of comedy, parody, and satire in the Strugatskys' texts is based on theoretical premises shared by various schools of literary theory. The reader's appreciation and understanding of art are essentially determined by the inherent qualities of the work of art and the reader's own sensibility and knowledge. According to a model proposed by Roman Jakobson, the code is one of the six components of any act of communication:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SENDER</th>
<th>context</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>message</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contact</td>
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<tr>
<td>code</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RECEIVER</td>
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A code is a set of rules, conventions in which the message (the text) is framed. Thus I use the term code in the sense of a literary convention: "genre rules constitute a code that is necessary for the correct interpretation of the literary work."¹

¹Tzvetan Todorov, "The Discourse of Fiction," Encyclopedic
Lotman says that the unique feature of art is that it gives out to each reader different information, "to each according to his understanding". This feature, he says, is the result of qualities inherent in art itself, but it is also a question of the perceiver's response:

Lotman is committed to the idea that perception is a process of establishing a code, or codes.... The process of cognition Lotman describes as follows: first the message is received, then the code is selected or worked out, finally the code is compared with the text; in this process it is the systematic elements, which are the bearers of meaning, that are selected, while the extra-systematic are rejected for not bearing information. Thus, 'the process of cognition inevitably presupposes raising the text to the level of abstract language'.

Reception or Reading Theories also emphasize the coherence and validity of the reader's response and suggest that meaning depends on the horizon of the reader's expectations. The same work may evoke different understandings in different historical periods. An example may be the work of Gogol which in different historical periods has been read as realist, symbolist, or comic. In


«...художественный текст имеет еще одну особенность которая выдаёт разным читателям различную информацию--каждому в меру его понимания, он же дает читателю язык, на котором можно усвоить следующую порцию сведений при повторном чтении».

—Shukman, Literature and Semiotics 130-32.
any particular moment of history, reading and interpretation may vary depending on the individual's aesthetic sensibility as well as on his general and literary knowledge. 4

The Strugatskys' texts bring about a variety of responses and understandings. Firstly, they frequently evoke laughter which may range from an abstracted smile to a "full-blooded" laugh as a response to a wide range of comic incongruities characteristic of comedy. But the pure comic appeal may be followed by the second stage which offers more comic effects and more satisfying reading when the reader recognizes numerous parodic allusions to other texts. Another reflective stage may follow in which more comic effects are produced due to the discovery of satirical references to social and moral reality outside of fiction. Thus the distinctions in the inherent features of these texts as well as in a reader's responses lead us to dividing Strugatskys' literary coding into three comic categories: code of comedy, code of parody, code of satire.

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4 Tzvetan Todorov, The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre (Ithaca, New York: Cornell UP, 1975) 33. The kind of distinctions readers are able to make in the process of reading is the basis for Tzvetan Todorov's genre definitions. A work becomes an instance of fantastic when readers hesitate between natural and supernatural explanations.
"The tragic (and the dramatic)--it is said--are universal.... The comic, on the other hand, seems bound to its time, society, cultural anthropology. We understand the drama of the protagonist of Rashomon, but we don't understand when and why the Japanese laugh. It is an effort to find Aristophanes comic, and it takes more culture to laugh at Rabelais than it does to weep at the death of the paladin Orlando."^5

The comic is based on referential function. Its effect depends on our knowledge of cultural, social, or literary codes, the customary pattern of behavior, the dominant or traditional attitudes, literary figures, events, or styles. "Humour is not for babes, Martians, or congenital idiots. We share our humour with those who have shared our history and who understand our way of interpreting experience."^6

There is, however, much humor which has a more or less universal appeal; it is what is called elementary or absolute comic. Baudelaire divides the comic into "the absolute comic" and "the significative comic". He identifies the former with grotesque creation having no utilitarian purpose, while he considers the latter more imitative than creative. Baudelaire's general theory remains obscure today (in essence, he considers all laughter satanic), but his classifications of the comic correspond to more recent insights into the theory of the comic. Edith

Kern⁷ ties Baudelaire's idea of the absolute comic with Baxtin's concept of grotesque creation and "ambivalent carnival laughter." The origin of absolute laughter is in the carnival festivities, which suspend the existing rules, turn the world up-side down, mix mockery and triumph, fuse praise and abuse.⁸ Gurewitch further interprets Baudelaire's term absolute comic as an embodiment of irrationality which subverts logic and defies practical common sense.⁹

The word comic comes from the Greek word κόμος which means "revels" (properly "a village festival: a revel carousel, merry-making," also "a band of revelers, a jovial troop" also "the ode sung at a festive procession"¹⁰). Thus comedy suggests celebration, vitality, reveling, and anarchic subversion.

Though the absolute comic is always aware of the standard norms which it violates, its goal is not moralizing but a pure delight in fanciful creation. Through interplay of norm and absurdity, sense and nonsense, it creates a

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⁸ Mikhail Bakhtin, Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota P, 1984) 164.
world on its own terms which has no utilitarian purpose, and is not mimetic or realistic; it is a world characteristic of the discourse of comic fantasy, and of the grotesque.

Comic fantasy like all comic forms, is based on the collision of opposites, and the interplay of norm and absurdity. The difference is that comic fantasy carries these incongruities to the extreme. Its imagination is at its boldest, and its humor is closer to the preposterous than the amusing: animals and machines can speak, wild and impossible events happen, but at the same time, this fantastic world is credible due to its own internal logic characteristic of all comic.\textsuperscript{11}

Grotesque is a comic form complicated by some horrifying, frightening, and disgusting aspects. The comic component provides a liberating effect, while the horrifying element produces unresolved tension.\textsuperscript{12} The grotesque is a genre wherein incompatible ingredients form a complete aesthetic system. It is a paradox because rationally this system cannot exist, it is alogic, absurd, and still, it is there. Under its comic aspect, the grotesque privileges the comic ingredient, to which then other ingredients are added,


e.g., the tragic, the fantastic, the realist. Together, these components form something of a concrete organism. For Eijzenbaum,

the grotesque style requires first of all that the situation or event being described should be enclosed in a fantastically small world of artificial experiences, that it be completely isolated from reality at large or from the true fullness of inner life, and second, that this should be done not with didactic or satirical intent, but rather to make it possible to play with reality, to break up its elements and displace them freely, so that normal correlations and associations (psychological and logical) will prove inoperative in this newly constructed world, and any trifle can grow to colossal proportions.\(^3\)

For Baxtin the grotesque is essentially physical, referring always to the body and bodily excesses and celebrating these body pleasures and functions in an uninhibited, outrageous, but essentially joyous fashion.\(^4\)

In the Strugatskys the comic has a varying degree of appeal. There is much universal comic of the grotesque, absurd, and illogical character as well as there is the comic which requires a pool of specific knowledge and recollection to have its effect, and that brings parody and satire into our consideration.


\(^4\)Mikhail Bakhtin, Rabelais and His World (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1968) 303-68.
CODE OF PARODY

Parody is a very complex and ambiguous term. It has a long history in literary theory, but has no transhistorical definition. "The vast literature on parody in different ages and places makes it clear that its meaning changes." The term comes from the Greek word *parodia* (παροδία). The root *odos* means song, but the ambiguity already exists in the prefix *para* which has two meanings: 1. "counter", "against" suggesting contrast. 2. "besides" suggesting congruence, accord. The traditional theorist of parody focuses only on the first meaning, thus parody is a text written in opposition to the "original" text with the intent of mocking or ridiculing it. The second, neglected meaning, however, permits another and broader definition, different from the traditional dictionary definitions, but more in tune with the practice of modern art and literature. In accordance with the meaning "beside", a parodist creates a text which is an ironic recast of the "original" text.\(^\text{15}\)

\(^{15}\)Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms* (New York: Methuen, 1985) 32. My presentation of the theory of parody is based on several theoretical sources, among which the work of Linda Hutcheon plays the dominant role.

\(^{16}\)Henryk Markiewicz "On the Definition of Literary Parody," *To Honour Roman Jakobson II* (The Hague: Mouton, 1967) 1271. Markiewicz offers two definitions of parody: sensu stricto which ridicules its "model" and sensu largo which is a recast of the "model".
Thus in its formal or structural dimension parody is a relation between two texts, between:

the primary, surface or foregrounded text, text of parody

and the secondary, implied, backgrounded, borrowed, parodied text, or model, original, target text

As the two texts coalesce, two levels of meaning coexist there structurally. In Susan Stewart's terms, the text of parody "stands in an inverse or incongruous relation to the borrowed text."\(^{47}\) It is, however, important to stress further that, due to the similarity and the contrast between these two texts, the relation between them is that of relative or partial incongruity which brings about a comic effect.

The intent of parody is not a mockery of the original text, but rather an ambivalent attitude of criticism and/or admiration. Although the comic effect may not always be a necessary condition of modern parody, it still is usually present at least in a reduced form and can range from the ironically reverential, to the playful to the scornful. More often the comic effect is expressed by a mere knowing, sophisticated smile rather than by an explosive chuckle.

Baxtin too emphasizes the ambivalent attitude of the

parodist to his target. His "double-voiced" word of parody and the inverted world of carnival parody are consistent with his theory of "polyphonic", "dialogic" literature.\textsuperscript{18}

The ambivalent nature of parody is further elaborated by Hutcheon in her concept of the paradox of parody:

...in discussing the particular case of the medieval carnival, Bakhtin seems to have uncovered what I believe to be another underlying principle of all parodic discourse: the paradox of its authorized transgression of norms.... parody's transgressions ultimately remain authorized--authorized by the very norm it seeks to subvert. Even in mocking, parody reinforces; in formal terms, it inscribes the mocked conventions onto itself, thereby guaranteeing their continued existence.\textsuperscript{19}

While both praising and mocking, modern parody paradoxically presupposes "law" and "transgression", "similarity" and "difference", "continuity" and "change", "homage" and "abuse".\textsuperscript{20}

Another step away from the reductive, standard, dictionary definitions of parody is Hutcheon's observation that modern parody does not even need to be within the same genre:

Literature is famous for parodying non-literary discourse. \textit{Pale Fire} plays with editorial commentary; \textit{Tom Jones}, \textit{Tristam Shandy}, and even \textit{Finnegans Wake} undermine the conventions of scholarly annotation and footnotes.... Peter Greenaway film \textit{The Draughtsman's Contract} is a loving parody of eighteenth-century


\textsuperscript{19}Hutcheon 74-75.
painting and Restoration comedy.\textsuperscript{20}

Another move away from the traditional mocking type of parody can be seen in the issue of the scope of parody:
"Modern parody can operate on a wide range of text sizes....
Its physical dimensions can be as vast as Joyce's \textit{Ulysses} or as small as the changing of one letter or word of a text.\textsuperscript{21} Hutcheon strongly contests the traditional notion of parody and asserts that to be effective a parody does not need to be a "willful distortion of the entire form and spirit of a writer, captured at his most typical moment",\textsuperscript{22} as the traditional theorist claims. On the contrary, "in modern parody, another context can be evoked and then inverted without a step-by-step, pedestrian signaling of the entire form and spirit."\textsuperscript{23}

Though fragmentary and often small in physical dimensions, these parodies can, at the same time, function as component parts of larger and extended structures of complex parodic echoing. Indeed, modern novels can be characterized by multiple and elaborate parodic coding, in which the authors often "recast", "revise", "replay", or "refunction" the previous works of art. Such extended

\textsuperscript{20}Hutcheon 18.
\textsuperscript{21}Hutcheon 18-19.
\textsuperscript{22}Hutcheon 19.
\textsuperscript{23}Hutcheon 19.
parodic forms stand in a striking contrast to those short, occasional parodies that were gathered into anthologies with such regularity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.\textsuperscript{24}

Having so broadened the concept of parody, one should, however, always keep in mind one basic restriction, namely, that parody's "target" or "source" is another work of art. This particular focus makes parody very different from satire, with which it has frequently been confused. Unlike parody, satire ridicules the society's customs and morals with the aim of reforming and improving them. As Nabokov said: "parody is a game, satire is a lesson."\textsuperscript{25} One of the reasons for the common confusion of these terms is the fact that parody is often used as a device of satire. A recast of a serious literary work can have a satiric purpose which, however, is directed not against the literary model but is aimed at ridiculing contemporary customs and practices.\textsuperscript{26}

Satirists choose to use parodies of the most familiar of texts as the vehicle for their satire in order to add to the initial impact and to reinforce the ironic contrast.\textsuperscript{27}

An excellent example of such a device is pointed out by

\textsuperscript{24}Hutcheon 11.
\textsuperscript{26}Markiewicz 1265.
\textsuperscript{27}Hutcheon 58.
Geoffrey Leech in George Orwell's satire of jargonized and
cliched English language. Orwell's parodic rewriting of
the famous verse from Ecclesiastes into the form of modern
jargon creates a comic effect which is directed not against
the Bible but, satirically, against the contemporary,
degenerate writing habits. In this process, the biblical
passage is upheld as the admired model and ideal.

Ecclesiastes:
I returned and saw under the sun, that the race is not
to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet
the bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of
understanding, nor yet favour to men of still, but time
and chance happeneth to all.

Orwell's parody of the Bible as a device of satire on
English contemporary prose:

Objective consideration of contemporary phenomena
compels the conclusion that success or failure in
competitive activities exhibit no tendency to be
commensurate with innate capacity, but that a
considerable element of the unpredictable must
invariably be taken into account.

It is a fact that the most parodied works of art are
the most familiar ones. In painting: Mona Lisa, Last
Supper, in English literature: speeches of Shakespeare's
characters, such as "To be or not to be", in Russian
literature: Puškin's prologue to Ruslan and Liudmila is
parodied in popular satirical folk songs, also in the

Leech 41.
Strugatsky's tale PVS, and in Vladimir Vysotsky's songs. Using a well-known work of art as model, the parodists borrow some of the prestige and authority of the original. The intention is to show the parodist's respect for, and knowledge of, the tradition in which he operates.  

But it also assumes that the author (encoder) and the reader (decoder) have to share the codes which are employed in the text. It assumes that the reader is a sophisticated one who, recognizing the internalized literary model, can see its new semantic possibilities and can enjoy the aesthetic, and the comic effects of its parodic transformations. This is the pragmatic dimension of parody which takes into account the role of the writer and the reader of the text. The pragmatics of parody suggests that "parody is in the eye of the beholder."  

"Historians of parody agree that parody prospers in periods of cultural sophistication that enable parodists to rely on the competence of the reader (viewer, listener) of parody."

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**CODE OF SATIRE**

Baudelaire's significative comic is today interpreted as being synonymous with satire. Satire shares with comedy

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20 Hutcheon 88.
30 Hutcheon 84.
31 Hutcheon 19.
as being synonymous with satire. Satire shares with comedy the same mechanism of comic effect, and it may also have all the elements and qualities mentioned under comedy. In addition, however, satire, through greater suggestiveness and concretization, includes specific details which allude to the real world. Satire's representation of life, morals, and ideas, however, is not "true to life." It concentrates on the negative features, and through a systematic selection and exaggeration of faults and follies, it creates a caricature of its object. More realistic satirists like Saltykov-Šedrin or Zoschenko utilize their vast firsthand knowledge of the material they describe and their sensitive ear for dialogue to support the illusion of reality:

But satirists who use elements of the fanciful or strange—like Swift and Rabelais and Gogol and Orwell and Huxley—are just as careful in providing a detailed illusion of reality; they support their fantastic deceptions with a profusion of authentic details, specific names, dates and statistics.\(^{32}\)

To the latter group, I would surely add the Strugatskys whose writing often extends into the fantastic but at the same time it refers to the present. This is confirmed by Boris Strugatsky's open declaration of Soviet science fiction's relevance to the present.\(^{33}\)


What further distinguishes satire from comedy is its judgmental tone towards the world it presents:

It is censorious attitude that provides the one consistent element in all satirists' views of the world. For whatever else they do, they criticize; satire is permeated with disapprobation, complaint, expose, denunciation, rebuke, condemnation. It is in this sense that satire is unique, its final perspective different from that of every other genre.

Two things, then, are essential to satire; one is wit or humor founded on fantasy or a sense of the grotesque or absurd, the other is an object of attack. Attack without humor, or pure denunciation, forms one of the boundaries of satire.

The mechanism of the comic in satire is the reader's perception of the incongruity between the social and moral reality as he knows it, and the ridiculously distorted representation of that reality in the satiric text. The relative discrepancy between these two planes of thought is comically bridged when their focal concepts and the didactic significance are discovered.

Having analyzed earlier that incongruity is only a part of the complex concept of the comic, from now on, however, I

163.

34Feinberg 59

will be using the term incongruity, or comic incongruity as a shorthand for the comic effect, or an equivalent of the comic effect.

As hinted above, the comic effects in all three codes depend on distinctly different sources of incongruity:

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 2. Sources of incongruity.**

In comedy, the comic effect is due, most importantly in my study, to the incongruities within the text itself.

In parody, the comic effect is due to the incongruity between the Strugatskys' text and the 'original', parodied text.

In satire, the comic effect is due to the incongruity between the concrete social and moral reality and its distortions in the Strugatskys' text.

All three codes have an underlying comic element based on the mechanism of relative incongruity. The codes differ
from each other essentially only in terms of the sources of incongruity. Consequently, in my subsequent analysis, when I use the term comic, I speak of an incongruity without necessarily indicating its source. And when I use the term comedic, parodic, or satiric, I speak of the comic, and I indicate the source of the comic incongruity.

Rarely is a piece of text purely comedic, satiric, or parodic. In their tales, the Strugatskys effectively intermix and blend all three comic codes to create a complex aesthetic text, highly charged with humor and graced with meaning.

The complexity of the Strugatskys' comic codes, in many instances, lends itself to the analysis on three distinct levels of the text: starting from the smallest units (stylistic), through larger (compositional), to the largest units (thematic).

In my study, I will also take into consideration the fundamental opposition of paradigmatic (in absentia) and syntagmatic (in praesentia) relations. When that system is applied to the principle of the three comic codes, it is clear that the code of comedy, in my analysis, deals primarily with the relations in praeentia, and the codes of parody and satire deal with relations in absentia. Studying the Strugatskys' works this way, I will not only be examining combinations of various elements of the material
in relation to other elements within the two tales themselves, but I will analyze the same elements in the context of related works of Russian and world literature, and in the cultural context of the world. Integrating the text into these broader contexts reveals other meanings of the text and further clarifies it. These different readings of the text units will be treated here as the principal demonstration cases of literary richness and complexity and as the telling clues to the nature of the Strugatskys’ comic art.

It is also important to note that the incongruities, whether comedic, parodic, or satiric, are not only a source of comic effects but also of aesthetic effects, resulting from purely formal contrasts and harmonies carried by comic incongruities:

"Harmony is the result of contrast," I said. "The whole world is made up of opposing elements. And ..." "And poetry", he interjected, "true poetry--the more original and alive its world, the more contradictory the contrasts in which the secret kinship occurs."

Thus by tracing the contrasts and incongruities, the lines of repetition, variation, reversal, convergence and interplay of various comic images, I will be analyzing their poetic function. As they echo, intersect, supersede, and

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react upon each other, they establish aesthetic patterns which expand and sustain a larger comic narrative.

The two tales follow a progression in the noticeable variation of the character of the comic, expressed by the gradual shift from the the light and friendly comedy to the blacker humor of satire. In popular film and literature there is the unwritten rule of sequels--namely, that deaths and mayhem must multiply exponentially. In the Strugatskys' tales PNVS and SOT, "death and mayhem" do not occur literally, nevertheless, the tales parody this principle. The cheerful and comic interplay of the fairy tale and of the ordinary reality at the beginning of PNVS gives way first to the grotesqueries (comic and horror) of the abuses of science in the middle of PNVS, and then to the dark and disquieting absurdities of abuses of power in SOT.
PART II--MAGIC AND SCIENCE

CHAPTER III--RUSSIAN FAIRY TALE ENTITIES AND
THE SCIENTIFIC-RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF MAGIC AND SORCERY--
НИЧАВΟ

Most of the action of PNVS takes place at the
Scientific-Research Institute of Magic and Sorcery
«НИЧАВО». Privalov is one of the magi/scientists at this
Institute and also the protagonist and the narrator of the
tales. He continuously encounters mysterious characters and
magical acts at the Institute and in its environment.

Arriving at the Institute, Privalov sees the word
НИЧАВО already on the gate of the Museum of the Institute
(10). The comic effect of this word can be analyzed first
on the stylistic (verbal) level. The word itself is an
acronym and resembles, that is, it has a paradigmatic
relation, particularly in its pronunciation, and even more
so in substandard, provincial Russian pronunciation, with
the word «ничего» meaning "nothing", "nothing special".
Thus the two words create a comic incongruity (unexpected
resemblance and unlikeness), «НИЧАВО»: «НИЧЕГО». The
unexpected, implied meaning "nothing" comically undermines
the serious formality intended in the acronym as the name
of the Institute.

A comic incongruity also develops on the compositional (syntactic) level when Privalov attempts to guess the meaning of the intriguing acronym appearing later in its full form:

АН СССР НИИЧАВО (43)
Научно-Исследовательский Институт Чаво?
В смысле Чего?

1. The first half of the acronym (two units) are clear, conventional, entirely respectable--АН СССР.
2. The second half of the acronym is unclear, unconventional. In the attempt to decode the second half of the acronym, Privalov uses the question word «Чаво», though, in a substandard Russian. He then comes up with some reasonable, nevertheless, linguistically comic speculations (note: the first three letters are identifiable):

Чрезвычайно-Автоматизированной Вооруженной Охраны?
Черных Ассоциаций Восточной Океании? (43)

3. When the second half of the acronym is finally revealed, one incongruous acronym yields its place to another, comically clashing with Privalov's earlier linguistic guessing exercise:

Чародейства и Волшебства (80)

This second half of the acronym turns to be incongruous but in a different sense. The acronym in question presents an
unexpected semantic incongruity. After reading: «Академия Наук Сове́тского Социалистического Республики Научно-Исследовательский Институт...», the participant does not expect the phrase: «Чародейства и Волшебства». The serious (or at least the potentially serious) empirical science clashes with the realm of magic and sorcery. The juxtaposition of the two discourses creates a comic incongruity which is built into the structure of PNVS as the dynamics of the narrative.

In respect to the acronym's earlier considered possible implication of "nothing", the final disclosure of the full name provides some substance to it and restores, but only partially and ironically, the seriousness and respectability of the word «НИИЧАВО». The name of the Institute in itself represents an astonishing and comic incompatibility—the empirical activity of the Institute's science interlocked with magic and sorcery.

The word «НИИЧАВО» being a mocking comment on the Institute, in a nutshell foreshadows, not only incongruity as a principal creative technique of the tales, but also an interplay of empirical and supernatural worlds, manifesting themselves respectively through the "realistic" and fairy tale discourses. In the resulting science fiction discourse, however, the two intersecting realms achieve a comic and poetic ambiguity. Thus in itself, «НИИЧАВО»
offers a playful summary and a comic view of PNVS and SOT.

1. THE HUT ON CHICKEN LEGS

PNVS is "an affectionate return to the roots of Russian and other folk tales (The Institute is located with great felicity in the legendary Russian North)."¹ In the woods Privalov picks up two hitch-hikers, scientists of the local Institute, and drives with them into a small town. When, in a conversation, the names of the locations «Лукоморье» and «Избакурень» (the latter being a contraction of «избы на куриных ногох») are mentioned, the reader familiar with Russian fairy tales and Russian literature hears echoes of the opening lines of many Russian fairy tales, also used by Puškin in the prologue to his narrative poem Ruslan and Liudmila.² Most Russians know the lines by heart; parents use them before reciting fairy-tales to their children.³


²Roman Jakobson "On Russian Fairy Tales" Russian Fairy Tales collected by Aleksandr Afanas'ev (New York: Pantheon Books, 1973) 644. "Introductory and concluding formulas are especially cultivated in the Russian tales. The former frequently grows into elaborate jocular preludes, designed to focus and prepare the attention of the audience. They contrast strikingly with what is to come, for 'that's the flourish (priskazka), just for fun; the real tale (skazka) has not begun'."

³1. Communication from Russian immigrants.

2. Jakobson 643. "Neither in the kolkhoz, nor in the workers' settlement, nor in the Red Army, do the tales die
The subsequent description of the surroundings of the Institute and the images of the first characters encountered there carry more allusions to the famous lines and present a parodic recast of Puškin's prologue.

У лукоморья дуб зеленый;
Златая цепь на дубе том;
И днем и ночью кот ученый
Всё ходит по цепи кругом;
Идет направо—песнь заводит,
Налево—сказку говорит.

Там чудеса: там леший бродит,
Русалка на ветвях сидит;
Там на неведомых дорожках
Следы невиданных зверей;
Избушка там на курьих ножках
Стоит без окон, без дверей;
Там лес и дол видений полны;

..............................

В тенице там царевна тужит
А бурый волк ей верно служит;
Там ступа с Бабою Ягой
Идет, бредет сама собой;
Там царь Кащей над златом чахнет;
Там русский дух... там Русью пахнет!
И там я был, и мед я пил;
У моря видел дуб зеленый;
Под ним сидел, и кот ученый
Свои мне сказки говорил.
Одну я помню: сказку эту
Поведаю теперь я свету...

Privalov is offered a job as a computer programmer at the local scientific Institute and spends his first night at its museum which has a sign at its gate, part of which

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out."

reads: «изба на куриных ногах». The reader now realizes that the earlier mentioned «Изнакурнож» is an acronym of «ИЗба НА КУРиных НоГах» (a hut on chicken legs). The acronym, contrasted with Puškin's phrase, creates comic effects on stylistic (verbal) and compositional (syntactic) levels. First, there is a comic effect due to the "unexpected resemblance and unlikeness" between the acronym and the phrase, as one set of linguistic symbols replaces another and provides an unexpected explanation--«изнакурнож» : «изба на куриных ногах». Some comic incongruity still remains: namely the verbal one, in the opposition of «изнакурнож» : «изнакурног». There is a comic variation in terms of sound effect due to the mutation of the final consonant. In the text of PNVS the acronym «изнакурнож» appears first (9), whereas «изнакурног» appears later (10). Strictly speaking, the acronym «изнакурног» does not appear at all; the editor (myself, E.K.) concocted it. What appears in PNVS is the phrase «изба на куриных ногах» (10).

By creating a name for the museum of a scientific Institute out of a fairy tale concept of "the hut on chicken legs", the authors bring into an apparent contrast two separate planes of thought--scientific activity and fairy tale magic. This contradiction, however, is only relative because it is to some extent justified by the context, that of the subtitle of the book (Повесть-сказка для научных
рабочиков младшего возраста—a tale which is a fairy tale for junior scientific workers), which suggests a combination of fairy tale and scientifically oriented discourses.

We have not expected Puškin's traditional fairy tale to enter into a fairy tale for modern scientific workers. But then the expectation is aroused as the authors introduce parallels to Puškin's work. Yet just when the reader starts to expect some likeness to Puškin's work, he meets instead unexpected unlikeness.

The sign of the gate of the Museum is a parodic recast of Puškin's line—two codes, the parody and the 'original' text form an incongruity—"изба на куриных ногах" (PNVS): "избушка на курьих ножках" (Puškin). The transformation of Puškin's friendly, well-wishing style of diminutives, characteristic of Russian fairy tales, into more neutral, but somewhat ungainly, standard Russian phrase, carries a comic pretense. It is supposed to make the name more suitable for the serious, scientific pursuits of the Institute.

2. THE LEARNED CAT

Entering the museum, Privalov is baffled by another sign on the gate which reads: «КОТ НЕ РАБОТАЕТ»—Администрация (Cat is not working—Administration). Privalov, guessing that «КОТ» is another acronym, wonders if
it is «Комитет Оборонной Техники?» that is not working. He is told by his host that things may look funny, but everything there is in order. Then as if in a timely response, but certainly in a comically incongruous one, a huge cat named Basil suddenly appears on the top of the gate and is settling himself leisurely and comfortably there to make one wonder if this feline cat is the one not working: «На воротах умашиывался, пристраиваясь поудобнее, гигантский—я таких никогда не видел—черно-серый, с разводами кот» (12). More of such subtle and comic incongruities appear when we later learn that cat Basil is laboring hard to tell stories, and is calling for hard work: «Труд, труд, труд—Только Труд!» which comically contradicts the sign if indeed the ambiguous sign were to refer to him (26). In another comic reversal, the sign could really refer to the cat Basil who actually is sclerotic and "out of order" (another meaning of «не работает») and cannot remember the lines of the stories he tries to tell.

As the cat Basil is wondering around the enormous oak tree and is trying to tell a story about a tsar in an ancient tsardom but cannot remember its name, the scene reveals not only a comic code but also a parodic code, linking it with the learned cat pacing around the oak in Puškin's work:
(Puškin)
У лукоморья дуб зеленый;
Златая цепь на дубе том:
И днем и ночью кот ученый
Всё ходит по цепи кругом;
Идет направо—песнь заводит,
Налево—сказку говорит.

(The Strugatskys)
Я лежал животом на подоконнике и, пия, смотрел, как злосчастный Василий бродит около дуба то вправо, то влево, борьбует, откашливается. подымает, мычит, становится от напряжения на четвереньки—словом, мучается несказанно. Диапазон знаний его был грандиозен. Ни одной сказки и ни одной песни он не знал больше чем наполовину, но зато это были русские, украинские, западнословянские, немецкие, английские, по-моему, даже японские, китайские и африканские сказки, легенды, притчи, баллады, песни, романсы, частушки и припевки. Склероз приводил его в бешенство... (26)

Strugatskys' parody is an ambivalent one, both praising and critical to their 'model'. The image of Puškin's learned cat, rendered in a classical stanzaic form, is an image of an ideal bard or poet, elegant and in control of his craft. When contrasted with the deliberately excessive image of a sclerotic, laboring, faltering, exasperated cat Basil, Puškin's graceful and cool cat-poet is both admired and gently mocked. It is also possible to read that the Strugatskys parodically recast Puškin's text for "satirical purposes, directed, however, not against the model but aimed at ridiculing contemporary customs and politics." The inapt, pretentious, internationalist polyglot cat Basil thus

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5This is part of Henryk Markiewicz' definition of parody discussed in my Introduction.
becomes an image of a sorry condition of contemporary Soviet poet, and his confused, unfinished, stories and faulty memory are a metaphor for the decay and poverty of Soviet creative writing, being misguided by false literary doctrine (Basil's method is the futile «Труд, труд, труд,--сказал он.--Только труд!») and hampered by the state and self censorship (cat's numerous unfinished words and sentences). It thus becomes evident that a gentle satiric code also enters into the Strugatskys' text along with the comedic and parodic ones.⁶

The comic acronyms: НИЧАВО, ИЗНАКУРНОЗ, КОТ all reveal their satiric codes which allude to the pervasive use of abbreviations and acronyms in contemporary life in general, and specifically to their overbearing presence in Soviet life and to their pollution of Russian language after the October Revolution:

In the twentieth century, abbreviations have proliferated around the world in response to accelerated pace of life, to developments in technology and a more schematic, even mathematical language.

⁶Byron Lindsey, "On the Strugackij Brothers' Contemporary Fairytale: Monday Begins on Saturday," The Supernatural in Slavic and Baltic Literature: Essays in Honor of Victor Terras, ed. Amy Mandelker, et al. (Columbus: Slavica Publishers, Inc., 1988) 298. "But with parodies of traditional Russian Fantasy, especially of Puškin's folktale imagery, their work is directed toward subtextual satire.... the cat remembers nothing more than half way through. This seems to suggest a deterioration of the national memory and its oral tradition, for Puškin's cat is an emblem of all Russian folklore."
(In the Soviet Union) the new names of State institutions were generally long, complicated, and harnessed to stock political epithets.... To pronounce them properly was an arduous necessity that led to the invention of myriad of abbreviations and acronym.... To the ordinary Russian, this all sounded originally like a nonsensical language, devoid of meaning yet portending something mysterious and sinister, since certain letters threatened life while others constituted its foundation, like some magic formula for reality.

3. RUSALKA (MERMAID)

Another fairy tale creature with which Privalov has an encounter early on during his stay at the Museum is a rusalka. He has gone outside and as he stands under a big oak tree, he watches the cat climb that tree. Soon he gets annoyed as some trash falls on him from the tree. Only when he returns to his room, does he notice that it is fish scales that fell on him. The next morning, he even sees a fish tail hanging from that oak tree. «С нижней ветки дуба свешивался мокрый серебристо-зеленый акулий хвост. Хвост тяжело покачивался под порывами утреннего ветерка» (27). Earlier, a talking cat, and now a fish in the tree have aroused Privalov’s imagination. Still wondering whether it was not just a dream, Privalov, in an inner monologue, tries to investigate the unusual situation rationally:

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In the character of Privalov two discourses intersect. As a fairy tale hero, Privalov accepts the existence of mermaids. He looks at the magic around him as something ordinary, as something which has its own logic. At the same time, as a scientist of the Institute, he expresses doubt as to the rusalkas' ability to climb trees, and he attempts to explain this unusual phenomenon in a rational way. For the reader familiar with Russian folklore such scenes are not entirely strange, incongruous, but they appear very comic found in an unlikely discourse. The fact that Privalov finds rusalkas

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*1. Max Lüthi, Once Upon a Time, tr. Lee Chadeayne and Paul Gottwald (New York: Fredrick Unger Publishing Co., 1970) 142. "[The fairy tale hero] does not ponder over the mysterious forces or where his helpers have come from; everything he experiences seems natural to him and he is carried along by this help, which he has earned often without his knowledge."2. Е. М. Неболев, Волшебно-сказочные корни научной фантастики (Ленинград: Изд-во ленинградского университета, 1986) 38. «С точки зрения героя—мир сказки—вполне обыкновенный, нормальный мир, в котором есть своя логика. Точка зрения героя изнутри и точка зрения слушателя снаружи диаметрально противоположны. Именно отношение к сказочному миру изнутри как не чудесному и создает возможность 'сплетения фантастики с бытовым материалом'. Это сплетение фантастики и быта также участвует в создании иллюзии достоверности.»

*Наталья Ильина, Изгнание норманнов: Очередная задача русской исторической науки (Париж, 1955) 149. «Русалка может жить и в лесу, далеко от воды, но чаще всего, выходя на берег, она выбирается на плакучую иву или березу и качается на ветвях, обняваемых речной струей.»
(mermaids) in the trees problematic shows that he is not entirely familiar with folklore rules, and it undermines some of his qualities as a fairy tale hero. Indeed, Privalov is a science fiction hero made up of the elements of a "realistic" hero and of fairy tale hero, as two conflicting planes of thought are comically brought together in him. The reader may not share Privalov's position, and thus, due to function of structural irony, the hero's serious endeavor brings about results exactly the reverse of Privalov's intentions, as the reader perceives Privalov's way of thinking and his earnest as ridiculous and amusing.10

Privalov takes for real the existence of mermaids; all he finds questionable is the thought that they can climb trees. This incongruity can be comically bridged if the reader, doubting that it was all a dream, imagines that in this situation there is no rusalka. Instead, there is only the cat who has taken a fish into the tree to eat. But if a rusalka is there, the cat is eating (or courting) exactly her. Later in the text, Privalov, without giving any details, mentions that cat Basil is getting married: «Кот Василий взял весенний отпуск—женится» (173). When this piece of news, comic in itself, is tied back to the episode

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10D. C. Muecke, Irony, Methuen & Co Ltd., 1970, p. 34, "The comic element seems to be inherent in the formal properties of irony: The basic contradiction or incongruity coupled with real or pretended confident unawareness."
in the beginning of the tale, cat Basil's night prowlings make sense and a greater comic sense.

If we also think back to the anecdote-epigraph at the very beginning of the book about the fish in the tree, we experience a comic feeling of unexpected congruence with Privalov's nocturnal experience:

Учитель: Дети, запишите предложение: «Рыба сидела на дереве.»
Ученик: А разве рыбы сидят на деревьях?
Учитель: Ну... Это была сумасшедшая рыба (5).

An anecdote is ruled by very strong conventions, and it is more difficult for children to abide by the convention than for adults. In this respect, children are "spoil-sports". They are prone to violate the "rule of the game." This "violation," this variation of the teacher's scenario generates the comic effect. This epigraph, just following the title of the book, is not only a conventional anecdote, comic in itself, but also a root joke, further reinforcing the fantastic, and comic character of the tale. Indeed, this anecdote also constitutes a very important clue and a starting point for the development of a major comic motif

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44Walter Nash, The Language of Humour: Style and technique in comic discourse (London and New York: Longman, 1975) 68. In comedy there are sentences which are not jokes in a formal sense, but they have a certain quality of jokiness about them. They are important elements of the structure of comic narrative and make a comment on the whole text. Such sentences can be called "root jokes"--framing devices of a comic narrative.
and an aesthetic pattern based on a chain of comic effects connected with the fish image. PNVS is not a series of anecdotes. In fact, this anecdote is followed by a very different type of discourse which leaves a certain tension of the anecdote unresolved. This tension ties it to other incongruities later in the narration, such as the experience of Privalov with the fish on the tree and his very question: «как они могут лазить по деревьям?...» (30). In the context of the anecdote, Privalov's experience follows the fantastic logic suggested at the outset of the tale by the content of the anecdote. And this overall similarity is accompanied by considerable comic differences. The children are told about a fish on a tree, while Privalov thinks that there is a rusalka, a mermaid (half-fish, half-woman) sitting in the tree, as he has seen only the tail end of her. Together, the anecdote, the strange sightings, and musings of Privalov constitute relationships in praesentia. These three scenes form a larger thematic unit, characterized by oppositions and harmony, but chiefly by gradation, that is, intensification of the comic effect.

This whole thematic unit concerning the fish-rusalka imagery has also relationships in absentia—with similar scenes from outside of the Strugatskys' text. It evokes and parodically recasts an image of rusalka from Puškin's prelude to Ruslan and Liudmila derived from Russian fairy
tales. Puškin's "Русалка на ветвях сидит" is a source which provides a partial answer and a comic resolution to Privalov's intellectual problem, and to the pupil's question "А разве рыбы сидят на деревьях?"

The familiar Puškin's «лукоморье» verse has its own parodic extension with a political, anti-Soviet edge. It appeared way back in the early stage of Soviet history, as a criticism of the impoverishment and restrictions of the Soviet State:

У лукоморья дуб-—срубили,
Златую цепь—в Торксис снесли.
Кота—на мясо изрубили,
А русский дух——съели в Соловки.  

The Strugatskys' episodes with cat Basil and rusalka find themselves in a chain of parodies. They "replay" and "refunction" the previous works and become component parts of larger and extended structures of parodic echoing. As noted by Hutcheon, "satirists choose to use parodies of the most familiar of texts as the vehicle for their satire in order to add to the initial impact and to reinforce the ironic contrast".

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13 Hutcheon 58.
4. THE PIKE FISH

In PNVS the fish image is aesthetically particularly satisfying because it undergoes a long series of transformations and semantic transfers resulting in a complex and sustained comic narrative. The image of the fish reappears again the same morning; this time as a pike at the well. As Privalov goes out to fetch water from the well, the rural and primitive surroundings are juxtaposed with unusually numerous elements of the modern world: the sight and noise of a helicopter, the honking and droning of automobiles in the distance, and the hero's turning his eyes on his car and his thoughts on the need to add water to the car's radiator. And then this common modern reality, so elaborately described, is invaded by the magical, fairy tale reality, the pike with a human voice. This happens abruptly and unexpectedly, which is a condition of the comic. But according to the rules of fairy tales, already firmly established in the text, one does expect, if not a mermaid, then at least a talking fish.

Though the fish talks, she has a hiccup and there is a noticeable discrepancy, a lack of synchronization between the movements of her jaw and her speech sounds which produces a funny and grotesque effect. Hence, the narrator-hero cannot help comparing her to a pike in a puppet theater—a comic incongruous image, something both
living and artificial, Bergson's "mechanical encrusted on
the living":

Было очень странно смотреть, как она говорит.
Совершенно как щука в кукольном театре, она вовсю
открывала и закрывала зубастую пасть в неприятном
несоответствии с произносимыми звуками. Последнюю
фразу она произнесла, судорожно сжав челюсти (31).

The incident with the talking pike at the well displays
not only a code of comedy, described above, but also a code
of parody, as it contains parallels with the fairy tale «По
щучьему веленью»:

«Отпусти меня, добрый человек, на волю; я тебя
счастливы сделаю: чего душа твоя пожелает, все у тебя
будет! Только скажи: по щучьему веленью, по божьему
благословенью явись то-то и то-то—сейчас явится!»

The pike in PNVS models her incantation on the fairy tale
ritual formula, but comically distorts it--most strikingly
replacing God's will with that of the human: Ты меня
отпустишь, а я тебе послужу, скажи только «по щучьему
веленью, по моему, мол, хотелим» (32). The pike is uneasy
with the demands and wishes of modern man. She admits that
her wish-granting ability is limited only to the sphere of
fairy tale magic.

-- Ну что просить—то будешь, служивый? Только попрошу
чего, а то просят телевизоры какие-то, транзисторы...
Один совсем обалдел: «Выполни, говорит, за меня,
годовой план на лесопилке». Года мол не тедрого

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14 A. Н. Афанасьев, Народные русские сказки в трех томах, том
1 (Москва: Государственное Издательство Художественной
Литературы, 1957) 411.
The magical, talking pike lives in the modern world, but apparently has not gotten well adjusted to it. She lives at the junction of the modern technological world and the fairy tale world; she cannot grant wishes the modern men expect of her, but she can grant the thousand-league boots or the invisibility cap, скороходы или шапку-невидку. One can wonder if the pike's wish-granting formula can work at all since it violates the original magical one. A comic connection with the wish-granting pike can be seen when some sort of invisibility cap rescues Privalov from trouble later in the story. It, however, happens quite unceremoniously, without the necessary magical incantation: "У меня теперь похолодело внутри. Но Роман уже оценил положение. Он схватил с вешалки заселенный картуз и нахлобучил мне на уши. Я исчез (74).

The pike in Afanas'ev's fairy tale lacks any details and is described only with one adjective: "большая щука". In parodic contrast, the pike on PNVS is described with several comic details. The pike is huge too but also green and mossy, and hiccuping. She is a chatter-box complaining about her rheumatism and poor eye-sight (she mistakes young
Privalov for someone else).

Moreover, the wish-granting ability makes the pike related to the classic goldfish of Russian fairy tales. In a comic twist, the pike, directly mentioning the goldfish, admits that she is not as good at granting wishes as the goldfish was. She also reveals to Privalov that the goldfish was recently killed by a depth mine.

The scene with the pike at the well, as playful as it is, having comic and parodic codes, also carries a satiric code. The killing of the magic wish-fulfilling goldfish represents the destruction of the creativity and imagination of the fairy tale ethos. The pike's complaints about the wishes she hears from people today express a judgment on some specific matters of the contemporary world and its mass culture. The fairy tale magic is replaced by the devices and instruments of modern science and technology. The magic pike does not understand or believe in television or transistor radio. Maybe this is because the way these

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15 Cathy Young, *Growing up in Moscow* (New York: Ticknor and Fields, 1989) 18. In her book, Young provides a reference to the fact that fairy tales were forbidden after the Revolution, particularly in the 1930s: "Chukovsky, who lived from 1882 to 1969 and was already a writer of some renown at the time of the 1917 Revolution, had to wage a relentless fight to get his poems for children published in the late thirties. Fairy tales and fantasy were then viewed as useless, if not harmful, distractions from the proletarian struggle. Children's literature was supposed to inculcate correct principles, not divert the tykes with some apolitical and moreover unscientifically depicted flies and mosquitoes."
objects are used in modern mass culture induces intellectual passivity. The person using thousand-league boots or an invisibility cap can still think and act for himself. But with the TV, radio, and tape recorders, man sometimes forgets how to think for himself. The narrator, however, says that the best thing is to think: «Как Паскаль: 'Будем же учиться хорошо мыслить—вот основной принцип морали.' » (35)
5. BABA YAGA

Another fairy tale character whom Privalov encounters early during his stay at the Museum of «Измакурно» is the old woman Найна Клевна Горыніч who is the caretaker of the museum. Her first name itself immediately alludes (paradigmatically) to the evil witch in Puškin's Ruslan and Liudmila, who is a literary variation of the the Baba Yaga of fairy tales. Her appearance further suggests that she is not only a vivid by also a comically exaggerated and distorted image of Baba Yaga:

(Puškin)

И вдруг сидит передо мной
Старушка дряхлая, седая,
Глазами впалыми сверкая,
С горбом, с трясучей головой.
Печальной ветхости картина.
Ах, витязь, то была Наина!... *

(Strugatskys)

Хозяйке было, наверно, за сто. Она шла к нам медленно, опираясь на суковатую палку, волоча ноги в валенках с галошами. Лицо у неё было темно-коричневое; из сплошной массы морщин выдавался вперёд и вниз нос, кривой и острый, ятаган, а глаза были бледные, тусклые, словно бы закрытые белками (13).

The Strugatskys' establish resemblances between their text and Puškin's text and introduce unexpected variations resulting in comic incongruities. The beginning of the description of the Strugatskys' Baba Yaga is very much in the convention of Puškin's poem and fairy tale in general.

*А.С. Пушkin. Поэмы сказки. Том четвертый (Москва - Ленинград, Издательство Академии Наук СССР, 1949) 25.
But soon the objects of contemporary reality comically interfere with the purely traditional one (she is wearing felt boots and galoshes). Even her scarf, at first, seems a typical and expected garment, consistent with the fairy tale image, but its further detailed description turns Naina into a parodic distortion of the fairy tale model. That scarf is a nylon one with a gaudy, colorful picture of the atomic plant «Атомиум» with inscriptions in several languages, a symbol of modern science and technology and of the bright, new technological world for the whole humankind. Byron Lindsey's analysis of this scene reveals its satiric coding: "Naina Klevna wears a scarf from the Brussels World's Fair --a bit of Gogolian Pošlost' or vulgar detail which comments on the tawdry nature of her present existence."47

He adds:

The Soviet Union participated in the Bruxelles Fair of 1958, an event given wide attention as an example of new cultural ties to the West after the isolation of the Stalinist years.48

In a further contrast to her Puškin counterpart, who is evil and scheming against the unfortunate Ruslan, Naina of the Struğatskys' is merely gruff and annoying but basically benevolent towards her visitor Privalov. The witch Baba Yaga in some of Afanas'ev's fairy tales "is seen

47 Lindsey 296.
48 Lindsey 302.
to be a destructive being who intends to kill the hero, usually while he is asleep, and indeed even drugs his food in order to accomplish this. The Strugatskys parody this in the scene when late at night Naina brings food to hungry Privalov:

На ней была длинная серая рубаха, а в руках она несла тарелку, и в комнате сейчас же распространился настоящий, а не фантастический аромат еды. Старуха улыбалась. Она поставила тарелку прямо перед мной и сладко пробасила:
-- Откушай-ко, батюшка, Александрович. Откушай, чем бог послал, со мной переслал... (21).

For the reader familiar with the fairy tales, this scene, warm and friendly as it is, causes, nevertheless, a comic trepidation and a momentary concern for the fate of the hero. In a further comically partial resemblance and unlikeness with the 'original', Naina's 'evil' nature merely shows in her unreasonable grumpiness, mostly over her hungry client's teeth sucking. Upon her first meeting of Privalov, Naina expresses her apprehension over teeth sucking several times which is a parodic reversal of the fairy tale conventions where Baba Yaga "regards the hero at his first appearance as her legitimate prey and threatens to devour him with her teeth of iron which she sharpens in anticipation." The fairy tale menacing phrase «зубы точит»

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20 Kravchenko 184.
is turned into PNVS's less threatening «ышать зубом», and it is not Naina who "hushes" with her teeth but her supposed prey.

6. ZMEJ GORYNYČ (THE DRAGON)

Performing her evil deeds, Puškin's witch Naina, changes (not unlike snakes do, shedding their old skin and emerging as if reborn), into a winged dragon (земл крылатый) known from the traditional fairy tales as Zmej Gorynyč. In a parodic contrast, the Strugatskys' Naina never changes her appearance, but her last name Gorynyč indicates that her dual nature is still preserved, though in her name only. Hence it ties her to Puškin's Naina and the fairy tale Baba Yaga. The special close relationship of Baba Yaga and the Zmej Gorynyč is grotesquely and parodically remodeled in PNVS in a scene where Naina and Privalov watch a huge cistern, being hauled down the street, spewing out yellow tongue of flame, and issuing a strange sound which chills the heart. This is the resident Zmej Gorynyč being carted away to the piercing screams of the swarms of children: «Тилили-тилили, а дракона повезли!», and Naina's affectionate, and grieving remark over the fate of her own one, «Повезли родимого»:

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24 Kravchenko's research shows that Baba Yaga can adopt different shapes, that Zmej and Baba Yaga have many attributes in common, and that Zmej is virtually Baba Yaga's alter ego. 187, 210, 211.
The grotesque image of the dragon, half-mechanical, half a living monster creates a comic effect according to the rules of Bergson. He saw the dualism of the living and the inert, rigid matter, "the mechanical encrusted on the living" as the main source and explanation of all forms of the comic. The more recent theories consider it only a variant among others:

The cistern-like fairy tale monster on wheels presents such an example of humor which exploits the line of intersection of the two incongruous elements: the living organism and the automaton, and what is related to it, the comic hybrid of animal-machine. This comic pattern has the purpose of intermixing the fantastic and frightful creature of fairy tale imagination with the menace of technological inventions and progress «Огнедышащо» (35) of the Institute's science. Naina is not only upset over the cruelty being done to the Dragon but she gives a critical comment on the
experiments of the Institute. Her remark has a thematic relationship with the later events in the book, that is, it foreshadows much of the abuse of science at the Institute:
«Сам Э. Горьмич был заперт в старой котельной, откуда доносилось его металлическое храпение и взревывания спросонок» (107).

In the fairy tales Baba Yaga...is the focal character at a very important stage of the hero's adventures, namely, when he is to cross the threshold into the Other World....(184)

The hero of PNVS Privalov follows that pattern of the fairy tale model with considerable comic inversions. We first meet him in the woods. From there he drives into the town and then he enters the Institute—the magical Other World where he experiences his adventures. But before he enters that world he has to deal with Naina Klevna—a comic crossing of ominous Baba Yaga and a grumpy but benevolent caretaker of the Institute's Museum.

On the New Year's Eve, Privalov is on duty to watch over the Institute which gives him the opportunity to tour part of the Institute. His subsequent narration reveals a menagerie of monsters, and strange experiments. Just as he did at the Museum, here too, Privalov meets more fairy tale creatures.
Another character of the Russian fairy tale, who is also mentioned in Puškin's prologue to Ruslan and Ljudmila is Koščej. Puškin's line describes him as «Там царь Камей над златом чахнет». Koščej is an evil sorcerer, and his image is skeletal which makes him the very essence of death. His full name, however, is Koščej Bessmertnyj, the epithet meaning 'immortal' (literally 'deathless'). This opposition of the physical form and the name, death: Deathless, creates a very chilling, grotesque effect. His image and his activities vary to some degree from tale to tale, but Anikin interprets Koščej as the embodiment of social crimes and injustices, and further depicts him as the miserly old man constantly guarding his enormous wealth:  

...It may be seen that the Koshchei's powers are not limitless, for at the beginning of some tales the Koshchei is clearly a prisoner of the hero's bride, a warrior princess. He is locked in a secret room, and held captive in very cruel circumstances, e.g., chained to the wall above a cauldron of boiling tar or onto a board of fire, or suspended from an iron hook by one rib.

(The Strugatskys:)
Около Кошея Бессмертного я задержался. Великий негодяй обитал в комфортабельной отдельной клетке с коврами, кондиционированием и стеллажами для книг. По стенам клетки были развезены портреты Чингисхана, Гиммлера, Екатерины Медичи, одного из Борджия и то ли Голдуотера, то ли Маккарти... Содержался он в бесконечном предварительном заключении, пока велось бесконечное

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22 V. P. Anikin, Russkaia narodnaja skazka (Moskva: Uchpedgiz, 1959) 137–8.
23 Kravchenko 217.
The Strugatskys' depiction of Koščej is a hilariously distorted version of the fairy tale model. Several genuine, general similarities are scrupulously preserved, but they are simultaneously, comically undermined by the wealth of unexpected, entirely non-fairy tale details. Like his fairy tale model, the Strugatskys' Koščej is imprisoned in a cage. But in contrast to the expected cruel conditions, his cage is a comfortable study room with rugs and uniquely modern facility of air-conditioning. The fairy tale miser, hoarding material wealth, «над златом чахнет», is turned into a collector of books. The portraits, lining up his study, betray his autocratic and reactionary sentiments tying him to the image of his fairy tale predecessor as the embodiment of social evils. The selection of the portraits cannot help but reveal a satiric code too—a ridicule of the 1960s official Soviet view as to what political orientation is the source of social injustices (Ghingis Khan, Himmler, McCarthy, Goldwater).

In the quoted passage, Zmej Gorynyč returns into the picture of the narration. Previously, he had been seen being hauled to the Institute for some cruel
experimentation. He is now put in a boiler room from where he gives out the comic sounds of his half-mechanical, half animal existence, "домосились его металлическое храпение и взрывывания кососох" (107). Koшcеj is highly valued in the Institute because, besides participating in other experiments, he serves as the translator for Zmej Gorynyч. This extraordinary relationship between these two monsters serves as a thematic device to connect two images in PNVS for aesthetic purposes. It can also be viewed as a parodic recast, a comic specification of the relationship the two beings have in the fairy tales where they "have common features and are interchangeable in their functions." 24

Privalov wonders about the paradox of Koшcеj's immortality faced with the possibility of capital punishment for his crimes. In the fairy tales, this perfect contradiction holds true only when applied only to the epithet "deathless". Otherwise, there is a secret to Koшcеj's immortality. He is called 'deathless' because his death, his innermost soul, is in an egg which is hidden in some faraway place:

Koshchei meets his death in one of two ways in the tale. He dies as soon as the hero finds the egg which contains his "death" (soul) (Af. Tales, 156-8; Nov. 12; Beloruss. pp. 238-254), or he is killed by the hero's steed (Af. Tales, 159-160; Khud. 22, 48; Pom. 30; Vyat. 86).

24 Kravchenko 216.
25 Kravchenko 219.
The image of Koščej and the question of immortality returns later in the narration in the scene of one of the experiments at the Institute. The scientist Korneev has managed to bring back to life a dead fish. As the scientists are watching a gutted fish swimming vigorously in a tub, some of them believe that they are actually witnessing a non-protein life, and then this experiment provokes a discussion about the forms and the essence of life.

-- Я говорю, что жизнь--это белок,--возразил Эдик.
-- Не ощущаю разницы,--сказал Витька.--Ты говоришь, что если нет белка, то нет и жизни.
-- Да.
-- Ну, а это что?--спросил Витька. Он слабо понял рукой.

На столе рядом с ванной появилось отвратительное существо, похожее на ежа и на паука одновременно. Эдик приподнялся и заглянул на стол.
-- Ах,--сказал он и снова лег.--Это не жизнь. Это жить. Разве Кошеч Бессмертный--это небелковое существо? (162).

The fact that Eddie Amperian brings up the question of Koščej the Deathless in this discussion creates an astounding and subtly comic incongruity between the forms of life of the fairy tale character and the creatures observed in the experiment. Koščej is called 'deathless' because his soul is his death which has been taken and hidden away from him:

The belief that the soul may absent itself from the body without causing death is widespread in the traditions of many lands. The doctrine of the eternal
soul, the idea of keeping the soul in some place of security outside the body is, according to Fraser, a real act of primitive faith.

The Strugatskys have created a curious parallelism and comic incongruity between the soulless life of Koščej and the non-protein life of the "gutless" (gutted) fish. The primitive belief in the possibility of soulless life expressed in the fairy tales finds its recurrence in the scientific thinking and activity of the Institute's magi/scientists.

8. WATER-OF-LIFE

Korneev is one of the most dedicated and selfless scientists of the Institute. When he is working on his extraordinary experiment to bring the dead fish back to life, he immerses the fish in the water-of-life. Consequently, this introduces another fairy tale element to the narration. The semantically rich, fairy tale motif of the fish is now combined with water-of-life and the two produce another series of comic and aesthetic effects. The introduction of water-of-life into the action is not entirely unexpected. Apart from the fairy tale conventions already strongly established in the text, water-of-life has been foreshadowed by the image of Rusalka. The image of Rusalka aesthetically also links two major, apparently

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20 Kravchenko 219.
separate, images in the tale—the fish and the water-of-life. In Russian folklore Русалка is an embodiment of water-of-life:

Изъ влаги и огня созданъ образъ и нашей русалки.... Объединяясь въ ней, эти силы действуютъ ее образомъ живой воды, играющимъ меда, т.е. напитка бессмертия.

Privalov, observing the experiment, expresses his ignorance over the nature of Korneev's work, and his musings again create an incongruity between the science of the Institute and the fairy tale imagination:

А-а, сказал я и стал соображать, что бы ему посоветовать. Механизм действия живой воды я представлял себе крайне скуто. В основной по сказке об Иване-царевиче и Сером Волке (124).

In the fairy tale "Prince Ivan, the Firebird, and the Gray Wolf"28, Prince Ivan, returning to his father's kingdom with the Princess Elena, the Firebird, and the horse with golden mane, was slain in sleep and cut into pieces by his envious brothers. Ivan's body was found thirty days later by his friend the Gray Wolf who then commanded a raven to bring water-of-life from a far-a-way land. He then "sprinkled Prince Ivan with the water-of-life and Prince Ivan stood up and said: 'Ah, I have slept very long!' He soon returned to his father's kingdom, married Princess Elena, while his

27 Ильина 148-149.
evil brothers were thrown into dungeon. 20.

During his experiment, Korneev asserts that the Gaussian scientific theory of "dispersion of properties" could be the key to understanding the phenomenon of the water-of-life. This further elaboration of the incongruity deepens the absurdity and carries it to a higher level of intensity:

Ты меня слушай, понял?—сказал он угрожающе.—На свете нет ничего одинакового.—Все распределяется по гауссюане. Вода воде рознь... Этот старый дурак не сообразил, что существует дисперсия свойств... (125).

Privalov's recollection of the fairy tale about the miraculous water-of-life juxtaposed with Korneev's scientific theorizing in the Strugatskys' prose have some points of connection which is the condition of the comic. One such point partially mediating this incongruity is Privalov's comment in the epilogue that water-of-life has gone out of usage two hundred years ago and it should not be used as such in describing Korneev's experiment. The implication is that water-of-life used to be a scientific term.

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20В. А. Неёлов 125. Неёлов quotes В. А. Бахтина, Время в волшебной сказке, «Сказка игнорирует и известный закон природы, что все живое существует только во времени, рождаешь, развиваясь и умирая. Она легко побеждает смерть, применяя живой и мертвый воды. Тем самым 'отменяется' представление о неотвратимости времени, о невозможности повернуть его вспять»
Much of the action of PNVS takes place on New Year's Eve, which in Russian culture is the time when people like to listen to stories of make-believe. This is the time when the extraordinary experiments in the Institute are performed. On New Year's Eve, Korneev and Privalov watch the dead fish float belly up in a baby bath, and then the fish begins to swim vigorously about in the tub of water-of-life.

The term water-of-life is used by the Strugatskys in such a way in the text that it forms very elaborate configurations in the text and acquires a very diverse semantic significance. These meaningful arrangements also provides a structure for a sustained and sophisticated comic narrative.

Besides bringing the dead fish back to life using water-of-life, Korneev's biggest scientific idea is turning the water of all seas and oceans into water-of-life. This project, however, is still in the experimental stage. When these experiments are read in combination with the narrator's later off-hand remarks regarding the scientists' abilities of changing water into wine and feeding a thousand people with five fish, new comic and aesthetic effects are created. These remarks also hint that this ambiguous term

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This time corresponds to the older tradition of Christmas (Святы: гадание, пение, пляски, переодевание).
'water-of-life' in some instances stands for alcohol which is in much use in the Institute:

Да, они знали кое-какие заклинания, умели превращать воду в вино, и каждый из них не затруднился бы накормить пятью хлебами тысячу человек (130).

These feats are absurdities which, however, make sense in the fairy tale, play-reality of the Strugatskys' poetic text. In that reality, the scientists' miracles of turning water into wine and feeding a thousand men with five loaves of bread are simple, mundane events, as Privalov's understated, casual, and off-hand tone indicates.

The quote has an easily recognizable parodic code alluding to the Biblical text. The reader's recognition of these allusions causes two incompatible literary codes to play side by side in his mind: the code of the New Testament's text and its parodic distortion in PNVS. I emphasize that this parody is not the traditional mocking one, but rather, according to the definitions of Hutcheon, an "imitation characterized by ironic inversion" seldom at the expense of the parodied text. In another of her formulations, parody is "repetition with critical distance, which marks difference rather than similarity." The unique New Testament words which the Strugatskys hint at are in these lines:

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31 Hutcheon 6.
Jesus said to the servants, 'Fill the jars with water'; so they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, 'Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.' They did so, and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine.... (John 2:6)

When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, 'Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted.' So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten. (John 6:10)

The relationship between the parodist of the sacred text and the reader has been changing over the centuries. Medieval carnival was the archetype of parody, and Biblical parody was very common in medieval literature and was accepted by the Church authorities. Margaret A. Rose points out that the Puritan revolution of the post-Reformation period viewed Biblical parody as blasphemy and suppressed it.  

The violation of the Biblical code in the Strugatskys' parody does not have the intensity of the comic effect of medieval parody, because it is written in the context of secular Soviet culture, where semantic changes of the Biblical text are not so meaningful for the reader's world.

The semantic change here refers to the miracles of Christ being replaced by the tricks of the scientists of the Institute. The parody is also communicated through syntactic distortions: the original text is more elaborate,

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as it describes the miracles indirectly through St. John's report of the events, the drama of which is heightened by the direct speech of the characters involved. In the parodist text, all this is reduced to one off-hand sentence—"True, they knew an incantation or two, knew how to turn water into wine, and any one of them would not find it difficult to feed a thousand with five loaves"—which is followed by a conceited remark: "Это была щепуха, внешнее" "that was chaff and outer tinsel" (130). The brevity, the nonchalance, and the colloquialism of these statements clash with the high Biblical style of the original work and contribute to the comic effect.

The Strugatskys' parody does not ridicule the backgounded text of the New Testament. It only uses that text as a standard "by which to place the contemporary under scrutiny." Indeed, in these instances, the Strugatskys use parody of the Biblical text as a vehicle for their satirical attack of moonshining at Soviet institutions. Parodying the very familiar text of the Bible gives the authors an effective launch pad for their mockery of contemporary, specific human vices. The passage on the scientists' little miracles of turning water into wine provides a telling context to the scene of the New Year's

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Hutcheon 57.
celebration: «Стаканы сдвинулись. Потом кто-то сказал, осматривая бутылку: —Кто творил вино?»34 (129). Together these scenes can be read as codes for moonshining. The lofty word «творил», suggesting higher form of creativity, is incongruous and at the same time comically fitting for any kind of activity of the scientist. When this meaning is evoked the two words paradigmatically form a comic opposition.

Moonshining at the Institute is further suggested by the image of the gigantic Children's Laughter Still which can be a well disguised alcohol distillery:

Я отомкнул дверь центрального зала и, стоя на пороге, польбовался, как работает гигантский дистиллятор Детского Смеха, похожий чем-то на генератор Ван де Граафа (104).

There are also times when alcohol is used as a source of inspiration and relaxation during the scientists' work, as in the scene when Roman, participating in the solving of the problem of counter-motion, takes a drink of the "water-of-life": «Роман откашлялся и выпил кружку живой воды» (237).

Vybegallo's infamous experiment with the model of new man is conducted and, presumably, reported under the influence of alcohol, as Vybegallo himself and the local

newspaper correspondents show up in the laboratory in a state of intoxication:

...полез Антвосий Антвосович Выбегалло. Настоящий. От него пахло водкой, эпупоном и морозом.... Выяснилось, что Выбегалло привел с собой двух корреспондентов областной газеты. Корреспонденты были знакомые -- Г. Проницательный и Б. Питомник. От них тоже пахло водкой (139-140).

All of these scene are comedic and some are parodic, but the numerousness of these images creates a certain emphasis which also reveals a satirical code in them. This is a satire on the appalling aspects of life in the Soviet science cities—an escape into alcoholism, as witness in Akademgorodok:

Social life has changed radically since the cafe and clubs were closed down; it is chiefly fueled by vodka and cognac, the inevitable accompaniments of every gathering. In the home, people no longer converse or exchange views; they seem to have lost the faculty of talking coherently or listening. The solitary drinker has arrived and taken over. Local sociologists estimate that no less than 35 percent of men and women in Akademgorodok get drunk habitually, many of them daily.

In this context, the name of the Institute НИИЧАВО ("nothing"), introduced early in the text, may already be providing a satirical commentary on the quality and value of the Institute itself.

In Russia as well as in other parts of the world it is a common people's belief that alcohol has medicinal effect. A reader may, therefore, suspect that the mysterious water-of-life is simply alcohol. All the fuss with the water-of-life bringing the dead fish back to life and the great designs of turning the water of all seas and oceans into water-of-life may seem to be consistent with an alcoholic's grotesque dreaming and a satire on the habit of drinking as seeking an escape, a solution to all problems.

Water-of-life in all its forms, whether it is a fairy tale source of life and immortality, or the scientist's alcoholic drink, or chemical body, after all, remains an ambiguous substance. Following the experiment of bringing dead and gutted fish back to life, the scientists discuss whether the aims of nature could include un-life "нежить". Buoyed by his success with the gutted fish, Korneev suggests an evolutionary chain: anti-virus > protein > man (Amperian) > un-life. He does not object to Amperian's sarcastic, anecdotal conclusion to this kind of reasoning, namely, that a shot-glass of cognac followed by a slice of lemon with sugar on it is the crown of all creation:

"У меня есть один знакомый," --сказал Эдик. -- Он утверждает, будто человек--это только промежуточное звено, необходимое природе для создания венца творения: рюмки коньяка с ломтиком лимона.
"А почему бы в конце концов и нет? (163-4)."

Korneev is the hardest working scientist at the Institute.
He is the best embodiment of the Institute's theory that happiness can be found in work itself and in the constant search for knowledge. His acceptance of the "cognac theory" brings about a carnivalesque turning up-side-down of the Institute's theory of happiness and casts a comic and ambivalent light on all the activities of the Institute. Finally, it is a tribute to wit and inspiration and an ironic toast and a hedonist cheer to the games of «НИИЧАВО».
CHAPTER IV--OTHER FOLKLORE ENTITIES AND НИЧАБО

Russian fairy tale characters are not the only magic entities to play a role in PNVS. Entities of related folklore genre--legend and myth and are brought into the text to form other fundamental units of the tale. And just as the fairy tale entities do, they too interact with each other and undergo comic transformations in the Strugatskys' text, all together creating the fantastic and comic fabric of PNVS.

1. THE DIVAN OF BEN BEZALEL

Before Privalov is hired at the Institute, he spends a restless and eventful night sleeping on the sofa (divan) at the Museum of the Institute. There is much fuss at the Institute about this sofa. There is an ongoing argument over its true nature: whether it is just an ordinary sofa, something to sleep on, or a piece antique furniture of museum value, or an instrument able to transform everyday reality into a fairy tale reality. One thing is certain:
that in the past it belonged to Emperor Rudolf II and had been built by his legendary magician and alchemist Leo ben Bezalel:

Ручной труд—быстро сказал Роман.--Безотказен.
Конструкции Льва бен Бецалеля. Бен Бецалель собирал и отлаживал его триста лет... (70).

Most of the intermixing of reality and fantasy, of science and magic, which takes place at the Institute, is attributed to the existence and the working of this mysterious sofa:

Диван был транслятором. Он создавал вокруг себя М-поле, преобразующее, говоря просто, реальную действительность в действительность сказочную (120).

Both sentences in this passage create comic effect through compositional (syntactic) techniques. The second sentence offers particularly interesting technique of symmetrical paraphrase, quite commonly used in the Strugatskys' text. It is used by Privalov when he paraphrases an empirical scientific reality in terms of fairy tale magic or vice versa, when he restates a fairy tale image or action in what approximates a scientific discourse. The most commonly used expressions as conjunctions in these symmetrical paraphrases are: «то есть», «известный как», «значит», «говоря просто».

This technique is very natural on the psychological level, since we often paraphrase to explain further what we mean. On the literary level, this is very reminiscent of the syntactical symmetry of Psalms and, in Russian
literature, in Molenie Danila Zatočnika, or in Avvakum's Autobiography where the author speaks twice about the same thing, each time in a different form. Both elements of the symmetry speak about the same thing but each help to understand the other. Often one element may be vague or incomprehensible, and then the other completes or makes it more explicit:

...и бысть солнце против Гаваю, еже есть на полднях, ста Исус крестообразно, сюречь распростре руце свои... Возвратилось солнце к востоку, сюречь назад отбежало» (and the sun was over Gibeon, that is, at midday, Jeshua stood in cruciform, that is, he stretched out his arms... The sun receded into the east, that is, it went backward and again moved on....) Бысть же я в третий день пришел, сюречь есть захотел, (It came to pass that on the third day I was voracious, that is, I wanted to eat.

When, in these examples, Avvakum explains or paraphrases the bookish Old Church Slavonic expressions by using Russian vernacular expressions, he breaks the boundaries between the two languages. In this kind of writing, language becomes the subject, the search for the right word, the search for

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1 Житие прпотора Аввакума им санним написанное (Москва: Государственное издательство художественной литературы, 1960) 57, 66.

form and for the unification of two disparate languages.

Using the same method, the goal of the Strugatskys' writing is to illuminate in a comic way the similarities and differences between the ethos of magic and the ethos of science. There is an underlying tension between magic and science since they represent two incompatible worldviews. Yet due to Institute's interplay and intermixing of magic and science, both these notions acquire poetically ambiguous, double meaning—'Научаво's science of magic becomes also magic of science. The scientists of Научаво are not unlike the sorcerers of fairy tales or vice versa—just as the ancient magicians were the scientists of the past, and modern scientists are magicians of today. Through these techniques of paraphrase, juxtaposition and combination, the Strugatskys create their own magic and poetry, a literary form, a comic and fantastic literature, born out of the elements of fairy tales and "realistic" fiction.

In the Strugatskys' tales paraphrasing is done by the narrator-protagonist Privalov. The task of the Institute is to study scientifically any magical phenomena. Privalov is a novice there but already a talented magus himself. He loves his job and finds satisfaction in the intellectual challenges the Institute offers. Since Privalov is prepared to study any magical object or event as a scientific phenomenon, "the divan is a translator" is not an
incongruity for him. The objective "fictional" circumstances, conveyed by the syntax, may appear incongruous to the reader but Privalov has no control over this. The subsequent sentence: "It created around itself M-field capable of transforming everyday reality into fairy tale reality" only logically records the situation generated by the scientific factors which are unreal too. The reader, independent from the complexity of the fictional plot, may philosophically be amazed and amused at the complexity, but it is not his doing.

Further on Privalov admits that he experiences fairy tale events most often when he is asleep lying on the sofa, or when he seems to be half asleep or just waking up, which suggests that he is simply dreaming. This fact complicates for him the rational understanding of the activity of the sofa. For the reader, however, the dream factor comically mediates the apparent incongruities of the sofa being a transformer of reality. The introduction of the dream-reality brings about the resolution of the incongruity between the representations of the fantastic and the real.²

²The etymology of the word "divan" is from the Persian where it means a "collection of poems". Thus the word "divan" also suggests poetry, fiction, imagination, and their powers to transform reality. The word is, thus, imbued with ambiguity. Like the Persian divan, which transports the reader into the world of fiction, the Strugatskys' divan transforms the environment of the Institute into fairy tale reality.
The episodes with the divan are given another layer of comic effects when the Strugatskys' editorial device, the epilogue, is considered. In the epilogue Privalov appears as a "real life" scientist of НИИЧАВО, supposedly free from the authors' fictionalization. He now harshly criticizes the authors for writing out this abstract, scientific formula incorrectly in the main text of the tale: «Им, по-видимому, невдомек, что диван-транслятор является излучателем не М-поля, а μ-поля» (247). Apparently for him there must be an important difference between the М-field and the μ-field, which the authors overlooked or considered merely insignificant. Further on, Privalov expresses dismay over such mistakes because he has been given to understand that one of the authors is a professional scientist, an astronomer. The controversy about М-field and Mu-field is in a Gogolian key: to pass off an absurdity as a serious matter.\(^3\) The reader pretends to take this whole development seriously and thus engages in a gracious and amusing "play". The device of the epilogue makes all episodes with the sofa doubly comic. Following the rule of the editorial device, the reader is amused by the Strugatskys' ironic criticism directed at themselves.

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\(^3\) In physics there is neither М-field nor μ-field. There is μ a symbol of Mu-meson (muon), an unstable particle which, however, does not create a field.
From the level of composition, the comic and aesthetic effects associated with the sofa continue on the level of thematics, as the sofa and its peculiar function form a relationship with the other developments in the text. The image of the sofa-translator, the product of the legendary Leo ben Bezalel combines with the productive image of the fish in Korneev's experiment to bring the dead fish back to life. Due to its magical capabilities, Korneev considers the sofa indispensable to the success of his experiment. When Korneev plunges his arm deeply into the sofa and turns something inside, the fish for a moment turns belly down and moves its fins apathetically. Later he succeeds in againreviving the fish by turning something inside the sofa to its maximum potential. The absurd reviving of the gutted fish becomes more comic when the reader realizes that the experiment makes some sense when it is aided not only by the effect of the water-of-life but also by the magical activity of the sofa.

The extraordinary, incongruous activity of the sofa, its function to turn one reality into another re-echoes in the clash of arguments over the sofa's very nature itself among some of the scientists and the administration of the Institute. The scientist Red'kin thinks that the sofa contains the legendary White Thesis--a secret of happiness for all mankind; the Deputy Director of Administration of
the Institute Kamnoedov considers the sofa an antique piece of furniture to be kept at the Museum of the Institute, while the scientist Korneev considers it a scientific instrument, a translator, and secretly uses it in his experiments. The existence of opposing views on the sofa's origin and purpose imparts to it a conflicting and ambiguous character. The different views on the nature of the sofa are not resolved and they come to a comic clash again in the text when Privalov restates the problem in his narration following his definition of the sofa-translator:

Для Магнуса Редькина диван был возможным вместилищем искомого Белого Тезиса. Для Модеста Матвеевича—музейным экспонатом инвентарный номер 1123, к разбазариванию запрещенным. Для Витьки это был инструмент номер один (122).

As we pointed out, Privalov often contrasts and blends two distinct discourses using a compositional device of symmetrical paraphrase. Mediating in the argument over the identity of the sofa, Roman too resorts to this technique. But since he does it with an additional comment, demonstrating his exasperation and condescension towards his interlocutor, he parodies this technique:

-- Я имею в виду, что это не есть диван,--сказал Роман. --Или, в доступной для вас форме, это есть не совсем диван. Это есть прибор, имеющий внешность дивана (69).

Roman tries to reconcile the different views by allowing different functions of the divan but emphasizing its
technological core. His comment brings about a partial resolution of incongruity regarding the sofa. At the same time, taken as a parody of the symmetrical paraphrasing, so common in the text, Roman's explanation comically illuminates and ridicules the rephrasing of one discourse in terms of another.

The importance of the mysterious sofa is underscored when the principal theme of the tale, the Institute's search for happiness comes to the foreground of the narration. It is believed by some of the scientists that the secret to happiness, according the diaries of ben Bezalel, is in the White Thesis. In some comically incongruous way ben Bezalel distilled the White Thesis as a by-product of some alchemical reaction and built it into some apparatus of his as an auxiliary subsystem. The Institute in PNVS managed to collect seven apparatus that had belonged to Bezalel, and Red'kin ripped six of them apart looking for the contents. The seventh is the sofa-translator:

За институтом числилось семь приборов, принадлежавших некогда Бен Бецалелю. Шесть из них Редькин разобрал до винтика и ничего особенного не нашел. Седьмым прибором был диван-транслятор. Но на диван наложил руку Витыка Корнеев, и в простую душу закрались самые черные подозрения. Он стал следить за Виткой. Витка немедленно озерел. Они поссорились и стали заклятыми врагами, и остались ими по сей день (95).

The comic of this passage intensifies when its parodic code is discovered. It reminds one of Il'f and Petrov's Twelve
Chairs, as it reveals analogies and alternation of the plot of the 'model'.

The Twelve Chairs is a satire on the Soviet Russia of the 1920s and belongs to the classics of Russian comic literature. PNVS and The Twelve Chairs share some general common features: both are intensely comic and have episodic structure. The parodic element of the sofa episode, however, is limited to the recasting parts of the treasure-hunt plot of Il'f and Petrov's novel. The heroes of the parodied novel search for twelve chairs since, they are told, diamonds are sewn in one of them. The goal of that search for great fortune is their happiness. Red'kin's research at the Institute shows that the White Thesis—the secret to happiness for all mankind—is hidden in the sofa. For the heroes of both works, the stakes of their search are very high. Both search for means of happiness and both hope to find it in a piece of furniture, where the owner has put it. The differences, however, are great and numerous: The scientists of the Institute are apparently unselfish and their goal is happiness for all humanity. So far they have opened six apparatus and found nothing, and they put high hope on the seventh one, the sofa. Korneev is certain of the sofa's powerful magical capabilities and uses it as a

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*Евгений Петров, Илья Ильф. Двенадцать стульев (Москва: Издательство «Художественная Литература», 1968).*
tool to finding happiness through discovering immortality. The animosity and suspicion between Red'kin and Korneev over the possession of the sofa is a comic echo of the uneasy and finally tragic relationship between the heroes of *The Twelve Chairs*, Bender and Vorob'janinov. Moreover, Korneev's theft of the sofa is another allusion to Bender's ruthless tactics to acquire the chairs. When seen through these scenes of fights over the chairs, the more subtle arguments of the scientists over the possession of the sofa appear even more comic as parodic variations of Il'f and Petrov's version. In the reading of PNVS, the final extraordinary comic effect, however, comes from the reader's knowledge of the fiasco for all involved in the pursuit of the diamonds in *The Twelve Chairs*. That knowledge looms as a bad omen for the ultimate hopes of the seekers of happiness in PNVS, and provides a tension, as the reader anticipates either a difference or congruity with the model.

2. MAXWELL DEMONS

As Privalov continues his duty tour of the Institute, he encounters the image of Maxwell macro-demons, one of the most extraordinarily comic scenes where fairy tale sorcery and science comically intermix by means of, again, symmetrical paraphrasing. «Следуя инструкции, я заговорил
обоих, то есть перекрыл каналы информации и замкнул на себя вводно-выводные устройства.» "Following instructions, I cast a spell on both of them, that is, I crossed the information channels and locked the input-output peripherals to myself" (101). This is an example of paraphrasing where the magical reality is restated in scientific terms. On his inspection tour of the Institute, Privalov comes to an apparatus in which two Maxwell macro-demons are oscillating in a phosphorescent mist. At first the Maxwell demons appear to be some magical creatures involved in playing a game of "pitch-and-toss." Normally though, all their life, they are occupied by the activity of opening and and closing the door. In order to stop their activity, Privalov appropriately casts a spell on the demons, but he also provides a symmetrical paraphrase in purely scientific terms, as if referring to a scientific instrument or a machine.

In the description of the Maxwell demons themselves, the narrator juxtaposes distinct terminologies applicable to human behavior, to primitive biology of viruses, as well as to the magical, supernatural phenomena:

Там в фосфоресцирующем тумане маччили два макродемона Максвелла. Демоны играли в самую стохастическую из игр — в орлянку. Они занимались этим все свободное время, огромные, вялые, неописуемо нелепые, более всего похожие на колонии вируса полиомиелита под электронным микроскопом, одетые в поношенные ливреи. Как и полагается демонам Максвелла, всю свою жизнь они занимались открыванием и закрыванием дверей. Это были
The Strugatskys create an image of a scientific experiment full of grotesque incongruities. It is a world of human beings, with their frailties and heroism, unexpectedly intermixing and blending with the worlds of animals and physical phenomena—all performing in a scientific experiment. Involving all these diverse elements in this magic-scientific mosaic creates a comic effect of cosmic scope.

This scene, however, is also an allusion to James Clerk Maxwell's description of his famous experiment which helped him to formulate the law of the gases in connection with the second law of thermodynamics:

The concept of entropy led Maxwell to one of the celebrated images of modern science, namely that of the sorting demon. Increasing entropy is man's fate because we are not very bright. But a demon more favorably endowed could sort out the slow- and fast-moving particles of a gas, thereby changing disorder into order and converting unavailable into available energy. Maxwell imagined one of these small, sharp fellows "in charge of a frictionless, sliding door in a wall separating two compartments of a vessel filled with gas. When a fast-moving molecule moves from left to right, the demon opens the door; when a slow-moving molecule approaches, he (or she) closes the door. The fast-moving molecules accumulate in the right-hand compartment, and slow ones in the left. The gas in the first compartment grows hot and that in the second cold." Thus the demon would thwart the second
law of thermodynamics.\(^5\)

Describing his experiment, the scientist Maxwell has resorted to the stylistic technique of mythologizing by bringing into his scientific discourse the image of the supernatural—two supernaturally smart demons. Hence Maxwell's scientific text has literary qualities and can become a literary model for the Strugatskys' parodic recast. In their parody the Strugatskys play with Maxwell's stylistic device, carried by the word "demon", reversing his micro-demons into macro-demons. They further elaborate the scene through the technique of personification and dramatization. The resulting construct is a lively and friendly parody of Maxwell, a tribute to his creative imagery.

As midnight approaches the whole Institute turns into a place of celebration of the coming New Year. The fun and festivities obviously interrupt the routine activities and bring about chaos. This situation does not leave some of the experiments unaffected which is particularly evident in the activities of the Maxwell demons. In this scene, Strugatskys take up Maxwell imagery and carry their parody of it to the new heights:

Макродемоны Вход и Выход, вместо того чтобы заниматься делом, дрожа от азарта и лихорадочно фосфоресцируя.

The demons entirely abandon their work of sorting out particles, that is, of changing disorder into order to create energy. Earlier, they entertained themselves with the innocent game of "pitch-and-toss" «орлянка». Now they engage in the perilous, decadent game of roulette. Soon demon "In" takes the bank of some seventy million molecules from his counterpart "Out", eliminating the energy accumulated through the previous hard work. The fellows no longer demonstrate any "demonic" or mythical discipline and efficiency. Instead, they are utterly human--passionate and corrupt, losing themselves in the destructive delight of the game of chance. Play and taking risks is a constituent of the larger fabric of the whole tale and of the spirit of PNVS.

3. EVIL-SHREDDER AND THE CONCEPT OF HAPPINESS

The single most important goal of the Institute is the search for man's happiness: «А чем вы занимаетесь?» --спросил я. «Как и вся наука,--сказал горбоносый.--Счастьем человеческим» (8). The above is stated at the very beginning of the tale and is dramatized in a variety of ways throughout the text. Among several scientific projects,
whose purpose is achieving happiness and harmony in the
world, there is a portable "evil-shredder" «злободробитель».
The word is a neologism and its comic effect can be analyzed
on the stylistic (morphological and verbal) level.
Neologism is a very effective stylistic device. Being new
and not assimilated in the language, it is free of
historically determined semantic charge, and therefore its
form and original meaning reach the reader in a fresh and
spontaneous manner. Following the rules of Russian
word-formation, the authors create a compound noun out of a
standard Russian noun «злоба» (spite, malice) and of another
neologism «дробитель». The suffix «-тель» indicates a
performer of the action represented by the root of the verb
«дробить» (to crush, to split, to shred). Besides its
abbreviatory function, neologism creates a new concept, a
new category. Its meaning, then, is independent from the
meaning of the elements which compose it, and creates a
contrast "evil-shredder" : "a device that shreds evil."

"Geoffrey Leech, Semantics, p. 36-37, "It may seem...that
the effect of neologism is merely to condense into a single
word the same meaning that could otherwise be expressed by a
whole phrase or sentence. My argument, however, is that
combined with this abbreviatory function, the word as a
syntactic element has a concept-defining role, as the
following examples will help to show. Agent nouns such as
driver, copywriter, bed-maker have in the first stages of
their adoption a transparent equivalence to relative
clauses, so that, for example, driver may be defined as 'a
person who drives', bed-maker as 'one who makes beds' etc.
But it would be false to claim that the single word and the
syntactic construction have exactly the same meaning, for
The compound word "элободробитель" also offers an unexpected and incongruous association of two concepts. It represents a comic clash of "НИИЧАВО"'s science and technology with the universal, metaphysical goal of doing away with the evil of the world, also commonly expressed in fairy tale and mythological discourses. This comic juxtaposition playfully mocks the Institute of "Nothing"'s scientific and technological aspirations of moral amelioration of man.Moreover, the word "portable" suggests that this ambitious project is already well-enough perfected to be ready for convenient transportation and mass production. This claim only intensifies the comic effect, as it widens the gap between the illusions and the actual achievements of the magi/scientists revealed in the text.

Among several departments of the Institute, whose paramount goal is the search for human happiness, a very important one is the "Department of Linear Happiness". The comic effect of the name is created through the compositional device of juxtaposition which is placing two or more unrelated words or images side by side: juxtaposition of the abstract and concrete, of pain and pleasure, of epic and song, or magic and science. When taken separately, they may not have anything in common, but

"the word carries an additional message--namely, the calling into existence of a category."
when juxtaposed, their unexpected similarities may be revealed, as one illuminates, affects, or even transforms the other. The name of the Department seems to be a comic contradiction in terms. "Linear" relates to a line, something which follows a straight course or direction. It may also refer to a unit of measure involving a single dimension (not square or cubic). It is a term used in mathematics, physics, linguistics, e.g., linear function, linear equation, linear accelerator, linear discourse, etc. "Happiness" is a metaphysical term and refers to a mental state of well being. It is thus incompatible with "linear" because the two belong to different classes of concepts. Happiness is one of the broadest and most elusive terms which has made philosophers in all times grope for its definition. To measure happiness scientifically seems a far-fetched idea of science fiction, and to create a science of linear happiness is absurd at first glance. This incongruity, however, is comic when one realizes that it has its own underlying logic. The word "linear" can be taken metaphorically and, through associations with "one-dimensional space", "like a line", "straight", "undeviating", "streamlined", "continuous", "progressive", "simplified", "directed", may imply a reduced, programmed, or manipulated happiness, like the "happiness" of Vybégallo's models of man to be discussed in
a separate Chapter.

What kind of happiness is being aimed at in the Department of Linear Happiness is further comically illuminated in SOT, which is the sequel of PNVS. In SOT great hopes are pinned on the expedition of Privalov and his colleague Amperian to bring to the Institute the Talking Bedbug from T'muskorpion', the colony of the Institute. It is believed that the Talking Bedbug could effectively influence the research on happiness. In a philosophical discussion, the Bedbug boasts about the superiority of insects over human beings and claims that the insects have discovered and built the ideal system of society long ago. One may both shudder with horror and be amused about the possible contribution of the Bedbug's thought to the search for human happiness.

The episode of the "Department of Linear Happiness", however, contains also a parodic code since it echoes a number of elements in Saltykov-Щедрин's novel The History of A Town or The Chronicle of Foolov (История одного города). Reading the Strugatskys' episode in paradigmatic relation to Щедрин's work, particularly the chapter on Gloom-Grumblev (Угрюм-Бурчеев), creates comic effect and further illuminates the possible implications of the work of

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7Н. Щедрин (М. Е. Сальтъков) История одного города (Москва: Московский рабочий, 1968.)
the Department of Happiness in PNVS.

The first striking element which reveals a relationship between these two literary works is the concept of linearity and of happiness. The ever cryptic and incongruous term "Linear Happiness" echoes some formulations on human happiness in Седрин's passage:

Угрюм-Бурчеев принадлежал к числу самых фантастических нивелляторов этой школы. Начертавши прямую линию, он замыслил втиснуть в нее весь видимый и невидимый мир, и притом с таким непременным расчетом, чтоб нельзя было повернуться ни взад, ни вперед, ни направо, ни налево. Предлагал ли он при этом сделаться благодарителем человечества?--утвердительно отвечать на этот вопрос трудно. Скорее, однако ж, можно думать, что в голове его вообще никаких предположений ни о чем не существовало. Лишь в позднейшие времена (почти на наших глазах) мысль о сочетании идей прямолинейности с идеей всеобъемлющего осчастливления была возведена в довольно сложную и неизъятую идеологических ухищрений административную теорию, но нивелляторы старого закала, подобные Угрюм-Бурчееву, действовали в простоте души, единственно по инстинктивному отвращению от кривой линии и всяких зигзагов и извивин (154).

Седрин's passage has a certain degree of comic word play, involving the concrete and abstract meaning of the word «прямолинейность». Gloom-Grumblev takes the idea of this word in a primitive, somehow literal sense, due to his abhorrence of crooked lines and any kind of zigzag or curve «кривой линии и всяких зигзагов и извивин». One cannot deny that the word «прямолинейность» lends itself to such limited interpretation and abuse. In the parodic recasting of this passage, the Strugatskys drop the component «прямо» from the compound and achieve a concept of «линейность» as the
Institute's method to search for happiness, a comic and a disturbing variation of Gloom-Grumblev's methods.

Gloom-Grumblev's rule as governor of Foolov (Глупов) takes place in 18th century Russia, and the author explains that Gloom's notion of social justice and human happiness is that of so-called social levelers who have much in common with the later intellectual movements of socialists and revolutionaries.

Глоум, however, is a former hangman and a pure idiot who, now having the power of a governor, narrow-mindedly and instinctively follows the principle of a "straight line" of a primitive leveler. He has become governor as a reward for cutting his index finger in a show of love and devotion to his master. In the role of governor, his carrying out of social order turns into a despotism of fantastic proportions. On the road to utopian happiness, straightforwardness and honesty «прямолинейность» in the hand of an evil man turn into cruelty and tyranny. What is supposed to become a paradise is a garrison city of terror where people's lives are absurdly coerced, regimented, and uniform.
The image of Kivrin, the head of the "Department of Linear Happiness", offers some comic similarities and contrasts with Švedrin's hero. Kivrin was also maimed though it was not self-inflicted. Being accused of helping insurgents, he was actually denostrilled and not promoted but exiled to Solovetz (the location of НИИЧАВО) in perpetuity. Gloom's morbid and depressing disposition contrasts with Kivrin's incorrigible optimism, while their respective "kingdoms" are also worlds apart. Kivrin's "Department of Linear Happiness" is an idyl with the smell of apples and pine trees where no one experiences pain or anxiety. Only the prettiest girls and the handsomest young men work there:

Это было царство Федора Симеоновича, здесь пахло яблоками и хвойными лесами. Здесь работали самые хорошие девушки и самые славные ребята. Здесь не было красных изуверов, энтузиастов, адептов черной магии, здесь никто не ревал, шипя и кривясь от боли, из себя волос, никто не бормотал заклинаний, похожих на неприличные скороговорки, не варил заживо жаб и ворон и полночь, в полнолуние, на Ивана Купалу, по несчастливым числам (104). [Bold letters emphasis mine]

Kivrin's beautiful, select people, working on "linear happiness", are guided by an exhilarating sense of optimism. The subjects of Gloom, on the other hand, are miserable

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#The name Соловец (Solovets) and its explicit northern location as described in PNVS brings ambivalent associations with Соловецкие острова (Solovki Islands), famous, on the one hand, for their medieval monastery—the center of learning and mysticism and, on the other, infamous for their harsh and tragic labor camps in the 1920s and 1930s.
victims of "linear happiness" under the crushing heel of the tyrant. They work on command, move only in a straight line to the beat of the drum. And with no hope, they must bear their torment, fear, and confusion. In the "Department of Linear Happiness" there are never any cries of pain or muttering of curses «здесь никто не рвал, ширя и кривясь от боли, из себя волос, никто не бормотал заклинаний похожих на неприличные скороговорки». On the contrary, they have already succeeded in inventing and disseminating happy, good-natured laughter. The negative syntax of the quoted statement and the laughter may also be a mockery of their distant literary cousins in Schedrin's novel who, in their grim existence, have known no joy, amusement or laughter, who have not even seen a smile or any other emotions on the face of their enigmatic and cruel master. In these examples the Strugatskys have re-created some of the elements of Schedrin's text and ironically reverse them, achieving a comic effect as a result of such transformations. Schedrin's chronicler-narrator is unambiguously critical towards the object of his narration, as is emphasized by the epithets directed at governor Gloom himself and his horrible, grotesque policies and activities.
Although Privalov's descriptions of the Department of Linear Happiness are as fantastic as those in Ščedrin's chronicle, they are sympathetic and less critical. The ridicule in PNVS is gentler since it is accomplished through irony. This irony is due to the authors' "detachment" from the narrator's point of view. This critical irony is further enhanced by the device of parody when the reader recollects Ščedrin's work. The contrasting of these two texts provides a comic and aesthetic effect and a deeper interpretation of НИЧАВО's ideas on happiness.

The most extravagant and comic attempts at creating happiness are Professor Vybegallo's experiments with the models of Man to which a considerable amount of space is devoted in PNVS, and which I will discuss in a separate Chapter.

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The chronicler admits that his work is full of fantastic elements, and he further argues for the reason of such method of writing: "Очень может стать, что многое из рассказанного выше покажется читателю чересчур фантастическим.... Понимая всю важность этих вопросов, издатель настоящей летописи считает возможным ответить на них нижеследующее: история города Глупова, прежде всего, представляет собой мир чудес, отвергать который можно лишь тогда, когда отвергается существование чудес вообще. Но это мало. Бывают чудеса, в которых, по внимательном рассмотрении, можно подметить довольно яркое реальное основание (96). The chronicler's explanation hints that Ščedrin's work is written in Aesopian language, in coded languages, in which the fantastic imagery disguises the realities of the 19th c. Russia. In that respect Privalov, who interprets the world of miracles as natural and rational, is related to the Ščedrin's chronicler.
4. ROMAN GOD JANUS AND THE CONQUEST OF TIME

It is not inappropriate to discuss the title of PNVS in the middle of my analysis. Initially the title of the tale "Monday Begins on Saturday" appears cryptic and absurd. Only later in the narration, various meanings of the title and the comic effects created by it are gradually revealed. Not until the end do we really learn what the title has to do with the tale. So in a sense the tale moves forward to its title.

The title "Monday Begins on Saturday" is a framing device which establishes the character of the whole work. I have stated earlier that in comedy there are sentences which are not jokes in a formal sense, but they have a certain quality of jokiness about them. They are important elements of the structure of comic narrative and make a comment on the whole text. Such sentences can be called formulates or "root jokes"—framing devices of a comic narrative.10 The title of the Strugatskys' tale has the earmarks of a root

10 Walter Nash, The Language of Humour: Style and technique in comic discourse 68. "These sentences that mark out a structure, comment on the text, and have their own quality of jokiness, are a new feature in our account of humorous narrative. If a name is needed, let us call them formulates—because they are clues to the information of the narrative, because they formulate judgments, reflections, comments, etc, on the story, and because they are often worded in a pungently emphatic way that reminds us of the locative formula. (Locative, location, locus—word or phrase which clinches or discharges joke)."
joke. It is a trenchant statement, and an emblem of the whole tale of fantasy, nonsense, folly, and comic reversals adumbrated in one episode after another.

The title makes the reader smile because it is not in accord with the normal accepted chronology. It is comic in a low-key, elementary sense because it violates in jest the implicitly assumed everyday chronology. In doing so, the title introduces two incompatible planes of thoughts: 1) the reader's (before he or she picks up the book) conventional chronology where Monday begins after Sunday, and 2) the jumbled-up chronology of the book where--in some fantastic manner--Monday does begin on Saturday. The title thus arouses the reader's expectation that this work will be playfully comic and will not follow the rules of rational everyday life. The reversal of the common order of things is done very much in the spirit of carnivalesque festivities, where the established rules are turned upside down. But yet, within the plane of conventional chronology, the title does also reveal an inner logic: namely, the beginning of the week is identified with Saturday implying that Sunday, the time of rest, the carnival time of the week is paradoxically excluded in favor of constant work.\footnote{The week starts on Saturday and ends on Monday; Sunday is a resting day, Monday is the end of the week.} In each of the three Parts which make up the tale, the
Strugatskys bring about a partial resolution of the conflict of these two planes of thought.

The cryptic and mildly amusing title will be echoed later several times in the text by an identical phrase. One of the magi Korneev utters the words of the title, in reply to his colleague Demin who criticizes him for removing the sofa and then inquires, «Вам известно постановление Ученого совета?» The reply given "gloomily" by Korneev is «Мне, товарищ Демин, известно, что понедельник начинается в субботу» (66). In turn, Demin says «Не разводите демагогию.» At this point the meaning of the title is still a mystery for the reader. Later, the title appears again in the context of Roman trying to persuade Privalov to work for the Institute. When Privalov protests that he is on vacation, Roman answers, «Это неважно,—Понедельник начинается в субботу, а август на этот раз начинается в июле!» (79). (It is the end of July at this point in the story). Thus, it seems that the title means that the time of vacation, of rest, will be bypassed in favor of work. It is possible, however, that the phrase is an announcement that time at the Institute is somehow (not known at this time) really going backwards.

Later we learn that the first day of the new year is Monday: when the Kremlin clock starts striking twelve, someone says, «Ребята! Да здравствует понедельник!» (129).
Only now do the Strugatskys fully reveal that "Monday begins on Saturday" is a slogan of the scientific workers of the Institute. Most of these scientists are not ordinary people; they are magi who have a special love-relationship with their work and come to their laboratories even on New Year's Eve. They cannot stand Sunday or any other holiday because without work they are bored, and they find happiness in constant pursuit of knowledge:

Сюда пришли люди, которым было приятнее быть друг с другом, чем порознь, которые терпеть не могли всякого рода воскресений, потому что в воскресенье им было скучно. Маги, Люди с большой буквы, и девизон их было—«Понедельник начинается в субботу» (130).

Thus the phrase returns again and can be viewed as a motif, and as a recurring motif it becomes a leitmotif of the tale.\footnote{Oswald Ducrot and Tzvetan Todorov, Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Science of Language, tr. Catherine Porter (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins UP, 1979) 217. When...we do not take into account the relationships of contiguity and immediate causality, but attempt to uncover those of resemblance (and thus of opposition) between units often widely separated from each other, the perspective is semantic, and we obtain motifs as a result of the analysis.... When the motif returns frequently in the course of a work and assumes a specific role there, we may speak, by analogy with music, of a leitmotif.}
repetition of the title but with a semantic difference and more comic effects. For the good, honest, and dedicated scientists the slogan means that Monday (the beginning of work week) already begins on Saturday. Thus they bypass days of rest (Saturday and Sunday) in favor of constant work. The pursuit of knowledge and hard work ethic, however, is not shared by all at the Institute. There are others who only pretend to work, for whom the Institute is a place to pursue their most selfish goals:

The ever ambiguous slogan "Monday begins on Saturday" can apply to these corrupt and parasitic scientists too. In an extravagantly reversed and metaphoric way, the quality of Saturday (time of rest) can be ascribed to Monday (time of work) and the slogan "Monday begins on Saturday" can then be a subversive call for no work at all. Thus the ambivalent slogan reveals even more complexity and more comic incongruities. This interpretation of the slogan collaborates semantically with the ambivalent, if not utterly useless, nature of the work done by the Institute, further emphasized by the Institute's name itself НИИЧАБО, which approximates, particularly in its substandard
pronunciation, the word «ничего» meaning "nothing". There
are two types of mankind at the Institute: noble and base,
good and evil. For the former, the ambivalent slogan is a
call for hard and constant work, while for the latter, it is
a trick to treat Monday as Saturday—a way and time to do
nothing and to cheat.

In Part III of the tale, the title "Monday Begins on
Saturday" takes on yet another meaning and comic effect.
This part is devoted to solving the mystery of the director
of the Institute, Janus Poluèktovich Nevstruev who lives in
two persons: Janus-U and Janus-A. The mystery of the
director is already the source of a comic scene in the
earlier part of the book when the narrator and other
characters are still very far from understanding the nature
of Janus' double existence:

-- Дело в том, Саша,—сказал Роман, обращаясь ко
име,—что у нас идеальный директор. Он один в двух
лицах. Есть А-Янус Полуэктович и У-Янус Полуэктович.
У-Янус—это крупный ученый международного класса. Что
касается А-Януса, то это довольно обыкновенный
администратор.
-- Близнецы?—осторожно спросил я.
-- Да нет, это один и тот же человек. Только он один
в двух лицах.
-- Ясно,—сказал я и стал надевать ботинки.
-- Ничего, Саша, скоро все узнаешь,—сказал Роман
ободряющее (73).

Privalov's first common-sense rejoinder, «близнецы», offers
a point of bisociation, a comic locus for the incongruity in
Roman's absurd statement. In his second reply—"I see! I
said and began to put on my felt boots"--resigned and ironic
Privalov only pretends understanding, but it is comically
obvious that for the time being he is giving up on finding
any "method" in the "madness" of Roman's extraordinary
revelations.

Privalov's further detailed but futile investigations
only reveal more incongruities about the directors. Одно
вреяя я думал, что А-Янус и У-Янус--это дубль и оригинал.
Однако это было совсем не так. Прежде всего оба директора
имели паспорта, дипломы, пропуска и другие необходимые
dокументы» (119). The fact that, despite their secret and
unnatural aspects, the directors are quite ordinary citizens
using passports, admission passes, etc., ("documents create
man"), brings about more comic effects and only deepens the
mystery and creates a dramatic tension only to be resolved
by a fantastic theorizing at the end of the book.

In the last chapter, the magi intellectually labor to
try to understand the phenomenon of Janus Poluektovich.
They finally realize that at some point in the future
Janus-A would solve the problem of counter motion and that
at that point Janus-A would turn into Janus-U and begin to
glide backward on the axis of time. His act is one of
tremendous selflessness. Every night at midnight Janus-A
would transit, as we all do from today's night into tomorrow
morning, while Janus-U would transit from our present night
into our yesterday's morning. At midnight on Sunday, Janus-U would transit not into Monday, but into Saturday morning. Therefore, for Janus-U, Monday would always begin on Saturday, hence the title of the book.

Normal time
Janus-A

Saturday → Sunday → Monday

Counter motion
Janus-U

Monday → Sunday → Saturday

The counter motion of Janus-U could also be represented in the following way:

Saturday → Sunday → Monday

Thus his general motion is reverse in relation to Janus-A

Figure 3. Counter motion.

Janus-A, like ourselves, moves from the past into the future; thus he only knows the past and does not know the future. Janus-U moves from the future into the past; thus he knows the future but does not know the past. The counter motion is not continuous, but it is discrete, that is, it is discontinuous every night at midnight. The scientists in PNVS compare it to a film which has been cut in three places
and was shown with the third piece first, then the second, and finally the first piece. Aesthetically, this is like the book itself, seen from Janus-U's perspective: it is as if the story is cut in three places and is told with Part III first (from Janus-U's point of view), then Part II and finally Part I. Each part is discontinuous from the following one. Each tale ends with lines such as «Но это уже совсем другая история» (80, end of Part I—История Первая); «Но это уже совсем другая история» (170, end of Part II); «Но это уже совсем—совсем другая история.» (245, end of Part III). Maybe this last time he refers to the Strugatskys' sequel book Tale of the Troika which, however, also ends with lines «Это, впрочем, совсем другая история.»

Solving the scientific riddle of counter motion is a serious intellectual challenge for the magi of the Institute which they take up in earnest. But the idea of counter motion, like every other idea in the tale, does not escape the authors' playful and comic treatment which leaves it shrouded in irony and ambiguity. Before the riddle is solved the very idea of counter motion is already foreshadowed and ridiculed in the new idea and research of ever active and inventive Vybegallo. He claims that many monkeys have speech actually resembling human speech. He has made this outrageous but not quite surprising discovery by recording human conversations and playing them in reverse
at high speed, and by recording the sounds of monkeys and then playing them also in reverse at low speed:

One also wonders if the narrator Privalov will at some point start living in discrete counter motion. The book of fates in the archives of the Institute says that Privalov will die in 1611--this is the year that Emperor Rudolf II, whose mental instability had been getting worse, was deposed. Maybe Privalov is the one who helps to depose him, or maybe he is Rudolf II?). At this point in the narration, Privalov does not know anything about counter motion at the Institute and considers this entry in the record book simply a mistake:

The idea of counter motion, expressed not only in the director's life but also other phenomena of the Institute, provide a context which illuminates the ambiguous title of the book and the slogan of the scientists. What initially appears to be a call for work without rest, actually includes a more creative manipulation of time and represents a world which is complex, fantastic, and comic.
The name itself and the dual character of the director of the Institute have their source in the myth of the Roman god Janus. The Strugatskys' variations and distortion of the model make their hero a parody of the mythological god Janus:

The Roman god of doors and of beginnings. All doors and gates were sacred to Janus. So were all beginnings, which the Romans believed to be crucial to the success of any undertaking, presumably regarding them as doorways to the future. Janus' blessing was asked, therefore, on the beginning of every day, month, and year; the first month of the year was named for him. He also presided over the sowing—that is, the beginning—of the crops and over the start of virtually every other significant endeavor. Janus was represented in art with two faces that faced in opposite directions, as do doors. 13

The two incongruous worlds of the Roman god and of the director of the Institute unexpectedly share a number of common details which creates a comic effect. Part of the action of the novel takes place on the Eve of the New Year and the New Year which is the time of the god Janus—the god of all beginning. The importance of the doors is stressed by the fact that the scientists, leaving the building, bring the keys to the watchman Privalov. Janus Poluëktovich is the character who presides over the scientific work of the Institute; and scientific endeavor can be considered the sowing of the "new crop"—the development and dissemination

of new ideas and discoveries. His two faces are Janus-A and Janus-U who move in time in opposite directions which gives him the divine power to see the past and the future.

The highest goal for the magi at the Institute, as for all men, is happiness. One way to achieve it would be not only to control nature but also to know and to control the future. The magi/scientists are, of course, familiar with mythologies. They know that for the ancient Romans the god Janus was responsible for their future. His doors were the doorways to the future. Janus' blessing was asked, therefore, on the beginning of every day, month, or year, and at the beginning of any endeavor.

The magi probably recognize that the Roman Janus might be a useful source of knowledge about the future. They, however, do not pray to him as the ancients did. Instead, they explore Janus' divine principle scientifically and try to utilize it practically. This complex enterprise is already at an advanced stage at the Institute, as testified by the fact that the director of the Institute himself is Janus. He may not exactly be the Roman god, but nevertheless, he shares with him many vital characteristics to warrant a possible success of the Institute's work. Due to his dual nature and his life in counter motion, the director knows our past and future just as the Roman god did. For most of the narration of PNM, this fact is known
neither to the reader nor to the scientists of the Institute. The life of the director is a mystery which is only solved at the end of the tale, after a long and intense session of several scientists, including Privalov. The fact that such a large narrative episode is devoted to that problem and the fact of a high level of intellectual labor on the part of the scientists indicate the seriousness and the value of the task.

Janus the director is not a remote deity somewhere in heavens, but a man in two persons—-one from our past and one from our future—-down on the earth at the Institute. No longer a mystery, the knowledge of Janus' counter-motion life does open an opportunity to study and to control the future in a way different from that of the Romans. The magi now seem to have a foot in the doorway to the future, and thus have greater possibility to succeed in delivering happiness to man.

As it appears from the previous discussion, the title of the book "Monday Begins on Saturday" has many layers of meaning and is a potent source of comic and aesthetic effects. To a large extent, as I have tried to demonstrate, these effects depend on the organization of the narrative in terms of order and emphasis. Throughout the book, the selection and ordering of information concerning the phrase
"Monday begins on Saturday" appear to be crucial for the generation of its multiple semantic, aesthetic and comic functions. During the endeavor to attain knowledge about the director Janus' counter-motion life, the title and the magi's slogan--"Monday begins on Saturday"--reveal yet another semantic level. The image of the director, intricately developed, corresponds to, and further cultivates the concept of inverted time of the title and of the slogan. What initially appeared as an ambiguous call for intensive work or no work at all, at the end becomes also a code phrase not only of counter-motion but also of a formula for reaching into the future—to control's man's fate and to secure happiness.

The story of the director Janus may also be read as a parodic recast of Alexander Herzen's meditation on the fate of Russia torn by the conflict between Slavophilism and Westernism. In «Былое и думы» (My Past and Thoughts) the Westernizer Herzen says, "like Janus, or like a two-headed eagle, we were looking in different directions while single heart was beating in us."¹⁴

¹⁴А.И. Герцен, Собрание сочинений в тридцати томах. Том девятый—Былое и думы. Часть IV, Глава XXX, 170.
Brooding over Russia's national and cultural identity crisis, Herzen recalls the quarrels of the intelligentsia with anxiety and tenderness. Westernism considered Russia to be backward and proposed to follow the Western model of society. Slavophiles thought the West to be a degenerate society and advocated to restructure Russia on its ancient and unique principles of sobornost' (communality) and Orthodox religion. Since the middle of nineteenth century Russian thought and political currents have tended to one of these two forms in a cyclical pattern. At the same time, however, these two schools have often intermixed, as is seen already in Herzen. In this passage, Herzen, the Westernizer, pays homage to his former opponents, and later in his life, he ended up as a Slavophile. Indeed, at certain periods, the two currents could not have been distinguished from each other; they sometimes overlapped and contradicted each other. The October Revolution had its sources in the Western ideas of Marx's proletarian state, but it has been under the Soviet Marxist regime that Russia again has been cut out from the West, while Slavophile

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15 А. И. Герцен 170.
sentiments such as interest in folklore and occasionally religion (during the World War II) have been cultivated, and communal life has developed, though largely by force and necessity.

The Strugatskys allude to Herzen's vision of Russian nineteenth century intelligentsia by creating a picture of a modern Russian intelligentsia, a creative scientific community personified by the director of the Institute. У-Янус is an outstanding scientist, while А-Янус is an ordinary administrator. "У-Янус--это крупнейший ученый международного класса. Что же касается А-Януса, то это довольно обыкновенный администратор" (73). The division and the identification of their function is emphasized by their respective initials, У--ученый, А--администратор. They represent a conflict in Soviet society between communist administration and the creative forces of Russian intelligentsia. The authoritarian administrative methods of Janus-A are well demonstrated by his handling of the argument over the location for the experiment conducted by his subordinate colleague Vybegallo. The director turns down the request to carry out the experiment in town, stating sarcastically that it is in accord with Vybegallo's own wishes:

Эксперимент, согласно просьбе Амвросия Акбруазовича, будет произведен сегодня в десять ноль-ноль. В виду того что эксперимент будет сопровождаться значительными разрушениями, которые едва не повлекут за собой
У-Янус, on the other hand, is a pure self-sacrificing scientist. He fathoms the mysteries of the universe, and his imaginative life in counter motion allows him to know the future which makes him a metaphor of a modern prophet. The mystery of the director is gradually revealed in the tale. In the last chapter the reader finally learns that the director, being Janus-U and Janus-A, knows the future and the past, as it exists in memory. What unites the two persons of Janus is their love and commitment to science as a means to searching for man's happiness. What united the Slavophiles and Westernizers was their love of Russia and search for the happiness of her people. The former were devoted to, and looked into the past, what Herzen calls recollection (воспоминание), and the latter looked into the future and were preoccupied by the prophesy of the future (пророчество).

The image of the director, the very contradiction of two different persons embodied in one person and living lives in counter motion has a puzzling and comic effect. The suspension of common rules of life and the duality of Janus Polevktovich's life have a comic effect in the spirit of Baxtin's carnivalesque laughter:

Very characteristic for carnival thinking is paired images, chosen for their contrast (high/low, fat/thin,
etc.) or for their similarity (doubles/twins). Also characteristic is the utilization of things in reverse: putting clothes on inside out (or wrong side out), trousers on the head, dishes in place of headgear, the use of household utensils as weapons, and so forth. This is a special instance of the carnival category of eccentricity, the violation of the usual and the generally accepted, life drawn out of its usual rut.16

The phenomenon of the duality (double entity) represented by the director of the Institute connects with other related images, and together, they form a major and recurring set of images of the tale. Unique in itself, the director's duality echoes a related and very common phenomenon in the Institute, namely, that of the double (дубль). The Strugatskys' doubles assume a variety of forms. Besides the mysterious double entity of the director, there are all kind of robots as copies of their masters. «Точная копия своего творца», and most prominently, there are the androids (Vyegallo's models of Man). Creating men's doubles and using them in work as robots is a common practice at the Institute:

Настоящие мастера могут создавать очень сложных, многопrogramмных, самообучаемых дублей.... По поводу же дублей до сих пор еще не прекратился спор между философами и кибернетиками: считать их живыми или нет (118-119).

The initial absurdity of the narrator's above statements on the nature of the doubles is partially mediated and becomes

a source of comic effects if one considers various philosophical and scientific views which treat this matter seriously and do not exclude probability of artificial life. Artificial man or artificial intelligence has for a long time been the preoccupation of myths, alchemy, science, and literature. "The uncertain line between men and machines, one of our century's philosophical sore spots, fascinates science fiction."\textsuperscript{17} Man-made creatures, in myths and literature, have assumed various forms: homunculi, Golems, Frankenstein monsters, robots, mechanical brains, androids.

The argument whether the doubles represent life or not is also taking place at the Institute during Korneev's experiment with the fish. The dead and gutted fish, brought back to life, is supposed to be an example of un-life--non-protein life. Korneev then provides more examples on non-protein life by creating his own doubles of different sizes. He is a great magus, and he does it effortlessly, indeed, magically by merely snapping his fingers and then sends them to work, but his colleague Amperian is not impressed:

\textbf{-- Нежить не есть жизнь,--сказал Эдик.--Нежить существует лишь постольку, поскольку существует разумная жизнь. Можно даже сказать точнее: поскольку существуют маги. Нежить есть отход деятельности магов (162).}

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\textsuperscript{17}John Updike, "The Flaming Chalice," \textit{The New Yorker} February 26, 1990: 127.
The creation of doubles at the Institute is as much the activity of very advanced science and technology as it is of magic and sorcery; and this combination produces comic effect. Whether they are the result of science or of magic, or both, these extraordinary achievements deeply and comically contrast with their dubious or misplaced applications. Privalov's colloquial language and off-hand, low-key manner indicates that he is describing a trifle requiring a simple skill, known to most of the magi at the Institute. But it also comically foreshadows the limited, unexciting, and commonplace functions of the doubles:

If one can imagine the intellectual work and all the resources and energy necessary for the creation of a double, one perceives these as being in ridiculous discrepancy with the actual purposes and tasks of these creations. Through this image of a double standing in line for salary checks and watching that no one cheats on his turn, the Strugatskys conjure up and satirize the pervasive
poor standards of organization of the Soviet society, particularly in the area of services, as well as the mismanagement and waste of invaluable resources. It is also a ridicule of the low and inefficient standards of technology and services for the unprivileged sector, and the high standards of science and services for the privileged sector.

The director's mysterious double existence and other doubles will also be echoed in the most notorious double of the tale--Vybegallo's own double--the model of man to be analyzed separately in the next chapter.
PART III--NEW MAN AND SOCIAL UTOPIA

CHAPTER V--VYBEGALLO'S MODELS OF MAN

CODE OF COMEDY

The fairy tale element so prominent in the first half of PNVS plays much smaller role in the remaining part of the tale or in SOT in general. Therefore, the interaction of the "realistic" and fairy tale discourse is no longer the main source of the comic effects. Nevertheless, the element of the fantastic is no less plentiful and the sources of the comic effects are multiple and varied. In this Part of my dissertation, my focus is on the comic codes and the distinction between them, as I analyze two major events very representative of the two tales--Vybegallo's experiments in PNVS and Konstantin's trial in SOT.

The scenes of Vybegallo's experiments form the longest episode of PNVS which plays the central role in the tale. This episode is made up of a series of comic images which not only constitute one of the most sustained comic narratives of PNVS but also aesthetically expand the comic images and motifs discussed in Part II. The comic activities of the Institute analyzed in Part II, particularly the search for man's happiness, find more comic
transformations in Vybegallos pseudoscientific endeavors. In this chapter, I will consider separately first the episode's code of comedy, then its code of parody, and finally its code of satire.

Vybegallo is the representative of the worst type of corrupt scientists who, according to Privalov, found their haven in the Institute, along with the noble type of scientists. He is involved in many projects, but his most important experiment is the creation of the models of ideal, happy man. This experiment raises the question of man's happiness, of "human engineering", and betterment of man. The Strugatskys' work vividly and comically captures the contradictions of human engineering in the grotesque monsters of the charlatan Vybegallo.

Scientists today realize that knowledge of the genetic code not only opens new ways to identify and battle many mysterious diseases and disorders, but also theoretically gives them a blueprint for creating a man, that in science fiction is known as an "android"—an organic but artificially created man. Practically speaking, that task is still a fantasy because the imaginary technology to produce an artificial man is still viewed as impossible:

Even if we could invent a new biochemical coding-system to substitute for DNA, the information necessary to produce an artificial man would presumably be as complicated and as extensive as the information needed to produce real ones. The additional information required to produce functioning adults
without extensive environmental training could add very greatly to the complexity of the task. If a society had the means to do this, it could do many other things as well, so stories in which androids are produced in a near-future society otherwise much like ours are bordering on the absurd”.  

Precisely that kind of absurdity underlies Vybegallo’s experiments and is also a source of grotesque and comic incongruities. The poetics’ clue to the resolution of these incongruities and to the generation of comic effects is provided by the text of the tale itself which already has presented other fantastic feats, such as the doubles indistinguishable from humans telling jokes or singing songs: 

Настоящие мастера могут создавать очень сложных, многопрограммных, самообучающихся дублей... Дубль великолепно вел мой «Москвич», ругался, когда его кусали комары, и с удовольствием пел хором (118).

Thus different text units semantically interrelate with each other and form certain aesthetic patterns where there is incongruity and correspondence of images causing comic effects. Vybegallo's idea of creating a happy man is very simple. He believes that if man is given enough bread and steamed bran, all his problems would disappear:

Этот Выбегалло заявил, что все беды, это, от неудовольствия проистекают, и ежели, значит, дать человеку все—хлебца, значит, отрубей пареных.—то и будет не человек, а ангел (91).

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This recipe for happiness is ridiculously simplistic. If this philosophical question of man's needs and security were stated in the term "bread" it would sound metaphorical and serious. Vybegallo, however, does not use a standard word but a diminutive «хлебца» which conveys affection and tenderness that a Russian peasant would feel for the bread that he has grown. This peasant, affectionate style is comically incongruous with the complexity of the scientific project itself. Moreover, the endearment is immediately paraphrased with «отрубей пареных» which is commonly used to denote livestock feed. This deflates the "bread" metaphor and either degrades man or invalidates this whole theory as unfit for man. In addition to that, in the same sentence, the profane image of "livestock feed" then clashes with the hyperbole of turning man into "angel" and makes the phrase even more flippant and ridiculous.

Vybegallo's experiment is comically discrepant with the noble, theoretical goals of the Institute's scientists. They seek happiness in their search for knowledge, but Vybegallo's goal is more practical and immediate. He confuses the idea of inner happiness with the satisfaction of alimentary and material needs of man. In the process, he creates men of limitless biological universals (eating, sleeping) who turn out to be monsters of great voracity and destruction. Thus the theories and practices
of the Institute interact with those of Vybegallo to create aesthetic patterns of comic incongruities.

Privalov, who has no faith in Vybegallo's enterprise, provides a detailed and ironic description of how the Professor goes about his project. To ensure his success, Vybegallo approaches his task of creating an artificial man in both a "scientific" and a "businesslike" manner which heightens the incompatibility between his primitive theory and the ingenuity and the difficulty his endeavor would require. A scientific approach combined with good organizational effort would normally be expected in a serious technological project of any magnitude, and that is why Vybegallo's bustling strikes the reader as comic:

Vybegallo is a fraud making the impression of a serious and driven scientist. His efforts are emphasized by such words as строго, старательно, измеряя...в процентах, режим экономии, but all this colossal exercise of energy and skill is misapplied to a goal which is only self-serving, utterly cynical, and scientifically useless.
Vybegallo's physical appearance (he is dressed not like a modern scientist but like a Russian peasant at work) provides another incongruity and adds more comic effects:

Он был в валенках, подшитых кожей, в пахучем извозчиком тулупе, из поднятого воротника торчала вперед седоватая немного борода. Волосы он стриг под горщок, так что никто никогда не видел его ушей (90).

This image is a deliberate scheme to produce an effect "à la moujik". First it brings association with a backward and ignorant Russian peasantry which forms a contrast with the expectation connected with an ultra modern and futuristic scientific experiment. The image of a Russian peasant, however, is ambiguous; it also suggests the deeper folk wisdom and common sense often attributed to Russian peasants, and thus is at least partly appropriate for the incredibly difficult task. The latter consideration lessens the initial incongruity and makes the image very comic.

Vybegallo lays out three experimental models: model of man, totally unsatisfied; model of man, unsatisfied stomach-wise; and model of man, completely satisfied. The creation of the first model is mentioned only in passing; it was sick, covered with boils, and quickly died after intense suffering from the lack of food, water, medical care, and the ensuing physical ailments. The second model, however, creates a much bigger stir at the Institute as its birth turns into an incredible event, with much publicity
organized by Vybegallo's self-serving advertisements, and is witnessed by many scientists and by the local press corps.

Various stages of Vybegallo's experiment are shown in great detail and with multiple comic effects:

"...я направился прямо в лабораторию, известную среди сотрудников как "Родильный Дом". Здесь, по утверждению профессора Выбегаллы, рождались в колбах модели идеального человека. Вылуплялись, значит. Компене ву" (116).

Through the Strugatskys' frequent figure of speech—the symmetrical paraphrase—the passage conjures two realms of life: human and animal. His futuristic laboratory where an ideal man is to be born from a cucurbit is given an ironic term from contemporary human experience—"Maternity Ward". This ambiguous term is supposed to humanize and familiarize for the reader Vybegallo's scientifically formidable work, but it also mocks the extraordinary experiment. And indeed, the reader can see the resemblance in these two concepts: the cucurbit and maternity ward. Yet there is enough incongruity in their similarity to make it sound outrageous and comic. Furthermore, having comically humanized Vybegallo's technology, the narrator sets up another incongruity by offering another paraphrase for the birth of the ideal man. It restates the act of birth of the model of happy, future man with a single term appropriate only for animals—"hatching" «вылуплялись» (116). The scientifically very sophisticated process of creating a man, compounded by
the idealistic and lofty intentions of creating a happy man
is comically degraded by the term "hatching" which normally
refers to birds or insects. By using the phrases
«по-утверждению Выбегаллы...компрене ву» (116), the narrator
makes it clear that this is the language Professor Vybegallo
himself uses in reference to his experiment. This may be
Vybegallo's professional jargon, but in reader's perception,
it nevertheless ridicules the very notion of artificial
creation of man. It also exposes the crudity of Vybegallo's
experiment and classifies it as pseudoscience. The
perception, revealed in Privalov's point of view, that
Vybegallo's work is a hoax and buffoonery is further
emphasized by other narrative devices such as the dialogues
of the other characters in which their comments and
reactions are directly expressed. Vybegallo's activity is
occasionally mocked by his colleagues, as in Roman's
derogatory comment «вылупился», reacting to woman's scream
coming from Vybegallo's "maternity ward". Another example
is Roman's later observation and "provocative" question:

Я, конечно, не специалист. Но какое будущее у данной
модели? Я понимаю, что эксперимент проходит успешно.
Но очень уж активно она потребляет (145).

As this event develops, several other incongruities unfold
creating a series of comic effects. When a piercing female
scream is heard, it is a sign that Vybegallo's model of man
is born. The scream itself is incongruous because it can
normally be associated with a mother giving birth to a child, whereas in this case the model of man is simply hatched in an autoclave. The scream, however, partly makes sense because it does come from the "maternity ward". Thus two separate scenes echo each other and, forming an aesthetic link, they constitute another source of comic effect. The incongruity of the scream reaches another resolution when the young female undergraduate Stella is shown feeding the new-born model of man with slabs of bread, not unlike a mother nursing her child, though Stella is not the mother, and she does it not with love but with fear and disgust. The birth device, the autoclave, is described like a mother's open womb: "Центральный автоклав был раскрыт, опрокинут, и вокруг него растеклась обширная зеленоватая лужа" (135). The initial two frames of reference—human and animal—are expanded here into even more grotesquely clashing images: the human and monstrous-mechanical.

As it has been noted one of the scientists, Roman, refers to the model's birth as the hatching of, indeed, a monster or zombi. This perception, however, soon clashes with the actual description of that monster. The description evokes sudden surprise and shock because, instead of a strange monster, the scientists entering the "Ward" see Professor Vybegallo himself as the new-born model
of man. The order of presentation, as it is stressed in Koestler's and Kolek's theories, plays an important role in creating a grotesque effect. As befits newborns, Vybegallo is naked and wet: "Синеватобелая его кожа мокра поглядывала, мокрая борода свисала клином, мокрые волосы залепили низкий лоб" (134). This image, however, creates another grotesque incongruity due to the fact that the newborn is not an infant, as expected, but a grown-up man. This opposition, however, is resolved by the reader's earlier expectation to see some kind of a monster in the first place.

Another comic effect emerges when the reader realizes that the model is not Professor Vybegallo himself, but that it only perfectly resembles him. This resemblance prompts the narrator to note comically: "И слава богу, а то я уже подумал, что профессора хватил мозговой паралич. Как следствие напряженных занятий" (136). The incongruity, based on the ambiguous identity of the model, is also reconciled in a variety of ways. The model may simply be a double. It has already been a common practice for the scientists at the Institute to create their own doubles to help perform a variety of tasks. Another possibility is that the model may indeed be Vybegallo's baby, not only in a metaphoric sense as the realization of his bold ideas, but also biologically, born in a "test-tube", the autoclave.
Vybegallo's zeal for his project actually comically exposes his intentions as being a mere selfish propagation of his own genes under the guise of a lofty experimentation with the human species. He then appears as a fool and an object of laughter.

Despite its normal human form and perfect likeness to the Professor himself, the originally expected image of a monster returns as the narrator describes its behavior. It is revolting to see how this creature devours and gorges itself with incredibly huge amounts of food and makes all kinds of loud noises like an animal:

Гнев не обращая ни на кого специального внимания, он зачерпывал отруби ладонью, уминал их пальцами, как плюс, и образовавшийся комок отправлял в ротовое отверстие, обильно посыпая крошками бороду. При этом он хрустел, чмокал, хрипел, всхрапывал, склонял голову набок и жмурился, словно от огромного наслаждения (135).

This image of the incompatible, of man/animal, is partly resolved by the obvious clue that this is a model of man, unsatisfied stomach-wise.

These scenes are also highly characteristic of the grotesque. "The grotesque character of the transformation of the human element into an animal one; the combination of human and animal traits is one of the most ancient grotesque forms."\(^2\) The unresolved clash of incompatibles, paralleled

\(^2\)Bakhtin 326.
by the presence of the ambivalently abnormal, is the basic
definition of the grotesque. It is the abnormal (as
distinct from the fantastic) which is the source of both the
comic and of the fearful disgust. Thus, what differentiates
the grotesque from the comic is the unresolved nature of the
conflict. The comic in the grotesque only partly resolves
the conflict. The image of the model, looking like the
professor and behaving like a beast, is both comic and
fearsome. The smiles of the scientists further testify to
and emphasize the model's comic aspect «Все
переглядывались, неуверенно улыбаясь» (138), whereas
Stella's shrieks and shivers of fear and disgust underscore
its terrifying side: «Степло дрожала. шепча: 'Что это
будет? Саша, я боюсь!'» (138). When he runs out of food, he
increasingly acts like an animal. He chews the empty tray
and, being more and more irritated and frustrated, he turns
his cannibalistic gaze on the crowd of people. A disaster,
however, is averted when the broken conveyor is fixed and
tons of stinking herring heads continue to flow in to be
devoured by the model of man. Like an animal, he now falls
on all fours and wolfs everything down.

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The comic effect intensifies when this awful beast is dressed up in a two-piece suit appropriate for a civilized man and a model of man and is hoisted into the chair by newly arrived laboratory assistants. Nevertheless, the elegant black suit cannot make him look very human. As a matter of fact, the suit soon splits along the seams under the monster's expanding body, making him look even more grotesque and comic. The model of man, unsatisfied stomach-wise, closely fits Baxtin's more specialized definition of the grotesque. For Baxtin, the grotesque is essentially physical, referring always to the body and bodily excesses and celebrating these in an uninhibited, outrageous fashion:

The grotesque body, as we have often stressed, is a body in the act of becoming. It is never finished, never completed; it is continually built, created, and builds and creates another body. Moreover, the body swallows the world and is itself swallowed by the world. This is why the essential role belongs to those parts of the grotesque body in which it outgrows its own self, transgressing its own body, in which it conceives a new body, second body....

The most important of all human features for the grotesque is the open mouth. It dominates all else....

Eating and drinking are one of the most significant manifestations of the grotesque body. The distinctive character of this body is its open unfinished nature, its interaction with the world. These traits are most fully and concretely revealed in the act of eating; the body transgresses here its own limits: it swallows, devours, rends the world apart, is enriched
and grows at the world's expense. *

In the descriptions of the monster's voracious eating, the emphasis is on its mouth, referred to as «ротовое отверстие» and «пасть», and the sounds made by him: «хрустел, чюкал, хрюкал, всхрапывал» (135). The gaping mouth is related to eating and swallowing. This characteristically grotesque exaggeration and abnormality continues throughout the experiment and brings about an extreme grotesque vision in the mind of the character/narrator Privalov:

Мне представилась громадная отверстая пасть, в которую, брошенные магической силой, сыплются животные, люди, города, континенты, планеты и солнца... (146).

This vision functions as dramatic irony because it foreshadows the subsequent scene of near global catastrophe during the experiment with the third model of man outside of town.

For Baxtin grotesque is positive and creative, opening and swallowing is good; it signifies reaching out of oneself and interacting with the world, whereas with the Vybegallo's man, all that is the opposite. The body of the zombi is grotesque, though unlike Baxtin's, it is negative. The model is born with a huge unhealthy-looking boil which is the first sign that not all may be well with this model of man either. It forms a parallel with the unfortunate first

* Bakhtin 281.
model who was all covered with boils and did not live very long: «мокрые волосы залепили низкий лоб, на котором пламенел действующий вулканический прыщ» (134-5). As his body expands, there is nothing positive or creative about it, since it is not a healthy growth: «Кадавр жрал.... Затем он рокочуще отрыгнулся и откинулся на спинку стула, сложив руки на огромном вздувшемся животе» (136-137). The fact that the monster is referred to as «кадавр» cadaver (Lat, fr. cadere to fall to die, dead body, corpse) already foreshadows his death. The sentence «Кадавр жрал» is a grotesque oxymoron, combining the image of a dead body engrossed in voracious eating, in a revolting "act of becoming", further suggesting that the livelier, that is, the hungrier the cadaver the deader it looks.

As the experiment continues, the observers witness the very process of its transformation from the state of lack into the state of happiness. Having stuffed itself to the full, the body reposes and experiences a feeling of great pleasure. It snuffles and smiles inanely; it undoubtedly is happy:

По лицу его разлилось блаженство. Он посапывал и бессмысленно улыбался. Он был несомненно счастлив, как бывает счастлив предельно уставший человек, добравшийся, наконец, до желанной постели (137).

But what kind of happiness is this? Vybegallo apparently confuses a mere physical satisfaction with the concept of
happiness. He has created a creature which experiences a state of satisfaction on the most primitive, instinctive level which is comically incongruous with the meaning of happiness worthy of man. The dubious transformations into the state of happiness are comically emphasized by Vybegallo's hesitation and confusion in the use of the pronouns referring to his monster. At first he uses «он» («человек») or «она» («модель»), but then he settles on the neuter «оно» which diminishes his man and ironically limits and lowers the concept of happiness:

И еще лучше, потому что раз так, то она... он, значит, счастливый. Имеется метафизический переход от несчастья к счастью, и это нас не может удивлять; потому что счастливыми не рождаются, а счастливыми, эта, становятся. Вот оно сейчас просыпается... Оно хочет... Вот так. Теперь оно смогло и диалектически переходит к счастью. К довольству то есть. Видите, оно глаза закрыло. Наслаждается. Ему хорошо. Я вам научно утверждаю, что готов был бы с ним поменяться. В данный, конечно, момент..." (141).

Vybegallo comically exposes and degrades himself by suggesting changing places with his monster. Considering the physical resemblance of the model and Vybegallo, and the professor's delight in his achievement, the reader may discover the comic effect by suspecting that Vybegallo dreams of changing places with the model not only in a "scientific" but also in a literal sense. Vybegallo would not mind being a man-made man and the satisfaction the cadaver has just achieved would make him perfectly
happy too.

With the model's perpetually increasing alimentary needs, however, the initial moments of satiation and happiness are becoming shorter and shorter and finally cease completely, and the zombi eats without interruption. Professor Vybegallo explains this incongruity by saying that this is only a superficial observation. In fact, according to him, a dialectical, qualitative transformation takes place. Namely, the satiation state is found in the very process of the satisfaction of needs. Eating and chewing themselves constitute happiness. Thus, a metaphysical transformation is achieved, "from unhappiness to happiness".

Vybegallo believes that once the material needs of man are satisfied, man can turn to the satisfaction of his spiritual needs. Thus, Vybegallo proceeds to researching the model's spiritual capabilities. The actual experiment, however, shows a glaring discrepancy between the theory and practice. When instruments of man's cultural activity, a tape recorder, a radio, a movie projector, are presented to the model--it totally ignores them, except that it samples the tape for taste which comically demonstrates that its needs do not go beyond the alimentary ones, and proves the logic that the model is impervious to cultural universals and is more like a mere animal. It does, however, react to the drumbeats from the radio with a jerking of its leg which
produces a comic effect, as it creates a huge gap between
the normal expectation of the range of human spiritual
capabilities and the model's primitive signs of them. This
gap, however, is only relative; it confirms the reader's
expectations of the monster's inner limitations but throws
Vybegallo into a state of ecstasy and joy. Since Vybegallo
has created this model in his own image, the revelations of
the model's biological and cultural universals cast a comic
shadow on Vybegallo himself. After these tests, the cadaver
returns to eating, and in the end its body lets go and, with
a resounding roar, bursts open and destroys itself, causing
a stinking flood and much damage in the laboratory.

The shortcomings of this model of man and its own final
destruction do not discomfit Vybegallo because this model is
only a passing stage and not the ideal. The professor is
ready to move on to the next experiments to demonstrate his
next model. Since Vybegallo, "Vybegallo" actually means "it
ran out, or it would run out" and it comically corresponds
to his easy habit of leaving his unfinished, or unsuccessful
projects and running out hastily to other undertakings and
territories. After the failures of his first two models,
his third one is supposed to be the ideal, totally satisfied
man. It is supposed to be all men's common ideal and a
universal consumer, a man whose needs, as well as
capabilities, are limitless. Fearing much more destruction,
the authorities of the Institute force Vybegallo out to do his experiment at the polygon 15km from the town. The description of what happens at the polygon more closely fits a description of the end of the world caused by an explosion of nuclear bombs than the birth of an ideal man:

Земля поплыла и зашевелилась. Взвилась огромная снежная туча. Все повалились друг на друга, и меня тоже опрокинуло и покатило. Рев все усиливался и, когда я с трудом, цепляясь за гусеницы грузовика, поднялся на ноги, я увидел, как жутко, гигантской чашей в нервном свете луны ползет, заворачиваясь внутрь, край горизонта, как угрожающе раскачиваются бронешиты, как бегут враспыханную, падают и снова вскакивают выбиванные в снегу зрителю (166).

This is a grotesque scene, both comic and terrifying. The enormous incongruity between the vision of the ideal man and the witnessing of the earthly cataclysm can comically and only partly be reconciled by the realization that the birth of the ideal man is the coming of the new world which cannot happen without the end of the old world. But the sense of horror and destruction, as the consequences of Vybegallo's human engineering, does not leave the scene. The scope of the monster's fantastic fury is astounding and surprising, but it also comes close to the realization of the nightmare fears expressed by Privalov already earlier during the experiment with the previous monster:

Мне представилась громадная отверста пасть, в которую брошены магической силой, сыплются животные, люди, города, континенты, планеты и солнце... (146)
Privalov's vision foreshadows Vybegallo's actual disaster and these two grotesque scenes, thus, tied together provide an additional dramatic tension to the narration. The scene of the monster's terrifying raging turns more comic, when, after it is killed, it is discovered how materialistic and pedestrian are the needs of the "totally satisfied man."

«Там были фото- киноаппараты, бумажники, шубы, кольца, ожерелья, брюки, и платиновый зуб» (169). The monster wields a force capable to destroy the Earth, but it is caught pathetically hoarding ordinary consumer goods.
CODE OF PARODY

The same episode, concerning Vybegallo and his experiments with the models of man, contains also the code of parody, that is, it presents a comic recast of other literary works both of Russian and of world literature. The model of man unsatisfied stomach-wise is a parody of Rabelais' *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, particularly the scenes of Gargantua's and Pantagruel's births and their grotesque scenes of feasting.

The explosion and annihilation of Vybegallo's model of man satisfied stomach-wise ends Chapter IV in Part II. Chapter V opens with the epigraph from Rabelais: "Believe me, it was the most awful sight in the world." Rabelais refers to the terrible scenes of destruction of war, so this epigraph prepares the reader to expect an even worse sight from Vybegallo's next experiment and to look for parallels with Rabelais' texts. Already the birth of the model of man, unsatisfied stomach-wise, in Chapter IV, is a parody of the birth of Gargantua and even more so of the birth of his son Pantagruel. Pantagruel was extraordinarily large and heavy and that killed his mother during the birth. He resembled his father in that Gargantua also was huge when he had been born after eleven months in his mother's womb. Pantagruel was given a name, derived from Greek, which means "All-Athirst". It was given to him in memory of a terrible
drought that raged throughout the world that year and in memory of the people's subsequent torment from thirst. Because of that, wagons of salted food came out from the open womb of the mother during the childbirth. Besides, the name turned out to be prophetic, as Pantagruel could eat and drink enormous amounts:

I shall not dwell upon how at each of his meals he lapped up the milk of forty-six hundred cows...how, to make a skillet to boil his pap in, all the braziers of Saumur in Anjou, of Villedieu in Normandy, of Bramont in Lorraine, were set to work day and night ...how, to serve him this pap, they used a colossal cup" (175).

Rabelais's scenes of Pantagruel are comic and grotesque in themselves. The Strugatskys parody them, that is, imitate them with ironic recasting, transformation and distortion. Using another formulation, they create a "repetition with critical distance, which marks difference rather than similarity." The model of man, unsatisfied stomach-wise, is born as a full size adult though deprived of cultural universals. Vybegallo can be considered his father since the newborn perfectly resembles him. He does not have a natural mother, though. The role of the mother's womb is fulfilled by the autoclave. Lying open and overturned after the monster's birth, the autoclave looks

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"dead". «Центральный автоклав был раскрыт, опрокинут, и вокруг него растеклась обширная зеленоватая лужа» (135).

This image unexpectedly resembles Pantagruel' mother's death at child birth. Thus the Strugatskys' machine parodically supersedes Rabelais' live woman.

This model's predecessor, totally unsatisfied man, was not fed and was not given water and suffered greatly. The new model, however, eats and drinks as if to make up for the torments of the past. As a parody of Pantagruel's thirsting, Vyбегалло's model is even named "unsatisfied stomach-wise" which also accurately describes his main characteristics, those of a insatiable glutton. Having no mother, the model needs a nurse. This role seems to be played by the girl Stella:

«На другом конце стола молоденькая ведьма-практиканта Стелла, с чистыми розовыми ушками, бледная и заплаканная, с дрожащими губками, нарезала хлебные буханки огромными скибками и, отворачиваясь, подносила их Выбегалле на вытянутых руках» (135).

When the zombi runs out of food, he seems to be selecting his nurse Stella for his next course:

С минуту он сидел в задумчивости, пробуя пальцами зубы, затем медленно прошёлся взглядом по замершей толпе. Нехороший у него был взгляд—оценивающий, выбирающий какой-то. Володя Почкин непроизвольно произнёс: «Но-но, тихо, ты...» И тут пустые прозрачные глаза уперлись в Стеллу, и она испустила вопль, тот самый душераздирающий вопль, переходящий в ультразвук, который мы с Романом уже слышали в приемной директора четырьмя этажами ниже. Я содрогнулся. Кадавра это тоже сумтило: он опустил глаза и нервно забарабанил пальцами по столу (139).
Having lost his mother, Pantagruel needs to be nursed, but he never had any nurse other than a cow: "He would have devoured her whole, had she not bellowed as if a pack of starving wolves had their fangs in her legs" (176). These resemblances of attempting to devour their own nurses and then giving up, due to being frightened by both victims' heart-rending howls, are comically countered by the difference. And the difference is that Pantagruel's nurse was not a human being but a cow.

Gargantua is extremely happy with the child: "Ho, ho, ho, how happy I am! Let us drink, ho! and put away our melancholy! Bring out the best wine, rinse the glasses, lay the table,..."(174). Like a father, professor Vybegallo himself, is very proud and happy with his off-spring. Watching the monster eat, Vybegallo cheers him on, loudly applauds his appetite and now and then with affection scratches him behind the ear. He brings him more food (tons of herring heads) and then beams with pride and satisfaction: «Bo, bo!..Смотрите! Видали, как он может? Ух ты, мой милый, ух ты, мой радостный!..Bo, bo! Вот как оно может!» (141).

The two episodes display their resemblances and contrast. The differences between them lie both in the outward, physical aspect of the elements and in their meaning. Rabelais's images of the grotesque body, food,
drink and swallowing are complex and often contradictory. Baxtin provides an elaborate interpretation of these images. He links them with the carnivalesque festivities of the Middle Ages and the popular literature of that time. These images have double meaning. On the one hand, they are a celebration of fertility, birth and growth. Therefore they are festive, joyous and positive. On the other hand, they are satirical, directed against corruption, greed and parasitism.

But even here the images preserve their positive nature, and indeed it is this positive element that creates the exaggerations, though they are put to a satirical use. Negation is not transferred to the matter of images: to wine, food, abundance.  

An increasing number of banquet images are found in Rabelais' Book IV. The repeated, richly varied references to food, to swallowing, and appetite acquire increasingly more complex symbolism. Some of them have a historic coloring:

The banquet takes place, as it were, in a new epoch. And one might say that the carnival banquet was also held in the utopian future, in the Saturnine age come back to earth. Gay, triumphal time speaks in the language of banquet images. This element survives in our modern toasts."\(^8\)

There is still another significant aspect of the banquet

\(^7\)Bakhtin 290.

\(^8\)Bakhtin 301.
images. They relate to death and to the underworld. "The word 'to die' had among its various connotations the meaning of 'being swallowed' or being 'eaten up'."\(^9\) Thus in all, they become ambivalent, relating to the cycle of life and death. This cycle (death and resurrection) does extend to Pantagruel's eating and banquets but does not extend to Vybegallo's baby's food. Here there is only death and no resurrection. Banquet images have considerably changed their meaning in the modern world. They have lost much of their ambiguity; they tend to express the negative aspect of gluttony and are associated with "the contentment and satiety of the selfish individual, his personal enjoyment, and not the triumph of the people as a whole."\(^10\)

The Strugatskys' models of man are organized on the principles of some scientific predictions of man's historical development. Thus, they parody Rabelais's victorious banquet images, those relating to the future epochs. The parody is also emphasized by Vybegallo's baby's food. His livestock feed («пареные отруби» and herring heads) is so much inferior of Pantagruel's sumptuous food. The negative significance of the Strugatskys' "banquet" images is unambiguous. It is established not only through

\(^9\)Bakhtin 301

\(^10\)Bakhtin 302.
Privalov's narration but also through the other characters' comments and reactions. Most of the observers of the experiment are disapproving, disgusted, or horrified by the sight of the model of man and his gobbling. The Strugatskys' images of the monster's insatiable, gross eating does not relate to Rabelais' continuation, affirmation, or celebration of life. Rather, they reflect the negative aspect of Rabelais' images of swallowing which symbolize death. Moreover, through the magnifying glass of Rabelais' complex work, the Strugatskys' images seem even more menacing, hopeless, and destructive. This is emphasized not only by the final scene of the zombi's self-destruction, but also by the scene in which he runs out of food and turns his appetite on the people.

Rabelais's gourmandizing culminates in the chapters about the society in the kingdom of Messer Gaster (Sir Stomach). On one level, these episodes express the idea that it is hard to earn one's bread but pleasant to eat it. On another level, they form an allegory of a sketch of an economic theory of civilization, which says that if it were not for the need to fill his stomach, man would not have been stimulated enough to develop the arts and sciences and would remain in barbarity. The Strugatskys parody these

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concepts in various parts of PNVS through a variety of techniques. One of the techniques is the creation and destruction of Vybegallo's glutton model of man, and also the scenes of heavy drinking in the Institute. The other technique is the narrator's more direct explanation of the philosophy of the magi, the Institute's scientists thirsting for knowledge, and of the theory of work in general as the source of man's evolution:

Каждый человек—наг в душе, но он становится нагом только тогда, когда начинает меньше думать о себе и больше о других, когда работать ему становится интереснее, чем развлекаться в старинном смысле этого слова. И наверное, их рабочая гипотеза была недалека от истины, потому что так же как труд превратил обезьяну в человека, точно так же отсутствие труда в гораздо более короткие сроки превращают человека в обезьяну. Даже хуже, чем в обезьяну (131).

The work of Rabelais is itself comic, but it is also very complex and ambiguous. Besides creating a comic vision of the world, Rabelais had a satirical intention too; he was deeply concerned about the condition of the society. The Strugatskys' parody is ambivalent, both praising and ridiculing Rabelais. Parody is often a device of satire, and the Strugatskys use parody of Rabelais as a tool to critique, to ridicule their own, modern society.

The same episode, concerning Vybegallo and his experiments with the models of man, has comic allusion to other literary works, particularly those which deal with the philosophical questions of man's happiness and the concept
of achieving happiness through satisfying material needs and providing security. Most notably, in Russian literature these works are: Chernyševskij's *What Is To Be Done?*, Dostoevskij's *Notes from the Underground*, Dostoevsky's "Grand Inquisitor" in *The Brothers Karamazov*, Zamjatin's *We*, Oleśa's *Envy* and others.

Chernyševskij believed literature to be a direct reflection of social reality and his work exerted a strong influence on Russian revolutionaries. His novel advocated the establishment of a utopia based upon the principles of nineteenth century Rationalism, Utilitarianism, and Socialism. Like other socialists, he expressed the belief that if all man's needs are satisfied, he then will automatically be happy. In the subsequent history of Russian literature, Chernyševskij's novel and its ideas met several literary rebuttals from some of the greatest Russian writers, including the Strugatskys. Dostoevskij satirized those utopian ideas both in *Notes from Underground* and in "Grand Inquisitor". He argued that in rationalistic, utilitarian society, security and happiness will take away man's freedom. In the context of the idea of man's

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Nabokov in his novel *The Gift* gives a very critical assessment of all Chernyshevsky's ideas and depicts him as a sympathetic man but a foolish writer. Both *We* and *Envy* attack the same rationalistic, utilitarian concepts of society.
transformation from "unhappiness to happiness," Vybegallo's first model of man, totally unsatisfied, sick and suffering is a parody of the concept of man's suffering spelled out by the Dostoevskij's Underground Man in *Notes from Underground*. Dostoevskij's character is not mocked; if anything, he can be seen as a norm, if not an ideal, from which the Strugatskys' first model of man departs. «Я человек больной... Я не лечусь и никогда не лечился,»¹³ says the Underground Man. He claims that in suffering man finds satisfaction and well-being and a higher state:

Может быть, страдание-то ему ровно насколько же и выгодно, как благодеяние? А человек иногда ужасно любит страдание, до страсти, и это факт....Страдание--да ведь это единственная причина сознания (42).

The Underground Man attacks the rationalists who want to create security and happiness in man's life while removing freedom and suffering associated with it. He believes that there is a value in suffering because it increases man's consciousness and ennobles man. Vybegallo's first model of man is sick, is not fed and is not cured. He suffers immensely but finds no pleasure and no hope in that condition; he complains and soon dies, finding no salvation in his suffering. This experience makes him a perfect model of an unhappy man. The Strugatskys' creation is vastly

¹³О. М. Достоевский, Записки из подполья (Letchworth, Hertfordshire: Bradda Books Ltd., 1973) 5, 42.
incongruous with the Underground Man. But the descriptions of the physical condition of both men, and the philosophical question of man's happiness and suffering associated with it, raised in each case, provide clues for the resolution of the discrepancies and the creation of the comic effect. The ridicule is directed at both creations, though the one aimed at Vybegallo's model of man is a stronger one.

Vybegallo's argument, "все беды, эта, от неудовольствия проистекают, и ежели, значит, дать человеку все--хлебца, значит, отрубей пареньх, то и будет не человек, а ангел" (91) makes a parodic allusion to Ivan Karamazov's poem "Grand Inquisitor" in The Brothers Karamazov. The Grand Inquisitor is the Church leader in the sixteenth century Spain. During his rule, he establishes a plan for the universal happiness of men by providing the people with earthly security, but deprives them of their freedom, freedom of choice to follow Christ to eternal life. Attacking Christ's rejection of the Devil's first temptation, the Inquisitor uses Christ's own words from St. Luke, 4:4.

«Но ты не захотел лишить человека свободы и отверг предложение, ибо какая же свобода, рассудил ты, если послушание куплено хлебами? Ты возразил, что человек жив не единым хлебом.»

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Vybegallo is made to mock the Inquisitor's language, when he makes his banal and slighting reference to bread which represents security. His whole phrase acquires another comical effect because of the ambiguity of the word «ангел». Vybegallo means "happiness" whereas the word may imply heavenly existence which is exactly what is denied man if he accepts earthly bread. The phrase is an example of double irony, with the ridicule aimed at both the Inquisitor and Vybegallo. Both man take a low view of mankind: the Inquisitor considers the majority of men weak and wretched and unable to give up security for freedom, while Vybegallo mistakes animal for man. The fate of Vybegallo's second model of man (his life and death) is a comic illustration of both Christ's and the Inquisitor's positions, as it reveals discrepancies and similarities between its fate and the fate of Dostoevskij's characters. Since the model does nothing but eat and since he wants nothing else, he proves Christ wrong and the Inquisitor right. But finally having shown no spiritual abilities and dying from overeating, he proves the Inquisitor wrong and Christ, at last, right that man cannot live by bread alone.

Vybegallo's most important experiment is, of course, the creation of the model of a happy man, but he is also involved in a series of other extraordinary experiments and projects:
Его боевые очерки о самонадеяющейся обуви, о самовыдергивающе-самоукладывающейся в грузовики моркови и о других проектах Въебегаллы были широко известны в области, а статья «Волшебник из Солевца» появилась даже в одном из центральных журналов (140).
А классический труд Въебегаллы «Основы технологии производства самонадеяющейся обуви», набитый демагогической болтовней, произвел в свое время заботы Б. Питомника изрядный шум. (Позже выяснилось, что самонадеяющиеся ботинки стоят дороже мотоцикла и боятся пыли и сырости) [152].

The principle underlying Vybegallo's pathetic tricks and labors is the conquest of nature and a creation of social utopia. In that respect, Vybegallo's episode follows and parodies the fairy tale model. According to Jakobson a fairy tale fulfills the role of a social utopia. It is a dream about the conquest of nature. In fairy tales:

all the pails will go up the hill by themselves, the axes will chop by themselves, the unharnessed sleighs will glide to the forest, and the firewood will poke itself into the stove. It is a dream about the triumph of the wretched, about the metamorphoses of a hind into a tsar.

The Strugatskys' science fiction is a modern fairy tale which, having taken into consideration the latest scientific and technological and social advances, has further transformed the fairy tale into a modern fairy tale. Most importantly however, as the above examples show, that transformation has a comic character in which the

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16 Jakobson 650.
traditional fairy tale magic intermixes with modern science and produces comic science fiction.

The firewood will poke itself into the stove (fairy tale) vs. self-harvesting, self-loading carrots (PNVS)

The above opposition comically reveal more similarities than expected contrasts between corresponding discourses of fairy tale science fiction. Vybegallo's futuristically advanced science and technology makes agricultural produce which is more characteristic of the realm of fairy tale magic than of the gadgetry-oriented popular science fiction. This technique parodies both fairy tale and science fiction. Since the transgression of the rules of fairy tale is so minor and subtle, the parody of the fairy tale is not of the ridiculing kind, but rather affirming and "authorizing". The ridicule of this parody is directed more towards the optimistic, utopian science fiction, as the Strugatskys freely transform the rules and expectations associated with the serious, conventional science fiction.

Vybegallo never succeeds in any of his projects, but he always has new ideas and, as his name itself suggests, he "runs out forward" to new undertakings. Due to his skillful manipulation of the authorities he still manages to continue his work though the majority of his colleagues are appalled by his incompetent and dangerous experiments. His role of an outcast in the Institute is emphasized by the banishing
his third experiment with the model of man out of the
Institute into the polygon 15km from the town. Vybegallo
does not mind his outcast status as long as he finds in it
new opportunities to use his "cunning science" and to
further his career. Vybegallo's extraordinary career spans
the two tales and strengthens the connection between PNVS
and its sequel SOT. When there is an opening for a highly
paid position of scientific consultant in the colony of the
Institute, he again drops everything and does his
"Vybegallo" routine. This time, he goes to a "better place"
and climbs up the elevator shaft to the 76th floor, as if to
heaven, to join the renegade Troika in T'muskorpion'. In
that respect too, Vybegallo mimics the journey of the fairy
tale hero:

The outcasts went their way to another realm to look
for a "better place" and "easy bread." In pursuit of
this aim the good fellow has to master a "cunning
science," or, maybe, simply to "follow his eyes."...
There is in the Russian tradition a most
caracteristic tale about the peasant who contrives to
climb to heaven and finds there: "In the middle of a
mansion, an oven; in the oven, a goose roasting, a
suckling pig, and pies, pies, pies ...! In a word:
There is all that the soul desires." It is true the
peasant's expedition ends with his tumbling into a
bog--a pitiful return to miserable reality, as
Trubetzkoy points out mockingly. But the rhymed
epilogue of this tale catches far better the function
of the fairy dream:
Not this is the miracle of miracles,
That the muzhik fell from heaven;
But that is the miracle of miracles:
That he had climbed into heaven.17

17 Jakobson 651.
Vybegallo's comic similarity to the muzhik of the fairy tale is further emphasized by his peasant dress and appearance, and the voracious appetite for food of his model of man with whom Vybegallo would wish to change places. The model of man is in fact an identical copy of Vybegallo himself and food is all his "soul desires."
CODE OF SATIRE

In PNVS, the text concerning Vybegallo's idea of creating a new model of man and the actual experiments contain specific elements which refer to non-literary reality, that is, to the contemporary social reality, and particularly to the Soviet reality which experienced the Socialist Revolution and the greatest social experimentation in history. The Socialist movement of the nineteenth century sought a radical transformation of society, and had some of its roots in the ideas of the Enlightenment, especially in the idea about the universe being founded on the principles of reason and harmony and in the optimistic belief in universal human progress. Another source for the new social order was found in Marxist doctrine:

Marxism is a body of social doctrine..., a philosophy of history, implemented by an elaborate economic theory. It purports to demonstrate the inevitability of socialism and eventually of full communism, the latter to be understood as a class less, collectivist order in which the social product is distributed according to needs...

Some of the most important elements of Marxism are the elements of change and determinism. According to Marx's law of historical materialism, humankind has gone through the stages of slavery, feudalism, capitalism which will be

followed by socialism and communism. Like all previous epochs, socialism too is a passing stage, but communism is the final one. Each historical epoch created its own culture and its own type of man. Communism too is supposed to produce its own type of man with distinct communist characteristics. In the words of Andrei Sinyavsky "[the] idea of the new man is the cornerstone of Soviet civilization. The State could not have survived as long as it has without the support of a man of a new social and psychological type."¹⁹ In Marxist theory, the social "superstructure"—ideas, institutions, traditions and the whole spiritual life—is the product of material and economic developments. Marxists advocate that if man is given all the security he needs, then he will automatically be happy. Marx identified socialism with the slogan: "From each according to his abilities, to each according to his work", and communism with the slogan: "From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs". Communism gained much of its power over human minds by the "scientific" prediction and promise of establishing social justice, perpetual peace and happiness. Marxist doctrine has gone through a variety of modifications and interpretations. In Russia and in the Soviet Union, it has

been expanded by Lenin and was reinterpreted and implemented by Stalin.

Vybegallo's theories and models of Man are a satire on the ideas of the Marxist doctrine and their crude manipulation and radical implementation by Stalin. I will attempt to analyze a number of semantic elements which indicate that Vybegallo's three models of Man are a distorted, satirical, representation of the Marxist theory of scientifically ordained, inevitable historical development:

1. Модель человека неудовлетворенного полностью (A model of Man totally unsatisfied).
2. Модель человека неудовлетворенного желудочно (A model of Man unsatisfied stomach wise).
3. Модель человека полностью удовлетворенного (A model of Man totally satisfied) [91].

What all three of Vybegallo's models of Man have in common and what relates them to the Marxist doctrine and its famous maxims is the question of the satisfaction of needs and the concept of stages in historical development.

The first clues of satire of the Marxist idea appear in the passage where the narrator presents Vybegallo's theory of man's happiness. Vybegallo is a zealot in his field, but his knowledge of man's psychology and his understanding of the problem of happiness seem to be very superficial. Moreover, he uses his limited knowledge in a manipulative
and opportunistic way. He recipe for happiness quoted earlier is ridiculously simplistic. It represents a satirically distorted materialistic theory of man's happiness based solely on the satisfaction of material needs which reduces man to an animal. That Vybegallo's statement easily applies to animals is further emphasized by the term "отруби" (bran) which traditionally has been part of livestock feed. Vybegallo's theory is a caricature of the idea of man's happiness. His theory is incompatible with more complex and profound, spiritual concepts of man's happiness or with the serious search for it.

Vybegallo's formula acquires an additional comic effect in today's reading. In pursuit of health, safety, and longevity, Western affluent society seems to show more and more faith in cuisines, diets, and eating habits. Oat bran, once fodder for horses, is now considered one of the most desirable, magic food ingredients in man's diet. Physical well-being has become synonymous with happiness. Nietzsche, in Thus Spake Zarathustra prophesied that future man, whom he called the last man, would give up spiritual searching for the pursuit of health. He said of him that "one still quarrels, but one is soon reconciled--else it might spoil the digestion. One has one's little pleasure for the day and one's little pleasure for the night: but one has a
regard for health."20

The actual carrying out of Vybegallo's experiments is done with the approval of the authorities (the Learned Council) and with a strict adherence to the Institute's plan. The extraordinary plan of creating a model of man, one must assume, is a highly sophisticated and imaginative project which, however, is undertaken inside the inept State bureaucracy with its common delays and inaction. By manipulating the Institute's budget and bureaucracy, by juggling figures and authoritative quotations, and by keeping an eye out for practical applications, Vybegallo finally projected three experimental models. This exaggerated state of affairs inevitably invites an association with, and makes a caricature of the conditions of Soviet applied science which exists in the framework of the state-planned economy and suffers the consequences of bureaucratic bungling and ineffectiveness.

The satirical characteristics of Vybegallo's first model, the totally unhappy man, are better revealed only after the consideration of the second model, to which the Professor devotes more attention. Having produced the second model of man called unsatisfied stomach-wise, Vybegallo delivers a theoretical speech elucidating the

20Walter Kaufmann, ed. and tr., The Portable Nietzsche (Penguin Books) 130.
experiment to the other scientists and the press which is
the Strugatskys' comic tour de force:

Емели он, то есть человек, может все, что хочет, а
хочет все, что может, то он и есть счастлив. Так мы
его и определим. Что мы здесь, товарищи, перед собою
имеем? Мы имеем модель. Но эта модель, товарищи,
хочет, и это уже хорошо. Так сказать, экселент, ексвн,
шарман. И еще товарищи, вы сами видите, что она
может. И это еще лучше, потому что раз так, то
она...он, значит, счастливый. Имеется метафизический
переход от несчастья в счастье, и это нас не может
удивлять; потому что счастливыми не рождаются, а
счастливыми, эта, становятся, Вот оно сейчас
просыпается...Оно хочет. И потому оно пока несчастно.
Но оно может, и через это «может» совершается
dialekticheskiy скачок. Во, бо!.. Смотрите! Видали, как
оно может? Ух ты, мой милый, ух ты, мой
радостный!.. Во, бо! Вот как оно может!... Вот так.
теперь оно смогло и диалектически переходит к счастью
(140-141).

Vybegallo's words "run out" of his mouth, but his speech is
a howler for the rubes. It contains very clear allusions to
the Marxist popular definition of communism in the maxim:
"From each according to his abilities, to each according to
his needs", and offers a comically modified theory of the
laws of dialectic materialism according to which societies
develop through class conflict in stages of thesis,
antithesis, and synthesis. In this speech, Vybegallo is a
pseudo intellectual who understands the concepts of needs
and abilities in his own crooked and selfish way. His
confused and repetitious delivery testifies to his own
intellectual limitations and oratorical feebleness. But he
also sounds like a dangerous demagogue, who deliberately
confuses concepts and misapplies them only to influence his
listeners and to champion his fanatical cause.

Marx's and Lenin's works were elaborate and voluminous.
Stalin and his propagandists would often take out certain
Marxist and Leninist phrases and use them for political
purposes:

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\text{Stalin swept aside all these 'Talmudic subtleties,' while retaining Marxist phraseology and Marxism's unlimited possibilities for 'dialectical' self-refutation. Stalin himself would decide what Marxism was. He would make clear that it was unnecessary for others to read Marx; he had done the reading for them.}\]

Vybegallo's perverted logic and mystifications are satirical
distortions of the communist slogans and propaganda. His
speech retains enough elements from the Marxist doctrine to
allow the reader to mediate the incongruity and see the
comic in it. Thus, the Strugatskys not only satirize the
but also its reinterpretations and its abuses in the
Stalinist ideology. In the end, when the model of Man
unsatisfied stomach-wise blows itself into smithereens from
overeating, even Vybegallo can see that it has been a

\[\text{Mikhail Heller and Aleksandr M. Nekrich,}\ \text{Utopia in Power}\ (\text{New York: Summit Books, 1985})\ 298.\]

\[\text{Mark Popovsky,}\ \text{Manipulated Science}\ 290. \ "That truth was}\n\text{Marxism, and only the party and its Leader knew it for certain. The purpose of this campaign was to make the}\n\text{educated public more manageable, to make science}\n\text{manageable."}\]
failure. He accepts it, however, since he considers the model of man unsatisfied stomach-wise not an ideal one, but merely a passing stage. The analysis of this model has provided a better perspective on the meaning of the other two models: the first one--totally unsatisfied and the third one--completely satisfied, and their relation to the unsatisfied stomach-wise.

The creation of the first model is mentioned only in passing and is compared to Job:

Это жалкое существо, покрытое язвами, как Иов, полуразложившееся, мутиное всеми известными и неизвестными болезнями, страдающее от холода и от жары одновременно, вывалилось в коридор, огласило институт серией нечленораздельных жалоб и издохло (91).

Job, however, did not die. Even though he complained to God, Job came to prosper because he had spiritual faith which is not present in the first model. When this model dies Vybegallo does not dwell on the things of the past. In his work he is a man of progress, a pioneer and an optimist. He always looks forward to his next project and the brighter future ahead. The first model is unhappy because his needs are not satisfied; he is not fed and not given water and is terminally sick. Since the alimentary bliss of his successor represents the socialist stage, the misery and hopelessness of the first model can be associated with the fate of the common man in the epoch of capitalism as viewed by Marxists. He is a satirical, extremely simplified, and
distorted representation of the man who is a victim, exploited and humiliated by capitalism—the faulty and unjust system, ridden by its own irreconcilable contradiction and bound for its inevitable doom.

In the fate of the first two models, the Strugatskys satirize the Marxist concept of various historical stages and their inevitable transformations. According to Marx, not only capitalism but also socialism is merely a passing stage and will be followed by the highest and final social system of communism. In PNVS, the second model, the perverted representation of the optimistic idea of socialism and its prediction, is presented as a passing stage too, a transitional system carrying the seeds of its own destruction. And after its demise, Vybegallo, always excited and inspired by scientific theory, moves to his next experiment, the third model—completely satisfied man. Relying on the same Marxist premise of man's needs and abilities, and by absurdly stretching its logic and the logic of Marxist historical development, Vybegallo creates a stage of human progress in which man's desires and abilities have no limits. The final, common ideal man desires everything and is capable of everything. The birth of this model takes place on the polygon and the result is a near cataclysm. Before he is destroyed by the jinn thrown at him by Roman, the ideal man demonstrates the enormity of his
needs and abilities. He causes a violent storm and takes
all the material valuables from everyone around and, like a
super egocentric, he starts folding up space to wrap himself
up as if in a cocoon:

Исполина-победителя в воронке не оказалось. Зато там
было все остальное и еще много сверх того. Там были
фото-киноаппараты, бумажники, шубы, кольца, ожерелья,
брюки и платиновый зуб. Там были валенки Выбегаллы и
шапка Магнуса Федоровича. Там оказался мой платиновый
свисток для вызова авральной команды. Кроме того, мы
обнаружили там два автомобиля «Москвич», три автомобиля
«Волга», железный сейф с печатями местной сберкассой,
большой кусок жареного мяса, два ящика водки, ящик
жигулевского пива и железную кровать с никелированными
шарами (169).

This passage has a concreteness of detail which is a clue
that this is a representation of the distinctly-Soviet
reality of the 1950s and 60s, as indicated by the Soviet
made cars—Moskvich and Volga—and the Zhiguli beer. The
additional comic effect is created by the incongruity
between the sheer physical power of the monster, able to
fold space, and the pettiness of his desires for material
comforts and the vulgarity and pošlost' of his tastes.
Unmistakably then, the ideal man is a satirical
representation of the Soviet "new man". He turns out to be
powerful and selfish, a robber of his fellow man and a
self-indulgent, conspicuous consumer. The idea of the new
man in the Soviet Union was a dismal failure. In Andrei
Sinyavsky's words "[it] turned into a farce, comic and
horrible at the same time. And this became the incarnation
of the dream about the new man, the cornerstone of Soviet civilization."\(^{22}\)

Consumerism is one of many aspects of capitalism, but by playing with the Marxist logic of communist slogans and by making clear references to contemporary Soviet reality, the Strugatskys expose the falsehood the Marxist doctrine and the failure of the Marxist social experimentation which degenerate into the worst forms of capitalism, that is, the unrestrained, monstrous consumerism. Such a satirical understanding of the Soviet reality is related to the popular quip which says that "communism is the longest road to capitalism".

Vybegallo assumes that once the material needs of man are satisfied, man can better develop his spiritual needs. He then conducts an experiment to examine the model's spiritual capabilities. The actual experiment, using a tape recorder, a radio, a movie projector, however, shows a glaring and embarrassing discrepancy between the theory and practice. Vybegallo's model of man cannot be a success because the project is based on erroneous assumption that man's needs can be satisfied. Kolakowski says:

since the needs of wolves are limited and definable and therefore conceivably satisfied, whereas human needs have no boundaries we could delineate; consequently, total satisfaction is incompatible with the variety and

\(^{22}\)Sinayavsky 152.
The demonstration of the poverty of the monster's spiritual life offers satirical attack on the notions that the satisfaction of only material needs will result in the spiritual development of man. The scene also offers satirical allusions to the more recent transformations of man as a result of NTR (naučno-tekničeskaja revolutsja). In 1976 on the occasion of the XXV Congress of the CPSU, A. Strugatsky stated that:

from a literary point of view the most interesting consequence of NTR is the appearance of new types of mass man, massovyj naučnyj rabotnik ('the scientific worker of the masses') and massovyj sytyj nevospitannyj čelovek ('the well-fed uneducated man of the masses'). ... It is this consumption for the sake of consumption, accompanied by a philistine outlook on life, that, in Strugackij's view, represents the most negative aspect of NTR.

As Vybogallo's scientific product is a comic caricature of "the well-fed uneducated man of the masses", Vybogallo himself is an exaggerated ridicule of "the scientific worker of the masses". The science cities in the Soviet Union started as centers of creative intelligentsia, but the ideal scientist was hard to find as the science cities went into

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decline and crisis. It soon had to be acknowledged "that normal human shortcomings are also present in the scientific milieu and... the atmosphere of a research institute only marginally affects the inner personality."\textsuperscript{25} Both Vybegallo and his monsters are embodiments of barbarism and po\'sonlost':

The Strugatskys' Enemy Number One is the philistine, that very same 'grey silent majority' which, as our earthly experience has shown, paves the way to fascism. The philistine, according to the Strugatskys, is the aggressive mediocrity which not only fights tooth and nail for its right to satiety and somnolence, but also tries to force its way of thinking and living on the rest of the world.\textsuperscript{26}

Vybegallo's thesis that new conditions can produce new man, as well as his hack methods of work and demagoguery are also a satire of Lysenkoism, one of the most bizarre chapters in the history of modern science. Lysenko's theory proclaimed that any living organism could be transformed to any desired extent by environmental changes and its new qualities could be passed on to later generation. Such a theory was in accord with the Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist faith in the malleability of human nature, and for long was consistent with the ideology of the Soviet Union, the country so devoted to the social improvement of all people according to the Marxist creed.

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\textsuperscript{25} Stephan 366.
\textsuperscript{26} Vladimir Gakov, "A Test of Humanity (About the Work of the Strugatsky Brothers)," \textit{Soviet Literature}, 1982, # 1 (406): 156.
Privalov states that the work Vyбегалло does could be called eugenics, but nobody in the Institute calls it that way because of the reluctance to get involved: «Работу, которой он занимался за триста пятьдесят рублей в месяц, можно было смело назвать евгеникой--но никто её так не называл--боились связываться» (90). Eugenics is an applied biological science whose goal is to determine and improve man's genetic endowment by taking into account both heredity and environment. In its history of development, this science was misused and earned for itself the term of pseudo-science:

Believers ranged from the American eugenicists of the early 1900s, who thought humans should be bred like race horses, to the German geneticists who gave scientific advice to the leaders of the Third Reich, instructing them on how the species might be 'purified' by selective breeding and by exterminating whole races at a time.27

Clearly, a project of such complexity as Vyбегалло's, to be credible, at least to a minute degree, in view of a reader's knowledge of modern science, would have to involve genetic engineering. In Privalov's report of Vyбегалло's experiment, however, there is nothing said about chromosomal theory of heredity. Instead, Vyбегалло, both in his theory and the actual carrying out of the experiment considers the environment to be the sole and all-determining factor.

obviously ignoring the genetic ones.

Lysenko, ignoring the scientific evidence in the field of genetics, claimed that evolution is 'ultimately' determined by environmental influences:

Under the action of external environment, which is unsuitable or little suitable for a given species, particles of a different species for which the conditions are more suitable arise in the body of the plant. From these particles, rudiments (buds or seeds) are formed which develop into individuals of the other species.28

Lysenko repeated this absurd theory as late as 1961, characterizing it as an important achievement of Soviet materialistic biology. This is not an original theory; it is related to the late seventeenth century theories of the so called "naive transformationalists" who held the view that one species occasionally can give rise to another.29 In the years 1950-55, in almost every issue of Agrobiologia, articles appeared which reported transformations of wheat into rye and vice versa, barley into oats, firs into pines, etc., without giving any proof of it. At the time when the gene mechanism on the molecular level had been discovered, for Lysenko there were no genes, no unchanging substance of heredity, no fixed unalterable species. To him these terms were abstractions of the reactionaries and preachers

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29 Zhores Medvedev 30.
of mysticism, idealism, and racism. For more than two decades Lysenko was the President of the Lenin All-Union Academy of Agricultural Sciences, and used his political power to suppress the science of genetics. His own pseudo-scientific work and his politics have isolated Soviet biology from the rest of the world and have done enormous damage to Soviet sciences and agriculture.

There are several other clues in the Strugatskys' text which indicate comic parallels with the Lysenko affair. Privalov's statement that Vybegallo's work could be called eugenics but nobody in the Institute called it that way is reminiscent of the silence of the majority of Soviet biologists of the time who saw that Lysenko's activities were that of a charlatan and of a villain. They would not call it this way, however, and out of fear of the consequences, they usually just went along with his dictatorship, just as, in Privalov's narration, Vybegallo's colleagues did.

In his analysis of the Lysenko Affair, Joravsky comments that outside observers thought of the Stalinists, including Lysenko, as mad ideologists whose minds were unhinged by a dream of total power and utopia. The fact is, he further notes, that Stalinists regarded themselves as supremely practical people, who subordinated theoretical considerations to practical necessities. Moreover, they
were notoriously anti-intellectual, though they were equally
notorious for their ideological fanaticism.\textsuperscript{30} Vybeegallo is a
caricature of a Stalinist in all of these respects. His
ideological fanaticism is well illustrated in his eager
clarifications of his experiment for the sake of the media.
His practical sense is demonstrated in the way he wins
support of the the Learned Council for his project and his
going about his work: «Действуя строго по этому плану,
старательно измеряя свои достижения в процентах выполнения и
никогда не забывая о режиме экономии, увеличении
оборачиваемости оборотных средств, а также о связи с
жизнью...» (91). Vybeegallo's Stalinist and Lysenko-type
anti-intellectualism is displayed outwardly in his dress and
appearance, in the style of a Russian peasant. Lysenko was
a son of a Ukrainian peasant and that he was no intellectual
is documented by Medvedev.\textsuperscript{31}

\textsuperscript{30}David Joravsky, \textit{The Lysenko Affair} (Cambridge,

\textsuperscript{31}Medvedev 132-3. "Together with all his other posts,
Lysenko became professor of genetics and breeding, although
before that he had never done any teaching....Seeing
gray-haired scientists in the front row of the audience,
Lysenko exclaims with exaltation: 'Aha! You came to
relearn?' I remember little of the content of the
lecture--only the assertion that a horse is alive only in
interaction with the environment; without interaction it is
no longer a horse but a cadaver of a horse; that, when
different birds are fed hairy caterpillars, cuckoos hatch
from their eggs; that a new cell is not formed from a
previously existing one, but near one; that the living body
always wants to eat; etc., etc.".
Since the expectation was that collectivization would create the most advanced and effective farming system, Stalinist bosses, such as Lysenko, saw themselves as popular leaders in the creation of a prosperous new society. The reality, however, was that after the collectivization, Soviet agriculture experienced a sharp and steady decline in productivity. Therefore to keep the hope and enthusiasm for the new order high, the leaders resorted to deception and self-deception. They publicized false reports of fantastic discoveries and achievements in biology and agriculture which soon would bring abundance and happiness of utopia.

The mentioning of Vybehallo's famous articles about self-harvesting, self-loading carrots indicates that Vybehallo also worked in the field of agriculture and these feats of his are a more direct satire of absurd and fraudulent Lysenkoist activities:

Vybehallo's actions, work, theories, and speeches fill the narration of the Strugatskys' tales with colorful, comic, and terrifying scenes. Together, they coalesce into a powerful satirical image of the dangers of manipulated, abused, and degenerated science.
CHAPTER VI--TROIKA ON RATIONALIZATION AND UTILIZATION OF UNEXPLAINED PHENOMENA--KONSTANTIN'S TRIAL

CODE OF COMEDY

Tale of the Troika (Сказка о тройке--аббр. SOT) is a sequel to PNVS. Its action begins at the same Institute of Magic and Sorcery but it soon moves to the 76th floor, to the city of T'muskorpion', the land of unexplained phenomena which is a colony of the Institute. The narrator and main character of PNVS, Privalov, continues his key roles in SOT. In addition, several other characters of PNVS, such as the infamous Professor Vybegallo, Kivrin--the head of the Department of Linear Happiness, Eddie Arperian as well as others, again play major roles in the sequel. Another link between the two parts of this sequel are the motifs of taming nature and of creating happiness for man.

T'muskorpion' has been the center of strange phenomena in the making for many centuries ever since it was first captured by Prince Oleg the Prophetic (d. 945). Nobody

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Tьмускоприонь (T'muskorpion') is the Strugatskys' creation and a wordplay on the historical name Тнутаракань (a modern transcription) wherein the component *таракань [sounds like
knew why, but the fact was that anything which could not be rationally explained at any stage of scientific and technological progress was sent there to be preserved for better times «для сохранения до лучших времен». For a long time the colony has belonged to the Institute, but exactly twenty years back three sewage inspectors from the Institute accidentally were brought to the 76th floor by the malfunctioning elevator. They remained there and eventually seized power and established their authority there as the "Troika on the Rationalization and Utilization of Unexplained Phenomena." Under this title they have embarked on the policy which has turned out to be a tyrannical rule and a cruel persecution of the local population. There are many cases of unexplained phenomena in T'muskorpion: Fedja the Abominable Snowman, the old man Edelweiss and his heuristic machine, Konstantin the Alien, Gabby the Talking Bedbug, Kuzma the Pterodactyl, Liza the Plesiosaurus, and others. Konstantin the Alien is one of the cases considered

«таракан», i.e., "cockroach"] is "opposed" to the Strugatskys' *скорпионь [sounds like «скорпион», i.e., "scorpion"].

2А. и В. Стругацкие, Улитка на склоне, Сказка о тройке, Possev-Verlag, V. Gorachek K. G., 1972 Frankfurt/Main, p. 156.

for rationalization and utilization. The case covers one of the longest and most comic episodes in the tale and in itself is very representative of the activities of the Troika.

Amperian and Privalov, two young scientists from the Institute are sent on a humanitarian mission to the colony to rescue some items of unexplained phenomena, very valuable to the Institute. This mission is a dangerous one which may involve fighting the evil forces of the Troika. As befits a fairy tale hero, Privalov is a "wanderer charged with carrying a task." In a distortion of the traditional fairy tale model, however, Privalov is not alone but has a companion, his colleague Amperian. They go there equipped with a "re-moralizer" («репорализатор») which has the capability to suppress primitive, evil drives and induce the good, rational, and eternal qualities in man:

В лаборатории у него в девяти шкафах размещался опытный агрегат, принцип действия которого сводился к тому, что он подавлял в облучаемом примитивные рефлексы и извлекал на поверхность и направлял вовне разумное, доброе и вечное (160).

This device is a comic variation of the conventional fairy tale magical helper accompanying the hero on his voyage to the distant world. The idea of fighting the corruption of man and restoring human goodness by artificial,

technological means is related to the experiments of the scientists in PNVS whose main thrust is the search for human happiness. The "злободробытель" (evil-shredder) is first briefly mentioned in PNVS where it has been created in the Department of Linear Happiness of the Institute whose ultimate goal is man's happiness. The early mentioning of the device in PNVS foreshadows the plot development in SOT in which the evil-shredder expands into a major role of the tale but is referred to by another comic neologism «реморализатор» (re-moralizer). Thus the two terms comically echo and complement each other and unify the two tales. In terms of the plot, SOT is motivated by a "humanitarian mission". On their mission, Amperian and Privalov take along a "weapon". This weapon is invested, on the one hand, with a magic power as its name indicates. On the other hand, it is invested with a disarming humor.

The transformation of "evil-shredder" into "re-moralizer" also creates a poetic effect. Both of these concepts are nonsensical, but the reader is willing to suspend his disbelief and to accept them. And he does so not because these devices are not true, impossible empirically, but because the power of the Strugatskys' poetry makes them convincing. The evil-shredder and re-moralizer are ambiguous entities with double meaning, just as all the other technological devices or notions in
the Strugatskys' tales are. Due to the intersecting of fairy tale and science fiction discourses in Privalov's narration, the re-moralizer can be viewed as both a product of science and technology and a product of fairy tale magic, but ultimately a product of pure magic of the Strugatskys' poetry.

The dual nature of man, its good and evil side, its rational and wild one, is commonly considered as the source of man's problems and unhappiness. The scientists of the Institute place high hopes in the re-moralizer as one of the most sophisticated, technological devices used in suppressing evil and searching for happiness. So far, however, the tests have shown only a modest success with it in altogether rather trifling cases:

С помощью этого опытного реморализатора Эдику удалось излечить одного филателиста-тиффози, вернуть в лоно семья двух слетевших с нарезки хоккейных болельщиков и ввести в рамки застарелого клеветника. Теперь он лечил от хамства нашего большого друга Витьку Корнеева, но пока безуспешно (160).

Not everything is just, happy, decent, and good at the Institute, but the latest invention will have the opportunity to be tested in battling much greater evil in T'muskorpion', the colony of the Institute terrorized by the Troika.
In T'muskorpion', the two visitors (Privalov and Amperian) witness several hearings concerning "rationalization" presided over by the Troika who determine the nature of various strange phenomena appearing in the colony. Amperian and Privalov use the "re-moralizer" with various degrees of success which nevertheless influences the proceedings and the fate of the indicted. During the "trial" of Konstantin the Alien, the "re-moralizer" plays an important part in bringing into focus a a comic but also serious struggle between good and evil. This trial abounds in comic and grotesque effects which are created through a variety of techniques. Konstantin's episode in SOT consists of a series of scenes in which the authors use the Gogolian principle of comic alogism. In Slonimsky's analysis, this principle "consists of the comic destruction of logical and causal connections" in a variety of narrative and linguistic devices, such as: "absurd associations", "deductions", "disconnectedness", "quarrel", "mutual" "misunderstanding", "repetitions", "interruptions", "awkward speech", "word play and others."5 The Strugatskys use these devices and create their own comedy of nonsense.

Konstantin the alien, due to a mechanical failure of his spaceship, accidentally lands in T'muskorpion', the territory of unexplained phenomena ruled by the Troika. He appeals to these authorities for technical help and finally, after several months of waiting, is admitted for questioning. As a mysterious being of unknown origin, however, he is suspected to be an example of unexplained phenomena and goes through an arduous process of identification before the absurd prospect of rationalization.

The description of the Troika's entry to the earlier session creates an incongruity based on alogism. A Troika or triumvirate is a union of three persons. Thus when it is stated that the Troika in full complement appeared in the room, one expects to see three persons. This expectation is suddenly and comically thwarted by the absurd modification: "all four of them":

Он вдруг замолчал, прислушался и рысью кинулся на свое место. В приёмной пошли шаги, голоса, кашель, дверь распахнулась, двигая властной рукой, и в комнате появилась Тройка в полном составе—все четверо (167).

To mediate the incongruity, the reader may also recall that the Troika originally did have three members until the scientific advisor Vybegallo subsequently joined the group. Conceivably, the expression "all four of them" may signify that at all time the team of three needed one "spare" or
"extra" because one of them always must be an underdog, a stooge to be disgraced for the pleasure of Lavr, the head of the gang. The system is such that someone must be disgraced.

A violent incident involving the Troika members does indeed happen at the beginning of their session. The Troika member Farfurkis orders the window shades to be opened. Chairman Lavr Fedotović, however, has previously ordered them to be drawn. Consequently, Farfurkis is severely beaten and humiliated by his fellow triumvirs.

Возник крайне неприятный инцидент, и все время, пока инцидент распутывался, пока Фарфуркиса унижали, сгибал в баранный рог, вытирали об него ноги и выбивали ему бубну,... Потом Фарфуркиса, растоптанного, растерзанного, измочаленного и измочленного, пустили униженно догнать на его место, а сами, отдуваясь, опуская засученные рукава, вышибая клюяя шкуры из-под когтей, облизывая окровавленные кляки и время от времени непроизвольно взрыхляя, расселись за столом и объявили себя готовыми к утреннему заседанию" 203.

The event in question is twice described as an "incident". This "incident" depicts a particularly vicious fight between the #2 and #3 for the pecking order. The peripeties of the struggle, however, embody both literal and figurative meaning, and we are dealing here with a comic grotesque rather than a tragic grotesque. Moreover, the context also

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6 The following expressions can be figurative: «сгибал в баранный рог; выбивали ему бубну; измочаленного; вышибая клюяя шкуры из-под когтей; облизывая окровавленные кляки; взрыхляя.»
speaks against the literal interpretation. Far from dying or gone to seed, Farfurkis, the presumed victim, about eight pages later rebounds back to prosperity. Though the violence of this scene is essentially figurative, its unexpectedness and brutality form a shocking incongruity with the initial majestic image of the authorities and the solemnity of the situation. The horrible punishment, however, does seem to be justified to the scientific advisor Vybegallo who comments on the scene: «Вот злоравия достойные плоды!» (203). Farfurkis’s seemingly trifling act amounts, in the eyes of Vybegallo, to a serious crime of opposing the highest authority, and thus the clashing images are made less incompatible.

The struggle for power within the Troika, strictly speaking between Farfurkis and Xlebovvodov, continues throughout the session and its balance remains tenuous. Farfurkis finds an opportunity to climb back from the disgrace and his revenge assumes its own comic effect. He is transformed into a vulture and the power of his flight greatly frightens his chief rival. Apparently, Xlebovvodov expects a ferocious attack, but all that falls on him, figuratively, are Farfurkis’s droppings. Thus the lofty-dreadful turns base, but the disparity between the two opposites is comically resolved, as Farfurkis gets his revenge, humiliating his rival in his own way. Moreover,
scatological scenes have traditionally been a source of comic effect. There is yet another aspect which adds more comic ambiguity to this scene. To this day, among some peoples of the Soviet Union, there is a belief that if an eagle defecates on one's head--it is a sign that that person is granted mercy from heaven.\textsuperscript{7} Here figuratively and comically we have a vulture instead of an eagle and yet Xlebovvodov is "granted mercy from above".

Konstantin's episode has all the appearances of a trial, as the alien's identity, background, profession are being formally examined by the authorities. The case of Konstantin is introduced by Commandant Zubo who reads his name and other personal data from the file: «Константин Константинович Константинов двести тринадцатый до новой эры город Константинов планеты Константины звезды Антарес...» (203). The basis for the comic effect is the incongruity of two frames of reference. The first one conveys the actual full name and the place of origin, but it clashes with the second frame of reference produced by the repetition of the same nominal element, Константин. Repetition is a way of making nonsense, the antithesis of sense.\textsuperscript{8} It also creates

\textsuperscript{7}Vladimir Basilov, Moscow Institute of Ethnography, "Texts of Shamanistic Invocations from Central Asia", a lecture delivered at the Symposium on Culture and Shamanism in Central Asia and the Americas, at Denver Museum of Natural History, June 8-11, 1989.

\textsuperscript{8}Susan Stewart, Nonsense: Aspects of Intertextuality in Folklore and Literature (Baltimore: The John Hopkins UP,
a mechanical effect which according to Bergson's theory is a source of comic effect. What makes some sense out of the nonsensical repetition, that is, what lessens the incongruity and makes it only relative, and comically resolved, is the form of the name with its correct Russian morphology. Another comic effect is created precisely by the proposition of a Russian-sounding name in conflict with the expectation one has when meeting an alien from another planet. This incongruity is comically mediated by the fact that the name is indeed very strange in its repetitiveness. Repetition, however, also generates sense, poetic sense one might say. Thus the Strugatskys introduce a poetic principle into their prose. In Lotman's theory of poetic language repetition is the fundamental principle of poetry. He uses the word povtor (instead of the normal povtorenje—"repetition" to mean the repetition of an element.... For Lotman the povtor is a repetition, but never an exact repetition: even if an entire phrase is repeated in a poem."  

This kind of repetition may also generate a sense of closed world (can't run away) in which the visitor is presumed guilty and has to prove his innocence as a matter of principle. For the Troika even an innocent and statistically inconspicuous name will read and sound

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suspicious. They will act accordingly.

The comic absurdity of the name is quickly noticed by the member of the Troika, Xlebovvodov, who interrupts and comments on the Commandant's reading: «Ты что это нам читаете? Ты это нам роман читаете? Или водевиль? Ты братик, анкету нам зачитываете, а получается у тебя водевиль» (204). Xlebovvodov defines the incongruity in terms of genre differences, as a clash of the codes of an official document and a vaudeville. Xlebovvodov's intervention is the authors' device of irony: by equating the Troika's proceedings with a vaudeville at the start of the episode, Xlebovvodov unwittingly defines the Troika's scandalous trial, while the authors have an opportunity to indirectly determine that the type of comic mode used in the Konstantin episode is the elementary comic of the vaudeville or farce.

Next comes an unexpected interruption of the trial with Xlebovvodov's own chaotic and intense recollections. These ramblings are completely unrelated to the case of the alien and, as they immediately follow the consideration of his name, they produce a strikingly meaningless combination of images. The only sense in their unrelatedness, and the source of comic effect, is the fact that they are connected with a case, however not with Konstantin's but with the previously examined case of Edelweiss, the inventor of a
heuristic machine:

-Это, поню, в Сызрани,—продолжал Хлебовводов,—бросили меня заведующим курсов квалификации среднего персонала, так там тоже был один—улицу не хотел подметать...Только не в Сызрани, помнится, это было, а в Саратове... Ну да, точно, в Саратове! Сперва я там школу мастеров-крепчаков укреплял, а потом, значит, бросили меня на эти курсы... Да, в Саратове, в пятьдесят втором году, зимой. Морозы, поню, как в Сибири...Нет,—сказал с сожалением,—не в Саратове это было. В Сибири это и было, а вот в каком городе--вылетело из башки. Вчера еще помнил, эх думал, хорошо бы там, в этом городе..." (204)

Within this passage there are several comic incongruities generated by the feeble mind struggling with its foggy memory. Slonimsky's characterization of Gogol''s heroes would well apply to Xlebovvvodov:

The babblers in Gogol are comical because they lose the thread of logic, wander off the track, and get bogged down in a mass of parenthetical details that clutter up their talk. The result is a situation in which speech flows on by association and is not governed by logic and relevance.10

The examination of Konstantin's education causes another series of comic effects. First, Zubo has difficulty reading the term «синкретическое» and stutters: «высшее син... кри... кре... кретическое» (205). Stuttering is one of the most elementary comic effects of slap-stick comedy. Stuttering is a form of repetition which disrupts and transforms a normal speech sound arrangement into a mechanical one, and thus creates a comic effect.

10Slonimsky 352.
Xlebovvodov obviously does not understand the term and turns to Lavr Fedotovič for help who responds with: «Это хорошо,--веско произнес Лавр Федотович.--Мы любим самокритику» (205). In this context «самокритика» is a malapropism which creates another comic effect.

«Синкретическое» in Russian language has a relatively high frequency usage and may denote broad, universal education, but this word does not make sense to Lavr. He takes it for «Самокритическое»: the word in his range of comprehension which, however, is dubiously congruous with the concept of education. The two words have nothing in common, and Lavr makes them ludicrouusly synonymous only on the basis of their sound resemblance.

Konstantin's profession is entered as «читатель поэзии, амфибрахист». The concept of "reader of poetry" as a profession seems to be a nonsense, because it is incompatible with common expectations associated with professions. Like other incongruities about Konstantin, this one is to some extent resolved by the fact that one can expect anything in an alien civilization. The incongruity is also partially mediated by the more specific term--амфибрахист. This word, even if not understood, has the ring of the esoteric sophistication of modern world professions, and is even convincing if it comes from another planet.
More comic effects follow when Xlebovvodov, in confusion, tries to find out if it really is a profession and what it means. The dialogue which ensues between the Commandant and Xlebovvodov is based on mutual misunderstanding and turns into a quarrel. Both are traditional comic devices, well cultivated particularly in vaudeville. The misunderstanding causes the breaking of the logic in the dialogue and the disparity between the remark and the rejoinder. To cover his misunderstanding Xlebovvodov assumes an authoritarian posture and vents his frustration at his interlocutor. He throws abuses where argumentation is expected, thus incongruity arises between the exchanges:

-Это я без тебя понял,-- возразил Хлебовводов.  
-Я говорю: специальность у него какая?  
Комендант поднял папку к глазам.  
-Читатель... --Сказал он. --Стихи, видно, читает.  
Хлебовводов ударил по столу ладонью.  
-Я тебе не говорю, что я глухой,--сказал он. --Что он читает, это я слышал. Читает и пусть читает в свободное от работы время. Специальность, говорю! Работает где, кем? (206).

This dialogue sounds like a "conversation-of-the-deaf", as if each said his own line without hearing or listening to the other. Xlebovvodov realizes the lack of communication, but his sarcastic denial of being deaf only brings about another comic effect. His statement: "Я тебе не говорю, что я глухой" contains a comic incongruity because, being true to the fact that Xlebovvodov is neither deaf nor is saying
this, it, nevertheless, highlights and confirms the situation that he acts like a deaf person.

Unable to grasp the meaning of Konstantin's profession and lacking arguments, Xlebovvodov asserts his authority and continues the questioning; he expresses himself in a very chaotic syntax, full of nonsensical repetitions which form a comic disparity with normal speech patterns:

Что он читает, это я слышал. Читает и пусть читает...Амфибрахий—это я понимаю. Амфибрахий там...то, се...Я что хочу уяснить? Я хочу уяснить за что ему зарплату платят" (206) ... Ведь вот что я должен сказать! Амфибрахист—это вполне понятно. Амфибрахий там...то, се...И насчет поэзии все четко. Пушкин там, Михалков, Корнейчук...А вот читатель. Нет же в номенклатуре такой профессии! Я понятно, что нет. А то как это получится? Я, значит, стихи лочтывуя, а мне за это—блага, мне за это—отпуск... Вот что я должен уяснить (207).

In quoting these names, Xlebovvodov betrays his ignorance of Russian literature by lumping together incongruously Puškin, of whom any Russian would have heard, and Mixalkov, a mediocre writer, and Kornejčuk, a Ukrainian play writer, also a literary time-server, no company for Puškin. Xlebovvodov's inarticulate, awkward speech is further muddled by other linguistic abnormalities, such as grammatical errors, mispronunciations (misspellings) of words: «Ты что это нам читаете? Ты это нам роман читаете?», «Я хочу уяснить, за что ему зарплату платят» (204). After a long and frustrating debate about how reading can be a job, it is comically ironic that Xlebovvodov rudely and
unambiguously keeps ordering the Commandant to do his job, that is, to read: «Читайте, читайте,—сказал Хлебовводов....И не пререкайтесь. Твое дело читать, вот и читайте» (210). This is very comic because he just has been saying that no job of "reading" exists. But here he says "your job is reading." The disputation about "reading" is indeed a dialogue of the deaf. The issue is beyond Xlebovvodov's understanding. The interlocutors speak of two different kinds of reading. An enormous gap separates Konstantin, the cosmic guest, from the bureaucrat. For the former, reading means full-time cultural activity. The latter reads only bureaucratic information.

The Chairman of the Troika, apparently not satisfied with his colleague's feeble efforts at solving the riddle of Konstantin's profession, turns for help to Vybegallo, his scientific advisor. Vybegallo's speech offers yet a whole new range of comic effects: garrulousness, rambling evasions, and macaronisms. When Vybegallo proceeds to express his views in macaronic constructions, that is, in two languages simultaneously, his performance becomes a caricature of a scholar's macaronism.¹¹

In the macaronic, both languages are discrete and identifiable. They are allowed to coexist in the simultaneity of the form, creating a voice that is

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¹¹Macaronic constructions were common during the Renaissance—the time of the rise of vernacular languages and their coexistence with the Latin.
neither here nor there, that splits into a contradiction of what it knows.\textsuperscript{12}

For a person who does not know any foreign languages, an interruption of the native speech with a sudden flow of incomprehensible sounds creates a nonsensical language, and a comic effect, as if a parody of his own native language. For those knowing French (the authors provide a footnote translation), Vybegallo's generous use of French also creates a comic effect, but for different reasons. His intention is to sound learned and profound, but the French expressions, he uses to convey it, are either cliche sayings, proverbs, or empty phrases, "се яа иэн скер ле кер ке же ву ле ди" [Я говорю вам это, положа руку на сердце] (207). By transliterating the French phrases into Cyrillic alphabet, the authors intend to indicate that Vybegallo speaks French with a heavy Russian accent, to the degree, that it is difficult to understand him. This way, the incongruity between the French language and Vybegallo's bastardized French offers yet another source of comic effect. The distortions and the fact that the phrase has hardly any logical connection with the matter in question indicate a mental confusion and a comic departure from the chief argument. A similar technique, used by Gogol's garrulous characters, though in Russian only, Slonimsky

\textsuperscript{12}Stewart 166.
calls "verbal patches that have been stuck over a hole in logic, an urgent desire to convince when there are no proofs." 13

In the further consideration of the case, Vybegallo is asked to account for the discrepancy between Konstantin's photograph and his actual appearance. Vybegallo as usual resorts to the mystique of his French quotations. But this time, his expert opinion is not related in a direct speech but in a short, understated third person summary.

«Выбегалло разразился длиннейшей французской цитатой, смысл которой сводился к тому, что некий Артур любил поутру выйти на берег моря, предварительно выпив чашку шоколада» (213).

By saying this little, through such economy of literary means, the authors, paradoxically, emphasize and intensify the comic enormity of Vybegallo's intellectual pretensions and his hazy logic.

When Konstantin is finally let into the hearing room his natural, direct, and matter-of-fact request stands in sharp disparity with the formal, high-strung, and aggressive behavior of the Troika, and emphasizes how absurd and ridiculous the Troika's proceedings are. The dichotomy of these two worlds is made more comic by the irony of the situation in which Konstantin, being from another planet,

13 Slonimsky 363.
is expected to appear bizarre and incomprehensible, while in fact he is more natural and human than the Troika's earthlings. Moreover, Konstantin's geniality and reasonableness have no effect on their conduct. If anything, he makes them even more rattlebrained and offensive which deepens the comic alogism of the mutual misunderstanding: "Мы будем по инструкции, а он тут нам голову морочить, жулик четырехглазый...время будет у нас отнимать. Народное время!" (215).

Only under the influence of the re-moralizer, the apparatus which induces the rational, good, and eternal qualities in man, do Vybegallo and the other members of the Troika undergo a striking transformation and acquire a reasonable degree of moral integrity, intellectual capability, and articulateness. They reach and express their decision regarding Konstantin when they are under the influence of the re-moralizer. First Vybegallo makes a modest and cautious statement which strongly contrasts with his earlier incompetent and foreign ramblings. The incongruity turns comic with the realization of "an unexpected resemblance where there is unlikeness"—with the understanding that the different styles of the speeches belong to the same person.
The Chairman of the Troika, Lavr, gives a closing speech in which he elaborates and sums up the weighty decision against all contact with Konstantin's civilization. His speech presents a comprehensive analysis of the present conditions of the whole mankind and envisages the dangers which would follow as a consequence of contact with a more advanced civilization. It differs substantially from the usual parlance of the Troika. The statement is serious, rendering the thought explicit rather than hiding it as is their usual manner. In this piece of discourse, Lavr (or the authors) may be trying to compose a dignified speech by deliberately resorting to an archaic feature of style: "мы имеем заявить". "мы имеем уверить вас" (222). The dark comic effect is only due to the fact that Lavr's words are not quite his. They are put into his mouth by Amperian and Privalov, by means of the re-moralizer. This results in the creation of dramatic irony "in which characters use words that mean one thing to them but have foreboding, different meaning to those who understand the situation better" (in

"Darko Suvin, Canadian-American Slavic Studies, VIII, 3 (Fall 1974), p. 461: "As the episode of the Alien most clearly shows, this critique of a degenerated power situation is applicable to all of present-day mankind, psychologically unprepared for contact with an utopian future. In fact, I know of no more sympathetic insight into the true necessities that bring about elite power than the Troika chairman's speech (under the influence of an apparatus which induces the surfacing of innermost motives) at the Alien's trial."
By putting particular words into Lavr's mouth, when he is affected by the re-moralizer's rays, the authors may be indicating ideas and beliefs quite opposed to those the speaker is voicing. That the true intentions of the Troika are barbaric and sinister is clearly seen when the humanizing apparatus is turned off. As if woken from a ridiculous dream, the Troika is back to reality, back to its crude and abusive tactics. «Ну товарищи!.. Ну невозможно же работать, ну куда это мы заехали!..Точно!—сказал Хлебовводов и сел.—Надо кончать. Я тут в меньшинстве, но я что? Я пожалуйста! Не хотите его в милицию,—не надо» (225). Once again the seriousness alternates with the comic and the sympathetic with the ridiculous.

Konstantin's case is not closed. To his final verdict, Lavr attaches a clause which is bureaucracy at its worst. He postpones Konstantin's questioning until the end of the year to give him time to go back to his native planet and to return with his identification papers. This is an absurd decision because it ignores the fact that Konstantin is stranded on the Earth, and has asked the Troika only to help him to fly again. As Lavr has said, one of the reasons for such a decision is the authorities' resolve to combat

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bureaucratism, but he seems to be unaware of the comic contradiction of his decision. Konstantin's plight may be viewed in two different ways. Lavr is both stupid and cunning, and depending on his disposition, he may resort to two different solutions: (a) as a stupid provincial, Lavr may misjudge the dimensions of space and time, and, more or less in good faith assume that Konstantin would have enough time to go to his home country to pick up the appropriate documents, and return to T'muskorpion' on time; or (b) as a cunning ruthless chieftain, Lavr assigns a task impossible for Konstantin to achieve.

This is not the first time that Konstantin finds himself in a vicious circle. Earlier, Farfurkis turns down Konstantin's claim to telepathic powers as a proof of his cosmic origin, saying that the Troika accepts the existence of telepathy but does not believe in it. Farfurkis concludes his argument with a sentence: «Вы чувствуете замкнутый круг?» which foreshadows Konstantin's ultimate fate. The final decision of leaving Konstantin in suspension is only a relative incongruity; to some extent it is consistent with the Troika's general policy.

The Troika's endeavor is a wicked departure from the more noble work of the Institute. The differences between the Institute and the Troika are huge, but the similarities, another necessary condition of the comic effect, can be
discovered in the ironic little song sung by Korneev during his experiment with the fish in PNVS:

В целях природы обуздания,
В целях рассеять неученья
Тьму
Берем картину мироздания —— да!
И тупо смотрим, что к чему... (120)

The conquest of nature, as the road to man's happiness, is the supreme goal of the Institute. Thus the song can be read as a self mockery of the scientists' activities and their own limitations. It, however, also prefigures the Troika's brutal and inept attempts at taming and rationalizing the unexplained phenomena, while the word «Тьму» partially foreshadows «Тьмускорпионь». The last two lines of the quote offer a comic opposition between the immensity and beauty of the universe «картина мироздания» and the dullness and deficiency of human perception «тупо смотрим, что к чему...». Moreover, the last line is echoed in the Troika's highest scientific authority, Vybegallo's inquiry: «Объясни, мон шер, товарищам, что тут у тебя к чему.» Comic in itself, the song becomes an element in a larger structure of the Strugatskys' texts and thus becomes a source of more comic effects. The motif of transforming nature returns in a discussion of two already rationalized creatures: Fedja the Abominable Snowman and the Talking Bedbug. Fedja himself not a part of the human race, but a missing link between the apes and man, speaks with wistful
admiration about man's rational faculties and his ability to transform nature:

Я, конечно, слабый диалектик, но меня воспитали в представлении о том, что человеческий разум—это высшее творение природы. Мы в горах привыкли бояться человеческой мудрости и преклоняться перед ней, и теперь, когда я некоторым образом получил образование, я не устаю восхищаться той смелостью и тем хитроумием, с которым человек уже создал и продолжает создавать так называемую вторую природу. Человеческий разум—это... это...—Он помотал головой и замолк.

This over optimistic and naive statement of a pre-human creature begins to resound with irony and discharges a disturbing comic effect when it is juxtaposed with the activities of the humans such as the Troika particularly under such a promising slogan as rationalization.
The Strugatskys' texts abound in comic allusions to the works of Russian and world literature. Although fragmentary and frequently miniature in size, a modern parodic work can branch out to several other often very diverse literary works. It thus creates an extended network of parodic echoing, "an integrated structural modeling process of revising, replaying, inverting, and 'trans-contextualizing' previous works of art".\textsuperscript{16} The episode of Konstantin is particularly rich in such allusions which form its code of parody. "The fantastic worlds of Franz Kafka have become a paradigm for science fiction and can also be seen in Soviet fantastika."\textsuperscript{17} Many critics agree that the Strugatskys' writings of the middle and late 1960s have Kafkaesque features.\textsuperscript{18} The episode of Konstantin, discussed earlier, in fact, contains many allusions to both The Castle and The Trial (Kafka's works were published in the Soviet Union in the early sixties). I intend to demonstrate that the Kafkaesque, in the Strugatskys', is not only the atmosphere,

\textsuperscript{16}Hutcheon 11.
\textsuperscript{17}Stephan 365.
\textsuperscript{18}Darko Suvin 460. Suvin remarks that The Snail on the Slope is rather Kafkian. In the introduction the the English translation of The Tale of Troika, Theodore Sturgeon states that the cumulative effect of this work is Kafkaesque horror.
which is that of ambiguity, absurdity, and alienation, but also a parodic recasting of many elements of the plot and the characters of Kafka's novels: The Castle and The Trial.  

Kafka's two main novels: The Trial and The Castle share several common features. Both can be treated as an evolution of one dominant theme, and their main characters as complementary to each other. Camus says that "it would be indeed intelligent to consider as inevitable the progression leading from The Trial to The Castle. Joseph K. and the Land Surveyor K. are merely two poles that attract Kafka." The actual plot of the two novels can be reduced to very little. The arrest, the trial, and the execution of Joseph K. in The Trial and K.'s efforts to make contact with inaccessible authorities of The Castle. Both novels, however, are extremely complex, ambiguous, and symbolic.

The parodic recasting in SOT is marked by comic reversals and intensifications of many structural elements of the model, resulting in a deliberate abbreviation of Kafka's complex form. Both of Kafka's main protagonists, Land Surveyor K. and the chief clerk Joseph K., their

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respective plights, and their antagonists, are parodied respectively in the character of Konstantin, in his predicament, and in his adversaries.

The complexity and ambiguity of Kafka's novels have earned them multiple interpretations. In my view, the most comprehensive interpretation is offered by Eric Heller who sees two fundamental themes in Kafka's writing. One is the theme of superhuman judgment and Law with which man is confronted, as in The Trial. To understand the judgment one needs to understand the Law. Hence the second theme: man's efforts to make contact with the highest authorities, as in The Castle. Unlike many other critics, Heller does not see the Castle as divine power, but rather as the power of evil which overturned the divine law and grace and established its own domain. Thus Kafka presents life in the grip of evil power and man's fascination with its inscrutable ways, despite its corruption and injustice. As Heller points out, this situation is best summed up by Nietzsche: "Wretched man, your god lies in the dust, broken to fragments, and serpents dwell around him. And now you love even the serpents for his sake."21 In my interpretation I demonstrate that Konstantin's episode stands in a relation of parody to Kafka's novels, I will analyze the incongruities and the

unexpected resemblances, between the models and their parodies, as the mechanism of comic effect.

The characters, the situations in Kafka and in the Strugatskys are worlds apart, yet one is often struck by unexpected and surprising similarities. Other times, the striking analogies are suddenly broken and follow separate lines of development. Often such unforeseen shifts bring about a comic effect. Little is known about the life of Joseph K. and K. at the initial stage of Kafka's novels. The fact that their identities are not fully revealed is indicated by a sole initial K. for their last names. The nature of Joseph K.'s crime is never revealed, and sometimes suspicions arise that the Land-Surveyor K. is a con man with hidden intentions. The Strugatskys' hero Konstantin, being an alien from another planet, is even more of a "mysterious stranger" and naturally evokes in the Troika officials a suspicion as to his identity and intentions. Unlike in Kafka, the Strugatskys' hero has a full and long name, given together with the names of his native town and planet: Константин Константинович Константинов...город Константинов планеты Константны..." (203). The significant semantics of "Konstantin" is the fact that, "being the same all the time", the same unit keeps repeating itself. The irony is that despite its completeness, the name does not reveal much identity and remains a disguise in its uniformity, based on
the repetition of the root of his first name, thus not much
different from Kafka's masking brevity. The repetition of
the stem can be a kind of protective smokescreen securing
Konstantin's anonymity. Thus what brings Kafka's K.s and
Konstantin together is the intent to conceal their identity.
Having given Konstantin a full and long name, the authors
have established a degree of difference between Kafka's and
their own hero, but only to subvert it and to draw a
relative, comic congruity.

The puzzle of Kafka's K.s is deepened by the nature of
their professions. Joseph K. is a chief clerk in a bank,
but his profession is erroneously entered in the Court files
as house painter. K. in The Castle is supposedly a
land-surveyor hired by the Castle. Erwin R. Steinberg
analyzes the evidence in the text which indicate that K. is
pretending to be a land-surveyor as a way of gaining access
to the Castle by any means.22 K.'s claim and his expected
employment is a source of a lot of bureaucratic endless work
and confusion, further ridden with bitter ironies. K. may
be cheating to be admitted to the Castle, to achieve his
salvation which he has not earned, but the Castle is a false
heaven itself.

22Erwin R. Steinberg. "K. of The Castle: Ostensible
Land-Surveyor," Twentieth Century Interpretations of The
Castle, 25-31.
The question of Konstantin's profession parallels and comically diverges from that of K.'s. As I demonstrated earlier, by analogy with the confusion over his education, his profession was possibly entered erroneously in the questionnaire. Although officially he is a reader of poetry, an amphibrachist, his profession may actually have a different function, as the "witnesses" Privalov and Amperian try to explain to the confused officials. Prior to that clarification, the Troika official strongly suspects Konstantin to be an impostor. Konstantin may not be lying, but he also shares K.'s naive hopes about the high authorities' willingness or ability to grant his wishes. Similarly, Konstantin's request only results in setting a huge, ineffective, bureaucratic machinery in motion.

The authorities of both The Trial and The Castle are examples of enormous bureaucracy. The novels do not deal with a trial per se. The German title of the former novel is Der Prozess (process) and Kafka uses it interchangeably with "Verfahren" (proceedings) which, in turn, implies complication. The Court officials conduct several interrogations with Joseph K.. The German word for "interrogation" is "Verhör", while the verb "verhören" means: 1. to interrogate, 2. "to hear incorrectly", and indeed one of Kafka's main motifs is misunderstanding and miscommunication. Whatever message is sent, it becomes
ambiguous, incomprehensible, or erroneous, as if it has passed through the mist of distortion, misconception and misinterpretation. The absurdity of it is that the Castle authorities exclude a possibility of error:

That made me halt, for that error should happen in Sordini's department I dared neither maintain nor believe. Perhaps, my dear Land-Surveyor, you'll make the reproach against Sordini in our mind that in consideration of my assertion he should have been moved at least to make inquiries in the other departments about the affair. But that is just what would have been wrong; I don't want any blame to attach to this man, no, not even in your thoughts. It's a working principle of the head bureau that the very possibility of error must be ruled out of account. This ground principle is justified by the consummate organization of the whole authority, and it is necessary if the maximum speed in transacting business is to be attained...

There are only Control authorities. Frankly, it isn't their function to hunt out errors in the vulgar sense, for errors don't happen, and even when once in a while an error does happen, as in your case, who can say finally that it's an error? 23

The Troika may also be in the similar business of sending erroneous messages in order to make their rationalization activities unclear to the confounded population. Such a situation can make it easier for them to exercise their power in the colony. Konstantin's episode is a parody of Kafka's "trials" in both The Trial and The Castle with their general incompetence and monstrous confusion, but also a parody of particular elements of those trials. Konstantin

is not exactly on trial either. It is during a session of the Troika, T'muscorion''s authorities, that Konstantin's interrogation is conducted to determine his identity. The concept of "hearing incorrectly" has its parodic equivalent during the reading of Konstantin's personal file. His education and the name of his profession, as entered in the file, which give the Troika so much trouble to understand, could have been errors or distortions made in the Troika's bureaucratic process. When confronted with puzzling bureaucratic obstacles, Kafka's heroes react in a sensible, level-headed manner. Trying to resolve the unexpected conflict, they show a great deal of patience and common sense. Their ordinary reasonable ways, however, do not help them to find any common ground for an understanding with the authorities; they only emphasize the authorities' incomprehensible rules. It is not only a failure of communication but also a confrontation of two different worlds: the human and the "divine", or as Camus sees it, a perpetual dichotomy in Kafka's works. "On the one hand, there is the everyday or 'natural' world and on the other, there is the supernatural world of perplexities and anxiety." An ordinary man like Joseph K. has limits to his patience and tolerance. When he can no longer endure his

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24 Albert Camus 148-149.
absurd situation, he openly criticizes the Court for the ways it conducts its affairs; he exposes its abuses and corruption:

But considering the senselessness of the whole, how is it possible for the higher ranks to prevent gross corruption in their agents? Even the highest Judge in their organization cannot resist it. So the warders try to steal the clothes off the bodies of the people they arrest, the Inspectors break into strange houses, and innocent men, instead of being fairly examined, are humiliated in the presence of public assemblies" (58).

Konstantin's manner is related to that of Kafka's heroes. Despite the fact that he had to wait several months to be admitted to the hearing session, when he appears there, he is relaxed and easygoing. His friendly straightforwardness is a sudden relief from the exasperating display of the Troika's ponderous bureaucratic formalism. In further analogy with Kafka's heroes, Konstantin's calm and direct approach fails, as he encounters a wall of unpredictable complications and confusion. Frustrated and insulted, Konstantin also finally loses his temper and strikes back at the prosecutor Xlebovvodov and exposes his ignoble actions:

Почему же это я жулик?—осведомился Константин с возмущением.—Вы меня оскорбляете, гражданин Хлебовводов. И вообще я вижу, что вам совершенно безразлично, пришел я или не пришелец, вы только стараетесь подсидеть гражданина Фарфуркиса и выиграть в глазах гражданина Вунюкова... И опять врете,—хладнокровно сказал Константин.—Два раза вас выгнали без всякого повышения (215).
The arrest of Joseph K. appears to be a tragic misunderstanding in view of the lack of any apparent guilt. Despite his claims to the contrary, K. of *The Castle* comes to the village by accident without any prior intentions as a wandering stranger. He claims to be a land-surveyor and gropes toward the Castle which is often interpreted as "Heaven" and "Salvation". Correspondingly, Konstantin has no intention to land in T'muskorpion'. He is only forced to land there by accident due to the malfunctioning of his space-craft and is bound to appeal to the ruling authorities for technical help which is his salvation. Thus K.'s fate befalls Konstantin, as his appeal turns into a bitterly frustrating and unexpected investigation.

The story of Joseph K. is summed up in the parable about the Law and the door keeper told by the priest in Chapter IX of *The Trial*. A man from the country comes and begs for admittance to the Law. The door keeper says that he cannot admit him at the moment but possibly later. He also makes threat in case the man would try to get in without permission. Waiting all his life, the man dies without ever entering the Law. Joseph K. himself is sentenced to death and is executed in a gruesome and humiliating manner. K. of the unfinished novel *The Castle*, having experienced countless difficulties and frustration, seems to have less and less chance to enter the Castle.
Konstantin's episode stands in a relation of parody to the parable as well as to the fate of both K.s. As may be seen from this example, in SOT, the Strugatskys' parody develops predominantly at the thematic level. Konstantin's appeal for help may have been interpreted by the Troika as an attempt at contact on the part of alien civilization. The offer of contact is temporarily but categorically refused. The chairman of the Troika recommends that Konstantin wait and try again to establish a contact with Earth in 50 years (which is a lifetime). In the meantime, any attempt at contact will be met with a swift military retaliation. Nevertheless, Konstantin is still suspected of being an unexplained phenomenon, but since the Troika finds it impossible to properly identify him, the process of rationalization is postponed and his case remains open. The Chairman Lavr provides his final verdict with a clause which is a master stroke of Kafkaesque bureaucracy. Konstantin's case is postponed till the end of the year to give him time to go back to his native planet and to return with the proper documents, necessary for the completion of his identification as an unexplained phenomenon. Hearing this, Konstantin spits with contempt and vanishes. Konstantin's state of absurd suspension offers a partial, ironic transformation of Kafka's world of justice and order. It harmonizes with the unresolved situation of K. of The
Castle, who is never admitted to the Castle, but differs considerably from the tragic fate of Joseph K. of The Trial who, never being proven guilty, is executed nevertheless.

The overbearing and anomalous behavior of the Court in The Trial has its violent facet. Joseph K. witnesses a scene of vicious corporal punishment involving two of the employees of the Court, Franz and Willem, two agents who arrested K. They are severely flogged because K. complained about them when he criticized all the abominable practices of the Court. K.'s efforts to protect the victims do not succeed, and he is rebuffed by the executioner Whipper's grim words: "The punishment is as just as it is inevitable" (105).

The extreme physical abuse and humiliation directed at the members of one's own organization also takes place within the Troika and is a parody of Kafka's Court terrorist practices. When Farfur'kis, unaware of the Chairman's earlier order to pull the blinds, reverses the order he becomes a victim of a savage and bloody attack by the other members of the Troika. The violent scene meets with Vybegallo's cynical appreciation and approval. In a decorous scene Vybegallo edifies the junior member of the Troika about the wicked fruit of impiety: «Вот злоравия достоянья плоды!»Vybegallo hypocritically aphorizes Whipper's statement
that achieves a form of parody. The Whipper's and Vybegallo's comments acquire a comic effect when these seemingly discrepant statements on justice unexpectedly partially complement each other, largely due to similar contexts. The terrorist practices of the Court demonstrate that anybody can be found guilty and nobody can escape punishment. Vybegallo echoes this with a sadistic enjoyment of violence without worrying about justice or anybody's harm.

The despotic and arbitrary manner of the Court and the Castle are a proof that their power is absolute and corrupt. Their authority, however, evokes not only fear but also reverence. In The Trial, K.'s case never gets to the highest Court. The officials he deals with do not know their superiors, but they refer to them with utmost respect. There are several reports of the villagers which indicate that the Chief of the Castle, Klamm, is viewed by them as God. He is known to be seen simultaneously at different locations and contradictory accounts are given as to his size, height, and appearance:

Once the landlady had compared Klamm to an eagle, and that had seemed absurd in K.'s eyes, but it did not seem absurd now; he thought of Klamm's remoteness, of his impregnable dwelling, of his silence, broken perhaps only by cries such as K. never yet heard, of his downward-pressing gaze, which could never be proved or disproved, of his wheelings, which could never be disturbed by anything that K. did down below, which far above he followed at the behest of incomprehensible laws and which only for instants were visible—all
these things Klamm and the eagle had in common (151).

The soaring image of Klamm the eagle has its comical counterpart in the less glorious image of the Troika member, Farfurkis the vulture:

Хлебовводов, очутившись на дне зловонной пропасти, безумными глазами следил за полетом стервятника, совершающего круг за кругом в недоступной теперь ведомственной синеве. Фарфуркис же не торопился начинать. Он проделал еще пару кругов, обдавая Хлебовводова пометом, затем уселся на гребне, почистил перышки, охаршиваясь и кокетливо поглядывая на Лавра Фёдоровича, и наконец приступил (216).

A more faithful, though no less parodic image of Klamm as God, is recast in the figure of Lavr Fedotovich, the Chairman of the Troika who holds the highest power in the city of T'muskorpion', evokes much fear, and gets his share of reverence. Klamm's "downward-pressing gaze" transforms into Lavr's opera glasses, frequently used during the session, while Klamm's phenomenal silence and "his cries such as K. had never yet heard" are comically altered into Lavr's own aloofness and the effective "Грррм" sound whenever he needs to restore order during the proceedings. No matter how lowly the Troika may behave, it bears a formal resemblance to the Holy Trinity, hence Lavr is the Father. Even if he is not worshiped like a Deity, with the same intensity as Klamm is, he, nevertheless, makes his pretenses to divinity by identifying himself with the "immortal people."
The strange and puzzling world of bureaucracy is often shown through Kafka's use of dream technique in the narrative. On several occasions K.'s in both novels are depicted on the border-line of sleep and wake, either falling asleep or just waking up, and the perception of the reality seen through the eyes of the protagonists has often dream-like, or nightmare quality. When near the end of the novel another phantom-like opportunity for establishing contact with the Castle is being presented by Burgel, one of the Castle's secretaries, K. remains oblivious to it because he falls asleep from sheer exhaustion. The reality in Tale of the Troika often has elements of a grotesque nightmare, but Konstantin, in extreme reversal of Kafka's K., never sleeps and apparently does not know what sleep is:

Минут через десять мы объяснили ему, что такое 'спать', после чего он признался, что ему совсем не интересно и что он лучше не станет этим заниматься (202).

Despite Kafka's novels' mysterious, dream-like atmosphere, the author does not resort to fantastic devices and presents the events in the concrete language of the literary convention of realism. Parodying The Trial and The Castle, the Strugatskys freely introduce the element of the fantastic as part of their grotesque exaggeration and distortion of the parodied model: Konstantin is an alien with four eyes and four arms. The Troika member Farfurkis is figuratively turned into a vulture.
 Appropriately to their power and influence, Kafka's officials speak very eloquently and indulgently. The syntax of their direct speeches is complex, and windy. Also, the narrator's descriptions of the maze of the authorities' activities and motivations are properly elaborate and verbose. The effect is that the language is convoluted and confusing, but it effectively evokes and reinforces the elusive reality of the novel. The reality of Kafka's language is precisely the reality of the Court and the Castle—the remote, uncanny, and inaccessible, so different from the natural, and earthly reality. The high powers use their language on purpose to confuse, to awe, to exasperate, and to control the world below.

The language of the Troika too has a Kafkaesque quality. The speeches of Khlebovvodov and Vybegallo are confusing and muddled. This effect, however, stems from very different reasons. Their speeches are plainly inarticulate, feeble and incoherent exertions of empty and crude thoughts; they contain grammatical errors, mispronunciations, malapropisms. The syntax is primitive, choppy, and chaotic. Like Kafka's authorities, they want to intimidate and control their subjects, but their language is not a very sophisticated tool. Only when the humanizer is turned on does their language become smoother and more refined. In fact, Lavr's formal speech rejecting the idea
of contact is an impressive, impassioned oration not unlike the rapturous speeches of the Mayor or of Burgel in The Castle.

CODE OF SATIRE

In discussing Konstantin's episode, I have earlier focused on the code of comedy and the code of parody. The same text, however, possesses other elements which offer another dimension to the reading, the dimension of satire. The perception of this superimposed dimension depends on the reader's more specialized sign competence which enables him to recognize these elements and on his willingness to search for any possible deeper significance in the text. In his willingness to search, the reader is like the Rabelaisian dog that falls on a marrow bone:

Or have you ever seen a dog fall on a marrow bone? (The dog, I may add, is, as Plato says in Book II of the Republic, the most philosophical beast in the world.) If you have seen my dog, you may recall how intently he scrutinizes his bone, how solicitously he guards it, how fervently he clutches it, how diligently he sucks it....Modeling yourself upon the dog, you should be wise, to scent, to feel and to prize these fine, full-flavored volumes. You should be fleet in your pursuit of them, resolute in your attack. Then, by diligent reading and prolonged meditation, you should break the bone of my symbols to suck out the marrow of
my meaning--for I make use of allegory as freely as Pythagoras did."  

In the case of the Strugatskys' text, the marrow can be viewed as the aesthetic functions of parody but also the moral and spiritual concerns of the satire; in total--the multiple and total meaning of their text. In the code of satire the incongruity is between the non-literary, social and moral reality and its literary representation which is always critical, comic and often caricatural. While maintaining the fundamental comic mechanism of the comic effect, the Strugatskys are able to superimpose the code of satire by the subtle use of semantic elements which critically reflect social and moral reality.

One of the incongruities which provides particularly strong dynamics for the creation of comic effects in the Strugatskys' tale is the perception of incompatibility between the faith in the perfectibility of human society and the futility of this idea. Since the 18th century there have been two movements to achieve a better society: the evolutionary and the revolutionary. The evolutionary one

26 Morton Gurewitch in Comedy: The Irrational Vision interprets Rabelais's metaphors of the prologue, namely the Sileni little boxes and the dogs chewing the bone, as a way of reading Rabelais's comic, both "absolutely comic" (comedy) and "significantly comic" (satire).
27 Hutcheon 49.
assumed that scientific and technological development would be followed by man's moral progress towards a creation of a better and more humane society. The revolutionary movement set out on the path of violent destruction of the traditional social order and intended to build a new society based on rational, and scientific theories.\textsuperscript{28}

The paradoxes of the evolutionary path and revolutionary path of human improvement are creatively exploited in the satiric code of the Strugatskys' tale SOT. The Scientific-Research Institute of Magic and Sorcery is explicitly devoted to the search for happiness of man. This is to be achieved by the development of highly advanced, futuristic technology intended for the direct manipulation and reformation of man's body and mind. One of such futuristic, highly sophisticated technological devices is a re-moralizer «реморализатор». It has the capability to "suppress primitive, evil drives and induce the good, rational, and eternal qualities in man."

В лаборатории у него в девяти шкафах размещался опытный агрегат, принцип действия которого сводился к тому, что он подавлял в облучаемом примитивные рефлексы и извлекал на поверхность и направлял вовне разумное, доброе и вечное (160).

The device is being tested by the Troika which seized power

\textsuperscript{28} Czeslaw Milosz "History is a Prankster," \textit{California Monthly} February 1990: 9.
in T'muskorpion' under the name "The Troika on Rationalization and Utilization of the Unexplained Phenomena" («Тройка по Рационализации и Утилизации Необъясненных Явлений»). The Troika carries out a revolutionary transformation of the local society. Claiming that they are building a rational and purposeful society, they conduct trials of what they consider unexplained phenomena, and then they execute their "justice" which amounts to a despotic purge and suppression of the society's various irrational tendencies and anomalies.

Konstantin's "trial" is one of many such attempts to rationalize what appears to the authorities to be mysterious and unfathomable. This specific trial, as well as the whole tale is a "critique of a degenerate power situation (which) is applicable to all present-day mankind, psychologically unprepared for contact with an utopian future"20 There are, however, specific elements which reflect Soviet reality and which make unmistakable satirical allusions to the power situation, and the revolutionary transformation in the Soviet Union, particularly under Joseph Stalin.

The members of the Troika originally were inspectors of the sewerage system at the Institute. By their former colleagues they are referred to as «канализаторы» (sewerage

20Darko Suvin 461.
men). De Jonge says that "sewer cleaners" is a marked word with respect to the Russian Revolution. It conveys the idea of not being afraid to get one's hands dirty for the revolution. Feliks Dzeržinskij—the head of ČEKA, a classic example of an idealist fanatic—used to say that he was "cleaning out the latrines (sewers) of the revolution"³⁰ to mean that he was cleaning out the enemies of the revolution.³¹ The former sewer cleaners' accidental coming to power in SOT is an ironic fulfillment of Marxist proletarian revolution and a mockery of historical determinism.

Ruling a modern country, however, requires complex knowledge, appropriate sophistication, and experience. Obviously, the Troika is not the intellectual or moral elite. They are mediocre, generally primitive people, and totally unqualified for the job of running a country. When T'muskorpion' falls into their hands, they handle their authority in a crude, clumsy manner. Moreover, as they bungle and abuse everything, they maintain the airs and appearance of true and unquestioned authority. Historian Paul Johnson (86) describing the first despotic utopias quotes Joseph Conrad's words about revolution:

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³⁰ Alex de Jonge, a lecture at the University of Colorado at Boulder. This material will be published in his book on Lenin.
³¹ Majakovskij («Во весь голос») called himself «канализатор революции».
In real revolution, the best characters do not come to the front. A violent revolution falls into the hands of narrow-minded fanatics and of tyrannical hypocrites at first. Afterwards come the turn of all the pretentious intellectual failures of the time. Such are the chiefs and the leaders.  

The "fourth" member of the Troika is probably the most glaring example of an intellectual failure and opportunist, pretending knowledge and aspiring only to high social position and material rewards. As soon as an offer of a fantastically well paid position of a scientific consultant came from the Troika, Vybegallo dropped his experimental work at the Institute and climbed up the elevator shaft all the way to the 76th floor of T'muskorpion':

Многие видели, как он, взявши портфель в зубы, карабкался по внутренней стене шахты, выходя на этажах, кратных пяти, дабы укрепить свои силы в буфете. А через неделю сверху был спущен приказ о зачислении профессора Выбегалло А. А. научным консультантом при ТПРУЯ с обещанным окладом и надбавками за знание иностранных языков" (159).

The activities of the Strugatskys' Troika bear several resemblances with the most famous troika in Russian history, namely that of Stalin, Zinoviev, and Kamenev, formed by Stalin in the last year of Lenin's life. The formation of the Troika was one of Stalin's first tactical steps in his fight for the supreme power in the country. Stalin used the collective leadership of the triumvirate to disguise his

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self-interested and sinister intentions and to manipulate power relations within the Party.

The term "Troika" indicates that power is shared by its members. It is a form of collective leadership and a way of preventing an accumulation of power in the hands of a single leader. In the case of the Strugatskys' Troika, however, nothing is further from the truth. The triumvirate and its bureaucratic rituals are a facade behind which the Chairman of the Troika, Lavr Fedotovič enjoys absolute power, while the other members constantly fight with each other, and for his favors. During Konstantin's trial the principal "prosecutor" is the animated Xlebovvodov. He aggressively and inquisitively investigates the case; his own verdict is the most uncompromising, and at the end, he delivers a threat of a swift military retaliation if another attempt at interplanetary contact is undertaken before the agreed deadline. Lavr Fedotovič participates in the trial with a stony or wooden face, «каменнолицый», «черты лица товарища Вунюкова обнаружили тенденцию к раздеревенению» (205). He observes the proceeding like an entertainment, distantly through his opera glasses, but he actually is in command of the trial. He gives the speakers permission to take the floor, and when necessary, he brings order to the proceeding by a mere grunting. And his is always the last word. He resembles the portrait of Stalin given by Dmitrievsky:
Calm, immovable, Stalin sits there, with the stony face of an antediluvian lizard, in which only the eyes are alive. All thoughts, desires, plans converge upon him. He listens, reads, considers, thinking intently. Confidently, without any haste, he issues his orders."

Before Lavr delivers his speech, he first listens to the opinions of his associates. They all speak against establishing contact with the foreign civilization. Then in his own speech, Lavr only supports and elaborates the views of others, and he does it all with the air of finality and ultimate authority. This method too has a striking resemblance to the way Stalin conducted his sessions:

He always seemed to follow others, never to direct them. Silent during debates, he would eventually intervene to support the majority view, hence giving the impression of one whose will always prevailed in the end. Never did he preside at meeting; he would sit smoking his pipe or pace the room with his hands behind his back. Already, though, one could sense that he was the man in charge.

The most direct hint that Lavr is a satirical portrait of Stalin is in the image of Lavr's smoking Герцеговина-Флор, the favorite cigarettes of Stalin, as noted by Leonid Heller. The Chairman's first name Lavr could be read as a "code" word for "Lavrentij" (Beria), the NKVD-KGB chief, next best thing to Stalin himself.

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33 Дмитриевский, Stalin (Berlin, 1931) 335.
When he speaks the others «в неподвижном напряжении, не
мгая, глядели на Лавра Федотовича» (222), and when he
raises his voice, everyone in the room stands up. But this
reverence is mixed with the constant fear over losing their
influence, position or even life. They know the Chairman's
wrath and brutality. Therefore, they are on the alert:
they must not contradict the leader, and they constantly
seek opportunities to please him. «Один был на гребне и не
желал из-за какого-то паршивого пришельца с этого гребня
ссылаться. Другой, глубоко снизу, высел над пропастью, но
ему только что была брошена спасательная бечевка.» (212)
Farfurki's has just experienced a near fatal demise when he
unwittingly tried to reverse the order of the Chairman,
and was severely beaten by his colleagues. Quoted earlier,
this grotesquely savage violence committed on a member of
the Troika is a satire on Stalin's Great Terror, victims of
which, among many, were Stalin's triumvirs: Zinoviev and
Kamenev. The fact that the tale consists of several trials,
such as Konstantin's and that these trials take place some
20 years after the Troika's seizure of power is a satirical
allusion to the years 1937-38, the time of Stalin's show
trials and the height of the Great Terror 20 years after the
Bolsheviks' coming to power in 1917 in Russia.
Konstantin's trial creates an atmosphere of a world devoid of sense and filled with uncertainty and absurdity. This atmosphere is best conveyed on different levels of the text: the ridiculous data in Konstantin's questionnaire, by the "prosecutor" Xlebovvodov's illogical interruption, and by the final bureaucratic, absolutely irrational, and cruel verdict. There, however, is a logic in it from the point of view of Lavr. For him it is "legal"--legality without morality. This trial has in fact many features in common with the show trials staged by Stalin which themselves resembled theatrical performances:

The Moscow trials were in no sense judicial proceedings. Rather did they constitute what can now be seen--in the light of recent developments in the theater--as a stage performance of a peculiar type. Like any other effective dramatic or fictional production, they were designed to create an illusion sustaining the qualified suspension of disbelief in the minds of an audience which was simultaneously aware, with another part of its brain--no less than the audience at a performance of Hamlet--that the entire proceedings were the concoction of a powerfully inventive and creative intellect. Far in advance of their time, the three big Moscow trials strikingly anticipated the later Theater of the Absurd."

The Troika's trial obviously is not one of Stalin's trials, yet an unexpected resemblance between the two does occur. Stalin's trials did not take place on a theater stage, but, at times, they created an impression of a theatrical performance. Lavr observes the proceeding like a show,

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distantly, through his opera glasses, as if he watched a
teatrical performance, but he actually is in command of
what is going on on the stage: «Лавр Федотович взял бинокль
и направил на коненданта» (204). One of the scenes at the
end of 30Т ends with the curtain going down «Жуткий хохот
удаляющейся Троики. Занавес» (272). These transitions in
perception from one plane of thought to another "require a
change of mood" and create satiric effects.

Proper identification of Konstantin is a difficult task
because the data on him compiled earlier by Vybegailo
contains so much incomprehensible information. For instance
his education is listed as syncretical. Nobody seems to
know what it means. At last, the Chairman, pretending
understanding, identifies it with a word in his own range of
knowledge and for his own purpose: to him синкретическое
(syncretic) is самокритическое (self-critical). The
Troika's familiarity with, and the stress put on the term
"self-criticism" may be viewed as a humorous satire on
corruption of the term in the political and social life of
the Soviet Union. The term was one of the most fundamental
principles of the Marxist ideology and was supposed to play
the key role in the moral and spiritual development of the
socialist and communist society.37 This is also a satire on

37 Советский энциклопедический словарь, глав. редак. А.М.
Прохоров (Москва «Советская энциклопедия» 1987) 656.Критика
и самокритика. Метод раскрытия противоречий обществ.
Stalin who in the struggle with his adversaries "demonstrated great virtuosity in the semantic game...Every line was put through a strainer. Every word uttered by an opponent was reinterpreted, distorted, and falsified." 38

Self-criticism (самокритика) was part of periodical policy of admitting past mistakes. It was an important aspect of sudden shifts in policies, and of periods of renewal and reforms:

In one of the most tragicomic episodes in the history of Soviet culture, Gorky called for the prohibition of self-criticism. Stalin admonished him: 'We cannot do without self-criticism. 'We really cannot, Aleksei Maksimovich'. 39

Even more confusion is caused by Konstantin's profession which is listed as a reader of poetry specializing in amphibrachs. Vybegallo's conspicuously limited knowledge allows us to suggest that the term amphibrachist was entered by him in the files by error.

During the hearing of the previous case there was even an error regarding the name of the interrogated person which

развития, один из коренных принципов рев.-преобразоват. деятельности марксистско-ленинских партий, а в социалистич. об-ве--и всего народа; одно из движущих сил развития социалистич. об-ва; принцип нравств. воспитания, самовоспитания и духовного развития людей. Раскрывая противоречия, ошибки или недостатки, способствует их преодолению, наложению лучших форм и методов социалистич. и коммунистич. стр-ва.

38 Heller
39 Heller 274.
consequently caused a long argument:

Дело номер сорок второе. Фамилия: Машкин. Имя: Эдельвейс. Отчество: Захарович...
--С каких это пор он Машкиным звался?-- брезгливо спросил Хлебоводов.--Бабкин, а не Машкин! Бабкин Эдельвейс Петрович.... Эдуль-вейс или Э-доль-вейс?-- спросил Фарфуркис (168, 169).

The earlier trouble with the term "syncretical" indicates that the Troika easily confuses scholarly terms, and Konstantin's real profession may have as much to do with reading poetry as "self-critical" has with "syncretical".

The Troika members are at the ends of their wits to fathom the nature of Konstantin's profession. Finally, Privalov and Amperian from the Institute, present at the proceedings as "witnesses", explain the function and purpose of that profession. They tell exactly what the Troika can understand and wants to hear:

Ведь он не только читает: ему присылают все стихи, написанные амфибрахием. Он должен все их прочесть, понять, найти в них источник высокого наслаждения, полюбить их и, естественно, обнаружить какие-нибудь недостатки. Об этих всех своих чувствах и размышлениях он обязан регулярно писать авторам и выступать на творческих вечерах этих авторов, на читательских конференциях, и выступать так, чтобы авторы были довольны, чтобы они чувствовали свою необходимость... Это очень тяжелая профессия,-- заключил он. --Константин Константинович-- настоящий герой труда. Полезная профессия. И система мне нравится. Хорошая система, справедливая (209).

That explanation and Xlebovvodov's reaction are ambiguous and function as a device of irony. In one respect, the passage, in its literal meaning, is a description of the
work of a literary critic; in another respect, however, it
euphemistically suggests the work of a censor. Close
supervision and control of literary activity, or for that
matter, of any activity makes sense to Xlebovvodov, and
because of that he approves of the profession
whole-heartedly.

The elementary comic effect created in the scene
dealing with Konstantin's age, which is recorded as over
2000 years, achieves a greater comic effect when considered
on the satiric plane:

"Горец" is a "highlander" and refers to an inhabitant of the
Caucasus republics. Stalin was a Georgian and was sometimes
referred to as "Highlander", as in the interview with H.G.
Wells.\(^4\) Xlebovvodov's statement is ambiguous where two
meanings comically clash with each other. On the one hand,
it is a metaphorical praise of the famous Caucasian
longevity and a praise of the uniqueness and greatness of
these people in general. On the other hand, Xlebovvodov's

\(^*\)Hingley 225.
significant look indicates that, this statement is a eulogy to his boss, whom he considers immortal. The certainty of absolute power leads Lavr into a state of self deception, or cynicism. He sees himself as the true folk leader and frequently refers to himself as народ (the people). His identification with the people, however, carries an incongruity which is a source of a strong comic effect. In the above scene, the comic is further intensified by the confusion of the other members of the Troika over Lavr's lofty words. They sense two meanings in them, but they do not want to risk a wrong guess; they remain silent rather then offend the Chairman.

Lavr's synecdoche is modeled on Christ's words from the New Testament: "Небо и земля прейдут, но слова мои не прейдут" ["Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away"], (Matthew 24:35) and from the Old Testament: "Засыхает трава, увядает цвет, когда дунет на него дуновение господа: так и народ--трава. Трава засыхает, цвет увядает, а слово Бога нашего пребудет вечно" ["The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the Lord blows on them. Surely the people are grass. The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever"] (Isaiah 40:07 and 40:08). Lavr's speech is a distortion of the Biblical lines and creates more comic irony for someone who knows the Bible. According to the
Bible "the people are grass" and they do not live for ever. Lavr, however, proclaims a belief in the immortality of the people, and if we assume that he identifies himself with народ, his words express an empty pretense to divinity and the infallibility of his own power. The Chairman's megalomania and the attitude of subordinates toward him reveal a case of a personality cult.

Hingley points out that when Stalin spoke about the people, the proletariat, this term "increasingly tended, in the Secretary-General's mouth, to serve as a synonym for the first person singular pronoun."41 The end of 1929 "marked the real beginning not only of Stalin's unfettered personal rule but of Stalin's cult in all its nightmare maturity...a form of ruler-worship which went back to the Egyptian pharaohs."42 Dmitrievsky portrays Stalin as the embodiment of Russian national communism. Stalin's dictatorship was a national, people's dictatorship. "It was far more closely linked with the masses than any so-called democracy."43 In the words of Heller, Dmitrievsky saw Stalin as the predecessor of a future Russian Caesar, the builder of a future nationalist-led Russia. In fact, Stalin was a Caesar serving his own ends and building his own, purely Stalinist

41Hingley 183.
42Johnson 267.
43Dmitrievsky, Stalin 297.
state."" Ironically, Stalin was ignorant of life in the countryside. According to Xruščev, "Stalin separated himself from the people and never went anywhere...The last time he visited a village was in January 1928."45 This indifference towards the fate of the people is satirized in Lavr's attitude towards the people. Just as Stalin does, he avoids any contact with them. Entering the room of the session, he orders the opened window to be closed and the blinds to be drawn. He comments on this decision with an ambiguous ritualistic phrase: "На роду это не нужно" (203).

Besides Konstantin the Alien, there are several other cases of unexplained phenomena that the Troika prosecutes: Fedja the Abominable Snowman, the old man Edelweiss and his heuristic machine, Gabby the Talking Bedbug, Kuzma the Pterodactyl, Liza the Plesiosaurus, and others. This menagerie of strange and fantastic creatures stands for the variety, indefiniteness, and richness of life forms. These strange beings stand for everything irrational, free and imaginary; they may symbolize the world beyond senses--the supernatural and the magical. The Troika's efforts to explain and utilize mysterious phenomena mock cruel attempts to stifle man's freedom and fantasy.

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44Heller 249.
While conducting the trials of the mysterious creatures, the Troika never engages in defining the unexplained phenomena and never reveals what the criteria of such classification might be. This is not at all surprising because the Troika's activity is subordinated to their political goal which is the control and domination of the population. To ensure this requires the annihilation of the possible opponent. The Troika considers the mysterious creatures either useless, or harmful to its authority. To deal with this danger, it devises the policy of Rationalization and Utilization as its own reason of existence. To admit openly that they are fighting the strange and mysterious creatures because they are potentially dangerous to their hold of power would be vulgar in the Troika's age of expert and scientific knowledge. They are shrewd and cynical, and they prefer to sound scientific and, if possible, obscure. "Rationalization and Utilization" is a tantalizing slogan of Enlightenment. The terms immediately evoke understanding and support. How could anyone in the scientific and technological age of the Troika be against a pursuit of such reasonable or lofty goals? But the Troika's seductive slogan is both ridiculous and insidious.

To rationalize means to organize activity in the most purposeful and efficient way, or to put something to a
useful purpose. There is, however, a tremendous discrepancy between the slogan and the Troika's actual actions. In most cases the Troika tries to cripple, eradicate or suspend the existence of the mysterious creatures. What, however, appears irrational is in fact quite logical, inevitable and consistent with the policies whose only goal is self-interest and the preservation of power at all costs. If successful, the Troika's whole operation should amount to a transformation of life in that country, and should render the country manageable for the new rulers.

«Трояка по Рационализации и Утилизации Необъясняемых Явлений» is a satire on utopian phraseology, utopian ideologies, and on the disastrous practices of revolutionary reorganization of the Russian society under the Soviet regime. Analyzing the language of the Soviet civilization, Andrei Sinyavsky states that as the country entered the stage of rational and scientific social order of socialism, there was a desire to express oneself "scientifically", or in fact pseudoscientifically. Everyday speech became full of "beautiful" words, such as mechanization, industrialization, electrification, chemicalization. All these words imply some greater meaning and are tied to the scientific utopia at the base of Soviet civilization.⁴⁶

People endeavor--appropriately or not--to use these

"exalted" words, which they may not even understand or know how to pronounce properly. But this is the sacred language of the Soviet State, handed down from above—through the press and the leader's speeches—and toward which the masses are, or in principle should be, striving. Words replace knowledge: it's enough to know a specific set of words to feel on top of the situation.  

The moral corruption and intellectual limitations of the Troika are reflected in the deformations and other peculiarities of their language which was commented upon in the previous section of this chapter (code of comedy). The Troika's mangled language satirizes the manipulation of language by the power elite in a communist country:

It is an idiom naturally determined by their age, their work, and their ideology: a way of speaking which combines the language of communist propaganda with stilted, archaic expressions and old-fashioned slang. The fact that most of them lack any kind of formal education heightens the general effect. Their sentences are clumsy, their grasp of grammar tenuous; they misuse words, and see language not as a way of conveying their meaning but as an instrument for distorting and concealing the truth.  

The contradiction between the reasonable slogan and the gruesome activities of the Troika is the contradiction of a utopian vision translated into political action. A rational and permanently harmonious community is inconceivable. It would require the abolishing of everything that distinguishes one person from another. An ideal community

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47 Sinyavsky 195.

also implies satisfaction of all human needs. But total satisfaction is incompatible with the variety and infiniteness of human needs. Any attempt to implement the ideal would lead to the establishment of totalitarian coercion and violence.

The very title of the Troika contains marked words with respect to the Russian Revolution. Long before Lenin, the terms rationalization and utilization expressed the goals of Russian revolutionaries:

In the nineteenth century this utilitarianism burst forward in the intellectual and literary movement of the shestidesyatniki, or nihilists of the 1860s, headed by Nikolai Chernyshevsky and Dmitry Pisarev and epitomized by the fictional Bazarov, hero of Ivan Turgenev's Fathers and Sons (1862).

In Dostoevskij's Notes from the Underground, the hero polemicizes against the philosophy of rationalism and utilitarianism for the sake of man's freedom and happiness.

With successful launching of the Revolution, the utilitarian movement went far beyond the literary world and permeated every sphere of Russian life. Utilitarianism "reduced the utopia to real terms and made it possible to switch from high-flown rhetoric and ideas to the actual construction of the new world."

With the revolution, humanity had entered an era of the most brutal expediency. Man's every move was now

\footnote{Sinyavsky 47.}
\footnote{Sinyavsky 43.}
judged by the good or harm it did vis-à-vis communism's supreme goal.\textsuperscript{54}

In the early stages of the Soviet regime, the transformations of the Russian society were carried out in the name of abstractly understood rational principles of scientific doctrine of Marxism and Leninism. In the Stalinist period the "rational" reorganization continued for the sake of building a tyrannical empire still under the guise of the Communist ideology.

Describing the social experimentation taking place in the Soviet Union, Bernard Shaw calls it, in the non-ironic title of his book unpublished until 1964, \textit{The Rationalization of Russia}.\textsuperscript{52} He puts the situation in the Soviet Union into focus with a rhetorical question:

\begin{quote}
How is it then that the leaders of the Russian revolution have been able to do what I cannot do: that is, set up an effective inquisition to enforce to the death the dogma that forsytism--parasitism--is the sin against the Holy Ghost, and that though all other sins may be forgiven, to it there is only one reaction: Bang!?\textsuperscript{53}
\end{quote}

Stalin's policy of nationalization and collectivization was such an attempt to "rationalize" the country on a large scale by force and violence.

\textsuperscript{54}Sinyavsky 49.

\textsuperscript{52}Bernard Shaw, \textit{The Rationalization of Russia} (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1964). The Strugatskys' tale was published in 1968.

\textsuperscript{53}Bernard Shaw 94.
In the Strugatskys' tale, despite determination, the Troika's work is burdened by excessive bureaucracy and is carried out sluggishly and ineffectively. That too is a satire of the colossal blunders of the Soviet authorities. According to Kolakowski:

From the current perspective the Russian revolution must pass for a relatively restrained and inconsequential version of the cultural apocalypse.... Despite everything, the extermination and persecution were not sufficiently effective to break the continuity of culture completely. The radical idea of the complete destruction of inherited culture (Prolekult) was never the official policy of the authorities; it appeared that with even a slight loosening of political repression, Russia was able to produce new cultural energies, to demonstrate that it had not broken the ties with its past and had withstood the splendors of the New Time. 54

While attending trials of the unexplained phenomena, Privalov and Amperian use the re-moralizer on the Troika. The device plays an important role in bringing into focus a comic struggle between good and evil and it seems to be influencing the proceedings and the fate of the indicted. Earlier, Troika members have made a ridiculous show of bureaucratic incompetence, dreadful infighting, and inarticulate rumblings, but when the re-moralizer is turned on they undergo a striking, positive transformation. Suddenly they act and speak with reasonable degree of moral integrity and acquire impressive intellectual capabilities.

54 Kolakowski 223.
Unfortunately, however, the transformation is not a permanent one. Once the humanizing device is turned off, the Troika, as if woken from a ridiculous dream, is back to its grim and abusive tactics.

The idea of fighting the corruption of man and restoring human goodness by artificial, technological means such as the application of the re-moralizer is a ludicrous and fantastic idea. By ridiculing the direct intervention of technology into the metaphysical sphere of man's life, the Strugatskys satirize the belief in science and technology as the path to man's moral improvement.
CONCLUSION

The Strugatskys' tales *Monday Begins on Saturday* and *Tale of the Troika* are brilliantly comic and very complex works. The dynamic force of the Strugatskys' comic art lies in the paradoxes and incongruities which can be found on many levels of the tales' narrative structure. The most important source of these paradoxes is the synthesis of "realistic" discourse with fairy tale discourse—the former constructing the scientific activities of the research Institute and the latter conjuring up the world of magic and miracle. The result of the intermixing of the two discourses is a third discourse—comic science fiction. In this process, the fairy tale's dreaming, imagination, and magic find their extension and comic augmentation in science fiction's scientific thinking, its hypotheses and fantasy. Both the fairy tale and the science fiction are inspired by man's optimism and longing for the ideal, utopian state of society, and the happy condition of man in it. These features of both fairy tale and science fiction come into focus in the Scientific-Research Institute of Magic and Sorcery's explicitly stated and actively pursued goal of
man's happiness. The pursuit of this goal leads to other paradoxes or incongruities from which the Strugatskys' tales take their dynamics. In the narrative world of the tales, these incongruities are produced by the sense of discrepancy between the faith in the perfectibility of the human society and the realization of the bankruptcy of this idea. The Strugatskys clearly mock the idea of human progress whether it is to be done through science or fairy tale magic, but by identifying the utopian tendency of the scientific fantasy with the fairy tale dream, they render the theme of utopia not only comic but also more pervasive and universal and sympathetically ambivalent.

Max Lüthi suggests that literature in the twentieth century is not antipathetic toward what is fantastic, fabulous, and miraculous. "The miracle, though not accepted as real, has become an image and appears in many forms, even though it may be disguised in the form of the absurd or the incomprehensible."¹ The reverse can also be true, as in the Strugatskys' art, where "the absurd or incomprehensible" is disguised in the form of fairy tale miracle and fantasy. The Strugatskys' writing is an art not only of absurd opposites and incongruities, but also an art of echoes, correspondences and symmetries. As the narrator or other

¹Max Lüthi 157.
characters of the tales face what could appear to be an irreconcilable clash of opposites, a world devoid of reason, they do not fall into hopelessness and despair, they do not become victims of suffering or heroes of tragedy. Facing the incongruity, they actually see further and they make us see that the absurd names, aberrant institutions, grotesque images, or conflicting perspectives are laced with unexpected similarities or correspodences which begin to restore some coherence and harmony to what they see, and bring relative "sense into nonsense" and "method into madness". This kind of vision not only reveals the higher order of things and the hidden meaning of the universe but also releases the anxiety in a form of laughter which brings one closer to a state of happiness. This vision is related to the philosophy of phenomenology and existentialism particularly that of Heidegger. One of the principal points of that philosophy is bringing coherence, integrity and meaning to the chaos of the world, as a defense against the absurdity of existence.² The world of the Strugatskys has underpinnings of horror and tragedy, but their vision overcomes it and they transform the nonsense and chaos, which could be tormenting, into a more organized environment--intellectually rich, ambiguous, and

fascinating, and supported by fantasy and ironic laughter.

The interlocking comic codes—comedic, parodic and satiric—play with extreme incongruities and manage to contain the deepest paradoxes. In the process, they produce a text of very broad concerns: literary, moral, and philosophical. The kind of breadth and balance reflected in the Strugatskys' art is similar to that described by Baranczak in an article about an East European author: "[their] works and... actions reflect, on one hand, a strong sense of moral order and of need for justice, and on the other, a good-natured tolerance mixed with an absurd, zany sense of humor."³ The Strugatskys' fundamental objections to the abuses of science or power give rise to their satire, while their love of "choreographing paradoxes" gives rise to their comedy and parody. Echoing other literary works, the Strugatskys' tales gently mock or pay homage to them, and thus they permanently place themselves in the tradition of Russian and also world literature.

The joy of reading Monday Begins on Saturday and The Tale of the Troika springs from their most compelling qualities—wonder and humor. "Great literature of all ages

³Stanislaw Baranczak, "All the President's Plays," The New Republic July 23, 1990: 29. In this essay Baranczak analyzes the works of Vaclav Havel and makes some generalizations about East European writers which, in my opinion, also well apply to the Strugatsky Brothers.
has borrowed from fairy-tale motifs and often exhibited an imaginativeness not unlike that of the fairy tale."* For the Strugatskys, magic is synonymous with fairy tale and fairy tale is identical with poetry. They follow the principles of the fairy tales and then transform the fairy tale discourse to create their own poetic comic magic. Never ceasing to be playful and funny, the Strugatskys' tales offer an intellectual adventure which evokes mixed feelings of affection, skepticism, or horror, and they also steer the reader towards deeper contemplation of the wonders of life and art. But unless we hear the various tones and ranges of laughter, we cannot fully comprehend the Strugatskys' works—we cannot understand their links to reality or appreciate their aesthetic richness.

*Lüthi 21.
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