The End of the Fairy Tale: Hans Christian Andersen's "The Shadow"

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Abstract The article shows how Andersen's narrative technique discards both the syntagmatic and the paradigmatic approach to the fairy tale, in that the story reverses or inverts the fairy tale structure, thus becoming modern and comparable to the fiction of, for example, Nikolai Gogol, Franz Kafka and Bruno Schultz. Binary oppositions such as 'light' and 'shadow' are transcended, and like Alice in Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass* the learned young man's shadow approaches a type of knowledge different from the True, the Good and the Beautiful; but *The Shadow* (italized by Andersen) approaches this type of knowledge in reverse, claiming that he has seen "everything" whereas in fact he has seen "nothing". Since *The Shadow* nevertheless emerges victorious and marries the princess in the end, Andersen has reached the end of the fairy tale and is writing something else. Salman Rushdie's novel *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* contains explicit allusions to Andersen's story so that the two texts may be viewed as intertexts. Further, "The Shadow" may be compared to Bruno Schultz's "Under the Sign of the Hourglass"; Paul Auster's "Portrait of an Invisible Man"; and Haruki Murakami's story "TV People". *The Shadow* is a threefold metaphor of inversion: the inversion of the self, of knowledge and of language. Andersen discards mimetic poetry and engages in a pre-modernist critique of *logos*. This critique culminates in the insight that there is no source of the light emanating from the figure of *Poetry* in the story; the light is an immanent illumination and cannot be represented; representation is distortion and *The Shadow's* knowledge is a deviant form of investigation of that which is hidden and secret.
Key words reversal of the fairy tale; "The Shadow" in modern fiction; critique of logos

Classifying Hans Christian Andersen's "The Shadow" ("Skyggen", 1847) as a fairy tale presents almost insurmountable problems and will eventually lead to more questions than answers. A tentative solution to the problem of classification might be to suggest a paradigmatic rather than a syntagmatic analysis. In his introduction to the second edition of the English translation of Vladímir Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale* Alan Dundes says that there are two types of structural analysis in folklore; one type of analysis follows "the chronological order of the linear sequence of elements in the text as reported from an informant", resulting in a "linear sequential structural

analysis we might term "syntagmatic" structural analysis" (xi). Propp's work is an example of this approach. A different approach in structural analysis is the paradigmatic model, exemplified by the work of Claude Lévi-Strauss. Dundes describes this model as a "paradigmatic matrix" where "polar oppositions such as life/death, male/female are mediated" (xii). In the paradigmatic matrix elements are removed from the original order in which they were placed and relocated. Dundes notes that according to Lévi-Strauss the "linear sequential structure is but apparent or manifest content, whereas the paradigmatic or schematic structure is the more important latent content" (xii).

We may inquire further, posing the question whether either type of structural analysis will yield results as far as understanding Andersen's story is concerned. I have already hinted at an answer to this question by re-naming his fairy tale, i. e. by calling it a "story". My position is that Andersen exploits the fairy tale structure, syntagmatically and paradigmatically in order to reverse that structure; the reversal, or better still, *inversion* of the fairy tale structure results in a curiously anomalous anti-fairy tale reminiscent of the fiction of Nikolai Gogol, Franz Kafka and Bruno Schultz, authors whose works exemplify the eerie shadowy existence of the modern subject. It would be tempting, of course, to analyze Andersen's tale following the paradigmatic model; but then one would run into the problem of what to do with the typical structuralist binary opposition. As I see it, Andersen critiques this opposition after having put it into play, since the basic insight gained by the reader after perusing the tale is that the problem of the "learned gentleman", who is the protagonist of the story, not only thinks but *feels* in terms of oppositions; indeed, opposition and contradiction characterize his very being. These oppositions may be described, initially, as thematically constructed contradictions between the inside and the outside; self and other; ego and shadow; knowledge and ignorance; light and darkness.

Andersen's story starts out by adhering to the syntagmatic linear structure described by Propp and goes on to outline the paradigmatic pattern. After having followed these procedures or traditional prescriptions as we may call them, Andersen proceeds to reverse everything. The basic linear structure offered by Propp consists of the following elements, the functions of dramatis personae, briefly summarized and highlighted: absence from home of a senior family member; an interdiction, for example against going out; the interdiction is violated at which point the villain enters; the villain receives information and attempts to deceive his victim; a lack is made known and the hero is dispatched; the hero is tested and receives a helper or magical agent; the hero is led to an object of search; the hero and the villain engage in direct combat; the intial lack is liquidated; the hero is pursued; a false hero presents unfounded claims; the hero is recognized and the villain exposed; the hero is given a new appearance and is married.

The opening situation in "The Shadow" constitutes what Propp calls an "unclear" element. From the very beginning of his tale Andersen evokes a strange setting, "the hot countries" where the sun can really burn and where the learned gentleman, recently arrived from the cold countries, thinks he can run around outside but finds himself confined to his room like everyone else because of the glaring sun. This

"unclear" element, present from the very beginning, might become clearer if subjected to a paradigmatic analysis whose aim would be to indicate the presence of a binary opposition. However, such a procedure only results in more "unclear" elements. The typical binary opposition valorizes one side of the spectrum, dividing it into a negative and a positive pole. Sun and light should belong to the positive pole, and it is indeed in search of light that the learned gentleman, a young man, has ventured south into one of the hot countries; but the glaring sun seems to be on the negative side, confining him to his room and making him defer any going out till late evening. Further, the young man has a shadow who suffers as much from exposure to the sun as he does; both of them grow thin and come alive only at night when *artificial light* is brought into the room, at which point the shadow stretches "all the way up the wall, yes, even along the ceiling, it grew that long, it had to stretch in order to recover" (Andersen 379). At this point at least there is no opposition between the young master and his shadow; they seem almost identical as they react to the climate and the external and internal environment in a similar fashion. Being in the shade and using only artificial light seems beneficial here; as a consequence an attempt to delineate a clear schematic opposition divided into positive and negative values is doomed from the outset. Everything seems to be mixed in a way that defies any normative judgment. Neither the syntagmatic nor the paradigmatic model will suffice to penetrate Andersen's story. That much is clear from the beginning.

The glaring sun prohibits people from going out during the day; hence everyone, including the learned gentleman and his shadow, come alive at night. The inversion of day and night creates what Propp calls an "interdiction", but this interdiction appears in an inverted form which, according to Propp, "is represented by an order or a suggestion" (Propp 27). The order, or suggestion issued by the young man himself is that his shadow ventures out, albeit at night, in order to penetrate the house opposite from where music is heard and where beautiful flowers grow on the balcony in defiance of the glaring sun. The young man's landlord describes the music as dull and repetitive, as if someone was practising the same piece over and over again, being unable to relinquish or finish it. One night the young man notices a strange bright light enveloping the neighbor's balcony; the flowers are glowing, and he sees a slim, lovely woman standing among the flowers; she is also glowing and the light radiating from her figure is so strong that it makes his eyes ache; the pain is acute, also because he has just woken up, or is in the process of waking up. One night as the young man is sitting on the balcony he notices that his shadow reaches all the way across the street and is visible on the balcony opposite, and he suggests, in a jesting tone, that the shadow venture into the beautiful maiden's apartment with the intention of finding out what exactly is in there. The narrator continues:

> ... the stranger got up and his shadow on the neighbor's balcony got up too; and the stranger turned around and the shadow also turned around; indeed, if one was paying close attention one would plainly notice that the shadow entered the neighbor's apartment through the half-open balcony door, precisely when the stranger entered his own apartment, letting the long curtain drop down behind

> him. (Anderson 381)

Lewis Carroll, the master of inversion, lets Alice address the following remark to her cat in *Through the Looking Glass* (1872):

> Now, if you'll only attend, Kitty, and not talk so much, I'll tell you all my ideas about the Looking-glass house. First, there's the room you can see through the glass – that's just the same as our drawing-room, only the things go the other way. I can see all of it when I get upon a chair — all but the bit behind the fireplace. Oh! I do so wish I could see that bit! I want so much to know whether they've a fire in the winter: you never can tell, you know, unless our fire smokes, and then smoke comes up in that room too — but that may be only pretense, just to make it look as if they had a fire. Well then, the books are something like our books, only the words go the wrong way; I know that, because I've held up one of our books to the glass, and then they hold up one in the other room. (Carroll 19 – 20)

The passages cited from Andersen and Carroll are curiously similar, and things will indeed get "curiouser and curiouser", to quote another phrase from Carroll, as Andersen's story continues. The young man, who is a "stranger" in the hot country he is visiting, and Alice who is an imaginative young girl, are both attracted to light, and they approach it in an inverted fashion, exchanging right and left, forwards and backwards so that "the things go the other way". And, just as in Alice's looking-glass room, Andersen's words "go the wrong way", counteracting and contradicting all epistemological rules. The laws of perception and, indeed, the very mode of being are "curious" from the outset in "The Shadow". The "hero" is young, although not as young as Alice, and apparently has no parents or other family at "home", wherever that is. The young man, though learned and capable of writing books on the True, the Good and the Beautiful, is in search of knowledge of a different kind, perhaps unknown to himself; like Alice who enters a dream-world by going through the looking-glass, and becomes an other, the learned man is a double whose other, the shadow, is immanently present in his mind; the dual presence of self and other produces an inverted representation of knowledge, or rather, produces knowledge as representation. As Alice notes, the smoke in the other room "may be only pretense" to make it look as if there is a fire. Indeed, the young man needs his double and is seriously disturbed when his shadow disappears, having not come back after the visit to the neighbor. However, after some time a new shadow grows out, starting from his legs, and he returns to his home country where he continues representing knowledge in the form of printed books on "Truth". Of course, the words "go the wrong way", and the evidence of this is two-fold: The learned gentleman is for some reason or other dependent upon the presence of a shadow in order to function; and the "original" shadow returns after many years have gone by, inquiring whether he "owes" the gentleman anything in compensation for his loss — that loss being the several year long absence of his "double" or "other". The original shadow has become a "real" hu-

man being, or appears to be so, and has accumulated a fortune as well as fame. *The shadow*, written in italics from now on in Andersen's text, claims to have seen Poetry personified in the house the learned man sent him to investigate; he also claims he has seen everything and that he knows everything. Yet he cannot specify what exactly he saw in the residence of Poetry; asked by the learned man what he saw there, he replies "everything" and informs his former master that he was standing in the antechamber which was semi-dark; he could not venture into the other rooms of which there was a whole suite, because the light was too bright, and proceeding further would have killed him. The learned man repeats his question, inquiring whether *the shadow* saw a holy church, a fresh forest, ancient gods and playing children, and *the shadow* repeats his answer, claiming he saw "everything" and that he knows "everything".

Following Propp's structuralist analysis to the next stage we might say that the "villain", here *the shadow* as the hero's *other*, receives information and deceives his victim, who is also the hero in this case, of course, since Andersen's story condenses several figures into one: hero, villain and victim are really one and the same figure, aspects of the same self. We may even add the "helper" or "magical agent" to the list, all of them one character trying to replenish a lack, or absence, by searching for an "object". Again, in this case the "object of desire", as we may call it, is not a simple treasure as in a normal fairy tale; rather, it is knowledge and poetry, inversely represented, or inverted because represented. Knowledge must be repeated in one form or another; indeed, the tendency to represent knowledge through repetition is anticipated, or rather stated à priori, in the musical piece that is repeated over and over again. What cannot be seen may be heard, perhaps, but only as repetition and therefore by definition deviant and lacking like the words that "go the wrong way". The learned gentleman's proclivity towards representing truth and poetry in some palpable form is echoed and repeated in *the shadow's* career as investigator of mankind's innermost secrets; his knowledge is the knowledge of evil and of the most "unthinkable", meaning sensational. *The shadow* says:

> If I had written a newspaper it would have been read! But I wrote directly to the person himself, and there was a state of terror in all the towns I visited. They were so afraid of me! And they loved me so! The professors made me a professor, the tailors gave me new clothes, I am well provided for; the coin-master made coins for me, and the women said I was so goodlooking! — and then I became the man I am! (Anderson 385)

In his own words, *the shadow* has been supplied with all the "varnish", the exterior attributes that make him into a real human being.

Several years go by again and *the shadow* returns with a proposition. He proposes that the learned gentleman, who is in a state of despair because no one is interested in his ideas about the True, the Good and the Beautiful, accompany him on a trip to a health resort as his shadow. The learned man accepts; he becomes the shadow and his former shadow becomes the *master* and even requires his former master to ad-

dress him as "sir". *The shadow*, still indicated in the text in italics, meets a king's daughter who suffers from an illness: she sees "all too well". The young princess has noticed that *the shadow* has no shadow; but he explains to her that indeed he has one; only it is not an ordinary shadow, rather an extraordinary shadow dressed up as a real person. The princess is thus deceived into thinking that she has been cured of her "illness"; her eyesight is "normal": she does not see "all too well" any more. The princess is impressed with *the shadow*'s extensive knowledge about people and the world and proceeds to test him by asking the most difficult questions she can think of. *the shadow* asks her to approach his "shadow", and she is immediately supplied with answers to the most complicated questions about the sun and the moon and about people. She decides to bring *the shadow* home to her kingdom and marry him, for he must be the wisest man on earth since his "shadow" knows so much.

the shadow now presents the learned gentleman with an ultimate request: his former master is to remain at the castle, acting as shadow for the rest of his life. The learned gentleman protests, arguing that he refuses to deceive the whole country and the king's daughter as well, and threatening to tell her everything. However, *the shadow* dispatches the guards who throw the learned gentleman in prison. *the shadow* explains that his "shadow" has gone mad: he suffers from the delusion that he is a real human being and that *the shadow* is his shadow. The princess decides that it would be better to dispose of the poor insane "shadow", thus freeing him from his suffering. Thus the learned man dies and *the shadow* rules.

Propp's function "the hero and the villain engage in combat" is of course reversed or negated in Andersen's story since there is no real combat and since *the shadow* emerges victorious. The "hero", i. e. the learned man, is not recognized, and the "villain", i. e. *the shadow*, is not exposed. Rather, *the shadow* is "given a new appearance", as Propp's function reads, and marries the princess. The "liquidation" of the "initial lack" never occurs since the "object of search" is never found, that object being knowledge and Poetry personified. The ending of Andersen's "*the shadow*" signifies the end of the fairy tale genre for Andersen, both as form and substance. The story anticipates modernism and even turns into a modernist tale by engaging in a series of complex inversions and negations, comparable to Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass*, as I have noted above; the story may also be traced in much later fiction, for example Salman Rushdie's *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* (1990) where the protagonist, the young boy Haroun (named after Haroun al-Rashid, the legendary Caliph of Baghdad) has ventured into the dark region called the Land of Chup where he encounters a character called Mudra and his Shadow. *the shadow* explains the following to the boy:

> ... in the Land of Chup, a Shadow very often has a stronger personality than than the Person, or Self, or Substance to whom or to which it is joined! So often *the shadow* leads, and it is the Person or Self or Substance that follows. And of course there can be quarrels between *the shadow* and the Substance or Self or Person; they can pull in opposite directions — how often have I witnessed that! — but just as often there is a true partnership, and mutual respect. (Rushdie

132)

Mudra *the shadow* Warrior explains the following about the ruler of the Land of Chup, Khattam-Shud:

> He has plunged so deeply into the Dark Art of sorcery that he has become Shadowy himself — changeable, dark, more like a Shadow than a Person. And as he has become more Shadowy, so his Shadow has become more like a Person. And the point has come at which it is no longer possible to tell which is Khattam-Shud's Shadow and which his substantial Self — because he has done what no other Chupwala has ever dreamt of — that is, he has separated himself from his Shadow! He goes about in the darkness, entirely Shadowless, and his Shadow goes wherever it wishes. *The Cultmaster Khattam-Shud can be in two places at once*! (Rushdie 133).

The passages cited from Rushdie's novel may serve as an example of intertextuality; they are also an indication of how far into modern literature Andersen's story has reached. If one wishes, one may pursue parrallel motifs in fiction by Bruno Schultz, Paul Auster and Haruki Murakami, to name just a few authors. In Bruno Schultz's story "Sanatorium Under the Sign of the Hourglass" (1937) the protagonist's father leads a dual existence; firstly, a shadowy existence as a patient in a sanatorium where he is being treated after having died at home and where time is suspended, or rather translocated into the past so that the father's death has in fact not occurred yet; secondly, the father leads the life of an active, dynamic businessman in the town where the sanatorium is located, a town that appears to be an exact, ghostly replica of the protagonist's home town. The protagonist describes his father's face as "a remote, trancelike face, which, having left its earthly aspect, was confessing its existence somewhere on a distant shore by solemnly telling its minutes" (Schultz 243).

In Paul Auster's autobiographical "Portrait of an Invisible Man" (1982) the author's father is described as a "block of impenetrable space in the form of a man" (Auster 7), living in his house like a ghost, being invisible to others and to himself. In Haruki Murakami's story "TV People" (1993) the protagonist's apartment is invaded by ghostlike television installers who set up a TV that has no picture, only a grey, flickering screen. The TV installers are not real people, in fact - they have entered the apartment through the TV screen and are described as being the size of persons on TV, i. e. a grade smaller and one-dimensional. The protagonist finally turns into one of them himself:

> I look at the palms of my hands. They have shrunk slightly. Ever so slightly. Power of suggestion? Maybe the light's playing tricks on me. Maybe my sense of perspective has been thrown off. Yet, my palms really do look shrivelled. Hey now, wait just a minute! Let me speak. There's something I should say. I must say. I'll dry up and turn to stone if I don't. Like the others. (Murakami 216)

The contemporary "shadow" may be different from Andersen's *shadow*. However, the difference is a difference and a resemblance at one and the same time. The relationship between Andersen's *shadow* and our shadow — as we find it in the fiction of, for example, Bruno Schultz, Paul Auster and Haruki Murakami, cited above — can be illuminated by referring to Tzvetan Todorov's model of narrative transformation. Writing specifically about plot structure, Peter Brooks comments on Todorov's model of transformation, stating that plot "is constituted in the tension of two formal categories, difference and resemblance". Brook says, further, that transformation "represents a synthesis of difference and resemblance; it is, we might say, the same-but-different. Now, "the same-but-different" is a common (and if inadequate, not altogether false) definition of metaphor" (Brooks 91).

the shadow — ours and Andersen's — is a three-fold metaphor of inversion: the inversion of the self; of knowledge; and of language (here, i. e. in Andersen's story, the figure of Poetry). The metaphor contains a tension between the same and the different, inversion being by definition a positing of difference within sameness. This tension exists within Andersen's story as an immanent split in the subject; here the learned young man who strives to be the same, i. e. self-identical and autonomous by conceptualizing the True, the Good and the Beautiful but fails because his shadow is extended beyond himself, creating a fearful "difference" from its master. The same-but-different model, when applied to a case of intertextuality as I am doing here, reaches beyond Andersen's text into contemporary modernism so that "our" shadow becomes an extension of Andersen's fearful (in the sense of frightening, terrifying) *shadow*; "our" shadow, brilliantly portrayed by Schultz, Auster and Murakami, is anticipated by Andersen's powerful metaphor. The metaphor operates in Andersen's story on a fairly traditional level of representation, since the story is masked as a "fairy tale", so that the tension Todorov and Brooks speak of is acute and striking; it is carried out as an epical drama typical of the fairy tale. "Our" shadow seems to be toned down by comparison; Schultz's, Auster's and Murakami's shadows are, perhaps, emblematic of a contemporary tedious existence without substance or purpose, and these shadows may represent the lifeless existence of protagonists — two of them fathers — characterized as persons without an identity and subject to infinite metamorphoses that simply serve to perpetuate the state of emptiness within and without. By comparison, Andersen's *shadow* seems to be a person risen to power, raised up to a status of social affirmation and, not least, self-affirmation.

So "our" shadow is different from Andersen's; yet they are the same. The falsification of knowledge and language (*Poetry*) perpetrated by *the shadow* is the precondition for the modern or modernist loss of self. That loss begins with the learned man waking up as his mind is aroused and perplexed by a virtual revelation, a strong light emanating from the house opposite:

> One night the stranger woke up, he was sleeping with the balcony door open, the curtain in front of it was lifted up by the wind, and it seemed to him that a strange radiance was coming from his neighbor's balcony, all the flowers were shining like flames with the most lovely colors, and amidst the flowers a slender

> young maiden was standing, it was as if she was also radiant; it really hurt his eyes, but he had opened them so terrifically wide, of course, having just woken up; in one jump he was on the floor, quietly standing behind the curtain, but the maiden was gone, the radiance was gone; the flowers were not shining at all, but were there the same as always; the door was ajar, and deep inside the music was playing so soft and beautiful, a person could really fall into a sweet state of mind by listening. It was just like magic and who lived there? (Anderson 380)

Poised between sleeping and waking, almost in a dream-state, the young man has a revelation. He is not content to leave it at that; he has to know, perforce, who lives there, and hence follows the inversion of the self and the inversion of knowledge manifested as *the shadow*. The figure of *Poetry*, purportedly "seen" yet of course not seen by the young man's emissary, *the shadow*, is poetry as representation, mimetic poetry. Paul de Man says in *Blindness and Insight* that William Butler Yeats pointed to a significant contrast between mimetic poetry, the emblem of which is the mirror, and non-mimetic, modern poetry (Yeats's own, for example), the emblem of which is the lamp, according to M. H. Abrams's *The Mirror and the Lamp*. Paul de Man comments:

> In Abrams's book the lamp becomes the symbol of the constitutive, autonomous self, the creative subjectivity that certainly looms large in romantic theory, as an analogous microcosm of the world of nature. The light of that lamp is the self-knowledge of a consciousness, an internalized metaphor of daylight vision; mirror and lamp are both symbols of light, whatever their further differences may be. But Yeats's lamp is not that of the self, but of what he calls the "soul", and self and soul, as we know from his poetry, are antithetical. (Man 170 – 171)

The soul, according to Yeats, is a higher state of consciousness and autonomy than the self; one has to move beyond the self, and one way in which to do so is by creating a modern non-mimetic poetry, or at least a poetry whose diction indicates the contradiction and the tension between the mimetic and the non-mimetic mode. The soul, as a higher state of mind, is inward and does not seek representation in the external world; the knowledge of the soul lies hidden away in books, as indeed it does for the learned young man. Then why does the young "stranger" seek out representation, mimesis? Why does he want to know who lives across the street?

The reason is that for Andersen the inward kind of knowledge hidden away in books was also a deviation and a mimetic representation. The author does not state this explicitly for he did not write a theoretical treatise on poetry as did Yeats (much later). But "*the shadow*" implies a radical, pre-modernist (and certainly post-romantic) critique of knowledge, self and poetry. Andersen is confronted with a dilemma similar to Alice's in *Through the Looking Glass*; he can see the smoke coming from the fire on the other side, but the adage "where there is smoke there is fire" does not apply. Even if you manage to penetrate deeply into the other side you will

find yourself in a place where "the things go the other way" and where "the words go the wrong way", as Alice says.

I believe that Andersen's "*the shadow*" is symptomatic of a crisis in knowledge and language (poetry) occurring in modernity. The learned man "knows" something but has a problem expressing it and conveying it. His knowledge is inward yet directed outwards, towards the house opposite. For some reason he is unable to mediate the two; inside and outside remain separate. Hence the subject of knowledge and the object of knowledge remain separate. The separation invades language, causing an absolute split between the same and the different in lieu of a mediation and complementary co-existence of the two. The result is *the shadow* which poses an absolute antithesis to *Poetry*; *the shadow* is *Poetry* and the *self* inverted, represented as negative imprints of themselves. The radiant light emanating from the female figure in the house opposite would, if permitted to do so, ultimately entice the subject of knowledge, ethics and language (the True, the Good and the Beautiful) to abandon mimetic diction by subsuming the different under the same. The metaphor would, then, become open and inclusive rather than closed and exclusive: Light in shadow and shadow in light rather than a strict light/shadow opposition. Andersen's employment of the dual light/shadow metaphor is complex and ironic; he employs it in order to make it collapse. The metaphor of *the shadow* becomes enclosed in its own sameness rather than open to its own difference. Thus the author indicates his alertness vis à vis the epistemological and poetical crisis the story is really about.

As I see it, Andersen's story reaches far beyond his time, even into our own debate on the Greek logos. In *Writing* and *Difference* Jacques Derrida comments on the thought of Emmanuel Levinas. In his essay "Violence and Metaphysics" Derrida states that Levinas's thought makes us dream of "an inconceivable process of dismantling and dispossession" and that it "summons us to a dislocation of the Greek logos, to a dislocation of our identity, and perhaps of identity in general", making us move toward "what is no longer a source or a site (too welcoming to the gods), but toward an exhalation. . . "; Levinas's thought is "faithful to the immediate, but buried nudity of experience itself" and it "seeks to liberate itself from the Greek domination of the Same and the One (other names for the light of Being and of the phenomenon) as if from oppression itself . . . " (Derrida 101 – 102).

The light radiating from the house opposite in "*the shadow*" has no source; it is a ubiquitous suffusion, an immanent irradiation enveloping subject — the female figure — and object — the flowers. The approach to the light occurs as a physical approximation as the young man, referred to as "the stranger", gets up, turns around and walks into his apartment while his shadow performs the exact same motion in reverse, getting up, turning around and walking into the house opposite. One act contains the other; paradoxically, the inversion of self, knowledge and language is predicated upon the very concepts of the True, the Good and the Beautiful occupying the learned man's thoughts. The "book" he wants to read is in the house opposite, only the words "go the wrong way"; they go backwards, as does *the shadow*. It is therefore logical to assume that when the young master asks his former shadow, or servant/slave as he also was in a sense, what he actually saw, *the shadow* really saw *nothing*,

the reverse of "everything", or everything spelt backwards, metaphorically speaking.

Of course, *the shadow* did see something, at least enough to precipitate him to fame, fortune and a kingdom. The "everything" he saw was the reverse of knowledge, modern religious and instrumental knowledge. In his *History of Sexuality* I. *The Will to Knowledge* Michel Foucault explains how knowledge, starting in the 17th century, assumed the form of a discourse produced by desire:

> An imperative was established: Not only will you confess to acts contravening the law, but you will seek to transform your desire, your every desire, into discourse. Insofar as possible, nothing was meant to elude this dictum, even if the words it employed had to be carefully neutralized. The Christian pastoral prescribed as a fundamental duty the task of passing everything having to do with sex through the endless mill of speech. The forbidding of certain words, the decency of expressions, all the censorings of vocabulary, might well have been only secondary devices compared to that great subjugation: ways of rendering it morally acceptable and technically useful. (Foucault 21)

When *the shadow* claims to be privy to people's innermost secrets he does not mention sex, of course; however, it is once again logical to assume that the erotic dimension of beauty personified in the figure of *Poetry* is inverted by *the shadow*'s subsequent actions in the world at large; eroticism, beauty, knowledge and language turn into a prohibitive discourse meant to extract information. In the figure of *the shadow* looms the appalling personality of the inquisitor and the modern dictator. Knowledge and language have become perverted forms of power. In his *Relations Between the Ego and the Unconscious* C. G. Jung writes the following about megalomania and psychic inflation:

> . . . the state we are discussing involves an extension of the personality beyond individual limits, in other words, a state of being puffed up. In such a state a man fills a space which normally he cannot fill. He can only fill it by appropriating to himself contents and qualities which properly exist for themselves alone and should therefore remain outside our bounds. What lies outside ourselves belongs either to someone else, or to everyone, or to no one. (Jung 88)

Psychic inflation is characteristic of *the shadow* — and of the young man as well. *the shadow*'s propensity for fame and fortune is a distorted, magnified extension of the young stranger's desire for recognition. This desire makes him blind to the illumination of *Poetry*. Had he been able to perceive the real nature of the female figure standing on the balcony across the street, he would not have named the figure; the name *Poetry* comes from *the shadow*. The very naming of *Poetry* is symptomatic of what Jung, in his essay *the shadow*, refers to as "resistance" and "projection":

> Although, with insight and good will, *the shadow* can to some extent be assimilated into the conscious personality, experience shows that there are certain fea-

> tures which offer the most obstinate resistance to moral control and prove almost impossible to influence. These resistances are usually bound up with projections, which are not recognized as such, and their recognition is a moral achievement beyond the ordinary. (Jung 146)

Jung notes how projection operates as a tendency to see, for example, negative features as belonging to the other person, not oneself. The young master fails to recognize his own fateful desire for recognition; this failure infects his entire search for genuine selfhood, knowledge and for the expression of both in language and poetry. The result is a false naming of *Poetry*. Ironically, *the shadow* ends up marrying a young princess who suffers from the illness that she "sees all too well" and hence has to be cured of her insight; she has to learn to see nothing, the reverse of everything. The marriage between *the shadow* and the nameless princess is a union of inversion and negation.

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Comparativism in Slovenia: Introduction

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From its very beginning, the Slovene literary culture has been oriented towards the European, or, in the last decades, the world literary field. This holds true for literary production itself as well as for literary studies. Slovene literature has always been strongly tied to the international literary periods, currents, movements, being in a constant productive dialogue with them. Consequently, beside the national literary history, quite soon the discipline of Comparative literature emerged, and Anton Ocvirk's *The Theory of Comparative Literary History* (1936) appeared as the third monograph on Comparative literature worldwide.

In the earlier period, the main task of Slovene CompLit was to install the Slovene literature into the broader context of the world literature, particularly European. In pursuing this aim, several monographs on major Slovene writers or important literary periods emerged, illuminating the complex intertextual and intercultural intertwinement of Slovene and European literary spaces. In addition, a detailed study of masterpieces of World literature was encouraged, resulting in many very valuable, monograph-length interpretations. All these efforts culminated in Janko Kos' momentous *Comparative History of Slovene Literature* (1987).

From the 80's on, the focus gradually shifted from the Euro-centric perspective to the world literature proper. Scientists of younger generations broadened the range of Slovene comparativism on the one side by exploring poststructuralist, postcolonialist, new-historicist, gender etc. theories, and on the other by studying (beside European and North American) also South American, Asian, Middle-Eastern, and African literatures.

In the following short "Slovene section", articles of representatives of three different generations of Slovene comparatists are presented. Janez Vrečko's study *Oedipus and Joseph K.* appertains to the "classical tradition" of Slovene CompLit. The comparison of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* and Kafka's *The Trial* has its implicit methodological grounding in a variety of interpretative approaches, such as archetypical, mythological, thematological, philosophical, reception (particularly Jauβ') criticisms. Similarly to a very fine conclusion of J. L. Borges' *Kafka and His Precursors*, namely that each author creates his own predecessors, Vrečko concludes that the reading of Kafka's famous novel may help us to understand *Oedipus Rex* in a new way.

Some major "classical" representatives of Slovene CompLit, such as Janko Kos

and Dušan Pirjevec (both based in phenomenological criticism), have been largely engaged with the genre theory, particularly with the novel. The article of Tomo Virk *The Short Story as a Genre of Ontological Uncertainty* appertains to this tradition. With the support of phenomenological, historicist, and pragmatic approaches, it aims to demonstrate that the term "short story", applied in Anglo – American literary criticism to denote the entire variety of short fiction, neglects the differences between many subgenres of short story that for their part display various — in György Lukács' terms — "Formwillen".

The article of a comparatist of the younger generation, Vanesa Matajc, *The Historical Novel, Ideology and Re – organization of the Semiosphere: The Case of the Slovene Historical Novel*, is based on poststructuralist and (Lotman's) semiotic approaches. It deals with the modifications which the Slovene historical novel went through after 1990, when significant political changes occurred (Slovenia gained independence, and the parliamentary democracy was established). In the theoretically well – grounded discussion the author demonstrates how these modifications were influenced simultaneously by theoretical and political shifts.