

# The Use of Narrative Analysis of a Children's Book for Studying the Subjective Picture of the Author's World

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**Abstract:** This article studies the metaphorical narrative of "Adventures of Wind, Cloulette and Plumelet" by T. Pavlyuk; the metaphors of the futility of efforts (rains in the desert) and helplessness (passivity) are identified through the narrative analysis. The scheme of structuring the experience of the narrative's author by J. Bruner is used, namely, landscape of action and landscape of consciousness (agent, action, setting, instrument, goal, trouble). The characters of the hero and the characters of the narrative are placed in conformity with the Existential coordinate space between the axes "I" – "Other" and "Pleasant" – "Meaningful". It is concluded that unity prevails over individualization in the landscape of consciousness, which indicates the need for support and involvement of the author of the text. The ego state of the Rebellious Child was most clearly manifested in Plumelet – the image of the main character of this narrative. Thus, T. Pavlyuk's metaphorical narrative focuses on the existential dimensions of "Pleasantly" and "I" in describing the behavior of the protagonist. The existential dimensions of "Meaningful" and "Other" characterize the Wind. This may be a sign of intrapersonal conflict or depersonalization as a rejection of oneself and one's own desires in favor of something or for the benefit of others. This conclusion is based on the metaphorical correlation between the author and the hero of the work – a Plumelet who does not have a home, parents and the ability to move independently, but who likes to travel with the help of the Wind and other characters.

**Keywords:** Narrative Analysis, Personal Narrative, Metaphorical Narrative, Narrative's Deconstruction

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## 1. Introduction

The problem of perceiving of the subject's inner world through the text written by him- or herself causes a discussion about its objectivity and is still relevant [3, 4, 8]. This is especially true when it comes to unexpressed or unsaid events of personal experience. Crimeans describe the events of March 2014 in different ways and only few people reacted to them indifferently [1]. Tatiana Pavlyuk wrote a children's book "The Adventures of the Windock, Cloulette and Plumelet" [19] for her son and other children who appeared to be in Russian-speaking environment without children's literature in Ukrainian.

The purpose of the study is to analyze the possibilities of obtaining information about the inner world of the author's personality from the text he or she wrote.

The article raises the following questions:

- 1) How does the openness to experience of the author of the metaphorical narrative manifest itself in the text?

- 2) Is the standard narrative analysis scheme applicable to texts of this kind? And is there any signs of the author's uncertainty orientation in it?
- 3) What are the characteristics of the metaphorical narrative of a Crimean resident who has experienced the loss of political homeland?

Murray (2000) describes four levels of narratives: *personal*, *interpersonal*, *positional* and *ideological*. These levels are not separate, as ideological narratives provide the positions available for speakers that play out in interpersonal interactions (Gemma Wong & Mary Breheny, 2018, P. 248).

## 2. In the Research We Used Narrative Analysis of Metaphorical Text

Let us consider the basics of narrative psychology as a science field. The initial methodology of narrative psychology is postmodernism, which is based on the

interpretation of language as a mean of reality creation, first of all, the reality of personal experience. At the same time, postmodernists fix attention on the way our language constitutes our world and our beliefs. We develop our own vision of the world with the help of the community language, and every time we speak, we create the reality [5, 6, 9].

The second basis of narrative psychology is social constructivism, the main ideas of which are also developed in the framework of postmodern methodology. The idea of social construction of reality is based on the following postulates:

- 1) world does not appear before a person objectively; a person comprehends the reality under the influence of the speech;
- 2) language categories are formed in social interaction, that is, they have a social nature;
- 3) understanding of reality at the present moment depends on existing norms and social conventions;
- 4) social understanding of reality, formed in the process of social interaction, largely determines human life [5].

Thus, the world in which we live and act, is the world built by ourselves (consciously or unconsciously), the world that we have been adapted to, that is convenient and predictable. Any step out of it, creates a feeling of discomfort and a desire to return to this familiar, "our" world. We construct this "second-order reality" on the basis of cultural models, found in our own experience – both personal experience and experience of communication with others.

According to N. V. Chepeleva [10], the personality interprets the story of his or her life differently, depending on the perception of the private experience, and creates different types of narratives (emotionally-negative, emotionally-positive, ambivalent and emotionally-neutral). Creation of ambivalent, emotionally-negative and emotionally-positive types of narratives is facilitated by the comprehending of one's own personal experience, but this does not apply to the emotionally-neutral type. In the process of creating narratives, a person gets an opportunity to understand oneself deeper, to realize private problems, traits, qualities, needs, beliefs, to evaluate experience in the other way and accept it as a part of his or her life that is one of the conditions for personal self-development.

It is also worth noting that the creation of the narrative has a certain specificity that distinguishes it from the process of other types of texts creation, namely:

- 1) in the process of narratives creation, the so-called intervals of self-identity are defined and divided, as a condition of human reflection of important moments of the development that lead to changes in personality;
- 2) the self-concept of a person is realized through the analysis of life events stated in the autonarrative on the basis of which a person draws a conclusion on his

inherent character traits and qualities;

- 3) life strategies, developed on the basis of a special form of reflection on the person's life experience are realized (self-determination);
- 4) self-knowledge which appears by studying the internal foundations of the individual (resources, obstacles and contradictions, manifested in specific events of life) is intensified.

Thus, the creation of an autonarrative of a person by describing the life events that have radically influenced the understanding of the self and development of personality contributes to the awareness of the personal experience, and, therefore, is an important condition for self-development.

The main sign of resilience, according to S. Muddy [16, 17], is activity as opposed to passivity. The choice in favor of the future (a high level of control and risk-taking) is valuable because it requires more activity and processes a larger amount of information than the choice of the past. The choice of the future stimulates even greater activity, both cognitive and practical. Choosing the past.

Resilience is a person's desire to survive in certain conditions of life, to realize himself and his abilities, while making the world a better place. This is the courage to live and create life. Such a person actively builds an image of the future, he is dominated by higher values and meanings, he relies on his own strength and is ready to help others in difficult moments of life [14, 15].

### 3. J. Bruner's Model of Structuring the Subject's Experience

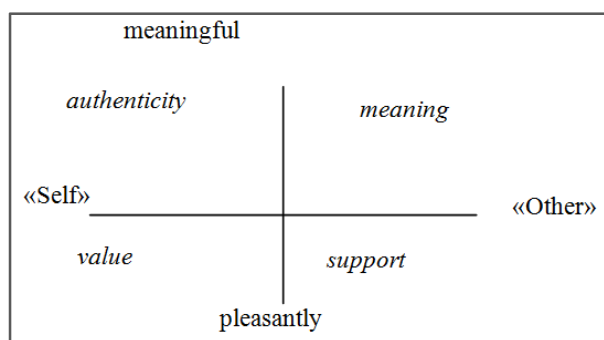
In terms of empirical research of narratives, J. Bruner is interested in patterns of structuring experience, in particular, building autobiographies, using as a starting point of analysis K. Burke's pentad: the actor (Agent), action (Action), setting (Setting), means (Instrument), goal (Goal). J. Bruner added Trouble to this list (Bruner, 2005).

An important point in the psychological understanding of the narrative is that stories are characterized by the presence of a "double landscape": the setting, the actors, the goal, the means to achieve it, etc. make up the "landscape of action", and the thoughts, feelings, knowledge and other experiences of the characters make up the "landscape of consciousness" (Bruner, 1987). The narrative events are arranged in a certain order with the dominant cultural tradition (linear order is the most common).

Let's present a template for structuring the experience of the author of the narrative according to J. Bruner (2005; 1987) (Table 1).

*Table 1. Structuring the experience of the author metaphorical narrative of "Adventures of Wind, Cloulette and Plumelet"*

«Double landscape»	Agent	Action	Setting	Instrument	Goal	Trouble
landscape of action	Wind	blowing	together with Plumelet	Cloulette	give a drink for caravan in the desert	takes a real toll, apparently
landscape of consciousness	lifesaver/helper	influences the environment	supports	attracts resources from the outside	set from the outside	does not pay attention to troubles



**Figure 1.** Existential coordinate space between axes “Self” – “Other” and “pleasantly” – “meaningful” according to V. Frankl [1983] and A. Langle [2001].

It can be generalized that the “landscape of consciousness” of the author of this text includes: Lifesaver (Wind), who cares about a friend (Plumelet) and uses the resources of others (Cloudette) to achieve a generally useful goal set from the outside.

The characteristics of a “good” narrative are also highlighted. K. Gergen [18] offers a number of conditions for an acceptable narrative. He says that a good narrative has a certain value-coloured end result – a goal, connecting elements, cause-and-effect relationships. Characters and objects in a “good” narrative should create an impression of stability and maintain their “identity” throughout history (Gergen, 1998).

If we compare the understanding of identity by E. Erickson with the existential analysis of A. Langle [2], then we get such a space of coordinates between the axes “Self” – “Other” and “pleasantly” – “meaningful” (Figure 1).

In analyzed narrative, action of Wind is closer to the pole of “Other” and “Support”, Plumelet is “Self” and “Value”, Cloudette is “Authenticity” and “Meaningful”. The Wind fulfills Plumelet’s wishes, physically supports him - it is the support of the Other (from the outside), his main role as a character in the fairy tale. Plumelet takes pleasure in what happens and is self-valued, its value supported by the Wind. And it is the wishes of «I» Plumelet that are the main motor force of the plot. The Cloudette performs an important function for others - rain carries, that is its essence, therefore one can speak of authenticity and meaning. That is, there is no “pleasantly” dimension in the described text, or rather, it is identified with “meaningful” – what is meaningful is enjoyable. As you can see from Figure 1, the categories “Other” and “pleasantly” form a *support* (“when the Other is pleasant, it will be possible to rely on him”), “Self” and “pleasantly” – *value* (“I am pleasant to myself, I am valuable, I like myself”), “Self” and “meaningful” – authenticity (“I carry individual meanings, I understand who I am and what constitutes my originality”); “Other” and “meaningful” – meaning (“what I do for the Other makes sense and this sense is important to me”). In all situations when it is “unpleasant” and “not meaningful”, we are dealing with negative manifestations of identity, which are the opposite of existential fullness or the realization of existential needs in

the life of each individual person.

## 4. The Analysis of Metaphorical Narrative by T. Pavlyuk

We will analyze metaphorical narrative “The Adventures of Wind, Cloudette and Plumelet” (text of a children’s book for preschool age) of Tatiana Pavlyuk [19].

As it was illustrated above, *togetherness prevails over individuation*, which indicates the need for support and the need to be involved.

In the N. V. Chepeleva’s typology of narratives [10], analyzed narrative is emotionally positive. The emotionally positive narrative reveals the author’s inherent features and qualities, shows the desire for self-determination and self-knowledge, testifies to the acceptance of the author’s own personality.

### 4.1. Analysis of the Communicative Chain of the Narrative

Real author: a middle-aged woman who has a preschool child. Imaginary author: an adult who is characterized by the freshness of the child’s perception, spontaneity and emotionality.

Narrator: 1) infantile (child) part of the real author’s personality – the Ego-state of the Child in Transactional analysis, unadapted, Free Child, who at the end of the story becomes an Adapted Child; 2) the receptacle of the person’s desires (Id according to Z. Freud), which is a source of activity for the individual.

Narrator: 1) a child, emotional, impulsive and brave, who knows how to be friends and help others, sometimes needs help of adults; 2) the Ego-state of the child’s personality of an adult reader; 3) Ego according to Z. Freud, tends to slightly adapt Id for the demands of the Super-Ego.

Imaginary reader: a child of a preschool age who is interested in adventures and natural phenomena (winds, thunderstorms, clouds and rains).

Real reader: every one of us.

### 4.2. The General Theme of the Narrative

It is necessary “to live a life that captures”: dream, travel, make friends and “do important things” – help others.

The subjects (characters) of narrative: Plumelet-feather, Wind, Cloudette, adult clouds-parents, the Dry Wind, the Storm Cloud, Blowers-winds, thirsty (people and camels) in the desert.

Characteristics of the main character. The main character is a Plumelet-feather, who “likes to travel and learn new things”. He is the initiator of all the adventures of friends. Looking for something new and unfamiliar with the environment, it is not afraid of the danger and the uncertainty. He confesses his own interests, not the interests of the environment.

He is very dependent on the environment and seeks help from the Wind. Plumelet is Wind’s friend, together they

“flew above the earth in search of adventure”. We can say that Wind and Plumelet has symbiotic relationship – Plumelet is not independent, because “to get somewhere, he needs to make a lot of effort, for he is so easy that cannot cope with the slightest breath of a wind”.

Cloudette, polite and caring, loves to help people, protects friends from the scorching sun. She is “still very little” and “cannot make the rain”, dreams of becoming a cumulus cloud, because she loves to make rain. She has almost no self-interest – she confesses the interests of the environment (friends, thirsty in the desert, plane in storm).

The most active character – Wind, because Cloudette and Plumelet need him to move them. He is not lazy like other winds. He helps Plumelet and Cloudette to achieve their goals, and in doing this he sees his own destination. We can say that he confesses their interests and does not have his own.

Analysis of metaphorical narrative environment. Environment is favourable and safe before the heroes decided to travel in the desert. During a storm it becomes threatening and dangerous, after returning to the Clouded Mountain it again becomes favourable. This demonstrates the trust in the world and its acceptance.

#### **4.3. The Selection of Themes (Semantic Blocks, Fragments) of the Narrative**

Emotionally positive parts of the text are marked with the “+”, emotionally negative parts related to difficulties, obstacles and overcoming “-”, dual or emotionally uncertain parts “?”.

Theme 1. “The adventures of Wind and Plumelet on the ground” (+).

Theme 2. “Interest in clouds and acquaintance with Cloudette” (?).

Theme 3. “Journey to the Clouded Mountain” (+).

Theme 4. “Journey to the desert” (+) – the most voluminous subtheme, a reflection of the current situation of the narrator [20, 21].

Theme 5. “Meeting the Dry Wind” (-).

Theme 6. “Help thirsty in the desert” (+).

Theme 7. “The Storm Cloud” (-).

Theme 8. “Aircraft rescue” (+).

Theme 9. “Return to the Clouded Mountain” (+).

Theme 10. “Dreams of clouds-toddlers” (+).

#### **4.4. Narrative Events and Their Short Name in Verbal Form**

Plumelet and Wind “flew over the earth in search of adventures” – “Where do clouds come from and where they always wander on the sky?” – “let’s fly to Cloudette” – “let’s fly to the Clouded Mountain” – “How do clouds fly without wings? We have enough a slight breeze to move somewhere” – “deliver to the destination (the desert of rain)” – “went to travel” – “the travellers remained in the sky all alone” – “the new landscape struck them with its uniqueness” – “need to tell an adult so they send rain clouds” – “behind the sand pile

desert wind emerged” (Dry Wind) – “he rushed at them” – “friends scattered in all directions” – “everyone got fear” – “I see thirsty in the desert” – “they need help” – “Cloudette has absorbed water from the lake, Wind brought Cloudette to the desert, Plumelet tickled her, she gave water, they could water the caravan” – “as quickly as possible to get home” – “coming, rushing Storm Cloud” – “the sky lit up with radiance” – “to slow down and rest a little” – “a bird screamed about the plane nearby” – “it started raining” – “need something to do immediately!” – “I will bring Wind-Blowers – they will help to disperse the storm around the aircraft – “Cloudette rushed forward” – “the aircraft hesitantly maneuvered among the storm clouds and was falling on each side alternately” – “Wind will be on time!” – “a familiar voice shouted” – “plane flew away unharmed” – “Wind-Blowers kept Storm Cloud on both sides” – “friends were overcome with emotions, asked Winds to carry them home as quickly as possible” – “everyone was thrilled” – “Forgive us! We’ll never do that again!” – “the company discussed about who they wanted to be when grown up” – “never be lonely” – “do a little rain” – “no one wanted to be scary or someone everyone is afraid of” – “put down the people’s fire” – “saved a baby from a sunburn” – “I love to create rain” – “it was necessary to gain strength for new adventures”.

#### **4.5. Building a Causal Sequence of Events**

Memories of traveling on land, traveling in the sky: in the desert, meeting with Dry Wind, help the suffering, the rescue of the aircraft and return to Clouded Mountain (Cloudette’s home).

Thus, the main character – a little dreamer who wants a new adventure and is bold to help those who need it, alone is not able to even move. However, he hopes to help seniors and other forces (winds). Despite his physical passivity, he is the initiator of adventures in the sky. More importantly, he needs calm conditions of existence, such as Clouded Mountain which embraces in the tranquillity all around.

You could say, a symbolic family is depicted: father – Wind, mother – Cloudette, child – Plumelet. Or the Ego-state by E. Bern [22]: free and rebellious Child (the one who wants, seeks – Plumelet), Adult (the one who can – Wind), Parent figure (the one who knows how to, how not to – Cloudette).

Text’s main ecopsychology dispositions by P. V. Lushin [11] allows us to highlight the following components: disposition of “home, family” (safety, comfort, identification) describes the life of clouds on the Clouded Mountain; disposition of “friend” (equality, respect, communication between equals) shows us Plumelet, Wind and Cloudette being friends; disposition of “warehouse” is present only in the episode with the caravan (the Cloudette has helped to fill the empty pitchers for drinking water supplies); the disposition of the “boss” (activity, dominance, independence) includes elders of the Clouded Mountain; the disposition of “slave” (obedience, passivity, helplessness, and helplessness) is explicit in the characteristics of Plumelet and Cloudette,

who cannot move independently; the disposition of “enemy-enemies” is present in the characters of the Wind and Cloud of Strife that brought the storm. Therefore, there are constant text’s dispositions “friend” and “slave”. In this context to have the friend is the best option to overcome own helplessness (the compelled passivity, a peculiar form of slavery) as the friend will not dominate and humiliate as “owner”. He will respect and help to achieve the goal. However, there is a contradiction: friendship is possible only between equals, in the described case, such a symbiotic relationship.

Another noteworthy fact is that the rescue of the aircraft (6 complicating event: 2708 words) is more important than the help of a caravan in the desert (4 complicating event: 1862 words). Volumetric described journey to the desert (3336 words), which indicates the presence of similar problems in the current situation of the author (laziness of the winds, having to carry the clouds in the desert – laziness of people, which depends to a certain extent the author, the difficulties of the way, but the presence of true friends adds strength, futility of effort, because it’s no matter how much you water the desert, it will remain empty).

The situation of futility of effort is important in describing how to overcome the difficulties of the protagonist of the metaphorical narrative, because the whole company got into numerous adventures through the need to water the desert with rain. In addition, the futility is hidden, because they *happened* to meet caravan left without drinking water.

The author’s idea is clear: efforts should be made, even when you think that they are useless. Such an act of reflection is therapeutic for the author of the text.

## 5. Discussion

We can say that the way of transformation of a Free Child into an Adapted Child (in the terminology of transactional analysis) is a generalized model of psychotherapy for Crimeans who have experienced an existential crisis due to the events in Crimea after March 18, 2014.

The experience of the existential crisis is caused by the forced loss of a part of the identity and it is shown in the texts of the inhabitants of the Crimea.

The feeling of “loss of ground” or, more precisely, “lack of ground underfoot” is characteristic of an existential crisis [6], which is often accompanied by a loss of meaning. If we analyze this text more deeply, we will find the destruction of a stable idea of who we are and why we are here [12, 13]. The metaphor of a feather driven by any wind very accurately reflects the essence of the changeable fluid Self.

In a metaphorical narrative of T. Pavlyuk [19] existential crisis is reflected as the lack of your own home like the main character Plumelet does (if Wind’s understanding of “home” is conditional, Cloudette lives in the Clouded Mountain, Plumelet does not have home). Most often, the author identifies him- or herself with the main character, so this lack of own home is not accidental, but indicates the absence of solid ground in the real life of the author of the narrative.

Deconstruction method, reassignment of the problem in the practice of narrative therapy (according to Zh. Derrida) is used to question the dominant problem story, which has a negative impact on life [7]. For example, to ask the question: “Who benefits from the fact that a person subordinates his own life to a certain public opinion?”, “Who else shares this opinion?”, “Where did it come from?”, “How does it change my life?”

A detailed analysis of the metaphorical narrative of “The adventures of Wind, Cloudette and Plumelet” by T. Pavlyuk showed that the main character went the way from turning a Free Child into an Adapted Child (in the terminology of transactional analysis). Available Ecopsychology dispositions of “friend” and “slave”, solve the contradiction between the helplessness of the movement of the main character (forced inactivity, a form of slavery) and his quest of adventure. However, there is also a contradiction: friendship is possible only between equals, in the described case, such symbiotic relationships. The author reveals metaphors of futility of efforts (rains in the desert) and helplessness (passivity), which permeate the whole text of the book and are a diagnostic sign of productive experience of existential crisis. Existential crisis is also reflected in the lack of your own home as the main character Plumelet does.

Moreover, there was derealization (description of the events that occurred as unreal) in the metaphorical narrative of T. Pavlyuk – depersonalization as a rejection of one’s own Self and one’s own roots in favor of something and for the benefit of others. This conclusion is based on the metaphorical relativity of the author and the hero of the work – Plumelet, who does not have a home, parents and the ability to move independently, but who likes to travel with the help of the Wind and others.

## 6. Conclusions

The need for support from the outside is inherent in a rebellious Child, since an adapted child is used to not demanding attention to himself, and a free child does not depend so much on the environment, an adult (Adult) has learned to find support in himself. Therefore, the main character’s need for support, described in such detail in the metaphorical narrative, can be an expression of identification with the author of the narrative, insistently demanding attention and support from loved ones. However, the fact that it was the ego state of the rebellious Child that manifested itself most vividly in this narrative may be a consequence of the genre of the children’s book itself and the author’s memories of his own childhood.

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