

## Artículo de investigación

## Ecohumanism of the short story by V.G. Korolenko *The Frost* and the novel by A.V. Gelasimov *Into the Thickening Fog*

Экогуманизм рассказа В.Г. Короленко «Мороз» и новеллы А.В. Геласимова «В сгущающийся туман»

Ecohumanismo em el cuento corto de V.G. Korolenko *la escarcha* y  
La novela de A.V. Gelasimov en la niebla espesante

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### Abstract

The relevance of this article is explained by the humanistic potential of the artistic thought of V.G. Korolenko and A.V. Gelasimov, whose works are united by problematic and thematic identity, despite the time period separating these writers. In this article, environmental thinking, expressed in literary works, is developed methodologically, which is in line with modern literary studies. The purpose of the article is to identify the general and the particular in environmental thinking of Korolenko and Gelasimov, enabling to concretize the concept of these writers' works. A comparative typological approach is applied in this research. The article proves the existence of typological similarities at different levels of the text: figurative, narrative-compositional and stylistic. It is argued that cold/frost, being a borderline situation in the fate of the heroes, becomes the leading ethical-philosophical category that forms the ideological center of the literary works. The inner conflict of the reflective hero is manifested through antinomies: love and hate, cowardice and fortitude, alienation and involvement in life, cynicism and decency, depression and a rise in vitality. Cold/frost acts as an eco-indicator, helping to check both the physical and the spiritual strength of a person. Nature and man, representing the unity, are in constant confrontation at the same time, and human ability for self-sacrifice and spiritual rebirth becomes a

### АННОТАЦИЯ

Актуальность данной статьи объясняется гуманистическим потенциалом художественной мысли В.Г. Короленко и Андрея Валерьевича Геласимова, произведения которых, несмотря на разделяющий их временной отрезок, объединяет проблемно-тематическая тождественность. В нашей статье экологическое мышление, выраженное в литературном творчестве, получает методологическую разработку, что находится в русле современной литературоведческой науки. Цель статьи состоит в выявлении общего и особенного в экологических размышлениях Короленко и Геласимова, позволяющих конкретизировать концепцию произведений авторов. В настоящем исследовании применяется сравнительно-типологический подход. В статье доказано наличие типологических сходств на разных уровнях текста: образном, сюжетно-композиционном, стилистическом. Утверждается, что холод/мороз, являясь пограничной ситуацией в судьбах героев, становится ведущей этико-философской категорией, формирующей идейный центр произведений. Внутренний конфликт рефлексирующего героя проявляется посредством антиномий: любовь и ненависть, малодушие и сила духа, отчуждение и вовлеченность в жизнь, цинизм и

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guarantee of survival for man. Moreover, the northern force of nature stimulates the spiritual growth of a person being put in a situation of choice by extreme conditions. The term “eco-metaphor”, having a semantic core and a semantic peripheral domain created by the author is introduced into scientific circulation.

**Keywords:** ecohumanism, eco-metaphor, cold, frost, Korolenko, Gelasimov, symbol, ethical and philosophical issues.

благопристойность, депрессия и подъем жизненных сил. Холод/мороз выступает в роли экоииндикатора, помогающего проверить не только физическую, но и духовную прочность человека. Природа и человек, представляя собой единство, в то же время находятся в постоянном противоборстве, и залогом выживания для человека становится его способность к самопожертвованию и духовному возрождению. Более того, северная природная стихия стимулирует духовный рост человека, поставленного экстремальными условиями в ситуацию выбора. Вводится в научный оборот термин «экометафора», которая имеет семантическое ядро и смысловую периферийную область, созданную автором.

**Ключевые слова:** экогуманизм, экометафора, холод, мороз, Короленко, Геласимов, символ, этическая и философская проблематика.

## Resumen

La relevancia de este artículo se explica por el potencial humanístico del pensamiento artístico de V.G. Korolenko y A.V. Gelasimov, cuyas obras están unidas por una identidad problemática y temática, a pesar del período de tiempo que separa a estos escritores. En este artículo, el pensamiento ambiental, expresado en obras literarias, se desarrolla metodológicamente, lo que está en línea con los estudios literarios modernos. El propósito del artículo es identificar lo general y lo particular en el pensamiento ambiental de Korolenko y Gelasimov, lo que permite concretar el concepto de las obras de estos escritores. En esta investigación se aplica un enfoque tipológico comparativo. El artículo demuestra la existencia de similitudes tipológicas en diferentes niveles del texto: figurativo, narrativo-compositivo y estilístico. Se argumenta que el frío / helada, al ser una situación límite en el destino de los héroes, se convierte en la principal categoría ético-filosófica que forma el centro ideológico de las obras literarias. El conflicto interno del héroe reflexivo se manifiesta a través de antinomias: amor y odio, cobardía y fortaleza, alienación y participación en la vida, cinismo y decencia, depresión y un aumento de la vitalidad. Frío / escarcha actúa como un eco-indicador, ayudando a verificar tanto la fuerza física como la espiritual de una persona. La naturaleza y el hombre, que representan la unidad, están en constante confrontación al mismo tiempo, y la capacidad humana para el sacrificio y el renacimiento espiritual se convierten en una garantía de supervivencia para el hombre. Además, la fuerza de la naturaleza del norte estimula el crecimiento espiritual de una persona que se encuentra en una situación de elección en condiciones extremas. El término "eco-metáfora", que tiene un núcleo semántico y un dominio periférico semántico creado por el autor, se introduce en la circulación científica.

**Palabras clave:** ecohumanismo, eco-metáfora, frío, heladas, Korolenko, Gelasimov, símbolo, cuestiones éticas y filosóficas.

## Introduction

Vladimir Korolenko and Andrei Gelasimov lived in Yakutia at various times and wrote works with synonymous titles: the short story *The Frost* (1901) and the novel *Into the Thickening Fog, Cold in Russian* (2015). Both writers have a humanistic thought that cold, strangely enough, can arouse good feelings in a person. Nevertheless, the main characters of both authors

do not come to the aid of freezing people in a critical situation. It seems impossible to assert the direct influence Korolenko's literary works on Gelasimov. The modern novelist says that E.M. Hemingway, W.K. Faulkner, F.M. Dostoevsky and Alice Walker are the most important writers for him. Rather, this refers to the typological

similarity of plot situations, the characters' personalities and some key symbols.

To date, a number of attempts have been made to interpret the creative legacy of Korolenko and Gelasimov, but there are very few studies of this kind dedicated to the first writer in foreign literary criticism, and none at all referring to the second one. The team of scholars from different countries (Olkhovskaya et al., 2015) under the leadership of Professor A.V. Trukhanenko (2015, 2018) explores the problem of Korolenko's ecohumanism, trying to determine the place of nature in the artist's worldview, readers' reflections and contradictory aspects of the writer's texts. The response to the autobiographical character of a number of Korolenko's works is presented in the publications of B.P. Scherr (2014), J. Costlow (2015). B.P. Scherr, despite the availability of understanding of the writer's works, emphasizes the artistic originality of Korolenko's stories, which are based on his memories. In the brief assessment by J. Costlow, Korolenko's creative figure is considered in comparison with the prose of Chekhov, Bunin, and Gorky in terms of the decadent position and with reference to the facts of the biographies of realist writers calling for the preservation of the ecology of spirituality as a guarantee of mankind development.

The theme of Siberia in the texts of Russian writers is revealed by Gryaznukhina et al. (2017) from the viewpoint of ethical and aesthetic aspects of understanding the severe natural realities that help to identify the character traits of Siberian man. The scholars discover the mental peculiarities of a Siberian resident: pride, self-sufficiency, vitality.

Over the past three years, foreign literary studies have shown a sustained interest in interpreting Russian classics from the perspective of an interdisciplinary approach. E. Fratto (2018) interprets Veniamin Kaverin's prose not only from the viewpoint of the literary context (Dostoevsky), but also from the viewpoint of natural science, referring to Lobachevsky's theory of space. J.M. Shields (2018) reveals the paradoxical influence of Leo Tolstoy's philosophy on agrarian-Buddhist utopianism in Japan. The analysis of cultural constants that are common for Russian and foreign literature allows Sizykh et al. (2018) to compare experimental modern Russian and foreign prose. Books of modern Russian prose writers are of great interest in terms of reception, literary succession among domestic and foreign literary scholars (Mondry, 2015; Rufova, 2015;

Nabiullina et al., 2017; Anderson and Iversen, 2018; Pogoda-Kołodziejak, 2018; Ong, 2018). The voluminous articles by H. Mondry (2006) and A. Schur (2016) contain psychological details of female images that demonstrate a new approach to the study of Gleb Uspensky's prose.

The articles by G. Matzner-Gore (2018) dwell on the influence of empirical ideas on the artistic essays of Dmitry Grigorovich. An attempt to make a comparative analysis of Gelasimov's novel *Into the Thickening Fog (Cold)* with a number of works by foreign writers was undertaken by O.I. Ivanova (2018). The phenomenon of alienation in the mentioned Gelasimov's novel is studied by S.F. Zhelobtsova (2016), A.V. Lazarenko (2016), A.B. Krendel (2016) in the context of Russian classical literature. Thus, the review of critical literature indicates the understudied problem of the typological similarity of the creative works of Korolenko and Gelasimov in general and in the context of ecohumanism ideas, in particular.

### Materials and methods

The methodological and theoretical basis of the research consists of the main provisions of the methodology of literary analysis of the text (the fundamental developments by G.N. Pospelov and B.V. Tomashevsky).

The set tasks were solved by a comparative analysis of the literary text, revealing the function of the concept of "cold" in the context of the ecohumanistic views of the writers. Comparative method adds to identification of the distinctive artistic features in the analyzed works. The artistic merit of the analyzed works is justified by the degree of development of concrete historical reality by reader's demand. In this regard, the typological and historical-functional principle of the study of a literary work acquires a special nature.

### The moral basis of "Man against Nature" conflict. The case of Korolenko

The artistic conception of the short story *The Frost* arose in Vladimir Korolenko, presumably, in 1884, after a casual encounter on a Siberian road with a person sleeping near a dying bonfire. This episode was described by the writer in his *Diary*. He states: "Ahead, threads of smoke is curling by the side of the road. We drive up. A man is lying on a pile of broken pine branches. There is a small bag at his head. His eyes are closed – this is a posture of a man exhausted by a hard way."

This halt amidst the snows nearby a wisp of smoke in the forest, seven miles away from the village, makes a strange impression.

- What kind of man is this? I ask.
- This one? He's to be from the placer. The day before yesterday, as I remember, he stayed overnight at our place. That's until where he's come.
- Really? After all, it's only seven miles away from your place, isn't it?
- That's right, seven. But you see he's slow in walking. He's a cripple. He's so bowlegged.
- How far has he to go?
- I do not know, maybe to some Manzurska volost (a district in the Irkutsk region in Siberia, Russia).
- It's at least 660 miles!.. And he covers 4 miles a day.
- That's what gold does. He might have been hurt in the face, or he lost the use of his legs because of the water, says the coachman indifferently. "He spent the night at our place; he wanted to chop wood, but didn't chop it ...

We had already left a long time ago, but there was still a blue thread of smoke glimmering indistinctly before my eyes and this dark figure of a person doomed to fast death... This is how a straggling, exhausted bird is dying in the frost, sadly watching the free flight of its free-standing mates; meanwhile the forerunners of a formidable winter are seen all around.

- That's fine with him yet: it's warm now for a long time. When the frost strikes – he'll freeze to death indeed," says the coachman, crumbling a piece of rustic tobacco in his palm..." (Korolenko, 1925: 38-39).

It is clear from the diary entry that this episode struck V.G. Korolenko, and the coachman treats this story philosophically, he already seems to get accustomed to many things.

The short story opens with a landscape description. The writer returning from his exile describes the Lena River, the process of its gradual freezing. The Lena is almost humanized by the author here: "... the river angrily threw ice floes still moving freely along it into the immovable ice fortifications, made breaches in them, crushed the ice into pieces, into needles, into the snow, but then again defeated powerless..." (Korolenko, 1971: 388); "The desolate river gorges of the mountainous banks

meekly reflected the dry crash of breaking ice fields and the heavy grunting of the sweltering river" (Korolenko, 1971: 389). The image of the frost is an independent artistic symbol of circumstances that are hostile to human nature. At first the frost is weak and betokens no bad. But gradually it increasingly shows its stern temper and, finally, turns into a force that carries death, destruction to all living things.

Here the writer tells an interesting story about two fearless mountain goats crossing the river from one bank to another. At the beginning of winter, the Lena, still not bound by ice, becomes a living hell. The ice floes continue to split up, stand on end and collide with each other with a loud crash like shots, forming open water patches. Only the hope of escape from hunger and frost on the other bank and frost may spur a living creature to the deadly crossing: "... gathering their thin, trembling legs, the goats stood on another ice platform, ready for a new jump. This was repeated several times, and each jump with a calculated rigor brought them closer to our bank and moved them away from the opposite one. <...>

They were already on the bank. But on the other side of the spit there was a dark band of water, and the passage was obstructed by a handful of people. However, the clever animal did not think for a minute. I noticed a glance of her round eyes, looking with some strange confidence, and then she rushed herself and sent the youngest directly to us. The local dog, a big shaggy Polkan, stepped aside awkwardly when the eldest goat, hiding the younger one, ran past it, almost touching sideways with her shaggy wool" (Korolenko, 1971: 390-391).

Then a dialogue follows between the narrator and the engineer Sokolsky. The hero draws attention to the fact that even Polkan was ashamed to kill two brave goats and wondered whether every mother would selflessly close her daughter with herself. To which the narrator confidently answers: yes, of course. Every mother will do it instinctively, without hesitation, according to the powerful impulse of the heart. This is the humanistic imperative of life.

This episode evolves into a symbolic one. It encourages the reader to think about the man, his ability to reckless self-denial, which reveals eco-humanistic values. It turns out that, by his nature, man is a being of humane character that is not alien to empathy, kindness, generosity.



Is every person capable of this? The writer answers, it is a person whose worldview has reached the highest level of conscience, who simply cannot, is unable to commit a betrayal, even risking his own life.

This literary work has a framed composition – it is a story in the story. One of the characters, Sokolsky, confides his memories to the narrator, he tells the story he witnessed. The autumn landscape in the short story terrifies the reader: “In one place, huge ice floes thickly collide with one another and block the river flow. The river piles them up more and more, breaks the ice, forms rapids, roars, rages...” (Korolenko, 1971: 393). Nature is clearly hostile towards man, but Ignatovich, Sokolsky’s traveling companion, resists the influence of the cold: on the way he tries to save the freezing ducks that have fallen behind their flock.

#### **Then a forty-degree frost hit.**

The writer describes the state of a person who has long been experiencing low temperatures like this: “We also began to feel chilly, you know what it is: you get short of breath, when you blink your eyes – thin ice needles stretch between eyelashes, cold gets under the clothes, then into the muscles, into the bones, to the marrow of the bones ... <...> The mood changes, impressions grow dull, people seem more unpleasant ... You also become disgusted with yourself...” (Korolenko, 1971: 397-398).

In the dictionary by S.I. Ozhegov and N.Yu. Shvedova (2006), the word “frost” has the following meanings: 1. cold; 2. very cold weather. In the story the frost becomes an ethical-philosophical category, which demonstrates the specificity of Korolenko’s eco-humanism, associated with the universal moral constants. Sokolsky and Ignatovich, who are in such a borderline “liminal” state of rigor, noticed a man in the forest sitting alone on a stump by the bonfire. But they did not respond to this vision, they did not pay attention to what the coachman had said. In essence, V.G. Korolenko depicts the so-called situation of choice, which reveals the depths of a person’s soul, his generosity and faint-heartedness, strength and weakness, courage and cowardice, conscience and false pompous heroism. Arriving at the “Cold Camp”, the characters warm up. Further, the narrative becomes retrospective; the narrator Sokolsky tells a story that in the polar countries, according to one legend, even words freeze in winter. They lie as frozen ice floes until spring, and with the onset of warmth they thaw. Warmed up the

characters of the story, finally, understand what the driver has told them. Thus, a legendary space appears in the short story, a mythological space coexisting with the real one, which is marked by natural details: rocks glazed with sparkling hoarfrost, broken ice pieces, the sharp edge of the river cape.

V.G. Korolenko presents the “idealist’s” reflection in the eco-humanistic way. Ignatovich cannot bear the fact that his conscience has frozen as the temperature of his body decreased by two degrees. He screams that he is a murderer, wakes up all the coachmen. In the end, seeing that the coachmen are slow, Ignatovich decides to go save the freezing man on his own, but he goes the wrong way and dies himself. On this occasion, Ignatovich’s friend, Sokolsky, comments that “a romanticist put to death a materialist in him”. As noted by Yu.M. Lotman (2010: 280), moving “to the forest” and returning is the usual mythological (and then fairy-tale) formula for dying and resurrection. But Ignatovich, having gone into the forest, dies without returning from it.

#### **Search for the reason for existence through a collision with nature. The case of Gelasimov**

A novel in three acts with interludes by Andrei Gelasimov *Into the Thickening Fog (Cold)* is not devoted to the description of tragic consequences for the city of Yakutsk due to the accident at the hydroelectric power station, as it may seem at the first glance. Primarily, this is a story about a man who had got iced up metaphysically long before he found himself in a freezing city. As Gelasimov (2016) determined the genre of his book, the novel-parable represents the connection between the being and a person’s hectic life. The realities of natural environment of Eduard Filippov, a famous stage director, are presented through the prism of a cold crystal. This is exactly the way the world is portrayed in the novel; this world faced by the character when he turned out to be in Yakutsk awakens his memories which are cold literally and metaphorically.

When confronting the character with nature, the writer, who apparently has a penchant to the ideas of ecohumanism, allows his protagonist to gain insight into the truth of life and understand its meaning, more precisely, the absence of this meaning, while not comprehending the verity. In one of the interviews, the writer talks about the idea of elevating a person, referring to the Nobel speech of a famous American prose writer: “... this is not my thought, but that of William Faulkner, who said in his Nobel speech that man

will not merely endure: he will prevail. And then he expanded: even when all of humanity falls down into the abyss, and everything burns in the fire, even then on the last worthless rock, which is about to collapse into the ocean of magma, there will still be a man standing. That is, for a second, he will still be majestic. It will be a moment of majesty in despair, and I am a huge fan of this in Faulkner, this is what makes us human: the ability not to lose face in a desperate situation" (Fomenko, 2017). Gelasimov together with his protagonist doubts the existence of the meaning of life "in general" (Fomenko, 2017) and, therefore, they are not eager to reveal it. The cold contributes to the spiritual salvation of the character, and after all destroys him physically.

Some particular natural details are rather constants of the northern landscape than determine the inner state of the protagonist: "There are neither the hills on the horizon, nor the huge dull wasteland, along which the port route ran towards the city, it was not visible due to fog. The memory quickly completed all this picture and Filippov grimaced in disgust" (Gelasimov, 2017: 96). "Cars ... now and then snatched icy lampposts and rare stunted bushes with their headlights, crushed by frost to such an extent that not everyone would recognize the bushes in these poor fellows" (Gelasimov, 2017: 215); Filippov sees "gray sky" (Gelasimov, 2017: 57), "boring fog" (Gelasimov, 2017: 59), "flimsy fir-trees flashing outside the window in the fog" (Gelasimov, 2017: 63).

The cold is of particular interest in terms of plot-building techniques. In Gelasimov's novel the "cold" is a cognitive category, since the writer endows it with a very general ethical and philosophical sense, the meaning of the mode of being. In the dictionary by Ozhegov and Shvedova (2013), the word "cold" is defined as: 1. a cold state of something deprived of warmth; 2. a cold state of air with temperature below zero; 3. cold weather, a cold season; 4. an unheated place, indoor space; 5. the sensation of chills, shivering; 6. figurative: indifference. In Gelasimov's narration this word, acquiring the status of a category, has a different meaning – it is a mode of a) the existence of a person who has a frozen soul; b) cognition of the world. Like in Korolenko' the book is based on a real tragedy. A few years ago, the writer read a story in a regional newspaper about a family frozen on the northern road, in their broken car a memo was found with the numbers of cars passing by whose drivers rendered no aid (Eksmo Journal, 2015).

This story creates the narrative strand that forms the idea of the novel as a whole, which unites Gelasimov with Korolenko. The modern author constructs the event: Filippov was riding in a warm off-road vehicle with occasional companions – the Neustroyevs' couple – along the "endless white field" (Gelasimov, 2017: 78) and suddenly "saw a cherry VAZ 2110 car with tinted windows ... a rather high snow parapet was pierced by the car crashed off the track... From the car that was stuck in the snow, a person was running in their direction, lifting his knees high. He had a tire lever in his hand... – Stop! Filippov interrupted him, tugging at the hood with such force that for a moment Pavlik even released the steering wheel. – Put the brakes on!.. Maybe they need help over there?.." (Gelasimov, 2017: 80) However, the driver did not stop the car: "Filippov turned around and looked at the man who finally got out onto the highway, threw his tire lever after them and shouted something, shouted and could not stop shouting at all" (Gelasimov, 2017: 80). It is this event that becomes the starting point for the subsequent actions of the main character and the events occurring with him.

The weird journey through the northern city made by Filippovs (Filya) is a spiritual way of becoming a person in a world without material values, devoid of lofty goals. It consists of several non-accidental stages) connected with the life of Filippov's deceased spouse: the apartment of the former fancy lady (Inga) – the House of Culture (folk dance classes for his deceased wife Nina) – the theater, the prompting booth (Nina's departure from the family) – the fur shop (the former apartment of Venechka to whom Nina left) – hospital and morgue building (Nina's body, Anna Rudolfovna – a relative of a family frozen on the highway) – the summer cottage (Nina's death).

The moral reflection of the protagonist from the "stage" to the "stage" is growing and is in line with the imperatives of ecoghumanism, which brings him closer to the characters of Korolenko. Gelasimov makes Filya look at himself objectively, as others see him. Actually, for this reason, the "Demon of Void" appears, the director's alter ego, who conducts provocative conversations with him, in fact, about the protagonist's inner essence: "Without answering him, Filya leaned even lower, clutching a heavily breathing dog and lifting it from the sidewalk. - Oooh? intoned the demon. – Taking care of your neighbor ... What a beautiful, what a wonderful act. Are you aware that Mother Teresa is already accused of dubious political connections and

almost money laundering? Maybe, to hell with it? Is it worth starting? Nobody will thank you anyway” (Gelasimov, 2017: 217).

A.V. Gelasimov rises to the level of moral generalizations, analytically analyzing the past life of Filippov, who, appearing in his hometown, passes the necessary path to finding the sense, trying to overcome the dramatic splitting of being. Like to the characters of the Korolenko’s short story *The Frost*, cold helps the character to reveal the hidden conflict that is deep at the back of his mind, which is determined through the antinomial couples: love and hatred, weakness and strength of mind, alienation and involvement in life, cynicism and decency, depression and recovery of vital forces. Thus, as the story progresses, the structure of the eternal perspective is shaped in the text: childhood, family, generosity, that is, the “substance of human existence”. The cold pushes the protagonist to a philosophical comprehension of the situations he has experienced and that he is experiencing, causing him to suffer physical pain, which can be compared with the physical sufferings of Ignatovich and Sokolsky. The voyage over the freezing city immerses Filippov into the chaos of reality and helps him to overcome the irregularity of the world, to see the moral sense that is proper, but lost by man. The motive of the road (trip to the placer mine) brings together the plot construction of the texts by Korolenko and Gelasimov.

Cold, as well as frost in Korolenko’s short story, creates a physical/real/retrospective and moral/metaphysical space. These types of space are symbolized (appeal to metaphors, metaphorical epithets). The first spatial plane is uncomfortable and hostile for Filippov physically: “ugly long under trousers”, “it darkens at three in the afternoon”, “ice glove”, “icy air”, “pipes woven into glass wool were recognizably humping over the entrance from the port route” (Gelasimov, 2017: 55), “then he opened the door, cringed from the cold and bent over the defective asphalt, covered with oil stains and patches of gray ice” (Gelasimov, 2017: 57), “hands hidden from the cold in miserable pockets, were gripped in an iron vice, legs were sprawling, and his breathing seized up so cruelly that it was certainly not the air which came to his mind” (Gelasimov, 2017: 74-75).

The second plane, referring to the worldviews of eco-humanism, causes the hero to become aware of loneliness, a feeling of inner emptiness and homelessness, emotional discomfort: “Everything around was not just covered with

snow, but wrapped into it with such thoroughness and such relentless care that not every mother swaddles her baby like this... It was not even snow, but some special, shaggy kind of it. Everything was shaggy and gray – buildings, pillars, street lamps, road signs” (Gelasimov, 2017: 264-265). “The cold here could think, and this ocean of thinking cold very obviously wanted something, expected something, was preparing for something. ...” (Gelasimov, 2017: 265). “The cold squeezed his chest with steel claws... Stopping in the middle of the track, he raised his left hand ... There really was nothing human around him. Even the road under his feet and high-voltage transmission towers blurred in the fog were just relics of a foreign ancient civilization” (Gelasimov, 2017: 342-344). In the conditions of cold, the protagonist faces a situation of choice: either to save the dog, to express condolences to Anna Rudolfovna in connection with the death of her family, or mentally to save his wife Nina.

The character’s transition into an abstract metaphysical plane dictates a critical reading of both the past and the surrounding reality. Filippov’s hypothetical interpretation of remote events is an attempt to balance the world, having achieved the reconciliation of the love-hatred opposition. If there is a rift around him, then by the power of alcohol, which brings the “Demon of Void” into being, with the obligatory condition of the cold, one can immerse into oneself and construct a proper event, a different life.

The cold organizes the elementary-sensual perception of the surrounding world: “it seemed to Filippov that the incredible thickness of gray wool above his head was a little worn out, and here, a little sun broke through to their bottom. However, it was not lighter because of that. On the river the fog was obviously blown away” (Gelasimov, 2017: 66), “the air creaked from the frost and crunched like ice under the wheels of the departing Zhiguli car (Gelasimov, 2017: 172). Attention to the boundaries of the character’s relocation, his transitions from home and under it (when searching for the dog that plays the role of a conditional conductor between different worlds) is connected with the hierarchy of being (physical/spiritual, everyday/universal), which exacerbates the existential problem of the character’s path to himself. Spatial opposition “house – the territory “under the house” is associated with images of childhood, family and the motives of movement forward, light, warmth – the frozen ground, ice, hospital, morgue, fire, devils, and correlate with the motive of sitting on

the floor, the fall of the protagonist (Gelasimov, 2017: 229), his descent from the stairs or the disappearance (of the same stairs), respectively. It is important that darkness and light in symbolic form provide worldly optimism. Eduard Filippov is in a spiritual crisis. In Yakutsk, visiting familiar places, through his memories, he tries to “grope” for real life and hopes to get inner peace. As the story goes, the questions of moral choice and conscience, from which the character cannot escape, are gradually resolved.

Once at the bonfire, among the people warming themselves, in whom Filya saw the devils, the character reflects: “You live, you think there is some sense in all this, you have fun even at the beginning, and then gradually everything grows so dim. This original sin is nonsense and, finally, the death” (Gelasimov, 2017: 208). Moral breakdown of people leads to the degradation of society, and, ultimately, to a fatal outcome. Since ancient times, a bonfire has been considered a symbol of the well-being of the world, of hearth and home, but in the realities of modern life it is transformed into hellish flames. Extinguished fire in the short story of Korolenko correlates with traditional symbolism, but it also has a philosophical meaning. The spiritual principle, love for one’s neighbor in a person is of exceptional ecohumanistic significance. Both writers come to the idea that the absence of moral principles means the death of a person. The eco-metaphor of a burning fire embodies the natural ethical law of mankind – being guided with humanistic ideas, despite the extreme conditions. The structure of the eco-metaphor has a universal semantic core – fire in the sense of “life”, and a peripheral semantic domain constructed by the author’s oxymoronic context (snow, hoarfrost, ice, crystal, fog, hummocks).

Filippov is a restless character who builds events in such a way as to go the way of knowing himself and the world at the level of the plot structure of the novel, being an anti-hero. In the conditions of new life realities of the terrible world – a catastrophe – this type of a man is trying to comprehend the truth of the “cold” everyday life. Changes in Filippov occurred when he tasted life in Moscow and Paris. Filippov’s skepticism and the inflexibility of his own views, which he acquired in the capital, destroy his personality and hinder in seeing the real life. We observe a certain moment in the life of the protagonist, when he, returning to Yakutsk, changes his attitude to life. Reflecting Filippov is in his own closed inner world, which turns out to be more significant than the world of other characters and even the Universe. This is

the principled position of the writer, who initially invested a human soul in his protagonist, which had frozen for a long time in him, but thawed out in the conditions of the northern frost. Such author’s position gives dynamics to the structure of the novel. The dramatic effect of the narration is formed by a change (alternation) of episodes from the character’s past and present, same as in Korolenko’s short story.

Being in the conditions of small passions and the eternal circulation of everyday problems, freezing Filippov, perhaps nostalgic for former himself, sets a kind of existential task: to change himself, and in fact to remember about the spirituality lost in the capital (not to find it!). The motive of flight as a sign of despiritualization is encoded in Filippov’s symbolic journey through Yakutsk.

Paradoxically, the cold acts at the same time as the keeper of life, and is likened to a “vice” that destroys everything around: “His (Filippov’s) film strip was rewound back, and he looked with anguish at the landscapes that had returned to his life, and his memory erased readily and with mocking love the ice of the present – the water was already splashing around...” (Gelasimov, 2017: 67). “The huge, frozen through world has shrunk to the size of the warm cabin of the old GAZ-66 truck, and peace has reigned in this world” (Gelasimov, 2017: 201). “The cold has already begun to screw Filya in his ruthless grip ... paralyzed Filya’s sarcasm, his devil-may-care attitude, his evil mockery and, as it seemed, even the very ability to think...” The cold, like the Korolenko’s frost, acquires the significance of the symbol – it is life itself.

## Conclusion

Thus, exploring the poetics of the works, the thematic corpus of which is associated with the concept of “cold” and the ideas of ecohumanism, it is appropriate to introduce the term “eco-metaphor” into scientific use, this term is generated by the author’s consciousness and is a type of classical metaphor. The eco-metaphor has a specific binary structure: the semantic core (the archetype) and the semantic periphery formed by the author’s content. Burning bonfire is an eco-metaphor of V.G. Korolenko and A.V. Gelasimov, personifying the ethical law of human life.

Metaphor “frost/cold – frozen life” in the works by Korolenko and Gelasimov is represented in a number of direct, fixed comparisons that depicted the horror of the low air temperature



which freezes the river, animals, man, conscience, soul, and even words and thoughts. The symbolic image of the frost/cold expresses the idea of human responsibility for their actions and deeds. It is impossible to live with a frozen conscience or soul, because this leads humanity to death. Hostile circumstances result in a deep awareness of the value of all living things, cause sympathy for the living, awaken humane feelings. The frost/cold, as an ecological indicator of real life, is present in the plot of the analyzed works and determines the strategy of the literary text through the title. The writers believe in the fundamental importance of high moral ideals, the significance of the existential search for the truth by a man in the imperfect world.

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