

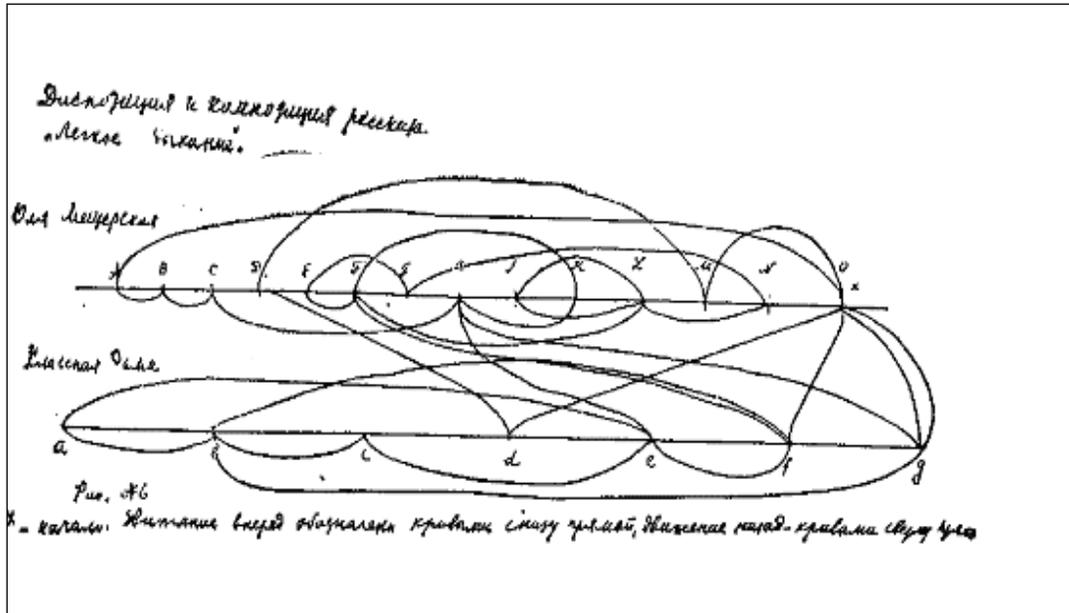
I cannot resist a temptation to immerse myself into brilliant Lev Vygotsky's work, his *The Psychology of Art*, into one of its amazing chapter which analyses Bunin's novella traditionally named in English "The Gentle Breath". With an aid of Alex Kozulin, translator of Vygotsky's work and Russian-American psychologist, I endeavor to show how Lev Vygotsky applied Enneagram principals to the novella.

But first, a few words about Lev Vygotsky. Lev Vygotsky's cousin David ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David\\_Vygotsky](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Vygotsky)) was a pupil in the Petrograd group, collected by Ouspensky for Gurdjieff's lectures in the time 1914-1916 (info from private letter by Russian psychologist and musician Andrew Suchilin). Lev was very receptive to older David's influence; A. Suchilin believes that Gurdjieff's ideas become known to Lev through David (he also mentions that Lev changed his last name from family name Vygotsky to Vygotsky). While still at the gymnasium Vygotsky completed the essay on Hamlet (1916) which was included in his dissertation on *The Psychology of Art* in 1925. He also became a junior psychologist at the Psychological Institute of Moscow University and was soon highly regarded in the field.

Vygotsky studied the interaction between the form and material which "is best understood in terms of *catharsis*... this term from Aristotle's *Poetics* to designate the discharge of emotions that build up in ...a reader... The cathartic 'purification' not only discharges the tension but also transforms human feelings." (17, p. 39-40)

"The storyline of Bunin's novella is roughly as follows: Olya Mescherskaya, a high-schoolgirl, lives a life that is no different from that of any other average, pretty and well-to-do girl from a provincial Russian town. Then something happens. She has a love affair with Malyutin, a landowner and friend of her father's who is much older than herself. Then she has a liaison with a Cossack officer whom she attracted and promised to wed. All this leads her astray. As a result the Cossack officer betrayed yet still in love with Olya, shoots her in crowded railway station. Olya's schoolmistress chooses the deceased as the subject of her passionate worship and frequently visits her grave.

The story thus has two character lines, one of the schoolgirl and the other of the teacher. The girl's chronological axis has fourteen episodes, from *A* to *O*, and the teacher's has seven episodes from *a* to *g*." (17, p. 40; 28, p.112)



The Vygotsky's drawing. (28, p. 114)

I have to note here that traditional translation “The gentle breath” is distortion. The Russian adjective “lehkoya” applied to the noun “dyhahnye” (breath) means facile breath – superficial, easy (light) breath, nimble, brisk breath. I believe the similar meaning has name of American movie “Easy riders”. I use term “facile” below. “The facile breath” is the title of novella by I.A.Bunin.

“If, however, we connect these episodes in the sequence in which they become known to the reader, a much more complex structure emerges with some episodes running ahead of their chronological time (indicted by arches above the axes) and some returning to the time passed (indicated by arches below the axes). The straight line represents the chronologically arranged story, while the arches in their totality represent the plot of Bunin’s novella.... The life depicted ...is rather dull and senseless from the beginning to the tragic end. There is nothing in the storyline that transcends the ‘muddy waters of life’, as Vygotsky calls it. Nevertheless, the general feeling evoked in the reader of this novella is quite the *opposite* of that conveyed by the material. This resultant feeling is one of liberation. It is this light [easy], gentle [facile] breath of the title that is the real theme of the novella” (17, p. 41; 28, p.113-117)

Once Olya’s teacher overheard her talking about ‘the old funny book’ described ‘the facile breath’ as most essential element of female beauty. The final sentence by

teacher - 'Now this facile breath evaporated in the world , in this cloudy sky...' – was perceived by Vygotsky as the cathartic point of the novella which brings the reader to an “almost religious feeling of ‘purification’... all previous events reveal their second nature when experienced through the prism of the gentle [facile] breath.” (17, p. 42)

Vygotsky offered the formula: “art is a social technique of feelings” (28, p.6) which become the element his theory of symbols that considers a symbol as ‘transformer’ of human natural impulses; and art is a system of symbols which supports transformation.

“The words of novella...are carrying its plane meaning, its water, but the composition creating above these words a new sense places all of that into completely different dimension and converts it into wine.” (28, p. 117) [Translation is mine.]

Vygotsky wrote: “in each word... we distinguish three main elements, first, the external sound form, then an image or an inner form, and, finally, meaning. The inner form is the closest etymologic meaning of a word by means of which it acquires a possibility to actually mean the content that is put to it.” (Thinking and Speech, The Collected Works of L.S. Vygotsky, Vol. 1, 1987, p.29)

On his diagram above Vygotsky puts the events of each of the two main character’s lives in chronological order along a straight line. Next, he draws curved lines to show the order of events as they take place in the short story: “The bottom curve represents transition to chronologically earlier events (when the author moves backward) and the top curves represent transition to chronologically advanced events (when the author leaps forward) ... The confused diagram reveals, at first glance, that the events do not evolve in a straight line, as would happen in real life, but in leaps and bounds” (29, p. 152).





8	<i>Last of winter</i>
6	<i>Liaison with Maliutin</i>
4	<i>Conversation about 'facile breath'</i>
1-2-3	<i>Childhood-adolescence-episode with Shenshin</i>
a	<i>School teaching</i>
b	<i>Daydreams about brother</i>
d	<i>Conversation about 'facile breath'</i>
e	<i>Daydreams about Olya</i>
f	<i>Walks to the cemetery</i>
g	<i>At the grave</i>

I'd like to recall here Alexander Zholkovsky's comment: "Rather than telling the story of one fatal love ... "Gentle Breathing" chronicles the heroine's interactions with various characters disparate in time and space. Even the participants in the main triangle (Olia, Maliutin, officer) are never brought together, and Maliutin's reactions, if any, remain unknown." (30, p. 101) (<http://www.usc.edu/dept/las/sll/eng/tct/chap4.htm> )

Now we are ready to draw our Enneagram.

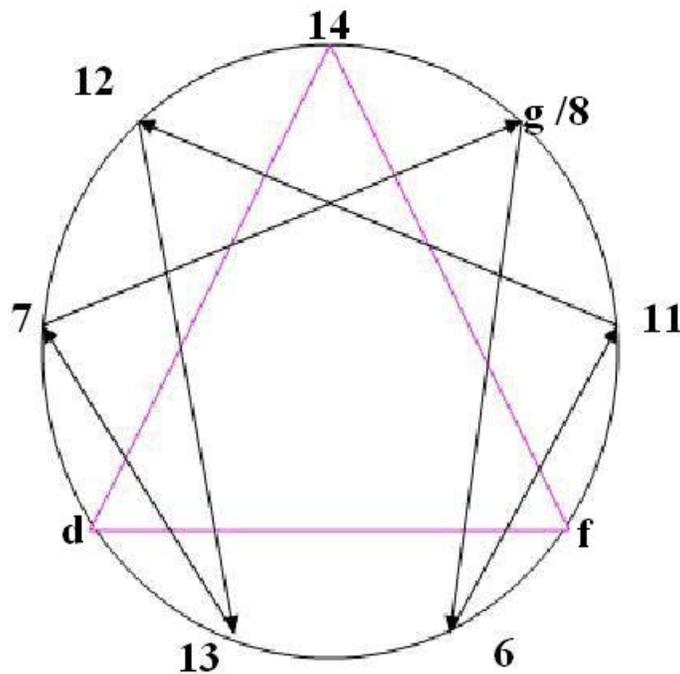
The point **14** (The grave) is apex which connects to 'd' (Conversation about 'gentle breath') and 'f' (Walks to the cemetery) – this is triangle; and connects by segments of circle to **12** (Funeral) and 'g' (At the grave).

Let's build correlations with 'standard' Enneagram.

##	9	3	6	1 nP	4 pA	2 pN	8 nA	5 aP	7 aN	1
<b>1</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>d</b>	<b>g</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
2	14	f	d	g	6	11	13	7	8	E
3	14	f	d	g	6	11	13	7	8	10
4	14	f	d	g	6	11	13	7	8	11
5	14	f	d	1-2-3	8	10	6	11	13	14-1
6	14	f	d	1-2-3	8	10	6	f	g	14-1
7	14	f	d	1-2-3	8	10	6	f	b	G
8	14	f	d	1-2-3	8	10	6	f	b	C
9	14	f	d	1-2-3	8	11	13	7	5	6-g
10	14	f	d	1-2-3	8	e	a	b	c	d-14-1
11	14	f	d	1-2-3	8	e	a	b	c	E
12	14	f	d	1-2-3	8	e	a	b	g	14-1

When discussed Enneagram in previous chapter we found that point 4 (pA) and 5 (aP) are turning ones.

From Vygotsky's diagram we have points 6 (*Liaison with Maliutin*) and 8 (*Last of winter*) for turning point 4 pA; and this is turnover from passive field to active with help passive shock point 3 which is point f (*Walks to the cemetery*) of diagram. Note that 6 and 8 belong to Olya's line and f – to teacher's.



The active-passive turnover (point 5) on diagram is represented by five points ##13, 7, 11, f, b.

It is potential to perform descript meaning of each five turns of Enneagram. Essential to see Vygotsky's diagram shows that Bunin's novella is build in such fashion that transition through point 5 transfers whole picture to a new level, another dimension. The returning to Enneagram starting point is as a rule a different point (compare column 1 nP and 1 on table above). Curios enough that active shock point 6 of Enneagram is point d (*Conversation about 'facile breath'*) of the diagram. Paraphrasing the old movie's line we could say that the *name* of novella and its *tune* are the same.

I placed point 14 at the apex (Enneagram point 9) because Vygotsky named it *beginning* with synonymous *start, opening, foundation, establishment, initiation, source, origin, principle, basis* etc. I feel that *beginning* in sense of *establishment* and *origin* suits very well Enneagram point 9.