

The naked truth for a good ending: The end in Slovenian paremiological units

Gola resnica za dober konec: konec v slovenskih paremioloških enotah

Konec predstavlja v naši kulturi eno od meja, je ena od usodnih meja. Konec je prelomnica in eden najbolj doslednih in močnih pojmov. Jezik je eden najpomembnejših nosilcev tega pojma, predvsem zato, ker je neoprijemljiv in povezan z izkušnjami in načinom življenja ljudi. Jezik, zlasti v kratkih folklorih oblikah, ohranja koncept in stereotipe, povezane s koncem. Z uporabo etnolingvističnega pristopa in semiotike lahko prodremo v globlje strukture in pomene besedil ter v njih celo zasledimo družbene stereotipe. V prispevku so predstavljene paremije iz zbirke Pregovori v repozitoriju Clarin.si, ki vsebujejo besedo 'konec', njihove pomenske plasti in semiotični vidiki obravnavanih pregovorov kot celote.

• **Ključne besede:** konec, pregovor, stereotip, paremiologija, folkloristika, mitologija

In our culture, the end represents one of the boundaries, it is one of the fatal boundaries. The end is a breaking point and one of the most consistent and powerful concepts. Language is one of the most important media for this concept, mainly because of its intangible nature and connectedness with experience and ways of life. Language is good at preserving the concept and stereotypes, related to the end, especially in short folklore forms. Ethnolinguistic approach and semiotics help us get a detailed look of the inmost structures and meanings of concepts and social stereotypes. The article presents paremies from the Proverbs section of the Clarin.si repository, which include the word 'konec' (end), their semantic layers and semiotic aspects of discussed proverbs as a whole.

• **Keywords:** end, proverb, stereotype, paremiology, folkloristics, mythology

Today, time is regarded as a linear chain of events, a line with a starting point somewhere in the distant past, from where it continues linearly towards its end. This linear temporal concept appears to act as a contemporary mask, covering a more profound and more lasting understanding of the cyclic nature of time, which can be detected in different folklore genres. There is a connection between our understanding of time and our understanding of the end. The end is one of the key modalities of relations to just about everything: the world, others, ourselves as a part of this world (Zupančič 2019: 7). The end as a concept is all around us, on every level of our lives: in the yearly cycle of activities, in spatial and temporal perceptions, in discontinuation of activities and starting new ones ... It relates to special and temporal perceptions, and predominantly marks the outer edges of different phenomena or boundaries.

The end is a frequent part of folklore literature, and represents an important compound of myths of eschatology in mythology. Myths of eschatology deal with the end of the world, the cosmos and, as a matter of fact, the destruction of the human race,

with the exception of a few individuals who later became the progenitors of the occurrence of a new civilisation (Eliade 1963: 54). The mythical end is a flooded earth or destruction by fire, an occurrence which pushed the Earth back into chaos, which in turn again followed by cosmogony. Myths often make it difficult to discern, whether they are portraying past destruction, ending of the world, or future ones (Eliade 1963: 56), which further endorses the cyclic concept. In our society, people's proximity to the cosmic context of nature is expressed in rituals related to yearly and life cycles (despite the fact that the meaning of many has been lost), and the experience has been embedded in a variety of genres and types of folklore literature, especially in myths and fairy tales, but it can also be found in tales, proverbs, riddles, incantations ... (Šmitek 2001: 33). This could also be applied to calendars, as they divide time into days, weeks, months, while naming days after saints divides our time into shorter and longer cycles, which eventually end and are succeeded by another cycle upon (day, week, month, year ...). Marking the beginning and the end mainly deals with the world order and consequently with time and space as fundamental anthropological constants. Myths of eschatology indicate that the end (of all existence) is inevitable (Šmitek 2001: 37), and this mind-set is ingrained in the very essence and existence of human beings, while the image of the end in a way mirrors the image of the beginning of the world: both the beginning and the end are characterised by chaos, which once again restores life, rather than creating it anew (Dux 1992: 228).

The end is a frequent subject of folklore literature: the end is explicitly exposed even in fairy tale formulas *In živila sta srečno do konca svojih dni / živila sta srečno do konca svojih dni* (And they lived happily till the end of their days / they lived happily till the end of their days) or *In počil je lonec, pravljice je konec* (And the pot cracked and the fairy tale ended), which are used to close the fairy tale and implicate a possible continuation of the story, which the fairy tale doesn't provide (e.g. prince's and princess's married life). Some animal tales approach the end of the world by including mistaken animals, fleeing because *the world is about to fall apart* (ATU 20C: *Animals flee in fear of the end of the world*). While the first case has to do with time, the second relates to time, as well as spatial and action concepts.

The end in riddles is conceptually connected with mythology: the end is signified as something representative of (our) world (*Bog nima, svet ima, hudič bi rad in ne dobi? – Konec* (God doesn't have it, the world has it, the Devil wants it but doesn't get it? – The end)) and as the shortest thing (*Kaj je najkrajše? – Konec* (What is the shortest? – The end)). The end as part of the riddle's question is used in idiomatic form "vzeti konec" (to meet one's end), as in 'cease to exist'. (*Mrzel sem, vendar grejem, kar bi sicer konec vzelo. – Sneg* (I'm cold, yet I keep warm what would otherwise meet its end)).¹

¹ Online: <https://www.folklore.ee/Slovenianriddles/tyybid> (accessed 11.12.2023).

These examples from different genres of folklore literature point to the extent of perceiving the end: it marks both restoration and cessation of existence, the end depends on temporal and special aspects, processes and activities. Paremiological material partly differs from the aforementioned statements, as this folklore material remains part of everyday speech. For this reason, approaching the end relates primarily to the perception of time, space, activities and processes. This discussion will focus on paremiological material, with the use of semiotic approach; individual proverbs will first be defined with the help of semiotics and then analysed as to what is signified by the sign ‘konec’ (the end), found in the paremiological material.

1 Semiotic approach to paremiological material

Proverbs are short folklore forms, characterised and defined by rhyme, metaphor and a concise message (Matičeto 1956; Stanonik 2001; Babič 2015); they maintain the authority of our ancestors’ wisdom in society (Mieder 2004), several generations which relied on observation and experience in their attempt to arrange the world and systematise it in pre-prepared statements. For this reason, proverbs are considered a convenient rhetorical means which convey social rules and values in a more elegant way.

Proverbs are usually defined as relatively stable forms, which preserve words and meanings. When speaking about proverbs and semiotics, dyadic relations therefore need to be considered (Morris 1938: 6): pragmatic, syntactic and semantic dimensions. Pragmatics deals with relation between sign and users of signs, syntactics is directed at formal relations among signs, and semantics focuses on signs’ relations to objects (Grzybek 2014: 69).

Morris and later Grzybek (2014) both stressed high interconnectedness of these three dimensions, indicating that they can only be separated and studied with separate emphasis for heuristic purposes, but nevertheless not really isolated, regardless of the use of signs or research of use. Semiotic approach predicts a sign consisting of a signifier, a signified and an interpreter. If the word “konec” (the end) is the signifier in our case, what is the signified?

The end is - obviously - an abstract concept, to the degree that, when standing alone, without specification, “the end of something” is described and defined only in (language) dictionaries. In any case, the expression “the end” serves as a sign denoting a pending (final) boundary in a temporal and spatial unit and points to the perception of these two anthropological constants.

On the semiotic level, Permjakov also emphasizes the concept of situation or context, which give rise to and provide a platform for folklore texts: according to Permjakov’s interpretation, the sign alone solves a situation, yet doesn’t depend on it; his chosen example are proverbs and proverbial phrases as “signs of situations or a certain type

of relation between objects” (Permjakov 1979: 20). The figurative meaning of the so-called “cliché text”, such as a proverb, for instance, namely enables folklore texts to be used also as rules for recognising novel and previously unfamiliar situations (Permjakov 1979: 272). From a semiotic perspective, this makes a proverb, as verbal constructions, a sign: the sentence carries a (metaphorical) meaning as a whole; as such, a proverb can also be defined as a so-called super sign, i.e. a complex sign or a sign complex (Grzybek 2014: 85). The meaning is created by context in which it is used, yet some words nevertheless retain their primary meaning and define temporal and spatial relations within a sign complex or super sign. These words allow us to discern the worldview and attitudes to basic social levels and relations. One of such signs or words is ‘konec’ (the end), as it retains its meaning and at the same time directs the meaning of a context from temporal, spacial and processing perspectives.

1.1 Development and meaning of the word ‘konec’ (end)

End is signified by two words in the Slovenian language: ‘konec’ (end) and ‘kraj’ (place/end) - the first is nowadays more frequently utilised in everyday use, the latter is signified as obsolete in this sense, while it is used in standard language for defining location or geographical settlement unit.² The end signifies a concept usually linked to a specific phenomenon, and, as defined in the Dictionary of the Slovenian Standard Language, defines 1) a part, area, spatially most distant from the starting point, beginning, centre (*biti na koncu sveta / iti na konec sveta*) (to be at the end of the world / to go to the end of the world), 2) a larger or a smaller part of an area, space (*zame so to španski kraji*) (these are Spanish places for me), 3) a piece, a part of something (*začeti na pravem koncu, potegniti za krajši konec*) (to start at the right end, to pull the short end), 4) something most distant from the starting point, regardless of time, action, existence (*niti na konec / kraj pameti mi ne pade*) (it doesn’t even fall at the end / place of my mind).³

The etymological development of the Slovenian word ‘konec’ (end) is supposedly rooted in Proto-Slavic *konьsь ‘end, beginning’ (< kōn ‘end, beginning’ and Proto-Slavic *čęti ‘to begin’), which semantically encompasses the concept “where one thing (a field, a stick, a rope) begins, it also ends” - if one looks from the opposite side (ES 2015, 27.12.2023). On the other hand, the Slovenian word ‘kraj’ (place / end) developed from Proto-Slavic *krājь, which is related to *krojiti ‘to cut, to tailor’ and originally meant ‘that which is cut off, where it was cut off’. The meaning first concretised as ‘end, edge’, from there moved to ‘border’ and ‘border area’ and later developed into ‘bordered area, land’ and into (inhabited) place’ (ESS 2015, 27.12.2023). ‘Kraj’ (place / end) in formal language therefore primarily marks a settlement. (E.g. *V domačem kraju so odprli novo pošto*. (A new post office has opened in the home place.)), while

² The word ‘konec’ (end) in this discussion is used to represent both ‘konec’ (end) and ‘kraj’ (place / end).

³ Online: <https://fran.si/iskanje?View=1&Query=konec> (27.12.2023)

the word ‘konec’ (end) can mark a location in colloquial language. (E.g. *V katerem koncu živiš?* (Which end do you live in?)). The connectedness of both terms to both beginning and end is clearly demonstrated by the idiom *brez konca in kraja* (with no end or place), which marks that which never ends or the absence of borders.

A similar conceptual development of an expression for the end can be traced in several other Germanic languages, where the expression ‘end/das Ende’ supposedly came from the Proto-Germanic *andiaz, which primarily signified “the opposite side”, and in turn developed from the Indo-European *antjo (end, border) with the lexical root *ant- “in front, forehead” and derivative meanings “in front, before”.⁴ The expression for end in Roman languages comes from the Latin base of *fine* in the sense of “a distinguishing point, something changes after the end; what ends, ceases to exist; a border in time and space”.⁵

It is evidently clear that the meaning of the sign ‘konec’ (end) relates to most distant parts of finishing and beginning, i.e. borders, spatial, temporal and processing, that end used to mark both beginning and end, where it could signify another beginning, which points to a cyclical perception of the course.

Contemporary predominant meaning of the words ‘konec/kraj’ (end / place, end) depends on the comprehension of conclusion: [biti] konec česa/koga (to be the end of something/someone) relates to reaching the outermost borders of space, time, process, which we are about to leave, conclude, noting that the outermost borders are not always defined and can mean any point, which is indicated by the idiom na vseh koncih in krajih (in all ends and places), meaning “everywhere”.

1.2 Methodology

To analyse the conceptual aspect of the sign ‘konec’ (end), I took a closer look at paremiological units in the scientific Collection of Slovenian paremiological units Pregovori 1.0, available at the repository of Clarin.si.⁶ Using the NoSketch concordancer I searched for paremiological units containing expressions ‘konec’ or ‘kraj’, and excluding proverbs using the words ‘konec’ or ‘kraj’ as settlement signifiers. This left 239 paremiological units suitable for analysis. The material was grouped by meaning, and represented in this article by a selection of variants (the complete number is significantly higher than the present selection): I tried to read the context and determine which nuance of the word ‘end’ was realized. Conceptual categorisation was then used in an attempt to identify semantic compounds which the word ‘konec’ could express, while I was looking for connections with myths of eschatology. Semiotics was used to detect both nuance in the meaning of the word, as well as the meaning of the supersign that is the formula: sign = signifier + signified (i.e. the word konec/kraj).

⁴ Online: <https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=end> (27.12.2023).

⁵ Online: <http://www.etimo.it/?term=fine&find=Cerca> (27.12.2023).

⁶ Online: <http://hdl.handle.net/11356/1455> (27.12.2023).

2 Analysis of paremiological units containing the word 'end'

Material comprised of 239 paremiological units is divided into six groups: five conceptual groups belonging to proverbs, and an additional group containing weather paremies - they represent a separate and autonomous group which falls in the intersection of experience, prediction and superstition. While proverbs express a society's world view, instructions for actions and morality of several generations (Mieder 2004), weather proverbs predominantly express expectations of future weather and harvest, and are highly cyclical and full of eternal return of time (Eliade 1963). Both types of paremies are generally classified as proverbs due to their structural characteristics, i.e. rhyme, rhythm and sentence structure, and partially also due to metaphorical expression (in case of weather proverbs mostly in the form of personification), while another common characteristic should not be overlooked, namely that all paremies include "several generations' experience and observations" and are passed down from one generation to another in the form of ancestral wisdom (despite the fact that many of them are questionable when it comes to the aspect of traditionality) (Mieder 1996, 2004). This is what endows them with authority and social importance. Expressing a paremiological unit might indeed be using a pre-prepared statement or reaction, but at the same time the statement makes the expressed thought more significant.

All units where "konec/kraj" signified a geographical unit, a settlement, were removed from the selected material, despite their conceptual underpinning of "where I live is the end/edge of "our" world"; this concept is further confirmed in e.g. incantations, as well as in mythical schemes, where forest, ocean or anything beyond the village border represent another, wild, not-our world. By using the sign kraj/konec as geographical units, the primary conceptual base described here has been lost to the extent that it makes them irrelevant for this discussion. The formation of conceptual groups containing selected paremiological units was governed by the meaning which the sign in question took on in an individual sign complex, i.e. paremiological unit.

I. Beginning

Beginning is more often signified by the word 'kraj' than the word 'konec', the latter is used in this sense in only one case. The conceptualisation of beginning makes it clear that it is a point at the border, simply a place where a process begins.

1. *Od kraja moli boga in od kraja kruh jej.* (Prey from the beginning and eat bread from the beginning.)
2. *Smrt kosi od kraja. / konca.* (Death mows from the beginning.)
3. *Smrt je slepa, od kraja pobira, nič ne izbira.* (Death is blind, it takes from the beginning, it does not choose.)
4. *Kdor kosi od kraja, psa pusti, da laja.* (The one who mows from the beginning, leaves the dog barking.)

II. Edge

Proverbs where the sign 'konec' / 'kraj' means a border area, running along the edge. The edge is an area, not a single point. While the edge can mean distance, invisibility (6.), it can also mean greater exposure to sun, in this case positive one (8.), the absence of the phenomenon at borders can mean total absence (5).

5. *Strah je v sredi votel, ob krajih ga pa nič ni.* (The fear is hollow inside, at the ends there is none of it.)
6. *Tukaj na kraju, tam na sredi v raju.* (Here at the end, in paradise in the middle.)
7. *Konec jezika se rado opotika.* (The end of the tongue likes to knot.)
8. *Lepe črešnje na koncu vej raso.* (Good cherries grow at the end of the branch.)
9. *Ako pri kraju ne vidiš dna, ne bredi čez vodo!* (If you don't see the bottom at the edge, don't wade across the water!)

III. Side

A special category emerged, wherein 'konec' or 'kraj' mark a side, with the focus mainly on the two-sidedness of an object (stick, knife ...). There is a clear perception of binary in this group: everything has two sides, these two sides can be cut into, while a side can also denote spare next to something (12.):

10. *Palica ima dva konca / kraja.* (The stick has two ends.)
11. *Je nož, ki na dva kraja reže.* (The knife cuts two ways.)
12. *Kraj suhega drevesa tudi sirovo zgori.* (By the dry tree the fresh one burns also.)

IV. Conclusion

The most common conceptual interpretation of the word 'konec' in today's everyday life is conclusion, so it comes as no surprise that the majority of paremiological units were conceptually related to this meaning (conclusion of a process, of time). In these cases, the end marks a final point, a moment when an outermost limit is reached.

13. *Konec dober, vse dobro.* (All's well that ends well.)
14. *Vsak doseže svoj konec, a cilja ne.* (Everyone reaches their end, but not the goal.)
15. *Vsaka reč ima svoj konec.* (Everything has its end.)
16. *Kjer začno ženske, zlepa ni konca.* (Where women begin, there is no end.)
17. *Vsaka pesem ima svoj konec.* (Every song has its end.)
18. *Začetek ljubezni je sladak, konec pa grenak.* (The beginning of love is sweet; the end is sour.)
19. *Ako eno drevo pade, ni gozda kraj.* (If one tree falls, it is not the end of the forest.)

The paremiological unit *Vsaka reč ima svoj konec, klobasa ima dva* (Everything has its end, the sausage has two) points to a close conceptual connection within meanings expressed by the word 'konec' / 'kraj'. Conceptually, it always denotes a marginal, border area which marks the borders of existence, and at the same time calls attention to either multiple ends or the relativity of a point of view, while stressing the binary concept of two sides.

V. Death

Death represents the end of life (or the end of the known). Since death is a fairly taboo phenomenon, it is often replaced with other, euphemistic expressions. One of them is “end”, which, when used for human beings, marks death.

20. *Zlobni človek ne vzame kon'c.* (Evil person does not take the end.)
21. *Kdor ne bo lačnemu kruha podal, lahko bo od žeje še konec jemat.* (The one that does not give the bread to the poor, might take the end from thirst.)
22. *Pijanec vzame slab konec.* (A drunk takes a bad end.)
23. *Dolgi boleznj konec motika.* (After long disease the end is slipping.)

In this sense “end” refers mainly to a bad ending and such proverbs are used as admonitions (21, 22) or warnings of (seemingly) eternal persistence of evil (20, 23). In no case does the ‘end’ refer to a positive outcome.

VI. Weather paremies

The analysed material contained approximately 21% of weather paremies. In most cases, they referred to an end of a specific period: year, season, month. This exposes a connection of end with the temporal perspective.

Anticipation of a season’s end is most obvious in the case of winter: the end of winter means the arrival of a less difficult period, the promise of harvest, warmth and more light. Weather paremies either warn that the winter will not be over soon:

24. *Če na svečnico (2. 2.) od strehe kane prej ko od sveče, ne bo še kmalu konec zime.* (If on Candlemas it drips from the roof sooner than it drips from the candle, the winter will not end anytime soon.)
25. *Če sv. Petra stol (22. 2.) mrazi, še dolgo cajta zime konca ni.* (If on St Peter’s day the chair is cold, for a long time there is no end to the winter.)
26. *Če je mračno in mrzlo, gre medved nazaj v brlog, ker zime še ne bo konec.* (If it is dark and cold, the bear goes back to the den, because winter is not over yet.)

or ensure that the winter is over and a new abundance is coming:

27. *Sv. Matija led razbije (24. 2.) – konec zime.* (St Matthias breaks the ice – the end of winter.)
28. *Ljubi maj, krasni maj, konec zime je tedaj.* (Beloved May, wonderful May, the end of winter is then.)

Individual Saints predict time which should last throughout a season:

29. *Vreme, ki ga Lovrenc (10. 8.) naredi, do konca jeseni drži.* (Weather on St Lawrence lasts till the end of autumn.)

or a month:

30. *Če se Servac (13. 5.) kislo drži, do konca meseca ni sončnih dni.* (If Servac has a sour face, there will be no sunny days till the end of the month.)
31. *Če se sv. Medard (8. 6.) kislo drži, do konca mesca ni pravih sončnih dni.* (If St Medardus is sour, then no real sunny days will come till the end of the month.)

Future weather is also determined by the specific time period (on a certain day or month):

32. *Maja mora biti mrzlo, če ni na začetku, je ob koncu tako.* (May should be cold, if not at the beginning, it will be so at the end.)
33. *Če je na drugi dan julija lepo, tako do konca meseca bo.* (If the second day of July is nice, it will stay like that till the end of the month.)

The end of the month can also predict harvest, which is key for prosperity. Predictive are the ends of February, October and December:

34. *Če konec svečana sever brije, dobre letine nam zasije.* (If at the end of February the north wind blows, good harvest shines for us.)
- Konec vinotoka dež – rodovitno leto.* (Rain at the end of October - a fruitful year.)
35. *Če konec leta burja hruje, slabo letino napoveduje.* (If at the end of the year northern wind roars, a bad harvest is forecasted.)

St Andrew and St Sylvester are the ones predicting weather till the end of the year:

36. *Na Andreja (30. 11.), ko se v kozarcih vino smeja, vreme tako ali onako ostane do konca leta enako.* (On St Andrew, when wine smiles in glasses, the weather will remain the same till the end of the year, one way or another.)
37. *Kakor vreme na Silvestra (31. 12.) kane, tako potem do konca leta ostane.* (As the weather is on St Silverster, so it will continue till the end of the year.)

The end also plays a role on both summer and winter solstice. In both cases, the solstice relates to a period of several days rather than to a single day. The weather paremy referring to the summer solstice focuses on the spacial aspect, and the winter on the temporal aspect of the duration of darkness:

38. *O sv. Vid (15. 6.) se na vsakem konc dan vid'.* (On St Vitus' day you can see the day at every end.)
39. *Od 21. decembra do konca decembra se utegne dan, kolikor petelin skoči čez prag.* (From 21 December to the end of December, the day stretches as far as a rooster jumps over a threshold.)

Weather paremies clearly depict the anticipation of an end, which can bring relief, as they bring something new, better (27, 28).

When talking about weather paremies, 'konec' relates to a conclusion of a certain time period, a cycle, which is followed by a new period, a new cycle. People were predicting weather conditions and harvest in the coming period based on phenomena in the expiring season. To a certain extent, weather paremias function as instructions (akin to true proverbs) concerning future actions, according to weather forecast. Namely, weather paremies attempt to systematise natural phenomena, create rules governing the 'cosmisated' world, as our world is governed by rules, while the other, not-our world, the one that follows the end, chaos and lawlessness prevail. "Za koncem" (beyond the end) even weather paremies lose their power.

3 Conclusion

The end is an all-pervasive concept. It is a part of everyday and ceremonial life, heavily present in both mythology and daily conversation. In modern times, 'konec' predominantly marks a conclusion of an action, an irreversible state. This is apparent in the units classified in the contemporary paremiological optimum: *To ni konec sveta / Vsega (lepega) je enkrat konec* (This is not the end of the world / Everything (nice) ends sometime) (Meterc 2017), with the emphasis on the aspect of passing and apparent irreversibility. A lesser known fact is that 'end' in Slovenian folklore and mythology also relates to a cyclical pattern: a new birth as well as cyclical understanding of time. This conceptual foundation is apparent in the very etymology of the word 'konec' and 'kraj', and even in individual paremiological units, where the two words explicitly mark a beginning. The mythological aspect is reflected in Slovenian riddles, as 'konec' partly relates to chaos, that which is not present in our "cosmisated" world. However, the mythological chaos is the earliest cause of something new - cosmos can only arise out of chaos and only chaos can give rise to something new. In modern times, cyclical perception of time along with a new continuation after an end, and active realisation of the proverb *Vsak konec je nov začetek* (Every end is a new beginning) has retreated into the background and left the stage to mere linear perception and irrevocable conclusion (this proverb is very often used as consolation).

The origin of the word 'konec' in various Indo-European language groups indicates that the concept of an end relates to borders, to a place of "fracture" and the start of another, new. This is corroborated by proverbs with discernible semantic groups beginning, edge, side, conclusion, death, that which can be overhanging. The sign "konec" thus includes signifiers 'konec' and 'kraj', and the signified relates to perception of extreme parts of conclusion and beginning, i.e. to borders, may they be spatial, temporal or process-related; the end is thus both the beginning and the conclusion, where it can mark a new beginning. The end is a border between the known, from spacial, temporal and processing aspects alike. So it doesn't come as a surprise that "konec" also serves as a euphemism for death, and in this case in no way relates to the concept of good, on the contrary, used in proverbs it always serves as a warning of a difficult death or an evasion of a bad ending (or a person or a physical condition). When marking the border in the sense of edge or side, the end is perceived as a wider strip or area (border, peripheral area), while in the case of the end of the process and often also of time, such as death, it denotes a point.

When talking about weather proverbs, temporal marking of conclusions of certain periods stands out the most. Judging by exposure, the conclusion of winter is the most anticipated. Namely, there are no proverbs articulating the end of spring or the end of summer, as they are periods of abundance and growth; proverbs discuss the end of autumn, which at the same time marks the beginning of winter, and the end of winter,

which at the same time means the beginning of spring; based on other narrative material one can conclude that this is based on the mythological perception of “the end of chaos and dangerous times, the beginning of cosmos and prosperity”. In any case, weather paremies are possibly signified by the perception of time as cyclical: beginning with the fact that weather courses are repeated every year or that individual days foretell a specific weather course in the near future, are strong indicators of the social perception of the cyclical nature of time. It is also obvious that ends mean conclusions of certain periods and simultaneously beginnings of new ones. Expectation of a conclusion is usually related to the duration of a less favourable period, whose end we are looking forward to: the end of winter or a long illness, as this will be succeeded by a new, better beginning. At the same time the weather proverbs use beginnings and endings to mark our “cosmised” world, which should function “according to rules”, in contrast to the not-our world, where chaos reigns and where there is no beginning and no end.

‘Konec’ also exposes our perception of binary: the existence of two sides as two extremes: a beginning and an end (e.g. 9, 18) or left and right (10), in the same way that they mark beginning and concluding, but not everything in between: just like in fairy tales featuring a prince marrying his chosen one, we read *In živela sta srečno do konca dni* (And they lived happily till the end of days) without learning anything about the couple’s married life. This binary or focus on two extremes is also evident in paremiological units which made it into the collection of the most familiar Slovenian paremies and M. Meterc classified in the so-called paremiological optimum: *Kakršen začetek takšen konec / Konec dober, vse dobro / Slab začetek, dober konec* (As it begins, so it ends / Good end, all good / Bad beginning, good ending) (Meterc 2017: 237–250).

Proverbs as super signs undoubtedly point to diachronic self-perception of society and the way it functions in time and space (chronotope), with specific expressions or signs within this complex super sign direct the meaning and point to relations among individual phenomena. ‘End’ as a concept is difficult to pinpoint, as it is usually related to actual phenomena and is not examined independently in discussions. But in each and every case it expresses its etymological base: conclusion and beginning, beginning and conclusion, i.e. the turning point which gives rise to the new.

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