The Author's Modality and Stratificational Structure of a Literary Text in Modern English

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Abstract: Any literary text irrespective of its genre or trend represents a unique and aesthetic image of the world, created by the author according to his communicative intention and his subjective modality. Hence, the subjective is the organizing axis of a literary work, for, in expressing his vision of the world, the author represents reality in the way that he considers to be most fitting. The interaction and co-existence of subjective and objective factors find their realization in the stratificational structure of the text, i.e. in its multi-layered constitution. The interdisciplinary methodology of research, employed in the article involves some essential data of the theory of literature, linguo-stylistics, text interpretation and linguo-pragmatics.

Any literary text irrespective of its genre or trend represents a unique and aesthetic image of the world, created by the author in precisely the way his communicative intention and subjective modality have urged him to create. Being the product of the author's imagination, a literary work is always based upon objective reality, for there is no source that feeds one's imagination other than objective reality. A literary work is thus an image of referential fragment of extralinguistic reality, arranged in accordance with the author's subjective modus, i.e. his vision of the world.

Both science and the arts aim at cognizing and interpreting the world we live in. But in contrast to science, where the means of cognition is an inductive and a deductive analysis, the means of cognition in literature and other arts is a re-creation of objective reality in the form of images drawn from reality itself. Hence, the relation between reality and literature is essentially that of an object and its image. An image is always similar to its referential object, as, for example, a painted portrait of a person is similar to the person himself. The similarity between an object and its image is conditioned by the fact that the latter is a representation of the former. But, however great this similarity might be, it will always remain a similarity and never become an identity, for an object cannot be at the same time its own image.

But an image is always somebody's creation. In other words, an image has not only its object but also its creator, the author. It implies the following:

1. First, an author, in setting out to re-create a fragment of reality, re-creates those features of it which seem to him to be most essential. In doing this he is guided by his own consciousness and his modality (i.e. his vision and attitude towards the world) as well as by the intralinguistic regularities of verbal art presentation. He makes a selection of various features to be represented in the individual, aesthetic image of the world re-created by him.

2. Secondly, the object, i.e. referential extralinguistic reality, is neutral to the observer, whereas the image of reality created by the author is not. For, one of the

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universal ways of the world perception is the identification of one object (a thing or an event) through another on the basis of their common properties, i.e. the similarity existing between them. This leads to deeper penetration into the essence of the target object, resulting in creating its new, subjective image which is different from its origin. Such an associative cognition of the objective world is conditioned, first of all, by cultural consciousness of people and secondly, by the man's ability of metaphorical thinking and his individual, subjective-evaluative vision of things.

Thus, any image of reality in a literary text contains both - objective and subjective features. Yet, it is the author's communicative intention and his subjective modality that represent the organizing axis of a literary work.

Literature is a medium for transmitting aesthetic information, i.e. the author's message, implying an intersubjective approach to the study of a literary text. Like any other kind of communication, it must involve not only the addresser (the author), but also the addressee (the reader). R. Jakobson, in his "Linguistics and Peotics"(1960) stated, that a literary work is always written for an audience, whether the author admits it or not. When the author sets out to write, he is urged on by a desire to impart his vision and attitude towards the world to someone, a reader. An author may have, each time, a particular kind of reader in mind. But he will always write for a reader whom he expects to share his attitude, imbibe it and adopt it as his own.

Within the framework of the modern anthropocentric-communicational paradigm of linguistic thought a literary text is studied via intersubjectivity as a communication of the author with the reader. But the existence of the relationship: the author - the text - the reader should not automatically give grounds for an assumption that, what the author has conveyed in the literary work passes on to the reader naturally and easily. In other words, reading does not necessarily result in the reader's direct perception of what the author has conveyed in his work.

The complexity of a literary work, since it is an involved interrelation of the objective and the subjective, the real and the imagined, the direct and the implied, makes the perception of it a creative effort. A reader, who penetrates into the subtleties of a literary work, implied in it as a sub-text, is sharing the author's aesthetic vision of the world. He/she becomes a sort of co-creator, a fact, which alone makes reading an aesthetic pleasure. On the other hand, one, who does not perceive the author's implications, tends to oversimplify the text. It is oversimplification when a reader sees only the surface (plot) level of the literary text, its characters and conflicts as life individuals engaged in life conflicts.

We hope, that the present paper will help those, who are but vaguely aware of the intrinsic properties of a literary work, to develop a more appreciative approach to the reading of fiction.

While reading a literary text one gradually moves from the first word of it on to the last. The words combine into phrases, phrases into sentences, sentences into paragraphs, paragraphs making up larger passages: chapters, sections and parts. All these represent the verbal layer of a literary text, i.e. the plane of expression containing the factual information of the literary work.

At the same time, when reading a text of imaginative literature an intellectual reader cannot but perceive another layer gradually emerging out of these verbal

sequences. In Text Interpretation this layer is consedered as implicational sub-text, conveying the aesthetical-poetic information, a message, encoded in the text by the author (Kukharenko 1988). This sub-textual, poetic layer of a literary text can be defined as plane of content. These two layers of a literary text are inseperable from each other, as any change in the surface structure of the text simulateneously changes its aesthetical-poetic content. It is in the literary text that the etymological meaning of the word "text" (from the Latin textum, texo = to weave) is motivated.

The cohision of these two layers (the verbal and the implied) constitutes the poetic structure of a literary text. Linguistically it means that the poetic structure of a literary text is of a stratificational model, having as its constituents the plane of expression and the plane of content, each having a multi-dimensional character. It is the stratificational structure of a literary text that conveys the author's message. All the entities of the text compose a hierarchy of interdependant layers. The basic unit of the stratificational structure is the word, for all the various layers of the structure, i.e. the syntactic, the semantic, the stylistic, are expressed in words.

Representation of a literary text in terms of a structure or a hierarchy of layers presupposes the concepts of macro- and micro-elements and bears upon form-content relationship. Macro- and micro-elements represent a functional category, characterized by relativity. In other words, within a literary text a simile or a metaphor, for instance, is a micro-element in relation to a macro-element which might be the image of a character, and the latter, in its turn, is a micro-element in relation to the macro-element which is the literary work itself, understood as an image of reality.

Imaginative representation of reality has its own aesthetic principles which coheres all elements of the literary text into a whole. Wholeness in a poetic text is different from wholeness in actual reality. The author creates a literary image according to his subjective modality, i.e. in the way he sees it. He focuses his attention only on those features that seem most essential to him. For instance, in the description of a farm-house in J. Steinbeck's "The Chrysanthemums" the following features are singled out: "It was a hard-swept looking house, with hard-polished windows, and a clean mudmat on the frontsteps." The farm-house had many other peculiarities, no doubt. But the selected ones very well create the image of the place. Moreover, they directly suggest the image of its owner, the vigorous, beauty-seeking Eliza.

In the theory of literature the term "image" refers not only to the whole of the literary work or to its characteres or personages but to any of its meaningful units such as a detail, phrase, etc. All images in the literary work constitute a hierarchial interrelation. At the bottom of this hierarchy there is a word-image, or a micro-image. They together with other elements build up character-images (E.Hemingway:"The three with the medals were like hunting-hawks."), event-images (R. Barker: "Dance music was bellowing from the open door of the Cadogan's cottage."), landscape-images (J.Steinbeck: "The fog sat like a lid on the mountains and made of the great valley a closed pot."), etc.

Each micro-image, when in isolation, is just a trope, but within the poetic structure it is an element, participating in the creation of the aesthetical content of the literary work. The meaningfulness of a word-image or its synonymic variants

becomes apparent when they are found to recur in the text at definite intervals, thus gradually constituting   the macro-image of the whole text with its aesthetical-conceptual information. A. Huxley's story "The Cioconda Smile" is a good example in this respect.   Here is the plot: A certain Miss Spence had poisoned the wife of her neighbour, Mr. Hutton, a country gentleman. She had done that in the hope that Mr. Hutton would eventually marry her. But when it became obvious that the gentleman was not in the least inclined to propose to her, she spread rumours accusing Mr. Hutton of the murder. The man was tried and condemned to capital punishment.

The surface layer of the story contains no direct hint of the true nature of Miss Spence. That she is the murderess is revealed to the reader only at the very end. It is the layer of word-images superimposed upon the surface storey layer that is suggestive in this respect. It begins with the title: "The Gioconda Smile". The allusive epithet "Gioconda", that describes Miss Spence's smile, later recurs in a number of its variants, such as: "her queer face", "there was something enigmatic about her", "the mysterious Gioconda", "there was some kind of   a queer face behind the Gioconda smile", "a pale mask", etc. Such words as "mysterious", "enigmatic", "queer", etc. interplay with another set of phrases suggestive of the nature of the "enigma". E.g. "She leaned forward aimed so to speak, like a gun, and fired her word"; "She was a machine-gun riddling her hostess with sympathy"; "Today the missiles were medical"; " 'Your wife is dreadfully ill,' she fired off at him"; "She shot a Gioconda in his direction" and at last: "Her eyes were two profound and manacing gun-barrels'. It remains with the reader to put all these suggestive metaphors together and decipher their meaningfulness, the simple surface story layer being his guide.

As we have already mentioned, we study a literary text via intersubjectivity (within the framework of the modern anthropocentric-communicational paradigm of linguistic thought) as a communication of the author with the reader. We also noted, that reading of a literary work does not necessarily result in the reader's direct perception of what the author has conveyed in his message. Adequate perception of the aesthetical-conceptual information of a literary text requires the reader's "active position". The process of reading imaginative literature is of a dynamic character, involving the synergies of prospective and retrospective types of the reception of the aesthetical content of a poetic text.

When we read a literary text our thought does not run in just one, onward direction. Its movement is both progressive and recursive, moving onward with a return to what has been previously stated. This peculiar movement of the thought is conditioned by the fact that the literary text represents a cohesion of two layers: verbal, which is direct and linear, and implicational, i.e. sub-textual, the perception of which depends on the intellectual level of the reader.

When we begin to read a literary work we do not yet perceive the complexity of the content contained in the whole of it, though the text is well understood by us (considering that it is written in the language we know). The covered portion of the text is part of the literary work and as such it gives us but a rough approximation of the meaning of the whole text, which we proceed to read. And the newly read portion of the text adds to our perception of the whole. In this recursive or spiral-

like manner we gather the aesthetical content of the literary work.

Poetic structure of the literary text is so modeled that certain of its elements which have already occurred in the text recur again at definite intervals. The recurrence of an element may have several functions, i.e. be meaningful in a variety of ways. One of these functions is that of organizing the subject matter, giving it a dynamic flow. Consider, for instance, the following expository passage from E. Hemingway's "Old Man at the Bridge" to see how the recurrent phrase "old man" orginizes and frames it up:

> "An old man with steel-rimmed spectacles and very dusty clothes sat by the side of the road. There was a pontoon bridge across the river and carts, trucks, and men, women and chidren were crossing it. The mule-drawn carts staggered up the steep bank from the bridge with soldiers helping push against the spokes of the wheels. The trucks ground up and away heading out of it all and the peasants plodded along in the ankle deep dust. But the old man sat there without moving. He was too tired to go any farther."
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> (E. Hemingway, "Old Man at the Bridge")

Recurrent elements mostly represent the leit-motif of a literary work, expressing the author's message. Very often the recurrence of certain words results in transforming a word into a poetic detail and then into a symbol. In the recently defended dissertation "Literary Detail as Linguo-Cultural Phenomenon and Semantic Implication in the Twentieth Century Literary Cycle" by N. Mataradze the sequence of the transformations: word detail symbol is considered as a dynamic complex sign, which, like all other signs, has a plane of expression and a plane of content, creating and referring to the imlication located in the subtext (Mataradze 2005, 30).

The transformation process af a word into a poetic detail and then into a symbol is a accompanied with the corresponding changes in the plane of content of the text. Each member of the model retains and, at the same time, transforms the characteristics of the preceding unit, finally leading to the global symbolization of the whole literary work, thus directing the reader's attention to deeper implicational layers of the text.

We shall try to illustrate this theory by E. Caldwell's seven-page story "Wild Flowers". The story has the direct(surface), metaphorical and symbolic layers. It is out of an interaction of all these that the author's aesthetical-conceptual message emerges.

The plot of the story (the direct, surface layer) is austerely simple. Somewhere deep in the South of the USA a young tenant and his wife (an expectant mother) are ordered to leave the dilapidated house they live in. The two set out on a long and exhaustive tramp across the lonely country of sand and pines in search of a shelter. Exhaustion precipitates that what otherwise would have come about in another week or so. The husband runs for help which is not easy to find in that country of a few isolated homesteads. When, at length, the husband returns with two Negroes, who have agreed to help, he finds his wife dead. She has died in childbirth, alone amidst beautiful but indifferent Nature. Such is the surface plot of

the story. It tells the tragedy of a young couple, denied a home, and evicted in spite of the condition the woman was in.

This information, which is easily gathered from the surface layer, is made more profound by a metaphor, a pronounced analogy between the young couple and wild flowers that grow hidden by weeds and scrubs near the road the two trudge by. The metaphor, clearly indicated in the title "Wild Flowers", adds a nuance to the idea expressed in the plot (the idea of a literary work being the uderlying thought and emotional attitude of the author transmitted to the reader by the multi-layered structure of the whole text). It ever so imaginatively suggests, i.e. implies, the frailty of the protagonists' existence, their insecurity in the face of a cruel and indifferent world. The world of those who give orders and evict is not directly shown in the text, it is obliquely represented by a "he", who, the reader finds out , had been pleeded with by Vern, the husband, to be allowed to stay, but remained adamant. "Doesn't he care, Vern?" asks Nelly, alluding to the state she was in. "I guess, he doesn't," answers Vern.

The story is set amidst Nature. There are just Vern and Nelly and the flat sandy country that extends mile after mile in every direction. In the country of pine and sand the farms and houses are sometimes ten or fifteen miles apart. Silence, deep and mysterious, hangs over the land. The recurrent image of the vast and silent country is not a mere setting of the story. It has an impact more profound, symbolizing the solitude of Vern and Nelly, complete indifference of the vast world to their existence. The image of Nature thus constitutes the symbolic layer of the text. It fully proves the theory that in contrast with a poetic detail, a symbol refers not simply to the psychic aspect of a human being, but the existential core of the human reality.

The discovery of all these layers greatly depends upon the reader's intellectual and analytical abilities and requires "his/her active position". And if the reader succeeds in perceiving them, it deepens the reception of the author's aesthetical-poetic message conveyed in the text and we may consider it as the reader's virtual "meeting" with the writer.

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