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## THE POSSIBILITIES OF THE LANGUAGE TO GET THE AUTHOR'S IDEAS

*Kudinova O.A., Kudinova V.I.*

Tula State Lev Tolstoy Pedagogical University, Tula, Tula Region,  
Russian Federation

*The article is devoted to the importance of interpreting fiction. The authors consider the language possibilities of the literary text to get the author's ideas in the process of text interpretation. The conducted analysis of the text helps us to provide a deep insight into the story "The Store of the Worlds" by Robert Sheckley. Its defining characteristics are the wonderful stylistic devices and the essential language tricks to reveal the main character.*

**Keywords:** *literary text; literary analysis; linguostylistic analysis; plot; characters; setting; narration; stylistic devices; higher education*

Every literary text has much more to offer than the plot and the description of events. The main peculiarity of literature is how the author uses the possibilities of the language to get his ideas across. Review of the text <...> as a linguistic matter, framed in some integrity, allows us to consider the material side of the text in a new way. <...>... since the text cannot appear by itself, but always has a creator, it means that by structuring the matter of the text in accordance with the intent of the message, <...> the organization of the material level "turns out to be filled with semiotic potencies." <...> Therefore, the form of the text as a given and immutability becomes the basis for the appearance of the whole variety of text interpretations [1, p. 223-224]. Analytical reading is a critical skill necessary to understand the main idea of the text, reveal the functions of all its parts, and logical connection between them [2; 3; 4]. This analysis lies in identifying all the topics the author raises, as well as his view on these topics. The way the writer expresses

his opinion is also important, that is why different tropes and literary devices are considered as well [5; 6].

Robert Sheckley was an American writer who created science-fiction stories and novels. Some say he was an absurdist, as his works are mostly unpredictable, quick-witted and comical. He began publishing his short stories in various magazines in the 1950s, often using pseudonyms. The works of this period are science fiction, and they are best known. In the 1960s R. Sheckley began creating novels with more satire, irony and metaphysics in them. In the 1970 he tried himself in writing more realistic books, but soon got back to science fiction.

His short story “The Store of the Worlds” was published in 1959 in the storybook of the same name. “The Store of the Worlds” is a dystopia based on defeated expectancy, where the end of the story reveals that the reader was not told the truth from the very beginning. It is written in a third-person narration. The narrative voice is close (not omniscient), as it adheres to a single character and tells a story from his point of view.

The main character – Mr. Wayne, comes to some strange place – “the Store of the Worlds”. Despite the ambitious title, this place looks like “a small shack” made of garbage: “bits of lumber, parts of cars, galvanized iron, crumbling bricks” [7]. This discrepancy draws the reader’s attention and helps to add some irony to the story.

The main character’s behavior is confined in a phrase “a little shiver of his own audacity” [7]. It is an oxymoron, as two opposed things are put together: “shiver” that is associated with fright, and “audacity”, courage and boldness. His uncertainty is also seen through the phrase “slipped inside” (not “came” or “went”, slipped – very quickly and anxiously).

He meets a man named Tompkins there – “the protector”. This character is described as “a tall, crafty-looking old fellow with narrow eyes and a down cast mouth” [7]. His “craftiness” is emphasized several times throughout the story.

The protector explains that for a fee he will give Mr. Wayne an injection, and then he will have an opportunity to choose one of the infinite probability-worlds and travel there. The protector also implies that the choice does not really lie on Mr. Wayne, as the device is able

to read his deepest desire and transport him to a perfect world where he can pursue this wish.

However, the transition is not permanent yet, as Tompkins has not found a way to “loosen the cord that binds a man to his own Earth” [7]. That is why the fee is so high, as soon as the protector finds a way to solve this problem, he promises to make his device free: “Everyone would go to the Earth of their desires, <...> and leave this damned place to the rats and worms” [7].

Tompkins speaks quite sarcastically, which makes Mr. Wayne even more nervous, and even enjoys himself, deliberately terrifying the visitor, but in general he seems to be a good man, who has a lot of enthusiasm and pride in his invention. When he speaks about his device, he sounds “like a circus barker” [7], but when he explains his invention is not perfect yet, he suddenly gets “icy calm” [7], as it is his life-work.

However, the procedure is too much stress for a human’s nervous system, that’s why after the transition Mr. Wayne will lose 10 years of his life. For this reason, the process is illegal, and this also explains its high price, though the ban is not enforced very firmly, because “officials are men, too”, and “they’d like to leave this Earth, just like everyone else” [7].

Because the procedure is so dangerous and may even involve death (if it is the real hidden desire), Mr. Wayne says he needs some to make a final decision. He goes home and talks to his wife, who feels something is “wrong” with him. The next several months are described briefly to give a sense of routine and everyday life: Mr. Wayne goes to work, spends time with his family, but he cannot get rid of the thoughts what his hidden desires are.

When Mr. Wayne is at home with his family, he portrays himself much more organized, than at the beginning of the story. Something is happening all the time, the events follow each other in a continuous stream, but he still feels “desire and fulfilment” [7], he is very proud and thankful for everything he has, and this distracts him from the thoughts of his “secret desire” [7].

After a year he almost forgets about the possible procedure, and at one moment he gets back to reality, where Tomkins is waiting for him.

All this year he was in a different world. He thanks the protector and pays for the procedure. The “high fee” turns out to be “a pair of army boots, a knife, two coils of copper wire, and three small cans of corned beef” [7].

At this moment the reader finally understands that something is wrong with the reality Mr. Wayne lives in. His world turns out to be a post-apocalyptic one: “flat fields of rubble”, “twisted remnants of cities, shattered remains of trees” [7]. There he has no family anymore, that is why his secret desire was to get back to them at least for some time.

The author does not have to describe the setting wordily, he paints the world in several short phrases: “wrist Geiger”, “deactivated lane through the rubble”, “before the rats come out”, “fine white ash that once was human flesh and bone” [7], etc. Most of the effect is created with the help of the opposition between the “real” and “dream” worlds, it is like an expanded contrast. The function of the setting is to reveal the unknown information about the characters and the world they live in. That is where the defeated expectancy effect unrolls completely.

R. Sheckley takes a personal story to disclose a more overreaching issue, combining intimate and global problems and dramatizing them. The main idea is the perception of one’s happiness: people only understand the true value of something after they lose it. The main character was trying to guess what his hidden desire was, while it was his family all along, as even the everyday routine with them was worth ten years of life and everything he owned, and even this mundanity is the perfect world for him in the terrifying reality he lives in.

Another important idea is that everyone is the creator of their own world, as well as the architect of his happiness – in this story it is shown metaphorically through the “probability-worlds” [7], one which we choose ourselves by our actions. The tone of the story is persuasive, conflicted and anticipating at the same time. The author sends his message: we must realize the importance of simple things. At the same time, he explains that it is not that simple. Throughout the story the reader wants to know what the perfect world for the character was, and then gets an unexpected answer, that was so evident but still unobvious to the character himself.

It is also important to say that the author's hints are given from the beginning of the story. For example, Tompkins says "Everyone would go to the Earth of their desires, <...> and leave this damned place to the rats and worms" [7]. Of course, the phrase about rats and worms is an allusion to the end of the story, but the reader doesn't suspect anything, as any world seems imperfect to the people who live there, so this phrase seems nothing more than an exaggeration.

The internal and external conflicts are combined here. On the one hand, the character struggles with his own opposing desires, trying to decide if he wants to find out his desire or not. On the other hand, there is an external conflict, where the character is set against the situation that is beyond his control, because he has already lost his family and has to live in a terrifying reality, and he can't get what he wants because of it.

Another important feature is the combination of playful narrative comment and serious language of the characters' conversations. "Tomkins smiled, and his silent parrot seemed to smile, too" [7], - the author says, while Tomkins himself passionately and considerably describes the procedure. The author also adds a lot of details to the narration, making the characters more vivid: Tomkins sits in a "rocking chair", which describes his personality. Mr. Wayne speaks "with a shy laugh", "anxiously" and "petulantly" – but his insecurity is also shown through his gestures: "tucked his parcel more firmly", "holding up his parcel", "gripping his parcel tightly" [7]: this parcel, that contains all his possessions is a treasure and a shield for him at the same time.

Most of the tropes are used in the characters' speech (especially Tomkins') to make their conversations more emotional and vivid. For example, the sentence "this battered Earth was born out of the sun's fiery womb" contains several metaphors and personification necessary to create pathos that is the necessary feature of science fiction. Graphically the emphasized words are printed in italics that acts as a stress mark, so there is an impression of spoken language, and most of the story is written in dialogical form.

All in all, this story raises several topics: what is the meaning of life, what is the difference between true and pseudo-values. We often

can understand what we really need, after we lose it, before we do not devote enough time to it, do not cherish it like we should. This idea in this story is global, it is not only about family – true happiness is seen when it is lost, and to indicate it in the right time is very hard. This is the simple thought that R. Sheckley proves through a tragical science-fiction story.

To sum up, the conducted analysis helped us to provide a deep insight into the story by Robert Sheckley and highlight the most important ideas the author wanted to share. The style of this writer turned out to be diverse and unique: he combines different styles of speech, uses various means of expression, and skillfully brings the defeated expectancy effect into action.

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