THE PRESENT TENSE IN THE TEXT WORLD OF TRUMAN CAPOTE'S "A CHRISTMAS MEMORY": A COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract:

Application of the cognitive tools, within the field of Cognitive Poetics, to the study of literary works has promised to be a fruitful line of research in recent years. By borrowing insights from the emerging field of Cognitive Poetics in general, and Paul Werth's Text World Theory (henceforth TWT) in particular, the paper seeks to provide a further investigation into the workability of Werth's model to the analysis of the complex structure of Truman Capote's short story, "A Christmas Memory". The historical as well as the simultaneous present tense choices, and the two integrated voices that frame the narrative line of the story prompt the investigation a challenging exercise. The paper in three parts proposes to present (1) a brief introduction summarising the growth of stylistics against which TWT was evolved, (2) an outline of the salient features of TWT and (3) a systematic analysis of the complex conceptual structure of Capote's autobiographical narrative.

Keywords: cognitive poetics; text world theory; Truman Capote; present tense; stylistics

1- Introduction

An increasing interest in TWT, and the usefulness of its application for the better appreciation of a literary text are the main concerns of this paper. TWT (1999) is a new theoretical proposition that its methods and strategies for the analysis of full discourses are yet to be wholly applied to test its efficacy. As TWT is a "cognitive" approach of reading, it is advisable to show how the sub-discipline of modern stylistics known as cognitive poetics or as it has been called cognitive stylistics was evolved. Accordingly, and for the purpose of clarity, this paper will be divided into three main parts. The first part will include two issues. The first of which will discuss the growth of stylistics towards the age of "going cognitive". However, during my investigation, I am quite aware that to write down the theories and ancestry of stylistics is a huge and quite a challenging task. Hence, this part will not address the overall theoretical survey of the history of stylistics in a comprehensive depth, but it will offer a simple chronological description of its development. The second of which will review the mechanism of TWT as proposed and developed by Werth. The second part of this paper, on the other hand, will be devoted to showing how the techniques and strategies of the Text World approach can be effectively applied to the complex structure of Capote's short story "A Christmas Memory".

Part One

2- The Growth of Stylistics Towards Cognitive Poetics/Stylistics

The roots of stylistics stretch back to the works of Russian Formalist school and to the school of the Prague Structutalists. During the 1960s, the development of stylistics progressed towards the effort to find an extensive answer to "what is

style?" (see e.g. Carter & Simpson, 1989; Guiraud, 1971; Lucas, 1955). The stylistic analysis undertaken by the Formalists led by Roman Jakobson (1960/4) attempted to exclude the reader's role from the concern of stylistics. Such view went under attack from several critics headed by the functionalist critic Fish (1973), whose work marked as one of the most critical pieces on stylistics. The proposed new perspective of stylistics begins to launch its principles, as it is not only the text produces the stylistic effects, but also it is the essential role of the reader during the process of reading the text. In the late 1970s, stylistics begins to fight for survival from those attacks by introducing sub-disciplines of traditional stylistics: "linguistic stylistics"; "literary stylistics" and "pedagogical stylistics". However, the sub-division of stylistics is not clearly distinguished firstly because the differences between them are not based on any fixed methodologies, and secondly because of the various purposes they claimed to deal with.

Stylisticians have, by and large, moved away from the study of style towards the study of meanings and effects produced by literary texts. However, though practically literary stylistics seems to be more influential than linguistic stylistics for its concern with interpretation, it remains under criticism because of its direction to deal with literary texts away from other social or cultural concerns. The call to consider the link between language as social product and social practice (Fowler 1981) leads to a new movement to be set up towards the growth of "conceptualization" in stylistic analysis, which is seen as far more refined than the earlier trends in stylistics (see Bex, Burke, & Stockwell, 2000).

3- "Going Cognitive"- the Emergence of the Cognitive Poetics

The other trend in stylistic analysis is cognitive linguistics (see Fauconnier, 1994; Lakoff, 1982; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Lakoff & Turner, 1989; Langacker, 1988; Turner, 1991) which emphasises on human cognitive abilities and processes as organization principles of linguistic structure. Language plays psychological, social, and cultural functions, and therefore language should be studied within its social and cultural context (Langacker, 1988, p. 3). Such a new direction receives significant welcome, but as Emmott (1997) argues that though cognitive linguistic theory establishes important insights of word and single sentence analysis, the researchers have not tended to examine discourse to any great length (p. 56). These attempts remain varied and controversial, leading a handful of researchers who disagree with this generalization to adapt a strong cognitive component when presenting the methodology and direction of their models. They establish a connection between cognitive processes that enable human beings to build up "mental representation" of "worlds" during the process of reading the text and the production of its interpretation (e.g. see Freeman, 1992; Givon, 1993; Semino, 1997; Verdonk & Weber, 1995; Werth, 1994, 1995, 1999). Apparently, it is the age of "going cognitive" which endorses the idea that the interpretation of a text is not a fixed fact in the sense that there is no guarantee that every individual reader will derive the same interpretation on reading the text.

The latest development in the progressive evolution of stylistics is cognitive poetics (Gavins, 2007; Gavins & Steen, 2003; Stockwell, 2002; Tsur, 1992) also known as cognitive stylistics (Burke & Lahey, 2010; (forthcoming) Semino &

Culpeper, 2002). The term cognitive poetics owns its existence to Reuven Tsur (1992) who defines it as "an interdisciplinary approach to the study of literature employing the tools offered by cognitive science" (p. 1). To put it differently, cognitive poetics draws much of its analytical influence from the analytical methods and descriptive intentions of "cognitive linguistics" and "cognitive psychology" as these two fields are pre-eminent in the field of cognitive science. For Simpson (2004) "what distinguishes cognitive from other sorts of stylistic models is that the main emphasis is on mental representation rather than on textual representation" (p. 92), whereas Stockwell (2007) claims that cognitive poetics is "(and should be) a hermeneutic theory with an integral poetic dimension, in order to capture the interaction of meaningfulness and felt experience in literary reading" (p. 135). Cognitive poetics, which has been developing over the past ten years, is no doubt a rapidly expanding research paradigm as its emphasis on experientiality and embodiment in meaning construction. Promising publications in this field continue to appear including diverse analysis in all forms of literary works (e.g. Burke, 2004, 2005, 2010; Gavins, 2008; Hamilton, 2005; Popova, 2004; Tobin, 2009), to mention only but a few names.

The following simplified diagram summarises the foundation of Cognitive Poetics/Stylistics, which was originated when cognitive science with its central topic "cognition" started to be applied to literary texts. It also shows some of the leading proponents who contribute to the developments of each discipline:

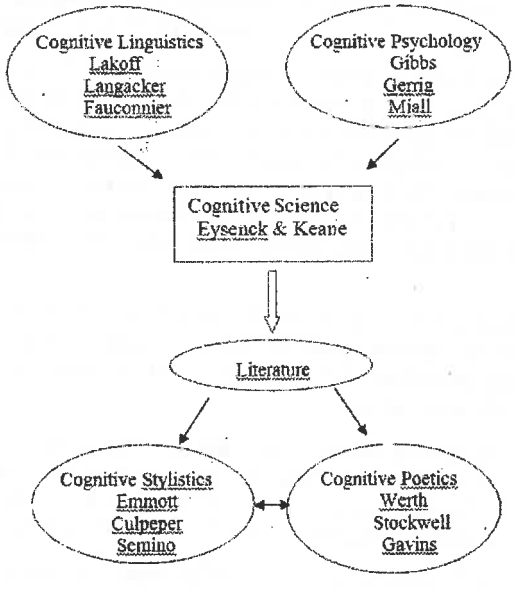

Figure 1: The Foundation of the Discipline of Cognitive Poetics/Stylistics

4- Text World Theory (A Cognitive Poetic Model)

TWT (1999) was developed as a result of extensive work, over a decade, by the late professor Paul Werth. He began publishing its theoretical outlines in a series of articles (1994, 1995a, 1995b, 1997a, 1997). Based on the fundamental principles of cognitive linguistics, Werth believes that one could ensure the future of linguistics if one is to return the discipline to "a more human level". This would entail a Cognitive Discourse Grammar in which "language must be viewed as a phenomenon intimately bound up with human experience" (Werth, 1999, p. 19, 50). He explains that his first analysis of the beginning passage of Hemingway's short story "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife" (Hemingway, 1926/1964) does not directly challenge any objectivist approach as its level, concerns and data are completely different from "objectivist aims". His analysis was based on the following principles:

(i) It takes its point of departure to be *discourses*, rather than sentences.
(ii) It is concerned with human processes, rather than formal systems (specifically, it is embodied and experiential).
(iii) As a consequence of (ii), it is *cognitive* in its orientation, rather semantic (in particular, it takes non-semantic types of inference seriously).
(iv) As a consequence of (iii), it is explicitly related to the human *conceptual faculty* (involving representation, knowledge, beliefs, assumptions).

(Werth, 1999, p. 60, original emphasis)

Werth, evidently, claims that his proposed model aims to handle discourse analysis, and such a view differs from a traditional linguistic analysis which was only restricted to sentence-level basis. However, such a claim was partially flawed as the demonstrated examples throughout his book (1999), showed that his model was applied to short extracts from several stories and novels. A handful of new researchers who use TWT in the analysis of longer discourses are to be found in the work of (see e.g. Al-Mansoob, 2006; Gavins, 2000, 2003, 2007; Hidalgo Downing, 2000; Lahey, 2005).

Basically, the characteristics of Werth's model as a discourse theory are set up by classifying the differences, based on context, between the discourse and the text as the basic units of analysis. He, in essence, aims to produce a theory of how humans understand discourse which

> would incorporate current knowledge concerning the cognitive processes of information handling, storage and retrieval, the social principles of co-operation and purposefulness, and the pragmatic conditions of coherence and relevance. (Werth, 1999, p. 17)

Thus, TWT is both a "cognitive" and "pragmatic" theory of reading as its basic orientation based on the emphasis of the relevant relationship between its producers and its recipients for a text world to be established. Unlike models in linguistic study, text worlds are "rich" worlds as they represent language as a phenomenon closely connected with human experiences, rather than "mathematical modelling" (Werth, 1994, p. 90). When we (writer and reader or speaker and listener) participate

in either spoken or written discourse, we create a text world, i.e. a conceptual space, firstly by activating our general knowledge, drawing on what we see or what we hear and secondly by building other levels of understanding. Werth suggests three levels as the core subject of his model: discourse world; text world and sub-world.

4-1 Discourse World

Werth argues that everyone has a different world as we experience and perceive things differently. However, when we use language in our communication we can assume that our worlds are more or less the same in their general sense. This process is called the discourse world i.e. "the situational context surrounding the speech itself", and is inhabited by sentient beings who at this level are called the participants. The discourse world contains what the participants can perceive of the immediate situation along with their vast personal and background knowledge. Werth specifies the differences and the similarities between spoken and written discourse as long as the contribution of the participants are taken into account. He states that practically "the discourse worlds of written texts are almost always split: since the writer and the readership occupy different spatio-temporal points" (Werth, 1995a, p. 54-55). On the other hand, in spoken discourse, the matter is different because the participants occupy the same spatial and temporal discourse worlds, and therefore the participants will arrive at an agreement to form the text world that could make sense of the discourse.

Every participant goes into a discourse event carrying a different amount of knowledge which mount up gradually, and which is measured in terms of propositions or facts. Hence, the issue of selecting the relevant knowledge is problematized. A question will be raised here, namely, at what limit these assorted types of knowledge can be controlled during the process of a discourse world? Werth proposes the notion of Common Ground (henceforth CG) which is described as the totality of information that have been accepted by the participants (speaker and hearer or author and reader) as appropriate for their discourse processing. Furthermore, in this context, Werth (1999) introduces the idea of text-drivenness by which the "text also determines which areas of knowledge – even pragmatic knowledge – have to be evoked in order to understand it" (p. 151).

4-2 Text World

During the discourse processing, the participants work together to build up a conceptual space in which the CG is constructed. This second level of understanding is called the text world and can be perceived in different ways depending on the variety of personal or background knowledge that the participants possess, hence every reader or listener may create his/her own distinctive text world. Text world contains the same kinds of parameter as the discourse world, but the sentient entities at this level are called characters. Text world is defined "initially by the discourse itself, and specifically by the deictic and referential elements in it" (Werth, 1999, p. 181). These deictic and referential elements give a reader a very mental representation of the setting of the text (provide the spatio/temporal elements) and they are called world-building elements (WB). On the other hand, the actions and descriptions of events which tell the story are called function-advancing propositions (FA) (Werth, 1999, p. 197-199). Clearly, WB and FA can be

understood as the narrative setting and the plot within the methods of the traditional learning of English literature.

4-3 Sub-worlds

From within the text world level, other levels of possible embedding worlds may be created and they are called sub-worlds. These further conceptual worlds form the third layer of Werth's model and they take place according to a variety of reasons:

- Deictic sub-worlds involve either temporal alternations in the deictic parameters of the text world as in flashbacks or direct speech or spatial alternations as "meanwhile back at the ranch" type–windows onto other scenes.
- Attitudinal sub-worlds involve three conceptual areas; desire worlds, belief worlds and purpose worlds.
- Epistemic sub-worlds involve modalised propositions, and also concern the probability system i.e. the notion of truth and hypotheticality. Epistemic worlds can also be seen in indirect speech, *if* in conditional construction, tentativeness and politeness.

Sub-worlds may be created either by the participants or by the characters. The participants are able to access the worlds they created (participants-accessible sub-worlds), but they are not able to access the worlds created by the characters (characters-accessible sub-worlds) because these worlds do not take place within the immediate situation of the discourse. On the other hand, the characters can access both the world they inhabit (the text world) and the worlds they create (sub-worlds).

Before drawing to the main analysis, it is worthwhile to mention that TWT is characterised by the use of diagrams representing the conceptual structures of the worlds that are created during the discourse process and indicating the relationships between these worlds. Practically, Werth Suggests that the expressions that present actions or events are shown by vertical arrows, and the expressions that present steady states (qualities) are shown by horizontal arrows.

Part Two

5- An Introduction to "A Christmas Memory"

"A Christmas Memory" is a short story written by Truman Capote originally appeared in *Mademoiselle* magazine in December, 1956, and later was reprinted in *The Selected Writings of Truman Capote* in 1963. "A Christmas Memory" is written entirely in the present tense, and it is based on Capote's own boyhood in rural Alabama in the 1930s. It is presented as a portrait of durable friendship between two people, one old and the other young, and their memories of special times together. The story purports to be an autobiography which uses a first-person narrator, an adult narrator who tells a story in which a younger version of himself was one of the main characters. In other words, the adult Buddy is recalling and reliving the events of his childhood, but it is told through the eyes of his seven-year old "'protagonist-self", named Buddy. The narrator's account mainly involves two major characters, Buddy and an unnamed elderly cousin-friend. We are told that the name Buddy is not his real name, but a name given to him by his friend. The story is not about the annual adventure of Buddy and his old cousin into the making of fruitcakes, but it is

a story of a boy who needs a caring relative in the middle of a large group of those who are uncaring ones, and about their relationship as pariahs in that family. The language of the story not only conveys the perceptions of a child; it also contains childish expressions.

After briefly outlining the theoretical characteristics and principles of TWT and presenting a short introduction to the story under discussion, the next section moves on to show how Werth's model can be used to account for the way in which text worlds are constructed and perceived in this autobiographical story.

6- A TWT Analysis for the Present-Simple Tense Narrative of "A Christmas Memory"

As mentioned earlier that the basic principle of TWT is that human beings process and understand all discourse by constructing mental representations of it in their minds. In this, Werth (1995) explains that "a text does not come into being until each of the three elements – author, text and reader – are present. Since the interaction between the author, his text and reader X will be different from that between the author, his text and reader Y, a given text may correspond to many possible text worlds" (p. 189). The present analysis in the following section undertakes an insightful investigation into how the text world of the story is built from those foregrounded parts of its main narrative.

As I mentioned earlier that like the discourse worlds of all written communications, the discourse world of Capote's story is "split" since the writer and the reader occupy different spatial and temporal positions. Moreover, the first thing a reader to be expected to perceive about the discourse world of Capote's "A Christmas Memory" is its title. The cultural background knowledge of the reader can be instantly triggered when reading the story's title about "a Christmas memory". In this, readers who have a cultural knowledge about Christmas will start to build up an initial picture of the discourse world (cf. Gavins, 2003, p. 132). Moving down to the accessibility to the second level, i.e. the text world level, a careful attention is required because the complex present-tense structure of the story stands as a challenge to the whole interpretation as well as to the validity of the TWT. The adult Buddy's story begins as follows:

> ***Imagine*** *a morning in late November.* A coming of winter morning more than twenty years ago. Consider the kitchen of a spreading old house in a country town. A great black stove is its main feature; but there is also a big round table and a fireplace with two rocking chairs placed in front of it. Just today the fireplace commenced its seasonal roar. (Capote, 1956, p. 1)

Even though we are given an account of past events, the narrating-self, the adult Buddy, uses the present-tense narration to relate his nostalgic reminiscence, with a few shits to the past. Dorrit (1993) notes that "the past tense may be temporarily used instead of the present tense for recounting events which belong to the same time sphere as those told in the past tense, and in such cases the context makes it unambiguously clear that the reference is still to the past" (p. 96). Like retrospective narration, historical present tense narration is deployed to portray past events using the present tense as a device to recount those past events. It is used to bring a "vividness" (Jespersen, 1942) and enhance the immediacy of past narrative (see

Wolfson, 1987, 1979 for a fuller discussion). Simultaneous present narrative, on the other hand, is another stylistic technique which takes place when a narrator relates events as they unfold, hence the narrating-I becomes the experiencing-I (see DelConte, 2007; Dorrit, 1999; Miyahara, 200; Shov Nielsen, 2004; Theo, 2005). Examining closely the whole story, one can find that there are two different uses of the present-tense narrative. On one hand, the adult-narrator is using the historical present tense narration throughout the story to relive his innocent relationship while living with his old cousin through the immediacy of present tense grammar. As Delconte (2007) points out that "A Christmas Memory" makes use of the historical present to "enhance the immediacy of the narrator's memories at the same time that the story highlights the difference between the mature narrating-self and his seven-year old protagonist-self" (p. 428). On the other, the adult-narrator sets his beginning in the here-and-now by uttering the words "imagine" and "consider" using the simultaneous present tense to invite us, readers, to experience the story as young Buddy himself did.

Incidentally, from a narratological viewpoint, one can argue that since the story is narrated by an adult narrator who tells about himself as a child, then the narrative is likely to be viewed as a mixture of both internal and external focalization[1]. Internal focalization is restricted to what is noticeable to an outside observer, whereas external focalization presents the mental processes (feelings, thoughts, etc.) of characters (e.g. Edmiston, 1989; Genette, 1988; Rimmon-Kenan, 1983; Uspensky, 1973; Van Peer & Chatman, 2001). The language of the narrative could be easily attributed to a child by virtue of its simplicity, presenting the child as a character-focalizer. However, on the other hand, the adult-narrator's invitation to his readers to "imagine" and "consider" signals the cognitive distance from the events hence showing the adult-narrator as an external-focalizer who is located outside the story in which once participated. In terms of TWT, the text world level is a process of "negotiation" and "a simply a representation of the cognitive space which the author and the reader are co-operating to form between them" (Werth, 1995, p. 191). In light of this, the adult-narrator views events from his present vantage point as an observer in his here-and-now position, i.e. outside the story he is recounting. His utterance can be foregrounded through his discourse, when he asks the readers to "imagine" and "consider", consequently creating the main text world as a process of "negotiation". In other words, within the parameters of the main text world level, the adult-narrator swiftly shifts the readers' focus to a different time-zone. First to "imagine" "a morning in late November. A coming of winter morning more than twenty years ago", and second to "consider" "the kitchen of a spreading old house [...]" (p. 1). These two verbs indicate that the function-advancing details of the adult-narrator's reminiscence which follow refer to a remote sub-world. To put it

1) See Gavins (2003, 2007) who defines focalised narratives as "modal-worlds" forming since they filter both world-building and function-advancing elements through the unverifiable perspective of one or more characters. She posits that the world created by the focalised narration would be taken by the reader as the main text world, whereas the text world layer of Werth's model remains "redundant". However, Gavins' idea of focalisation remains under-research area, and it is likely to entail some modification.

simply, this sudden shift from the adult-narrator's here-and-now to a specific time in the past is a deictic alternation which creates a flashback sub-world.

Obviously, this opening paragraph displays a lack of deictic details by which readers build up the temporal/spatial boundaries of the text world. It nominates only one character at present (the adult-narrator), but it does not offer any deictic information of when and where his reminiscence takes place. The conceptual structure of the opening passage can be illustrated and explained through the following diagram:

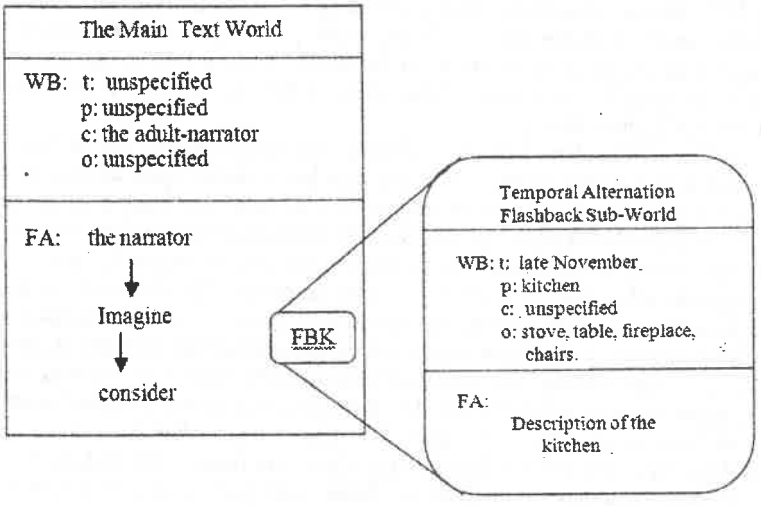

Figure 2: *The conceptual structure of the opining paragraph of "A Christmas Memory"*

WB = World-building elements
t= time
p= place
c= characters
o= objects

As you can observe, the diagram shown to the left is the main text world, where only two function-advancing propositions are involved. There is also an absence of the world building elements, apart from the adult-narrator. The rounded–edged diagram shown to the top of the figure, on the other hand, is the narrator's flashback sub-world (marked FBK). Notice how the sub-world is split off the text world and both are deictically distinct from their surrounding context.

The adult-narrator moves straight from describing the kitchen to provide a detailed account of the physical appearance of the young Buddy's friend, the unnamed woman and their joyful friendship despite both being poor. A sixty-year-old woman stands at the kitchen window and proclaims that "it's fruitcake weather!" This is amusing news to her seven-year-old cousin, Buddy. Though the adult-narrator sets the scene, he depends on the reader's own experience to bring it into

focus so that he can share the story with the readers. Depending on reader's experiences, the knowledge-frame activated for seasons and public vacations will vary. For readers who are familiar with or have a background knowledge about Christmas time will realize that "fruitcakes weather" is associated with Christmas season, the period of time around 25 December, the day when Christians celebrate the birth of Christ. Furthermore, Werth (1999) points out that "assuming that we are at the beginning of our prototypical discourse, we need to be able to retrieve, at least in a general way, the time, place, entities and relevant relationships between them" (p. 187). Reader, therefore, can by initiating a process of inference, through what Werth named "text-driveness" (Werth, 1999, p. 151), contributes to build up the temporal deictic element of the main flashback. A close look by the reader, he/she can easily identify the world building element for time because it is somewhere in the text (cf. Lahey, 2006).

The "fruitcakes weather" indicates the beginning of the holiday season, starting from late November, for Buddy and his eccentric older distant cousin, who bake the cakes for the people in their lives who have been kind to them throughout the year. The adult-narrator gives a blow-by-blow recounting of his experience with his old cousin, emphasising the enormous yearning to relive his past experience through the immediacy of the present tense grammar. The adult-narrator is entering the experiences of childhood, but describing them in a child language. As the narration moves on, we learn more detailed accounts of the location of the town, its people, its surroundings and their relationship with other relatives with whom they live together. Thus, gradually we start to build up the spatio/temporal boundaries of the adult-narrator's flashback world. The adult-narrator then goes on to explain in detail the day they went to buy the ingredients for making the fruitcakes, and how the kindness and good attitude of Mr. Haha, who gives them a bottle of wine for a trade to have one of the cakes, forces the unnamed woman to bake thirty one cakes instead of thirty. The feeling of happiness and pleasure between Buddy and his friend as being together are revealed through the satisfaction and enjoyment when exchanging their Christmas gifts:

> 'But I feel so bad, Buddy. I wanted so bad to give you a bike. I tried to sell my cameo Papa gave me. Buddy'—she hesitates, as though embarrassed—'I made you another kite." Then I confess that I made her one, too; and we Laugh. (p. 15)

Such enjoyment contrasts with his resentment when receiving Christmas gifts from other relatives in the house:

> Well, I'm disappointed. Who wouldn't be? With socks, a Sunday school shirt, some handkerchiefs, a hand-me-down sweater, and a year's subscription to a religious magazine for children. *The Little Shepherd.* It makes me boil. It really does. (p 15)

Generally speaking, within the boundaries of the adult-narrator's flashback sub-world, further remote worlds are created. The adult-narrator constantly breaks the flow of his narration to report the speeches of the main characters in the form of direct speech creating a deictic sub-world each time. According to Werth (1999), the main effect of direct speech "is to change the basic time-signature of the text world [...] this takes us, as it were, directly into the character's discourse world, rather than

that of the participants" (p. 221) (for a full and critical discussion of direct and indirect speech worlds see Al-Mansoob, 2006). Here are a few examples of the direct speech sub-worlds constructed by the characters (in italics):

> *'I knew it before I got out of bed,'* she says, turning away from the window with a purposeful excitement in her eyes. *'The courthouse bell sounded so cold and clear. And there were no birds singing; they've gone to warmer country, yes indeed. Oh, Buddy, stop stuffing biscuit and fetch our buggy. Help me find my hat. We've thirty cakes to bake.'* (p. 2)
>
> Footsteps. The door opens. Our hearts overturn. It's Mr. Haha Jones himself! And he *is* a giant; he *does* have scars; he *doesn't* smile. No, he glowers at us through Satan-tilted eyes and demands to know: *'What you want with Haha?'*
>
> For a moment we are too paralyzed to tell. Presently my friend half-finds her voice, a whispery voice at best: *'If you please, Mr. Haha, we'd like a quart of your finest whiskey.'*
>
> His eyes tilt more. Would you believe it? Haha is smiling! Laughing, too. *'Which one of you is a drinkin' man?'*
> *'It's for making fruitcakes, Mr. Haha. Cooking.'* (p. 8)
>
> Enter: two relatives. Very angry. Potent with eyes that scold, tongues that scald. Listen to what they have to say, the words tumbling together into a wrathful tune: *'A child of seven! whiskey on his breath! are you out of your mind? feeding a child of seven! must be loony! road to ruination! remember Cousin Kate? Uncle Charlie? Uncle Charlie's brother-inlaw? shame! scandal! humiliation! kneel, pray, beg the Lord!'* (p. 9)

The world-building elements of these deictic sub-worlds are entirely directed at the characters which define their attitudes towards one another. Moreover, the adult-narrator sometime departs from the parameters of his main flashback sub-world, which presented through the historical present tense, to create further remote flashback sub-worlds signalled by the shift in tense to either the past tense or to the present perfect tense. Here is one departure from the line of the main flashback sub-world:

> In addition to never having seen a movie, she has never: eaten in a restaurant, traveled more than five miles from home, received or sent a telegram, read anything except funny papers and the Bible, worn cosmetics, cursed, wished someone harm, told a lie on purpose, let a hungry dog go hungry. (p. 5)

Technically, the historical present tense belongs to the adult-narrator's mind, whereas the present perfect tense to that of young Buddy. In terms of TWT, this further flashback, which built up in the present perfect tense, is a deictic alternation as it takes the action out of the temporal parameters of the current text world, hence shifting the reader's focus to a separate time-zone. Revealing the idiosyncrasies of Buddy's friend along with describing her as "still a child" are correlated substantially, and justify the fact how her innocence allows their friendship to survive.

At the same time, the adult-narrator provides an account of things that his cousin has done:

> Here are a few things she has done, does do: killed with a hoe the biggest rattlesnake ever seen in this county (sixteen rattles), dip snuff (secretly), tame hummingbirds (just try it) till they balance on her finger, tell ghost stories (we both believe in ghosts) so tingling they chill you in July, talk to herself, take walks in the rain, grow the prettiest japonicas in town, know the recipe for every sort of old time Indian cure, including a magical wart remover. (p. 5)

The first thing we notice about this account is that it contains a quick shift in tense from present perfect to present simple tense. Apparently, the whole description of what the old cousin has done is shown in the present simple tense except depicting the issue of killing "with a hoe the biggest rattlesnake" which is shown in the past tense. Such manipulative choice of tenses seems to me to be very sensitive and reflects to some degree the same attitude of intimacy that is between both young Buddy/the adult-narrator and the old cousin. Since the version of killing itself signifies negativity in its connotation, even though it aims at killing a harmful rattlesnake, it is presented in the present perfect tense to portray it as an action happened at an unspecified time in the past, away from the same line of the main narrative which presented in the historical present. The narrator, evidently, does not want to relive such experience yet again with his readers but characterizes it as a past action. Interestingly enough, such outlook proves once more the love and intimacy between the young/old Buddy and his old cousin. Also, we must take into account that the shift in tense in the sentence "killed with a hoe the biggest rattlesnake ever seen in this county" creates an embedded sub-world in the form of a further flashback sub-world that splits off the main flashback sub-world. It, therefore, becomes a character-accessible sub-world which does not have the same reliability as those created by the participants. Werth (1999) puts it:

> ... as we shift our focus of attention to the text-world level, it is the text world, rather than the discourse world, which provides our conceptual backcloth, and truth, probability, reliability and relevance are calculated no longer with respect to the participants, but instead with respect to the characters. (p. 210-211)

In fact, the contrasts between the adult-narrator's account of his relation with his old cousin and the other relatives in the house along with his attitude towards the matter of "killing a rattlesnake" cast certain doubt on the reliability[2] of Buddy, the young and the adult alike. How a poor person who receives "socks, a Sunday school shirt, some handkerchiefs, a hand-me-down sweater, and a year's subscription to a religious magazine for children. *The Little Shepherd*", feels "boil". In comparison with what he receives from his old cousin, "I'm fairly certain that she is building me a kite—the same as last year and the year before" (p. 15). "Buddy"—she hesitates,

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2) Unreliable narration is a narrative technique that occurs in western literary texts at least since the eighteen century. It has been prevalent since the 1960s due to the rise of narratology as a discipline in general, and to Wayne Booth's *The Rhetoric in Fiction* (1961) in particular. Booth defines it as "It is most often a matter of what James calls inconscience; the narrator is mistaken, or he believes himself to have qualities which the author denies him". (p. 159)

as though embarrassed—"I made you another kite." Then I confess that I made her one, too; and we laugh" (p. 15), remains questionable.

Admitting all this, I would still like to insist on the influence of the old cousin on Buddy who experiences the discoveries of childhood with her who in her turns appreciates nature as the place where God reveals Himself every day. Those passionate learning experiences we are invited to share represent a direct representation of a young child's consciousness.

Near the end of the story, the reader's focus is switched back to time-zone one, i.e. the narrator's here and now, "this is our last Christmas together" which simultaneously emphasises the existence of the adult voice. The ending of his nostalgic tone can also be reinforced later when he recounts that he has been sent to a military school, providing a bittersweet resolution, "I have a new home too. But it doesn't count. Home is where my friend is, and there I never go". Before drawing to a conclusion, I shall, at this stage, provide a modified text world diagram for our observations so far:

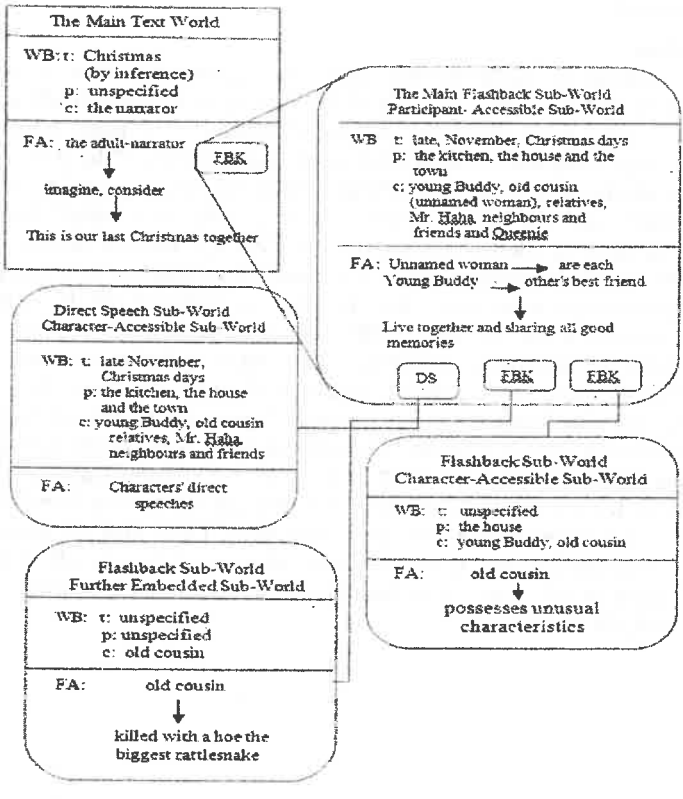

Figure 3: *The conceptual structure for the main flashback sub-world and the three further embedded sub-worlds*

It can be observed that the diagram shown to the left top is the main text world. It nominates only one character(the adult narrator), while the time can be inferred from the title as well as from the textual clues, it is Christmas time, but the place is still unspecified. The top rounded-edge diagram is the main flashback which contains the world building elements (marked WB) of the narrator's world, and the function-advancing propositions (marked FA) which present the actions and events of the characters. The other three rounded-edge diagrams, on the other hand, are the further embedded worlds, the direct speech sub-world (marked DS), the flashback sub-world (marked FBK) and the further remote flashback sub-world (marked FBK). Also, notice how the main flashback is a participant-accessible sub-world in which "the basic text-world parameters remain set as they are, but the participants temporarily depart from them [...] the details remain bound by the principles of discourse, and normal discourse processes" (Werth, 1999, p. 214-215). As it can be noticed, the expressions which depict steady states (qualities) are shown by horizontal arrows, and the expressions that depict actions and movements are shown by vertical arrows.

7- Conclusion

An attempt is made in this paper to demonstrate how a cognitive poetic/stylistic analysis, using the tools of TWT, leads to a systematically coherent reading of Capote's short story, "A Christmas Memory". The paper demonstrates how building up a text world within the present tense structure of the story needs us to pay a special focus, otherwise significant details pass unnoticed before our gaze. The framework of Text World strategies is especially well suited for literary interpretation since the hierarchical structure of TWT can account for those stories with complex layers of narrative mode. The paper also illustrates how the recalling of the adult-narrator's experience takes the form of flashback events which form different situations as they set up a reality outside the parameters of the main text world. Within his flashback sub-world, many other embedded sub-worlds are created either to report the characters' speech in the form of direct speech, or to recall events that had happened before the main line of his current narration. As it has shown how the readers may have to work harder to make inferences that will enhance the details of their text world of Capote's autobiographical story. On the whole, though TWT is still in its infancy, we have every reason to believe that it will prove a vigorous text-analysing tool. The principles of TWT, after all, have not yet been effectively tested against a wide variety of discourse types, therefore; a further continued study is still required to determine the efficiency of its workability in discourse analysis.

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