

THE COMPOSITIONAL STRUCTURE OF POETIC TEXTS

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The aim of the article is to figure out the types of compositional structure of poetic texts in terms of point of view theory. In the place available the analysis is done on the material of R. Frost's dramatic narratives. Following Bakhtin, Voloshinov, Uspensky we mean by composition the arrangement of contents by specifying point of view. This approach aims at investigating the interrelations of points of view in their various aspects. It is interesting to find out what kinds of relationship may occur between them, what types of points of view are possible.

The points of view from which the narration is conducted may be considered from different planes or levels: axiological (evaluative), phraseological (types of speech acts are meant), spatial and temporal position of the one who produces the description of events, psychological (subjective or objective narration). Although the point of view is itself nonverbal it must be conveyed through linguistic means. Our main objective is to figure out linguistic means used on different levels or planes to express this or that point of view. We assume that there should be some regularities which determine the formation of this or that compositional structure of a poetic text. There must be some relationship between the patterning of viewpoints on different planes.

The analysis of R. Frost's poetic texts in terms of point of view theory has led us to the following conclusions:

- poetic texts may be classified into simple, complicated and mixed compositional structures.

Simple is in no way equivalent to primitive. Simple poetic structure is a text in which the narration is conducted from one point of view and with one type of narration. These structures are presented in some dramatic monologues and lyrics.

Complicated compositional structure presents itself blurring of subjective and objective narrations, blending of points of view, their contamination on different levels. Mixed structures combine contaminated and dispersed points of view. The most favourite R. Frost's technique is simultaneous use of author's and narrator's (mainly protagonist's) points of view in expressing the main idea of the text. Thus in «Mending Wall» the message of the poem «there's something

repugnant in the idea of keeping or setting wall between people» is implemented in different statements uttered by various persons. The verse begins with the author's point of view: «Something there is that doesn't love a wall». This thought is confirmed by the narrator's viewpoint expressed in similar parallel structures in the middle of the verse (line35) and supported by synonymous sentence «He moves in darkness as it seems to me» at the end of the verse (line42). Contamination of the viewpoints on the axiological and phraseological planes are conveyed linguistically by foregrounding (inversion), shift of the articles, demonstrative 'that', the use of the same tenses. The main idea «Something there is that doesn't love a wall» is rendered by convergence of two compositional structures and blending of author's and narrator's viewpoints. Their positions converge on spatial and temporal levels foregrounding the message. The viewpoint of a minor character, the neighbour, is contrasted to that of the author's and the narrator's. The neighbour is characterised by a single statement, iterated and reiterated, while the narrator's is developed through the more whimsical banter. He quizzically asks his neighbour why they should be doing the unnecessary; then teases him for his dogmatic assertion. But the repetition of meaningless dogma «Good fences make good neighbours» symbolises the character of the neighbour. Balanced within the playful conversation is a seriousness which finds offhand expression immediately after a whimsical remark about elves:

« I see him there

Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top
In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed
He moves in darkness as it seems to me
Not of woods only and the shade of trees
He will not go behind his father's saying
And he likes having thought of it so well

He says again, «Good fences make good neighbours».

Thus, within brief narrative and dialogue, within this detail of a New England I landscape lies an unobtrusive commentary which represents what R. Frost means when he refers to poetry as «a clarification of life», or «a way of grappling with life».

One can't but mention the title of the poem. Although the dramatic narrative tells us about mending a concrete wall R. Frost intentionally omits the article. The omission of the article is meaningful, it brings about the polisemy of meaning and the word combination itself is half-way between a free combination and a set expression. The category of number is practically neutralised here. The meaning of the title is ambiguous, irony is implied in it.

The complicated poetic composition may be illustrated by one of the most familiar R. Frost's dramatic narratives «The Death of the Hired Man». The theme of the poem is the transformation of the husband's stubborn and impatient prejudice through the deliberate and gentle persuasiveness of the wife. The main idea is the return and the death of the hired man. The message of the poem is summed up in the following lines: «Home is the place where when you go there they take you in». The concept is the realization of the archetype «the Return of the Prodigal Son». One always returns home and is supposed to be accepted. The psychological implications of the poem become apparent only when one recognizes the gradual ascendancy of the wife's latent pity and kindness until it dominates the husband's outspoken intolerance and anger. The poem is brought to focus on Warren's (the husband's name) gradual conversion to pity and mercy for one who, Warren thinks, had never earned the right to pity. The movement of Frost's composition is the revealing of hired man's true self as Mary (the wife) strives to make her husband understand the fundamental self-respect which lies beneath Silas' plea for their help. At the beginning of the narration Mary wants to protect the old man from the abrupt dismissal he may receive at the hands of her husband, irked by memory of Silas' past disloyalties. So she breaks the news and quietly awaits while her husband protests, rehearses the case, and states his arguments. Mary answers with a touching description of the old man's feeble condition. Unconvinced, Warren bitterly challenges her to admit that the hired man has repeated to her the same threadbare promises about his desire to prove his worth. Mary reminds Warren indirectly of ways in which Silas has been valuable in the days past; through simple crafts like finding water underground with a hazel prong, his knack for building a load of hay. Warren admits that, and even forgets his anger. The advantage gained, Mary moves quietly to her intended assertion that Silas will never desert them again: «Warren,» she said «he has come home to die: you needn't be afraid he'll leave you this time». When Warren answers, the anger has gone out of his voice; but he mocks her gently and challenges Silas' right to call their farm his home. Why should he have more claim on them than on his rich brother? Mary's intuitive grasp, contrasting throughout with Warren's slow searching, goes to the heart of that trouble: Silas is «just the kind that kinsfolk can't abide». Before Warren realizes that, he is cautiously defending Silas against the rich brother's unspoken hostility. And at last Warren is willing to go in and talk to the old man. Mary sends him in alone - to find Silas dead. Ironic fulfillment and a rounding off of the dramatic conflict marks the simple tone of the ending. There is no

surprise, for the reader has been prepared by the title and has been expecting the ultimate outcome.

The contents, the idea, the message of the poem are triggered due to a masterfully built complicated composition. The image of the hired man is unfolded by patterning different points of view on various planes or levels: axiological, phraseological, psychological and chronotopical. Thus, the points of view of the author and Mary blend on axiological and phraseological level. Linguistically contaminated, blurred viewpoints are revealed by the use of the same syntactical patterns, deictic elements, constant epithets, shift in the use of the demonstrative pronoun 'here', expressive use of the definite article. On spatial and temporal level as well as on phraseological Warren's point of view is contrasted to Mary's and the author's. The use of different tense aspects shows the contrast of synchronic retrospective position of the author.

The shift to the Present Indefinite Tense in Mary's description of Silas' past activities provides synchronic perception of Silas' character:

«He bundles every forkful in its place

And tags and numbers it for future reference... »

Considering the psychological plane of the poetic composition we should mention Frost's extensive use of such a technique as represented point of view. Linguistically it is realized with the help of foregrounding. The effect of foregrounding is to make familiar things strange, to achieve defamiliarization. Defamiliarization evokes feelings and feelings guide refamiliarizing interpretive efforts, requires cognitive work on the part of the reader. It obliges the reader to slow down, allowing time for the feelings created by foregrounded elements to emerge. Foregrounding as a device deserves special attention. As far as it concerns composition of poetic texts it is regarded as a special device on phraseological and axiological levels.

Analysis shows that R. Frost uses different types of points of view patterns: contaminated, contrasted, dispersed and represented. Vividness of image is achieved by well-formed composition. In its turn well-formed composition leads to unity, integrity and wholeness of poetic structure.