REFLECTION OF TEMPORAL ISOLATES IN AMERICAN SHORT STORIES

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E.T. Hall in his work *The Silent Language* deals with the concept of time in American culture. He states that in western world time has the following main traits named isolates: ordering, cyclicity, synthesisity, valuation, tangibility, duration and depth [4,p. 139]. In the present article we will focus on the reflection of some of these isolates in the works of American writers .

J. Griffiths in her book *A Sideway Look at Time* states that time is perceived differently by people from different cultures and parts of the world. Thus, there is not just one abstract universal mono-time, there are thousands of times [3, p.42]. E.T. Hall also claims that there is a variety of time systems in the world and gives the example of Native Americans, for whom time is not duration and it is neither fixed nor measured. There is a different time for everything which can be altered by circumstances. In the lyrical short story *Blue Winds Dancing* by Thomas S. Whitecloud a young Native American experiences internal struggle between his Indian roots conflicting with modern American ambitions. In spite of the fact that he strives for a different life in the new modern world he feels an outcast in a frenetic western society and returns to his native reservation where he takes his time as he is 'back in a world where time does not mean that much now' [6, p.20]. Time there is nature-given or kairological, as people perceive passing of time by nature signs: the smell of wild rice and venison cooking in the air, the smell of rotting leaves and birds' last songs before leaving, announcing coming of snow.

E.T. Hall states that synthesisity isolate is important for perception of life and everything around people. In American culture the minutes and hours add up as people are dealing with a system and they believe that there is order in the universe; so people discover the order and create models that reflect it due to the tendency to synthesize everything [4, p.144]. As it turns out, these models do not work all the time for everybody and everywhere. The main character from *Blue Winds Dancing* by Thomas S. Whitecloud agrees that 'there is always beauty in order' but at the same time he claims that 'it is the beauty of captivity', finding a pine fighting for existence more beautiful .

Concerning duration feature of time E.T. Hall mentions informal time isolates. There are four isolates that suggest how people distinguish between a very short time and a long time regardless of the clock time: urgency, monochronism, activity and variety.

Rapid or slow passing of time is related to urgency, hence the more urgent the need, the more time seems to slow down. There is a distinction between

'active' and 'dormant' phases of everything. Just plain sitting, trying to capture a sense of self, is not considered to be doing anything [4, p.150]. In the short story *The Story of An Hour* by Kate Chopin Mrs. Mallard feels relieved and liberated after she learns about her husband's death in an accident. She is sitting by the window, enjoying the new situation of being free and seemingly doing nothing as her worried sister Josephine might see through the keyhole. She may seem to be in a dormant phase, doing nothing at all but in fact 'she was drinking in a very elixir of life, anticipating a long happy life' without her beloved husband.

Variety makes it possible for people to distinguish between short duration and long duration, or long duration and very long duration. E.T. Hall stated that "variety is a factor in boredom, while the degree of boredom experienced depends on how rapidly time passes" [4, p.152]. People search variety in everything in their lives: careers, hobbies, food and clothing. On the informal level of time, as E.T. Hall states, the basic distinction is between sameness and variety. With variety, time moves more rapidly. People associate variety with external events. In the short story *The Story of An Hour* by Kate Chopin Mrs. Mallard after the news of her husband's death prays for her life to be long thinking about 'all sort of days that would be her own'. We can observe a striking contrast as 'yesterday she had thought with a shudder that life might be long', because of her monotonous life of a married woman.

Maturing and aging is not considered by Americans variety. To the Pueblo of New Mexico, however, aging is something to be experienced. It means increased status in the community and a greater part in decision making [4, p.154]. Variety, from this point of view, is a natural part of living, and an inherent aspect of the self, providing a basically different view of life from the western one. In the short story *The Swimmer* by J. Cheever the main character swims home from a party through a number of swimming pools from his neighborhood, as he imagines them as a river. When he arrives home, it turns out that it is autumn and not summer any more, his house is locked and abandoned. Thus, several hundred meters took the swimmer ages to cover and he gets older and weaker. But his aging and 'swimming experience' have not brought him any respect or high status in the community, in contrast he found himself abandoned and hopeless.

According to E.T. Hall, informal patterning of time is the neglected aspects of culture and it is impossible to participate in two different patterns at the same time. Informal patterns are seldom, made explicit, deviations from the patterns are disapproved as people are not doing things that particular way [4, p.157]. The main character from *Blue Winds Dancing* by Thomas S. Whitecloud feels to be a stranger in modern American society, moreover people treat him as an inferior because of these differences, even if

he tries hard to keep up with the whites. R. Levine also agrees that "beliefs about time reside in a very personal zone, deep inside our psychological spaces, and even minimal meddling may be met defensively" [5, p.160].

Whereas there are a great variety of times, time and its passage are perceived differently by the existing cultures, and the writers have reflected different time perception through their works.

References:

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