A Text World Theory account of the traumatic episodes in Tim O'Brien's war memoir *The Things They Carried*

Parivash Esmaeili[1*], Behnoush Akhavan[2], FazelAsadi Amjad[3]
[1]Kish International Campus, University of Tehran, Kish, Iran
[2]Department of Foreign Languages, University of Alzahra, Tehran, Iran
[3]Department of Foreign Languages, University of Kharazmi, Tehran, Iran

*Corresponding Author:
Parivash Esmaeili
Email: esmaeili.pari@ut.ac.ir

Abstract: Text World Theory is a remarkable approach for exploration of the reader's cognitive interactions with the text. This study involves a Text World Theory perspective on Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried* to explore the stylistic particularities of traumatically-loaded episodes in terms of the shifting between the matrix contextual frame and the generated sub-worlds. O'Brien's techniques of tense manipulation, displacement of world-builders, and deliberate metaphors with or without schema refreshment have been examined to highlight the way textual features cue the reader's movements between various event frames. It was found that tense manipulation requires a more careful examination due to the fact that the absence of tense shifting is not always a sign of the absence of world shifting. Besides, priming of certain kinds of sub-worlds or displacement of world-builders was sometimes under the impact of emotion. Also, the importance of drawing upon conceptual point of view in dealing with episodes containing deliberate metaphors and/or schema refreshment was pointed out.
Keywords: Text World Theory, Sub-world, Priming, Conceptual Viewpoint.

INTRODUCTION

The Things They Carried (1990)[1] is a collection of interconnected short stories which depict Tim O'Brien's memories of the Vietnam War. It is acclaimed as a work of many styles, a metafictional work which blurs the borders of fiction and reality. It is made up of many vignette-like narratives embedded within other narratives.

Alexis Middleton states that while some critics appraised Tim O'Brien's classic work *The Things They Carried* as an authentic recording of war experiences, its elaboration is not easy since it includes many genres and styles [2] (p. 69). In other words, it is "about itself as much as it is about Vietnam" [2] (p. 70), "essentially a re-telling and re-narrating of stories that have already been told" [2] (p. 71). Traces of postmodern concerns can be found in other critics, too. For instance, Toby Suzan Robert sargues that O'Brien has attempted to "redefine truth in postmodern terms" [3]. Another critic, Michael Kaufmann, believes that O'Brien has moved away from "the comforting good form of modernism" toward the bad form of postmodernism in *The Things They Carried*[4] (p. 335).

Timothy Melley believes in the centrality of "the psychodrama of masculinization" to all of O'Brien's war fiction and states that he depicts elaborate fantasies of escape from war by men who dream of the admiration they might receive from their fathers if they attend the war [5] (p. 116). On the other hand, Pamela Smiley takes a totally different stance and states that O'Brien has tried to depart radically from the conventions of masculinity as portrayed in American war fiction and that in constructing the ideal female reader and "de-gendering the war" he has redefined American masculinity [6] (pp. 602-3).

As can be seen from the above survey of the major trends of O' Brien scholarship, the way textual features of his war narrative undergo variations in terms of shifting or movement between the text actual world and alternative possible worlds has been neglected. What is more, literary critics have ignored the possibility of developing a cognitively informed discourse for the systematic analysis of traumatically-driven episodes to offer an understanding of the way these episodes are perceived by the readers as they proceed through such episodes.

Text World Theory is an outstanding methodology for exploration of the reader's cognitive interactions with the text. Similar to the way the reader shifts from the real world into the fictional world of a text [7] (p. 123),

he is also enabled to move between the textual actual world and the alternative possible worlds or the "subjective events", i.e. thoughts and perceptions of characters in the story-world[8] (p. 76).

Working within the cognitive poetic framework of this theory, the present study is designed to explore the way narrative parameters as well as textual and figurative features give rise to the reader's shifting between various worlds in the course of reading traumatic episodes in O' Brien's war narrative. In this regard, we argue that Text World Theory (henceforth TWT) developed particularly by Joanna Gavins [9] in continuation of Paul Werth's contribution [10] provides an appropriate model of the text-driven discourse-level conceptual structures that are generated in the minds of discourse participants, the writer and the reader. It is regarded as a suitable means for modeling "the cognitive environments in which the conceptual structures prompted by metaphor appear" [11] (p. 23).

Whilst TWT involves highly sophisticated ways in offering accounts of discourse-level conceptual structures, we argue that the virtual discourse worlds, or what Marie-laure Ryan [12] , Werth, Gavins, and Peter Stockwell[13] have individually termed as "sub-worlds" is more appropriate in accounting for the contextual aspects of traumatic episodes particularly with regard to the conceptual structures that emerge through overt metaphors. Accordingly, we contend that the concept of sub-worlds provides a promising start to the study of the text-driven dynamics of metaphoric conceptual structures in the episodes in question. In the next section we outline the major implications of TWT, with particular attention being paid to Werth and Gavins's contributions. This is demonstrated through textual analysis, and it is suggested that a particular character's alternative worlds is significantly affected by the traumatic experience, to the effect that certain sub-worlds become predominant.

Nevertheless, Elena Semino notes that despite their various advantages for cognitive poetics, possible-world approaches do not systematically consider how worlds are constructed in the interaction between the reader's mind and linguistic stimuli. Moreover, such approaches do not pay attention to the role of linguistic choices and patterns in texts [14] (p. 89). On the other hand, as Helen Hargreaves notes, "the nature of those text worlds established from reading fiction will be strongly influenced by the style of narration" and, as a consequence, "stylistic features are central to a TWT approach" [15] (p. 2). However, the present researchers argue that applying Catherine Emmott's contextual frame theory, particularly the notions of "binding" and "priming" [16] (p. 123), can yield a better account of the points at which the reader is cued to leave a world and enter another one in the text. It is demonstrated that the figure-ground segregation mechanisms analyzed in

the previous chapter can also be helpful to some extent in accounting for this priming process which is textually driven.

The present researchers hope that the findings will therefore have broader relevance within stylistic approaches to war fiction, as it offers a cognitively-oriented alternative to the extant discourse analytical approaches to the genre. In the following sectionwe give a detailed overview of TWT and then we proceed to the TWT-based account of O' Brien's war narrative.

1.1 Text world theory (TWT)
Initially developed by Werth in the late 1980s, TWT integrates the experiential principles of cognitive linguistics. His work on the theory culminated in the 1999 posthumous publication of *Text Worlds: Representing Conceptual Space in Discourse* [10]. From 1999 onward the theory has continued to develop by such scholars as Gavins, Stockwell, and Laura Hidalgo-Downing [17].

TWT is a deictic discourse model that is designed to account for and explore "the mental spaces that construct all spoken and written discourse" [18] (p. 53). It is, according to Ernestine Lahey [19], "one of a number of similar discourse processing theories to have sprung up within stylistics over the past few decades", as the works by Emmott [16], Doreen Maitre [20], Ruth Ronen [21], Ryan [12], and Semino [22] reveal (p. 75). Werth claimed to have devised a methodology "capable of accounting for the cognitive processes behind the production and interpretation of *all* forms of human communication" (emphasis original) [9] (p. 6). His ambitious claim about this framework's applicability to all text types has been approached in recent years by various scholars who applied it to poetry, drama, advertising discourse, tabloid journalism, football commentary, and other text types [23] (p. 135).

As a cognitive linguistic model of discourse processing, TWT theorizes that all uses of language presuppose two conditions: they occur within a context, i.e. the discourse world, and they involve a conceptual domain of understanding that is jointly constructed by the producer and receiver, called the text world [10] (p.17). Thus, the basic premise of TWT, as Lahey states, is that when we participate in discourse we actively negotiate with our discourse participants in constructing a conceptual space defined primarily by the text and further informed by our knowledge and experiences [19] (p. 75).

Gavins argues that processing and understanding any kind of discourse, factual or fictional, is made possible through construction of mental representations in the readers' minds. These mental representations, she adds, have taken various names: "mental models" in cognitive psychology, "mental spaces" in cognitive linguistics,

and "text worlds" in cognitive poetics [24] (p. 129). She maintains that the key to a properly comprehensive examination and analysis of discourse is to formulate an appropriate analytical structure by means of which this complexity can be made more manageable. This is what TWT sets out to achieve by separating every discourse into a number of distinct conceptual levels; the first of these being the discourse world, with text world and sub-worlds stemming from it [9] (pp.9-10); [16] (p. 372). On her view, through TWT a methodological framework is provided by means of which we can systematically examine discourses in their entirety, that is, "from the pragmatic circumstances surrounding their genesis, through to conceptual consequences of specific language choices" [24] (p. 130).

1.2. Levels of worlds

TWT assumes that the various layers of story, or any kind of discourse, are not located on equal levels. Accordingly, a normal TWT analysis begins by "separating a given discourse into three interconnecting levels". The first level, called the "discourse world", or "the situational context surrounding the speech event itself" [10] (p. 83), involves two or more participants engaged in a language event. This world is governed by "certain tacit discourse principles, according to which the participants both expect and agree to perform coherent and cooperative communication" [24] (p. 130). It is the world in which the discourse takes place, with the discourse being defined as a context of situation, containing participants and a perceived complete language event, the perceptions and knowledge of the participants and the basic elements of any situation, i.e. location, time, entities, relationships [10] (pp. 83-84). During the progress of the language event, as Lahey mentions, the discourse participants build up what is known as the text world, or the second level [19] (p. 75).

Like the discourse world from which it arises, a text-world takes place in time and space, and is inhabited by "sentient beings", known as characters at the text-world level, and other entities and objects [10] (pp. 86-87). In her informed review of Werth's influential book, Emmott elucidates Werth's notion of text worlds as "the mental constructs by which a reader accumulates information from a text, interpreting and adding to this information from general knowledge". She believes that Werth's notion of text world is particularly relevant to literary analysis since, by definition, a text world is composed when discourse participants--speakers/hearers, writers/readers--are engaged in communication [25] (p. 372). Stockwell defines the text-world as the cognitive mechanism which is the means of understanding [13] (p. 137). It may be regarded as the story of the discourse or the part of the discourse that is in focus at any given time [26] (p. 53). This world is, in fact, the mental representation each language event participant constructs. Its structure and

content, Gavins adds, are dictated by linguistic indicators--within the discourse--as well as inferences drawn from the participant's background knowledge and experience [24] (p. 130).

Once the boundaries of the text world are established and the discourse is progressing, further conceptual layers which comprise the third level, i.e. sub-worlds may be created. Sub-worlds originate from within the text world and may be of three types: deictic sub-worlds, cued by spatial or temporal shifts; attitudinal sub-worlds, cued by expressions of attitude; and epistemic sub-worlds, cued by propositions exhibiting epistemic modality[10] (p. 216). These sub-worlds are generated along the construction and development of the text-world, as departures from the parameters of the original text world [24] (p. 131); [27] (p. 146).

Werth classifies these sub-worlds into three groups: (1)deictic sub-worlds, which occur whenever the basic world-building parameters of the text world vary [28] (p. 20), that is, when there is a shift away from the temporal or spatial parameters of the main text world [15] (p. 5); (2)Attitudinal sub-worlds, which portray "notions entertained by the protagonists, as opposed to actions undertaken by the protagonists in the discourse" [10] (p. 216) and embody the wish, belief, purpose, or intention of the characters vis à vis the matrix world [10] (p. 260);(3) Epistemic/modal worlds, which embody "some assumptions which modify the matrix world and posit an alternative one", which may be hypothetical, conditional or counterfactual, or "involving sheer pretense and make believe" [10] (p. 260) and cover any remoteness or hypotheticality expressed within the text world [28] (p. 22).

Gavins's suggested model is a modified version of Werth's:it is a re-categorization of Werth's sub-worlds by including the notion of modality which, she believes, Werth had ignored.Consequently, by relying on Paul Simpson's [29] modal grammar of point of view in fiction, she uses the categories of deontic, boulomaic, and epistemic modality as further sub-categories of modal worlds [15] (p. 7).

In Gavins's suggested model we encounter two divisions of such departures: "world switches"--including flashing forwards and backwards in time, or switching of the focus of the focus of the discourse in terms of location--and "modal worlds" which are created due to moralization in discourse.

This second category is divided into "deontic modality"--that expresses the degree of obligation to the performance of the specific action and includes modal auxiliaries like *may*, *should*, *must*, etc.--and "boulomaic modality"--which expresses the desires of a speaker or writer and stipulates the condition for satisfying these

desires. Verbs such as *hope*, *like*, *want*, and *wish* belong in this category of modality [28] (p. 131).

The third division, "epistemic modality", depicts the worlds which correspond to situations which are somehow "epistemically remote from either the participants in the discourse world, [. . .] or from the characters in the text world" [28] (p. 131). Epistemic modal auxiliaries including *might* and *could* as well as modal lexical verbs such as *think*, *suppose*, and *believe* are used in construction of such worlds [24] p. 132). The abovementioned verbs, alongside *hope* and *want* from the previous category create opaque contexts as they allow for what Gilles Fauconnier calls "referentially opaque" or "de dicto" descriptions, i.e. descriptions given from the thinker's point of view, in their complements [30] (p. 51).

As Gavins's modifications permit TWT for a better account of the complex world-systems evoked by episodes in question, we tend to dispense with Werth's terminology, preferring instead to distinguish between two broad categories of world: deictic worlds including spatial, temporal, and spatio-temporal shifts, and modal worlds, including Gavins's deontic, boulomaic, and epistemic modal worlds. In the following sections the representative techniques used by O'Brien in shifting between text-worlds and sub-worlds are discussed.

2. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

O'Brien's narrative is more complicated as there is not a linear flow of narrative events. To illustrate, it may appear that many traumatic contextual frames are scattered quite randomly across the entire narrative. However, as the various techniques considered below shall demonstrate, his narrative is layered in terms of sub-worlds and text-worlds in a rule governed manner.

2.1. Priming of the sub-worlds intraumatic episodes of *The Things They Carried*
2.1.1. Flashing back and forward: Tense manipulation

O'Brien's dominant verb tense in the majority of text worlds is simple past. However, he uses tense manipulation in traumatic episodes to prime sub-worlds. So, for example, the shift from past to present which results in triggering flash-forward sub-worlds, as shown in the following extract:

> I'm forty-three years old, and a writer now, and the war has been over for a long while. Much of it is hard to remember. I sit at this typewriter and stare through my words and watch Kiowa sinking into the deep muck of a shit field, or Curt Lemon hanging in pieces from a tree, and as I write about these things, the remembering is turned into a kind of rehappening. Kiowa yells at me. Curt Lemon steps from the shade

into bright sunlight, his face brown and shining, and then he soars into a tree. [1] (p. 26)

The lexical deictic terms such as the proximal deictic adverb 'now' in the first sentence as well as the proximal definite demonstrative 'this' in the third sentence trigger a flash-forward sub-world which involves an enactor of the narrator, with temporal co-ordinate being 'now', which is, of course, the time of narrating the story not the actual now in the real world of the reader. The sentence is inarticulate about spatial co-ordinate, except that there is a reference to an object, i.e., the 'typewriter', which implies that the action of this sub-world occurs in a place where a writer uses his typewriter.

O'Brien's tense manipulation can be explained by the second sentence of the above extract. In this sentence, another sub-world is constructed which is concurrent in time with the previous flash-forward sub-world as there is no shift in tense. It can thus be argued that even if the temporal predicate of a text-world remains constant, it does not guarantee that there is no departure from that text-world. More specifically, in the case of a compound sentence which builds up a sub-world, the persistence of verb tense throughout the clauses does not mean that no other sub-worlds are generated within that compound sentence.

This can be better explained by Ryan's accessibility relations [12]. Previously, her model had proved to be capable of accounting for the differences between the text-world and the sub-worlds emerging from it [23] (p.15). In Ryan's words, because a text projects a complete universe, not just an isolated planet, two domains of trans-world relations should be distinguished: (1) the trans-universe domain of the relations linking the actual world to text world, and (2) the intra-universe domain of the relations linking text world to its own alternatives, i.e. possible worlds or what she calls TAPWs [12] (p. 32). The present researchers agree with Ryan and would add that the relations linking the various possible worlds should also be distinguished as the third domain of trans-world relations.

Ryan notes that based on "the principle of minimal departure", unless suggested otherwise, we conceive of the world that is represented by a text as similar to our own [12] (p. 51). Therefore, "unless an accessibility relation is broken, readers and viewers assume the world of the text shares the characteristics of the real world" [23] (p. 16). Here, the action carried out by the perception verb 'watch' is not the same as the action carried out by the same verb in text-world that is assumed to be the same as our real world. In other words, the verb is incompatible with the flash-forward sub-world precisely because when the narrator says

'staring through his words he watches Kiowa sinking into the shit field or Curt Lemon hanging from a tree' he does not mean that he really watches these events. The perception verb, therefore, builds up a flashback sub-world that is, at the same time, an epistemic sub-world, in that it implies 'recall' or 'remember' instead of real watching. In other words, while the presence of the connective 'and' alongside the persistent use of present tense indicates that the flash-forward is still in progress, it is more sensible to infer that a flashback sub-world is primed in the clause '[I] watch Kiowa sinking into the deep muck of a shit field' as well as in the elliptical clause following it, i.e., '[I watch] Curt Lemon hanging in pieces from a tree'.

This is further reinforced if the background knowledge built by the time-zone presented in the flash-forward sub-world is taken into consideration. As the events described by the narrator have occurred during the war, now that war is ended it is obvious that the enactors of Kiowa and Curt Lemon are dead. On the other hand, Ryan's accessibility relation C, which concerns members, holds that a text-world is accessible from actual world if text-world's inventory includes all the members of the actual world, as well as some native members [12] (p. 32). The flash-forward sub-world is compatible with the actual world because it is populated with the writer/narrator who reflects our own human race, and is even a contemporary human being. The characters of Kiowa and Curt lemon, however, are dead in the second sub-world and are watched only in Tim-the-narrator's imagination, which means that the flashback sub-world generated here is incompatible with the flash-forward sub-world with regard to members.

Even when a flashback sub-world is explicitly primed by clauses such as 'I remember' and 'I suppose' in the following passage, the very clauses that help establish the flashback sub-worlds are situated in a temporal domain that belongs to the flash-forward.

> I remember the shadows spreading out under the trees where Curt Lemon and Rat Kiley were playing catch with smoke grenades…
> They were just goofing. There was a noise, I suppose, which must've been the detonator, so I glanced behind me and watched Lemon step from the shade into bright sunlight. [1] (p. 44)

The second paragraph builds up another sub-world through the epistemic modal verb 'suppose' with another sub-world being embedded in it which advances the non-sentient world builder 'a sound'. The sub-world constructed by the epistemic modal verb 'must've been' presents the perspective of the enactor of the narrator and, as such, it is built to "accommodate the more remote context associated with this participant-inaccessible character perspective" [9] (p. 129).

The same process of tense shifting can be observed in a passage which relates the contextual frame of Curt Lemon's death in a more straightforward manner:

> In the mountains that day, I watched Lemon turn sideways. He laughed and said something to Rat Kiley. Then he took a peculiar half step, moving from shade into bright sunlight, and the booby-trapped 105 round blew him into a tree. The parts were just hanging there, so Dave Jensen and I were ordered to shinny up and peel him off. I remember the white bone of an arm. I remember pieces of skin and something wet and yellow that must've been the intestines. The gore was horrible, and stays with me. But what wakes me up twenty years later is Dave Jensen singing "Lemon Tree" as we threw down the parts.[1] (p. 51)

As can be seen, the text-world is built in the first four sentences. Like the previous passage, with the insertion of the clause 'I remember' a flashback sub-world is created. This sub-world gives rise to an epistemic sub-world of belief through the epistemic modal verb 'must've been'. A shift to present tense occurs in the second clause of the seventh sentence through the verb 'stays', which causes a spatio-temporal world-switch from the original text-world. This world-switch is then extended to the final sentence to make up a flash-forward which includes predicates such as the present tense verbs 'wakes me up' and 'is' as well as the temporal co-ordinate 'twenty years later'.

The utilization of tense in the construction of flashback sub-worlds becomes even more complicated as we find quick alternative switches from the present tense of a sub-world to the past tense of the contextual frame:

> Twenty years later, I can still see the sunlight on Lemon's face. I can see him turning, looking back at Rat Kiley, then he laughed and took that curious half step from shade into sunlight, his face suddenly brown and shining, and when his foot touched down, in that instant, he must've thought it was the sunlight that was killing him. It was not the sunlight. It was a rigged 105 round. But if I could ever get the story right, how the sun seemed to gather around him and pick him up and lift him high into a tree, if I could somehow recreate the fatal whiteness of that light, the quick glare, the obvious cause and effect, then you would believe the last thing Curt Lemon believed, which for him must've been the final truth. [1] (p. 52)

The first epistemic modal world is constructed by the perception verb 'see' which is modalized as 'I can see him'. In line with the above discussions, the modal 'can' which is marginally epistemic [31] (p. 307), helps in the erection of this sub-world. The temporal co-ordinate 'twenty years later' identifies this sub-world to be a flash-forward which is, at the same time, epistemic modal.

This epistemic sub-world is maintained up to the deictic 'then' in the middle of the sentence, after which a shift of tense to the past occurs. This shifting back to the past tense of the main text-world continues until the next temporal adverb 'when'. The second clause of this compound sentence contains another epistemic modal verb, 'must have thought', which combines Gavins's deontic modality 'must' [24] (p. 131) with a modal lexical verb 'think' [24] (p. 132) and constructs an epistemic modal sub-world [28] (p. 22).

The two following sentences, which do not propel the action forward, instantiate free indirect thought, with the former being a negated sub-world as well. The final sentence is overtly complex in that it involves two successive conditionals, with the latter being even further complicated by drawing the enactor of the reader inside the sub-world through the second person technique favored by O'Brien, as well as the epistemic modal verb 'would believe', and 'must have been', each of which builds up a separate sub-world.

The above discussions may imply that tense manipulation is the major technique that O'Brien uses for complicated world networks in traumatic contextual frames. However, as the next section shall demonstrate, predicates are also sometimes manipulated so that the readers monitor [7] (p. 112) a traumatic contextual frame whilst they are attenuating another primed deictic field.

2.1.2. Displacing world-builders: Simultaneous monitoring

O'Brien's version of delayed decoding can be observed in the way he displaces some world building elements. For instance, the world builders of the actual traumatic event that covers the twelfth story "The Man I Killed" are given in the third story "Spin".

> I remember these things, too. . . .
> A red clay trail outside the village of My Khe.
> A hand grenade.
> A slim, dead, dainty young man of about twenty.
> Kiowa saying, "No choice, Tim. What else could you do?"
> Kiowa saying, "Right?"
> Kiowa saying, "Talk to me." [1] (p. 29)

There are six flash-back sub-worlds constructed in this passage which, together, offer an array of world-builders for the event of the narrator's killing a Vietnamese. So, the spatial co-ordinate is 'a red clay trail outside the village of My Khe', 'the hand grenade' is the object, and the enactors are the dead man, Kiowa, and Tim--although the post-processing [7] (p. 44) of the narrative reveals that Azar was also present [1] (p. 76). The point is that while the reader is attending to the contextual frame of the story "Spin", he is given cues to anticipating frame(s) into which the above-mentioned world-builders are bound [7] (p. 113). Within this story, these displaced world-builders only partially prime the contextual frame into which they are bound, and it is after the reader is actually grounded in the prominent text-world of these world-builders that the significance of these predicates is revealed.

The main text-world into which these elements are bound is given firstly in the story "On the Rainy River", where the non-immediate modal 'would' [31] (p. 308) builds up a flash-forward in that it implies a sense of futurity [31] (p. 309); [32] (p. 25):

> There was a slim young man I would one day kill with a hand grenade along a red clay trail outside the village of My Khe. [1] (p. 39) and secondly in the story "Ambush":

> He was a short, slender young man of about twenty. I was afraid of him—afraid of something—and as he passed me on the trail I threw a grenade that exploded at his feet and killed him.[1] (p. 80)

It is worth mentioning that O'Brien depicts the impact of guilt on the narrator in a significant manner. The whole story of "The Man I Killed" involves a series of epistemic modal worlds that are made up in a process of free indirect thought. So, there is a high density of modal verbs mostly modalized by 'would' such as 'would have listened', 'would have been taught', 'could not picture', 'would never be tested', 'would go away', 'would not have wanted', 'would have feared', 'would have been determined', 'would die', 'would see', and 'would fall dead'.

The skillful use of rich forms of modalization together with the silence of the narrator compared to Kiowa who addresses him continually result in giving the impression that the narrator feels "the burden of responsibility and grief" [1] (p. 107) through the profusion of free indirect thought in the whole story, as shown in the following excerpts.

> [F]rom his earliest boyhood the man I killed would have listened to stories [. . .]. He would have been taught that to defend the land was a man's highest duty and highest privilege. . . . At night, lying on his mat, he could not picture himself doing the brave things his

father had done, or his uncles, or the heroes of the stories. He hoped in his heart that he would never be tested. He hoped the Americans would go away. [1] (p. 76)

Frail-looking, delicately boned, the young man would not have wanted to be a soldier and in his heart would have feared performing badly in battle. [1] (p. 77)

And for years, despite his family's poverty, the man I killed would have been determined to continue his education in mathematics.[1] (p.78)

After his years at the university, the man I killed returned with his new wife to the village of My Khe, where he enlisted as a common rifleman with the 48th Vietcong Battalion. He knew he would die quickly. He knew he would see a flash of light. He knew he would fall dead and wake up in the stories of his village and people.[1] (p.79)

Free indirect thought presentation can also be found in other sub-worlds that are rooted in contextual frames overloaded with guilt feeling. For example, the following passage involves Jimmy Cross's feeling guilty over Kiowa's death due to his mistaken decision:

A crime, Jimmy Cross thought.
Looking out toward the river, he knew for a fact that he had made a mistake setting up here. The order had come from higher, true, but still he should've exercised some field discretion. He should've moved to higher ground for the night, should've radioed in false coordinates. There was nothing he could do now, but still it was a mistake and a hideous waste. He felt sick about it. Standing in the deep waters of the field, First Lieutenant Jimmy Cross began composing a letter in his head to the kid's father, not mentioning the shit field, just saying what a fine soldier Kiowa had been, what a fine human being, and how he was the kind of son that any father could be proud of forever.[1] (pp.97-98)

The presence of the modal lexical verbs of knowledge, 'thought' and 'knew', gives rise to epistemic sub-worlds and creates opaque contexts. In other words, the presence of these verbs makes the reader expect "referentially opaque" or "de dicto" descriptions [30] (p. 51), that is, the reader expects that in the complement of these two verbs descriptions from the thinker's point of view will be presented.

This epistemic sub-world is also reinforced by the presence of the predicate 'true' in the middle of a compound sentence, which is separated from the following sub-world by the connective 'but' which signals a turning point. Thus, in the second clause of this sentence a deontic sub-world of obligation is generated via the deontic modality of 'should've exercised' and 'should've radioed'.

A negated epistemic sub-world is built in the next sentence through the verb 'could do', with the temporal co-ordinate being specified as 'now', which is incompatible with the past tense. The inconsistency of the temporal predicate and the verb tense is justified on the ground that both of them are bound into the free indirect thought sub-world.

The matrix text-world which is established in the clause 'standing in the deep waters of the field' contains narrator's report of thought act, NRTA, reflected in 'composing a letter in his head', which gives rise to another stretch of free indirect thought [15] (p. 8). This sub-world is principally character advancing in that the referent of all the descriptive statements bound into the sub-world is Kiowa.

The same process of free indirect thought is used by another enactor, Norman Bowker, as he contemplates years after the war on the contextual frame of Kiowa's death:

He could not talk about it and never would. The evening was smooth and warm.
If it had been possible, which it wasn't, he would have explained how his friend Kiowa slipped away that night beneath the dark swampy field. He was folded in with the war; he was part of the waste. [1] (p.92)

The negated deontic 'could not talk' and modal 'never would' in the first sentence give way to a conditional in the following paragraph. The conditional or the epistemic sub-world embeds a comment 'which it wasn't' in the middle. The negation of this clause renders not only the condition negative, but it also negates the epistemic modal verb 'would have explained' in the response clause.

The epistemic sub-world generated by this conditional also embeds a flashback to the actual event which is post modified by free indirect thought in the final sentence of the extract, i.e. 'He was folded in with the war; he was part of the waste'.

Noticeably, the contextual frame of Kiowa's death is predominantly associated with free indirect thought process throughout the narrative. It can be observed, as a final example, in the following passage:

When a man died, there had to be blame. Jimmy Cross understood this. You could

blame the war. You could blame the idiots who made the war. You could blame Kiowa for going to it. You could blame the rain. You could blame the river. You could blame the field, the mud, the climate. You could blame the enemy. You could blame the mortar rounds. You could blame people who were too lazy to read a newspaper, who were bored by the daily body counts, who switched channels at the mention of politics. You could blame whole nations. You could blame God. You could blame the munitions makers or Karl Marx or a trick of fate or an old man in Omaha who forgot to vote. [1] (pp. 105-106)

The first clause of the beginning sentence primes the contextual frame of Kiowa's death, whereas, the second clause there had to be blame is the referent of the definite demonstrative this in the second sentence. So, the second clause of the first sentence is bound into the epistemic modal sub-world that is primed by the epistemic verb of knowledge, i.e., 'understood'.

This sub-world is followed by a series of deontic sub-worlds stemming from the contextual frame of Kiowa's death built up in 'when a man died'. The second person technique employed here is aligned with the free indirect thought, implying that it is an interior monologue, with the anaphoric 'you' referring back to Jimmy Cross.

2.1.3. Combining metaphor and schema refreshment: Conceptual point of view

A commonly held assumption in cognitive linguistics and cognitive psychology is that we understand certain events, situations and activities based on our prior knowledge about them. This background knowledge, according to McIntyre, is called "schematic knowledge" [7] (p. 48). In the preceding chapter we saw that schema clashes are capable of leading to foregrounding effects. In a related vein, the present researcher argues that whenever the schematic knowledge of the reader is challenged by the text, it is quite possible that a leave-taking from the preceding world has occurred around the point of schema clash. This can be better explained by O'Brien's use of the predicate beautiful in an unlikely position in the following extract.

> [Kurt Lemon's] face was suddenly brown and shining. A handsome kid, really. Sharp gray eyes, lean and narrow-waisted, and when he died it was almost beautiful, the way the sunlight came around him and lifted him up and sucked him high into a tree full of moss and vines and white blossoms. [1] (p. 44)

This extract involves the contextual frame of Kurt Lemon's soaring into a tree by a booby trap. The first sentence is bound into the contextual frame already established in 'I glanced behind me and watched Lemon step from the shade into bright sunlight', which was quoted in another extract. From the second sentence we have free indirect thought presentation as shown by the adverbial 'really' and the adjective 'beautiful'. The point is that the mentioned adverb and adjective do *not* propel the same epistemic modal sub-world. This can be explained on the ground that the adverbial really triggers a modal world of perception: the narrator's description of Kurt Lemon is based on his physical attributes, i.e. 'handsome', with 'sharp gray eyes', 'lean', and 'narrow-waisted'. Accordingly, these attributes are character advancers bound into the initial epistemic modal sub-world. From another perspective, it is also the case that the abovementioned predicates are aligned with what Katie Wales calls "angle of vision" [33] (p. 306) or "perceptual point of view": they are given from an optical viewpoint and represent "exactly [what the narrator] physically sees" [7] (p. 46).

On the other hand, at the clause 'when he died' in the middle of the sentence another sub-world is primed due to the presence of the predicate 'beautiful'. This predicate is significant because, as mentioned earlier, it contradicts with the reader's relevant prior knowledge [34] (p. 3) that death of a friend who is victimized by a booby trap cannot be regarded as beautiful. Consequently, the reader's schema of a soldier's death is refreshed in the Rumelhartian sense [35]. In other words, the inclusion of a positive predicate such as beautiful alongside positive predicates 'moss and vines and white blossoms' which advance the 'tree' is not compatible with, and therefore disrupts, the reader's schema of a comrade's death in combat. This has the effect of increasing the prominence of the sub-world that frames schema refreshment: it primes this sub-world by bringing it to the fore of the reader's attention.

The sub-world that is triggered by schema refreshment is principally enriched by the insertion of metaphoric language in a sequence of verbs 'came around him', 'lifted him up', and 'sucked him high' all of which personify the sun. So, it is clear that the foregrounding effect of schema refreshment is combined with the foregrounding effect of metaphoric language in priming an epistemic sub-world of attitude. In terms of point of view, moreover, this metaphorically-loaded section of the sentence which post-modifies the schema refreshing "value-laden" [7] (p. 49) predicate of 'beautiful' does not represent what the narrator actually sees; instead, it manifests his belief or attitude or evaluation of the contextual frame: it is therefore given from a "conceptual point of view", according to Seymour Chatman's taxonomy[36].

The above discussions may imply that metaphoric layering necessarily combines with schema clashes in order to prime a different sub-world. As the following extract demonstrates, however, metaphoric language

can function either in isolation or in combinations with other stylistic features than schema accretion or refreshment. Consider, for example, the following extract from the first short story in the collection, "The Things They Carried":

> On the morning after Ted Lavender died, First Lieutenant Jimmy Cross crouched at the bottom of his foxhole and burned Martha's letters. Then he burned the two photographs. . . .
>
> He realized it was only a gesture. Stupid, he thought. Sentimental, too, but mostly just stupid.
>
> Lavender was dead. You couldn't burn the blame. [1] (p. 22)

The first clause involves the first reference to one of the traumatic episodes which, as mentioned in the previous chapter, functions as a referent point for the occurrence of many other incidents. The first short paragraph makes up the main text-world, while in the second paragraph sequential belief worlds are generated via the epistemic lexical verbs 'realized' and 'thought' which are then extended into the stretch of free indirect thought presented in the final sentence in the paragraph with deleted beginning. This latter sentence can be understood as an extension of the previous two belief worlds.

This process of free indirect thought is then stretched into the last paragraph, with the stark statement 'Lavender was dead'. The second person pronoun used here does not imply, as it may seem, the presence of a fictional silent or un-participating addressee; rather, it signifies interior monologue or speech directed to oneself [37 (p. 137); 38 (p. 23)] because the sentence is situated within a process of free indirect thought already started in the preceding paragraph. Accordingly, the second person pronoun reflects a counterpart enactor of Jimmy Cross, who is talking to an enactor of Jimmy Cross.

To return back to the discussion of metaphoric layering, it can be observed in the extract that the last layer of sub-worlds is further enriched in a number of ways. First, the incorporation of the metaphorical construction 'burn the blame' builds up a sub-world which is parallel to the main text-world action of burning the letters and photographs. Second, the use of epistemic modal auxiliary 'could' assigns the generated sub-world to be an epistemic modal one [24] (p. 132). Third, this epistemic modal world is post-modified by negation of the verb phrase or predicate [39] (p. 218); [40] (p.197). Taken all these three aspects together, the sentence builds up an epistemic modal sub-world which is both negated and metaphorical. Consequently, it can be claimed that metaphoric language can be linked to other

textual features such as modalisation, second person technique, or negation to prime a sub-world.

3. CONCLUSION

Applying TWT to traumatic episodes in *The Things They Carried* has highlighted the complex stylistic features that have been influential in priming the various sub-worlds from within these contextual frames. Overall, it was shown that tense manipulation requires a more careful examination due to the fact that the absence of tense shifting is not always a sign of the absence of world shifting. In this regard, insights from Ryan's accessibility relations were suggested by the present researchers for reducing some of the complexities of tense management in quick alternate turn taking between flashbacks and flash-forwards.

Also, the impact of emotion in priming certain kinds of sub-worlds or even displacement of world-builders was demonstrated. This feature can be combined by free indirect thought presentation, itself being a common feature of many traumatic frames in O'Brien.

Moreover, the importance of drawing upon models of point of view in dealing with episodes containing deliberate metaphors and/or schema refreshment was pointed out. The insights from Chatman's conceptual point of view revealed to be helpful in identifying movements between the matrix contextual frame and its stemming sub-worlds irrespective of issues such as tense.

Overall, whether these procedures were used alone or blended with other ones, it was demonstrated that epistemic modal sub-worlds were the primary type of the sub-worlds generated in O'Brien's traumatic episodes.

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