

WRITING INTELLECTUAL STORIES AS A PERSONAL STYLE OF LYDIA DAVIS

Mirmuhsin Yuldashev

Master, Kokand Pedagogical Institute named after Mukimi

Abstract: *This article surveys a writing style of modern American writer-Lydia Davis. She is a virtuoso of a short story writing. She has been called “one of the quiet giants in the world of American fiction (Los Angeles Times). She also renowned “as an innovator who attempts” to remake the model of the modern short story (The New York Times Book Review). Lydia Davis as an innovator, she invented her own personal form and structure of writing short stories. Lydia Davis combines various genres into her short stories: from folklore to modern elements, such as: essays, anecdotes and parables.*

Key words: *flash fiction, “pure” genres, depersonalization of characters, pieces*

Lydia Davis was born in 1947, in Northampton, Massachusetts, US. She was noted for literary works of extreme brevity (commonly called “flash fiction”). She started her writing career from 1976--up to the present, her parents also were writers. Lydia Davis at her interview in Norway said about her parents: “They were minimally practical, to be practical have to be. So their great interest were: ideas, language, stories and world events”.¹ She became a writer, thanks to influential atmosphere of the family, bright education and profound reading. There are a lot of creativities in her writing style: apart of distinctive structure, she also uses “dream” stories –stories from night dreams and also dream-like experiences: “stories from Flaubert”—stories which shaped out of anecdotes that Flaubert related in his letters: “letters of complaint”. She writes intellectual stories, often with abrupt ending. Lydia Davis pays the specific attention the language, she deals with grammar, stylistic

¹ Lydia Davis Interview--Shaping Messy Material-- Louisiana channel, Interview by Christian Lund

devices (repetition, metonymy etc.) which take place in her writing. Lydia Davis's attention to word choice and word order will prove that she has her own style of writing. Her short stories even consist of one sentence. So short stories became miniatures, for example: her short story "**Spring Spleen**" *"I am happy the leaves are growing large so quickly. Soon they will hide the neighbor and her screaming child."*

In this short story Lydia Davis pays a great attention to a word choice for the title. "Spring spleen". The word "spleen" means -- melancholy, depression or even irritation then she started the story with "I am happy..." and ended up with the words: "screaming child". Her play of words makes readers read all her other stories. She is also a virtuoso of giving titles for her short stories. There are a lot of examples from her list of short stories: "*Young and Poor*", "*The White Tribe*", "*New Year's Resolution*", "*Oral History*", "*Right and Wrong*", "*The Bad Novel*", "*A Woman Thirty*", "*A Second Chance*", "*Collaboration with Fly*", "*Jane and Cane*", "*Disorder*", "*Paradox*", "*People are all the same, Madame and so on*".

Her works are so interesting thanks to the genre of her prose for many young writers and critics. As the director of Gorky Moscow Academic Art Theater Doronina T.V. said: "There is no "pure" genres. All genres in literature may contain elements of other genres"². In her works the description of persons is not characteristic at all, most of her characters are depersonalized, have no name, no description. However, the hero always has a thought, he thinks and reasons that, of course, makes him vivid. Sometimes an element of appearance or position of some heroes or characters can be described or revealed. For example: "*Happiest Moment*" (*Samuel Johnson is Indignant*, 2001) *"If you ask her what is a favorite story she has written, she will hesitate for a long time and then say it may be this story that she read in a book once: an English language teacher in China asked his Chinese student to say what was the happiest moment in his life. The student hesitated for a long time. At last he smiled with embarrassment and said that his wife had once gone to Beijing and eaten duck there, and she often told him about it, and he would have to say the happiest moment of his life was her trip, and the eating of*

² Translation in Lydia Davis's work Jonathan Evans, University of Portsmouth' 2011

the duck”³. Here the title, given by the author is totally appropriate, if we consider Chinese mentality. There were four depersonalized characters without description, but the position in the society is known (one of the characters was an English teacher in China). The story begins with the question: “If you ask her.” The author sends a message to the reader, that small things, happiness of others can make some people happy.

The predominant often narrative voice in her very short stories (some of them less than 11 words), turns a reader on various aspects of daily life. Lydia Davis is considered as a short story writer, she strongly refutes the combination of her writing as a poetry. She explains: “*Leaving aside whether or not some of my stories may be poetry, the problem of how to write an actual poem with line breaks still seems very interesting and mysterious for me. The truth is I don’t know how to do it*”, but there are some of her short stories which are written in the form of a poem, thanks to the excellent word choice and strong differentiating sounds of words. In one of her story entitled “*Jane and Cane*” (*Varietes of Disturbances* 2007) we see a new way of writing a short story. *Mother could not find her cane. She had a cane, but she could not find her special cane. Her special cane had a handle that was the head of a dog. Then she remembered: Jane had her cane. Jane had come to visit. Jane had needed a cane to get back home. That was two years ago. Mother called Jane. She told Jane she needed her cane. Jane came with a cane. When Jane came, Mother was tired. She was in bed. She did not look at the cane. Jane went back home. Mother got out of bed. She looked at the cane. She saw that it was not the same cane. It was a plain cane. She called Jane and told her: it was not the same cane. But Jane was tired. She was too tired to talk. She was going to bed. The next morning she came with the cane. Mother got out of bed. She looked at the cane. It was the right cane. It had the head of a dog on it, brown and white. Jane went home with the other cane, the plain cane. After Jane was gone, Mother complained, she complained on the phone: Why*

³ The article “Current understanding of a short story as a genre, Lee T.G. Far Eastern University of Humanities, 2014 (Khabarovsk, Russia).

*did Jane not bring **back the cane**? Why did **Jane** bring the wrong cane? Mother was tired. Oh, Mother was so tired of Jane and the cane.*

Among her works there are also works written in modern genres such as essays. An essay is understood as a short composition of a small volume and free composition on a particular topic, interpreted subjectively and usually not completely. The story “*Mothers*”(*Break it Down*) is not only similar in the form to the essay, but also resembles a child’s composition, from his point of view. However some elements indicate the maturity of this “child”, for example, “our youth”, they have suffered for our sakes. There is an introduction which expresses the main theme of the story: “Everyone has a mother”⁴ The author also entered a text to describe her: “She is a small woman, with eyeglass lenses so thick they seem black, when she turns her head away” This was created with the aim of showing the subjective vision of the hero, the closest person for us. The Mother, who gave birth to us, fed and now she needs our care and attention. This is the description of the surrounding world of the hero. The author put mothers in the center of the story to reveal the truth to the reader .

So Lydia Davis is a writer of a short story genre. She uses her own style of writing pieces. She uses a lot of forms and ways in her writing style.

REFERENCES:

1. Davis, Lydia. *The Collected Stories of Lydia Davis*. London: PENGUIN, 2010.
2. Niloufar Khosravi “Personal form and structure of Lydia Davis in selected stories, Teheran, 2017
3. Lee Tatiana Gennadijevna “Current understanding of a short story as a genre, Far Eastern University of Humanities, Khabarovsk, 2014
4. Jonathan Evans, “Translation in Lydia Davis’s work, Portsmouth University Press, Portsmouth, 2011

⁴ The article “Current understanding of a short story as a genre, Lee T.G. Far Eastern University of Humanities, 2014 (Khabarovsk, Russia).