

## THE CREATIVE POTENTIAL OF “THE TAO OF POOH” BY B. HOFF

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### Abstract

*“The Tao of Pooh” by Benjamin Hoff is considered in the context of its creative potential, the existence of expressive means and stylistic devices on all language levels, most of which focused on graphic, syntactic and lexical levels. The basic graphic expressive means of this work of postmodern literature are: the unusual placement of paragraphs; alternation of fonts, different in size and style; the usage of spaces between different fragments of the text; the unusual arrangement of words and lines. They serve as text markers and accentuate the main idea of this work of literature. The convergence of graphic and phonetic expressive means and stylistic devices, which helps to create a chaotic structure in a postmodern text, is known as multimedia effect. The postmodern worldview creates a special type of artistic perception in which understanding of a literary text is not important but the process of experimentation with it.*

**Key words:** *expressive means, stylistic devices, language level, convergence, multimedia effect.*

Modern stylistics is under the powerful influence of the postmodern situation. Expressive means and stylistic devices are interpreted as coherent in a dynamic system of artistic discourse due to the emergence and formation of postmodern poetics. Postmodern poetics is considered as a combination of compositional and stylistic techniques that reflect lingo-poetic features of postmodern literary text.

Narrative chaos, infinite language games on all language levels produce postmodern ironic writing style that reflects the poststructuralist perception of the world as absurd and unpredictable. The American postmodern narrative “The Tao of Pooh” by B. Hoff (Hoff 1982) is a vivid example of such experimentation.

The basic graphic expressive means of this postmodern story are: the unusual arrangement of paragraphs, alternation of different in size and style fonts, spacing

between words, lines and separate fragments of the text. They are text markers which serve to accentuate the main idea of the work: to live in harmony with oneself and nature, form a positive approach to life and do everything naturally as Pooh.

The convergence of graphic and phonetic means and stylistic devices, which helps to create a chaotic structure in a postmodern text, is known as multimedia. In the story analyzed it allows the reader, narrator and characters to listen to the radio, music, sing songs and check e-mail boxes and others. For example:

Radio: "Er . . . well . . ." **(Click)** "*Now just listen to this, Pooh*".

*"Thirty thousand people were killed today when five jumbo airliners collided over downtown Los Angeles . . .", the Radio announced.*

*We were discussing the "Ode to Joy", the choral finale to Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.*

*"It's one of my favorites", said Pooh.*

*"Same here", I said.*

*"My favorite part", said Pooh, "is where they go:*

*Sing Ho! for the life of a Bear!"*

*"But . . ."*

*"Sing Ho! for a Bear!*

*Sing Ho! for a Pooh!"*

*"But they don't-----"*

*Sing Ho! for the life of a Bear!"*

*"My favorite part", he added.*

*"But they don't sing, 'Sing Ho! for the life of a Bear!' in the 'Ode to Joy,'" I said (H, p. 56).*

Song: "*Wooh Baby! Oooaowee BABY! (Wanga wanga wanga.) Baby, don't leave me! (Wanga wanga crash bang!) Baby, don't LEAVE me!" (Click).*

Ode: **(Applause.)** *A Toast! To Gallant Piglet and Fearless Pooh --*

*Sing ho! for Piglet (PIGLET) ho!*

*Sing ho! for Piglet, ho!*

and

*Sing Ho! for a Bear!*

*Sing Ho! for a Pooh!*

*Sing Ho! for the life of a Bear!*

With the help of graphic and phonetic means the author creates a postmodern play upon words throughout the story that gives it unsurpassed humor:

- “*The **Tao** of Pooh?*”
- “*The **How** of Pooh?*”
- “*The Tao of Pooh?*”
- “*It seems more like the **ow** of Pooh!*”

“*The **How** of Pooh? The **Tao** of Who?*”

- “*Like **who**?*” I asked.
- “*Like **Pooh** Tao-tse, the famous Chinese painter*”, Pooh said.
- “*That’s **Wu** Tao-tse*”.
- “*Or how about **Li Pooh**, the famous Taoist poet?*” Pooh asked cautiously.
- “*You mean **Li Po***”, I said.
- “*It’s just a **figure of speech***”, I said.
- “*A **what of who**?*” asked Pooh.

“... like *Looking for Small or Organizing an **Expotition***, if Pooh could think of something”

“*the Confucianist Dedicated Scholar - Confusionist, Desiccated Scholar*”

“*Tuesday – **Twosday***”

“*Thursday – **Thirdsday***”

“*customary procedure – **Crustimoney Proseedcake***”

“*Confusionist’s state of mind*”

*“Aardvarks and Their Aberrations”*

*“He instigorate Knowledge”*

- *“Or how about **Li Pooh**, the famous Taoist poet?” Pooh asked cautiously.*

- *“You mean **Li Po**”, I said.*

- *“It’s just a **figure of speech**”, I said.*

- *“A **what of who?**” asked Pooh.*

*“... like Looking for Small or Organizing an **Exposition**, if Pooh could think of something”*

*“the Confucianist Dedicated Scholar – Confusionist, Desiccated Scholar”*

*“Tuesday – **Twosday**”*

*“Thursday – **Thursday**”*

*“customary procedure – **Crustimoney Proseedcake**”*

*“Confusionist’s state of mind”*

*“Aardvarks and Their Aberrations”*

*“He instigorate Knowledge”*

Various phonetic means and devices play a great associative and sound-instrumental role. Thus, explaining similar pronunciation of the Chinese word *P’u* and the name *Pooh*, the author resorts to onomatopoeia and sound symbolism using words with natural phonetic motivation that create in the reader’s mind a hot sunny summer day and the bug on the hand which you blow away with an easy breath air:

*P’u*, by the way, is pronounced like *Pooh*, but without so much *oo* – like the sound you make when **blowing a bug off your arm** on a hot summer day.

Phonetic and graphical means demonstrated in the following examples create multimedia effect:

... and then suddenly he made a **squeaky noise** ... and an **oo-noise**... because now he began to know where he was

“Er... (cough)... **Ahum**”

"I said '**Ow!**' without really **oo'ing**".

**"BANG!!!???\*!!!"**

“Then Pooh went off to find it. First, he stopped at Owl's house, and Owl told him in twenty-five thousand monotonous words or more that the Thing To Do would be to Issue a Reward, which would involve writing out a . . . (**yawn**) . . . notice, and putting it . . . (**YAWN**) . . . all over the . . . (**umm**). Oh, yes -- where were we?”

The effect of multimedia imagery arises when the narrator describes how the river flows by using sound symbolism:

By the time **it** came to the edge of the Forest the stream had grown up, so that it was almost a river, and, being grown-up, it did **not run** and **jump** and **sparkle** along as it used to do when it was younger, but moved more **slowly**. For it knew now where it was going, and it said to itself, “There is no hurry. We shall get there some day”.

In the following text fragment sound symbolism is activated to such an extent that it seems the reader hears different sounds:

“Yes, it . . . is, isn't it. Here, Pooh, you open it”.

**(Pop)**.

“Thanks, Pooh”, said Piglet.

“Nothing, really”, said Pooh.

“How did you get that lid off?” asked Tigger.

“It's easy”, said Pooh. “You just **twist** on it like this, until you can't **twist** any harder. Then you take a **deep breath** and, as you let it out, **twist**. That's all”.

“Let me try that!” yelled Tigger, **bouncing** into the kitchen. “Where's that new jar of pickles? Ah, here it is”.

“Tigger”, began Piglet nervously, “I don't think you'd better . . .”

“Nothing to it,” said Tigger. “Just **twist**, and . . .”

**CRASH!**

*“All right, Tigger,” I said. “Get those pickles off the floor”.*

*“**Slipped out** of my paw,” explained Tigger.*

*“He tried too hard,” said Pooh.*

A combination of graphic and phonetic means and devices, such as alliteration (the reiterated repetition of consonant sounds *tll, rd, sk, pl, fl, stl, sk, ck, n't*), epiphora (the repetition of the sound [ai] at the end of the line), the usage of font different from the main text and underlining plunges the reader into the atmosphere of sound associations and images similar to those in the real life:

*Cottleston, Cottleston, Cottleston Pie,*

*A **fly** can't **bird**, but a **bird** can fly.*

*Ask me a **riddle** and I **reply**:*

*“Cottleston, Cottleston, Cottleston Pie”.*

*Cottleston, Cottleston, Cottleston Pie,*

*A **fish** can't **whistle** and neither can I.*

*Ask me a **riddle** and I **reply**:*

*“Cottleston, Cottleston, Cottleston Pie”.*

*Cottleston, Cottleston, Cottleston Pie,*

*Why does a **chicken**, I **don't** know why.*

*Ask me a **riddle** and I **reply**:*

*“Cottleston, Cottleston, Cottleston Pie”.*

Pooh's nursery rhymes, senseless at the first sight, actually carry profound ideological content of existence. Graphic stylistic means play an important intonation and expressive role in them:

*How can you get very far,*

*If you don't know **Who You Are**?*

*How can you do what you ought,*

*If you don't know **What You've Got**?*

*And if you don't know **Which To Do***

*Of all the things in front of you,*

*Then what you'll have when you are through  
Is just a mess without a clue  
Of all the best that can come true  
If you know **What and Which and Who.***

“Now, then. . . (**erhum**)”,

*To know the **Way**,  
We go the **Way**;  
We do the **Way**  
The way we do  
The things we do.  
It's all there in front of you,  
But if you try too hard to see it,  
You'll only become **Confused.***

*I am me,  
And you are you,  
As you can see;  
But when you do  
The things that you can do,  
You will find the **Way**,  
And the **Way** will follow you.*

Capital letters and the font accentuate the key words and questions to be answered in order to find one's own way in life and inner harmony. This is what Pooh tries to explain in his nursery rhymes. Besides, capital letters transform a simple word combination into image, notion or symbols which are used throughout the story “*The Tao of Pooh*” acquiring textual significance (*Bisy Backson, Effortless Bear, Inner Nature, Confusionist Scholar etc.*).

Different fonts render a corresponding intonation with which this or that word or a word combination may be pronounced:

*“The **How** of Pooh, The Tao of **Who**?, **That** Sort of Bear”.*

*“**What?**” said Pooh, his eyes wide open in amazement;*

*“A copy of **Vinegar Tasters!**”;*

*“Well, maybe not **that** sweet!” I said;*

*“This basic Taoist principle applies not only to **things** in their natural beauty and function, but to people as well”;*

*“As any old Taoist walking out of the woods will tell you, simple-minded does not necessarily means **stupid**”;*

*“... it’s just that it’s really not so awfully much **fun**”;*

*“The Uncarved Block. **You** know...”;*

*“**I didn’t**”, Piglet said;*

*“It wasn’t **me!**” Piglet insisted;*

*“Oh, is **that** all?”;*

*“On top of that, it is very hard to find any of the **spirit** of Taoism in the lifeless writings of the humorless Academic Mortician ...”*

- *“What’s **that?**” Pooh interrupted.*

- *“What’s **what?**” I asked.*

*“By the way, Pooh, how do **you** spell Tuesday?”*

*“My dear Pooh,” said Owl, “**everybody** knows that it’s spelled with a **Two**”.*

*“It’s **Today!**” squeaked Piglet.*

*“Not very many **listen**, though,”*

*“Yes, whose **are** these, anyway?”*

*“The thing that makes someone **truly** different – unique, in fact – is something that Cleverness cannot really understand”.*

*“**Me** explain it?” said Pooh behind his paw.*

*“Unfortunately, some **people** – who always seem to think they’re smarter than fish and birds, somehow – aren’t so wise, and end up causing big trouble for themselves and others”.*

Different sizes and styles of font are used for text segmentation. The narrative of a storyteller is printed in one type and the insertion of the original work by A. A. Milne and certain intervals between them, in smaller ones. For example:

*"I didn't stop to ask, Pooh. Even at the very bottom of the river I didn't stop to say to myself, 'Is this a Hearty Joke, or is it the Merest Accident?' I just floated to the surface, and said to myself, 'It's wet' If you know what I mean".*

*So, to remove the Bounce from Tigger, Rabbit came up with another one of his famous plans: Rabbit, Pooh, and Piglet would take Tigger to someplace at the top of the Forest where he'd never been, and lose him there. And from then on, he would be a Small and Sorry Tigger who bounced no more. Well, so much for Cleverness, as Eeyore might say, because as things turned out, Rabbit got everyone lost, including himself. Everyone but Tigger, that is. Tiggers don't get lost, it so happens, not even in the mist at the top of the Forest. And that proved to be very Useful.*

*Because, although Pooh and Piglet found their way back after a while . . .*

*"Where's Rabbit?"*

*"I don't know", said Pooh.*

*"Oh -- well, I expect Tigger will find him. He's sort of looking for you all".*

*"Well", said Pooh, "I've got to go home for something, and so has Piglet, because we haven't had it yet, and . . ."*

All graphic expressive means (different sizes and styles of fonts, punctuation marks, doubling of letters, spacing of letters and lines, capitalization) add expressiveness to the multimedia component of the text.

Capital letters alteration is also sense forming in the story under analysis. The majority of capital letters denote nouns (*Wisdom, Happiness, Courage, Self-Reliance etc.*), adjectives (*Important, Empty sort of mind, Overstuffed mind, Enchanted place etc.*), some verbs (*the thing to Do, Bother etc.*). They also may be found in noun and adjective constructions to name the characters (*Bisy Backson, Curious, Science, Academician, Heffalump*), specific features of their character (*Bear of a Very Little Brain, Abstract Owl, Clever Rabbit, Panicky Piglet, Captain Rabbit, Positive Pooh, Ineffective Owl, Concerned Kanga, instructing Roo, Miserable Puritan, Restless Pioneer, Lonely Cowboy*), some other features the author highlights and mocks at (*Unpleasant Surprise, Essense of Life, Great Secret*) (*Unmanageable Balloon, Useful Pot, Absentminded Professor, the Confusionist*). Capital letters are widely used for creating a play upon words (*Confucianist – Confusionist*) and irony (*Interrogate – Instigate*).

There are examples of expressive means and stylistic devices on the morphological level in this postmodernist text (“rather Unimaginative ancestor”, “increasingly Confused”, “rather disagreeable”).

The repetition of the particle *too* intensifies the expressive meaning of the sentence in the following example:

*“In the classic Taoist manner, we won’t try **too** hard or explain **too** much, because that would only confuse things ...”*

*“The surest way to become Tense, Awkward, and Confused is to develop a mind that tries **too** hard -- one that thinks **too** much”.*

*“But at the same time, we do not need to be **too** desperate, **too** ruthless, **too** combative”.*

Morphological expressive means are used to create syntactic repetition:

*“Under Confucianism, the use of precisely measured court music, prescribed steps, actions, and phrases all added up to an **extremely** complex system of rituals, each used for a particular purpose at a particular time”.*

*“It’s **rather** significant that the Taoist ideal is that of the still, calm, reflecting “mirror-mind” of the Uncarved Block, and it’s **rather** significant that Pooh, **rather***

than the thinkers Rabbit, Owl, or Eeyore, is the true hero of Winnie-the-Pooh and The House at Pooh Corner”.

Morphological stylistic devices based on the usage of the degrees of comparison intensify the semantic and intonation tension:

“**The harder** you hit it, **the more** it yields; **the more** it yields, **the harder** it bounces back”.

“**The more** forcing, **the more** trouble”.

Morphemic foregrounding (addition of different suffixes and endings to the same root of the word) in the succeeding marked words in a sentence underlines the contrast: “... as the Son of Heaven, acted intermediary between *limitless* heaven and *limited* earth”.

Phrasal and sentence epithets used in the text create additional information and give vividness and freshness to the characters’ description:

“And the nicest thing about that Simplicity is its useful wisdom, **the what-is-there-to-eat variety – wisdom** you can get at”;

“the **dry-as-dust** Absentminded Professor”

“Pooh-in-action”

“Taoism-in-action”

“Gaiety, **song-and-dance**, here we are and there we are?”

“**Play-it-safe** pessimists”

“Where are we going?” said Pooh, hurrying after him, and wondering whether it was to be an Explore or a **What-shall-I-do-about-you-know-what**”.

“Speechless **Non-Doer**”

“While the Clear mind listens to a bird singing, the **Stuffed-Full-of-Knowledge-and-Cleverness** mind wonders what kind of bird is singing”.

“Then the Groups are joined, the Classes are signed up for, and the **Gift-to-Yourself** items are bought”.

“From early morning until late at night, practically every minute of the emperor's time is filled in with meetings, audiences, tours, inspections, and **who-knows-what**”.

Creative play with lexemes disorients the reader.

Lexical and lexico-syntactical stylistic devices in “*The Tao of Pooh*” create a specific world of this postmodern story. The actualization of original epithets is observed on the lexical level (“*simpleminded sort of happiness*”, “*unappreciative mind*”, “*the Thoughtful Spot*”, “*a Friendly Day*” etc.). They are used to create comic effect.

In the figurative manner metaphors reveal the postmodern worldview (“*bitter wind of everyday existence*”), concepts of Taoism (“*the mind of the Uncarved Block*”; “*You might say that **happy serenity** is the most noticeable characteristic of the Taoist personality*”).

Metonymies in this postmodern text function to create a multimedia effect, chaos and switching of narrative types and strategies:

“*quiet **laughter** seems to **bubble**”, “*as the **sand-pit** came through ...*”*

“*There are twelve **pots of honey** in my cupboard **they’ve been calling** to me for hours*”

“***Knowledge** and **Experience** do not necessarily **speak** the same language*”

“*So, in that sense at least, a **Weakness** of some sort **can do** you a big favor, if you acknowledge that it's there*”.

“*For a long time they looked at the river beneath them, saying nothing and **the river said nothing** too, for **it felt** very quiet and peaceful on this summer afternoon*”.

“***Cleverness**, as usual, **takes** all the credit it possibly can. But it's not the **Clever Mind that's responsible** when things work out. It's **the mind that sees** what's in front of it, and **follows** the nature of things*”.

“***Egotistical Desire** tries to force the round peg into the square hole and the square peg into the round hole. **Cleverness** tries to devise craftier ways of making pegs fit where they don't belong. **Knowledge** tries to figure out why round pegs fit round holes, but not square holes*”.

“***This mind** tries too hard, wears itself out, and **ends up** weak and sloppy. Such a **mind**, even if of high intelligence, is **inefficient**. It goes here and there, backwards and forwards, and **fails** to concentrate on what it's doing at the moment.*”

*It drives down the street in a fast-moving car and thinks it's at the store, going over a grocery list. Then it **wonders** why accidents occur”.*

With the help of metonymy concepts, objects, things are revived as if appealing to the reader and becoming narrators of Tao.

Periphrasis underlines parody, mock at particular features and drawbacks of the characters:

*“But that is the sort of thing we can expect from the **Abstract Owl, the dried-up Western descendant of the Confucianist Dedicated Scholar, who . . .**”*

*“the Confusionist, Desiccated Scholar”*

*“Mistakes are made – or imagined – by **man, the creature with the overloaded Brain** who separates himself from the supporting network of natural laws by interfering and trying too hard”.*

*“And in an exciting **Rescue, Piglet** was saved by none other than the famous **Pooh Bear, Discoverer of the North Pole**”.*

*“He believed that the present was out of step with the past and that the government of man on earth was out of harmony with the **Way of Heaven, the government of the universe**”.*

As well as periphrasis comparison expressively mocks and parodies Confucianism turning into multimedia effect:

*“the world was seen as a **setter of traps, a generator of illusions, a revolving wheel of pain** for all creatures”; “quiet laughter seems to bubble **like water** from a fountain”; “... who tended to see Confucianist scholars as **busy ants** spoiling the picnic of life, rushing back and forth to pick up the bits and pieces dropped from above”.*

Pun with its comic effect is created by the author using the semantics of words *Beethoven* and *Bearthoven*:

- “Neither **Ludwig van Beethoven** nor the man who wrote the words of the 'Ode to Joy' put anything in it about Bears”.

- “Oh. I must have been thinking of Ludwig van **Bearthoven**”.

Antithesis very eloquently conveys irony of the human nature of a modern man, emotionally reinforcing the following statement:

*“Now the principle can work **negatively** or **positively**. It can promote **cynicism** as easily as it can encourage **hope**. It can build **hardened criminals** or **courageous heroes**, **stupid vandals** or **brilliant creators**”*. Due to the contrast of the semantic meanings of the words in bold type above profound expressiveness of the author’s attitude to the world is created.

Complex syntactical constructions of sentences and excessive number of connectors in the text create permutation (one of the various ways in which you can combine or arrange a group of things), for example:

*“That was after some of us were discussing the Great Masters of Wisdom, **and** someone was saying how all of them came from the East, **and** I was saying that some of them didn’t, **but** he was going on and on, **just like** this sentence, not paying any attention, **when** I decided to read a quotation of Wisdom from the West, to prove that there was something more to the world than one half, **and** I read: ...”*

*“Well”, said Pooh, “we keep looking for Home **and** not finding it, **so** I thought that **if** we looked for this Pit, we’d be sure not to find it, **which** would be a Good Thing, **because then** we might find something that we weren’t looking for, **which** might be just **what** we were looking for, really”*.

*“Once you face and understand your limitations, you can work with them, **instead** of having them work against you **and** get in your way, **which** is **what** they do when you ignore them, **whether** you realize it or not”*.

*“It’s sometimes referred to as the Snowball Effect, **which** can remind you of the time you pushed that little ball of snow along, **and** it got bigger and bigger **until** it got so big you couldn’t stop it, **and** it rolled all the way down the hill **and** flattened the neighbor’s car, **and** soon everyone was talking about the Huge Snowball **that** you let get completely out of control . . . **and that** may be why we prefer to think of it as the Tiddely-Pom Principle, **instead**”*.

A combination of syntactical stylistic devices is an instrument for creating a postmodern world of chaos. Syntactic parallelism serves to intensify different meanings of the text, and the narration acquires ironic character:

*“That was after **some of us were discussing** the Great Masters of Wisdom, and **someone was saying** how all of them came from the East, and **I was saying** that some of them didn’t, but he **was going on and on** ...”*;

*“It’s about this dumpy little bear that wanders around **asking silly questions, making up songs, and going through** all kinds of adventures, without ever **accumulating** any amount of intellectual knowledge or **losing** his simpleminded sort of happiness”*.

Examples of chiasmus (a reversed parallelism) are also found in the text:

*“... to write a book that explained the principles of Taoism through Winnie-the-Pooh, and explained Winnie-the-Pooh through the principles of Taoism”*.

*“Rather than turn away from “the world of dust”, Lao-tse advised others to “join the dust of the world”*. The inverted order of the sentence clauses reinforces shades of meanings.

Aposiopesis (break in the narrative) promotes the incompleteness of sentence structure and is mainly used in the dialogue imitating spontaneous oral speech. It reflects the emotional or/and the psychological state of the character: a sentence is broken because the speaker’s emotions prevent him from finishing it. In many cases break is the result of the speaker’s uncertainty as to what exactly he is to tell. This syntactic stylistic device is widely used for creating rhizomes – one of the basic characteristics of postmodern fiction:

*“You see, Pooh,” I said, a lot of people don’t seem to know what Taoism is ...”*

*“... and then suddenly he made a squeaky noise ... and an oo-noise ... because now he began to know where he was ...”*

*“... they sat down for a little ... and by-and-by Pooh and Piglet went on again”*.

*“Well, to begin with ...” said Pooh.*

*“But that is the sort of thing we can expect from the Abstract Owl, the dried-up Western descendant of the Confucianist Dedicated Scholar, who, unlike his Noble but rather Unimaginative ancestor, thinks he has some sort of monopoly on . . .”*

*“Maybe, but . . .”*

*“Well, I can't remember what it's called, but . . .”*

*“Well, let's see . . .”*

*“But the point is . . .”*

*“No, but . . .”*

*“Down by the river, covered with mud . . .”*

*“Look, Pooh . . .”*

Syntactic repetitions intensify semantics of the word “power”:

*“What **I think**”, said Piglet, “is **I think** we'll go and see Christopher Robin, only he won't be there, so we can't”.*

*“To understand all this a little better, it might help to look at **someone** who is quite the opposite – **someone** like, well, say, Owl, for example . . .”.*

*“The essence of the principle of the Uncarved Block is that things in their original simplicity contain their own natural **power, power** that is easily spoiled and lost when the simplicity is changed”.*

Syntactic repetitions also strengthen the wrong meaning of the human life:

*“That applies to people, although many don't seem to realize it, stuck as they are in the **wrong** job, **the wrong** marriage, or the **wrong** house”; reproduce the colloquial type of speech making the narrative with the reader intimate:*

*“**Well, well.** Not so good” –*

*“Then Roo jumped and was Saved, and Tigger jumped (**sort of**) . . . and was Saved (**sort of**)”.*

With the help of syntactic repetitions the author reinforces ironical effect:

*“I'll give you three guesses, Rabbit. **Digging holes** in the ground? **Wrong.** Leaping from branch to branch of a young oak-tree? **Wrong.** Waiting for somebody to **help** me out of the river? **Right.** Give Rabbit time, and he'll always get the answer”.*

*“It was an anxious moment for the watchers on the bridge. They **looked and looked** . . . **and** even the sight of Piglet's stick coming out a little in front of Rabbit's didn't cheer them up as much as you would have expected. **And** then, just as Pooh was beginning to think that he must have chosen the **wrong** stone or the **wrong** river or the **wrong** day for his Idea, something grey showed for a moment by the river bank . . . **and** it got slowly **bigger and bigger** . . . **and** at last it was Eeyore coming out” –*

*“**Egotistical Desire** tries to force the round peg into the square hole and the square peg into the round hole. **Cleverness** tries to devise craftier ways of making pegs fit where they don't belong. **Knowledge** tries to figure out why round pegs fit round holes, but not square holes” – the drawbacks of human characteristics are underlined.*

*“Later on, you can look back and say, ‘Oh, now I understand. **That** had to happen so that **those** could happen, and **those** had to happen in order for **this** to happen’ . . .” – a chain repetition attracts the reader's attention to the following events.*

*“He could go see **Eeyore, whom** he hadn't seen since yesterday, or **Owl, whom** he hadn't seen since the day before yesterday, or **Kanga, Roo, and Tigger, all of whom** he hadn't seen for quite a while”.*

*“Abstract cleverness of mind only separates the thinker from the world of reality, and that world, the Forest of Real Life, is in a desperate condition now because of **too many** who think **too much** and care **too little**”.*

*“Rigid, combative fanatic that he is, the tightfisted Backson is just **too hard** on himself, **too hard** on others, and **too hard** on the world that heroically attempts to carry on in spite of what he is doing to it” – intensification is achieved with the help of particle *too*.*

*“It's a little Anxious”, he said to himself, “to be a Very Small Animal Entirely Surrounded by Water. Christopher Robin and Pooh **could escape by Climbing Trees**, and Kanga **could escape by Jumping**, and Rabbit **could escape by Burrowing**, and Owl **could escape by Flying**, and Eeyore **could escape by** – by Making a Loud Noise*

*Until Rescued, and here am I, surrounded by water and I can't do anything . . .*” – the repetition of the construction five times creates a comic effect.

Parenthetic sentences are essential syntactic expressive means in “*The Tao of Pooh*”. They make the narrative vivid and expressive:

*“We go inside and ask to be shown something allegorical – something humorous, **perhaps**, but with sort of Timeless Meaning”.*

*“To understand all this a little better, it might help to look at someone who is quite the opposite – someone **like, well, say, Owl, for example** ...”*

*“... because **perhaps** his house has been blown down, and **perhaps** he’d like us to build it again”.*

*“**To begin with**, it is necessary to point out that in China, scholars were ...”*

*“It seems rather odd, **somehow**, that Taoism ...”*

*“**On top of that**, it is very hard to find any of the spirit of Taoism ...”*

*“**By the way**, Pooh, how do you spell Tuesday?”*

*“**After all**, it's the second day of the week”.*

*“**After all**, from the scholarly point of view, it's practically a crime not to know everything”.*

*“**After all**, from the scholarly point of view, it's practically a crime not to know everything”.*

*“Yes . . . **well, anyway** . . .”*

*“Sometimes you will find that characteristics you try hard to eliminate eventually come back, **anyway**”.*

*“And sometimes those very tendencies that you dislike the most can show up in the right way at the right time to save your life, **somehow**”.*

*“**So**, to remove the Bounce from Tigger, Rabbit came up with another one of his famous plans”.*

*“**Well**, so much for Cleverness, as Eeyore might say, because as things turned out, Rabbit got everyone lost, including himself. Everyone but Tigger, that is”.*

*“**Well**, most of it, **anyway**”.*

Rhetorical questions as syntactic stylistic devices activate the reader's attention making him or her think over the events described:

*"Why not?"*

*"Will we find the answers here?"*

*"But isn't the knowledge that comes from experience more valuable than the knowledge that doesn't?"*

*"Yes, whose are these, anyway?"*

*"It's obvious, isn't it?"*

Nominative sentences make the narrative measured, expressive and dynamic:

*"Tree. Flower. Dog".*

*"Nothing".*

*"No stress, no mess".*

*"Work. Work. Work".*

Allusion (referring to well-known historical, literary or cultural facts) is used throughout *"The Tao of Pooh"*:

*"Work, work, work. All work and no play makes **Backson** a dull boy. Kept up for long enough, it makes him dead, too"* (allusion to the English saying "All work and no play make John a dull boy");

*"The Hamburger stand"* (allusion to McDonald's);

*"Great reward"* (allusion to various modern awards);

*"False front approach"* (allusion to plastic surgery);

*"Party-Crashing Busybody religion"* (allusion to the religion of the Puritans);

*"Heffalump"* (allusion to the notion of "absolute which has no absolute qualities in the provisions of Kant).

Allusion *"Heffalump"* is strengthened by the etymology of the word itself (from German *Haffen* – port, harbor, and the basis of spiritual). The concept of "absolute" is created with the help of the play upon words. Pooh, the narrator, remains surprised with the nature of "absolute" and tries to catch it arranging the trap.

To create ironic, sarcastic effect expressive means and stylistic devices on all language levels (morphological, lexical and syntactic) are employed:

*“It’s about this **dumpy little bear** that wanders around **asking** silly questions, **making** up songs, and going through all kinds of adventures, without ever accumulating any amount of intellectual knowledge or losing his **simpleminded sort of happiness**”.*

*“On top of that, it is very hard to find any of the spirit of Taoism in the lifeless writings of the **humorless Academic Mortician**, whose **bleached-out Scholarly Dissertations** contain no more of the character of Taoist wisdom than does the typical wax museum”.*

*“... Rabbit, whose life was made up of **Important Things**, said ...”*

*“ ... you can't help respecting anybody who can **spell TUESDAY**, even if he doesn't spell it right; but **spelling** isn't everything. There are days when **spelling Tuesday** simply doesn't count”.*

*“Ha ha!” But do they know anything about A? They don't. It's just three sticks to them. But to the **Educated** – **mark this**, little Piglet – **to the Educated**, not meaning Poohs and Piglets, it's a great and glorious A. Not”, he added, “just something that anybody can come and breathe on”.*

So, expressive means and stylistic devices of all language levels in the analyzed story “*The Tao of Pooh*” by Benjamin Hoff are the foundation for creating chaos as the basic feature of the postmodern style of writing. Also on this basis the reader is presented a special “world” of a story with its funny characters, humor and irony.

Convergence of expressive means and stylistic devices of different language levels correspond to postmodern writers’ view about the equivalence of all stylistic units.

## **REFERENCE**

H=Hoff B. “*The Tao of Pooh*”, 1982, Penguin Books USA, New York.