

ВІДОМОСТІ ПРО АВТОРА

**Валентина Рибальченко** – кандидат філологічних наук, доцент, доцент кафедри української та зарубіжної літератури Центральноукраїнського державного педагогічного університету імені Володимира Винниченка.

*Наукові інтереси:* компаративістика, психологія творчості, перекладознавство.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Valentyna Rybalchenko** – Candidate of Philological Sciences, Associate Professor of the Department of Ukrainian and Foreign Literature, Volodymyr Vynnychenko Central Ukrainian State Pedagogical University.

*Scientific interests:* comparative studies, psychology of creativity, translation knowledge.

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LITERARY SUBTEXT INTERPRETATION:  
THE POWER OF SUGGESTION

*Maryna TARNAVSKA (Kropyvnytsky, Ukraine)*

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5476-911X>

e-mail: [tarnavsky@rambler.ru](mailto:tarnavsky@rambler.ru)

**ТАРНАВСЬКА Марина. ІНТЕРПРЕТАЦІЯ ПІДТЕКСТУ ХУДОЖНЬОГО ТВОРУ: ДЖЕРЕЛО СУГЕСТІЇ.** У статті, присвяченій особливостям інтерпретації та перекладу імпліцитних смислів художнього твору, висвітлюється спроба дати визначення емоційному підтексту, дослідити шляхи та засоби його творення, проаналізувати специфіку перекладу художнього тексту, який містить приховані смисли. Такі тексти є надзвичайно складними для перекладу і вимагають від перекладача знань фонові інформації та особливостей літературної рецепції, а також творчих здібностей, оскільки переклад прихованих смислів часто є більш важливим ніж передача поверхневої інформації, адже саме переклад підтексту робить художній текст більш наближеним до оригіналу.

**Ключові слова:** прихований смисл, емоційний підтекст, імпліцитне значення, принцип айсберга, сугестія, інтерпретація, адекватність.

**TARNAVSKA Maryna. LITERARY SUBTEXT INTERPRETATION: THE POWER OF SUGGESTION.** The article, concerned with the peculiarities of interpretation and translation of implicit meanings of a literary work, highlights the attempt to define emotional subtext, explore the ways and means of its creation, as well as to analyze the specifics of translating literary text containing hidden meanings. Emotional subtext is quite hard to study, as it is actually a feeling that is indirectly suggested by the text of the work. An additional difficulty in identifying and interpreting such an implicit meaning is that it is often built against the background of other types of subtexts, for example, religious and philosophical, but not with the help of explicit information of the literary text. Various subtexts, present in one and the same literary work, frequently interact building layers of meanings, which should be revealed in turn, one after another, allowing the reader to get deeper into the text. J. D. Salinger's works present highly effective material for the study of implicit meanings, because the latter are consciously created, which means that their presence is in some way objective and amenable to scientific comprehension. Such texts are extremely complicated for translation and require the translator to know the background information, the peculiarities of literary perception as well as possession of creative abilities. After all, the translation of hidden meanings is often far more important than rendering of explicit information, since it is the translation of the subtext that makes the artistic text more adequate. Practically, to identify the subtext, the translator is to find the stylistic means used for its creation. As a rule, these means build the so-called "chains", which intensify each other and work together to create hidden meanings. Those "chains" may exist at various text levels, such as phonological, lexical, and grammatical. Consequently, to successfully and adequately render the implicit meanings is, to a large extent, to be able to detect and to correctly interpret the artistic devices responsible for subtext generation.

**Key words:** hidden meaning, emotional subtext, implicit meaning, iceberg theory, emotional suggestion, interpretation, adequacy.

The present article is a part of a continuous study into **the issue of literary subtext generation** and ways of its rendering in the process of translation. **The goal** of the present research is to figure out specific ways of emotional subtext creation and shape possible strategies to reproduce similar mood of the hidden meaning during the translation. It is the subtext of a fiction text that is **the object of our study**. **The subject of the research** is a paradigm of artistic means, which create a hidden plane of the artwork, as well as the translation transformations used to render

it in a target text. **The problem topicality** is hard to overestimate, as precision and proximity of text perception, both original and translated, are the most complicated and challenging in the present-day literary and translation studies. Various aspects of interpretation and translation of subtext meanings have been researched by numerous scholars; among them are Haleieva N., Halynska I., Hrintser P.A., Zorivchak R., Kukharenko V., Popovych A., Miller J. Jr. and others.

**The basis for the study material** is the cycle of J. D. Salinger's short stories known as the "Nine Stories" collection. As Salinger is an acknowledged expert in subtext generation, this choice seems justified. It should be noted that quite a few of his stories are imparted with the emotional subtext. However, there are only a couple of them, where this type of hidden meaning becomes dominant. Thus, in the story "Blue Melody" (that was not included into the cycle) the "leit-motif" is the power of music, which is capable of creating the most vibrant and long-lasting emotions, changing our understanding of the world around us. Among the "Nine Stories", the one, which stands out, is definitely "Teddy". Its plot significantly differs from the other stories of the collection, primarily on the subject. The center of the narration is a ten-year-old boy with extraordinary intellectual and philosophical mindset, unimaginable at his age. He is able to gain an insight into things and events as well as anticipate the future. The story is almost surreal, as it does not tell about the prodigy, but about a person endowed with the qualities of a superman, a prophet.

To begin with, mysticism is a typical feature of many of Salinger's works and it was noticed by the scholars who researched his literary heritage. For instance, John. Miller Jr. calls "Teddy" to be a truly mystical work. He believes that the story hints at a call to do away with material worries in real life (as required by the religious doctrines of the East) and plunge into a "real" spiritual world, the path to which lies through death (Miller, 1965: 26-27). Warren French argues that the main character of the story is a complete work of fiction (French, 1963: 104). Whether or not the assumptions are true, one thing is clear: Salinger involves a strong emotional subtext into his writing to get the message across to the reader and it is the primary assignment of the given article to apprehend (or at least try to) one. The story is complicated for interpretations of any kind, as the implicit meanings of it are multilayered and unfold for the reader only after deep and profound considerations.

We have repeatedly stated that the cycle "Nine Stories" was developed by the writer **in accordance with the canons of the Eastern Indian poetics** and that each of the stories is to "suggest" a certain emotional state over the reader. The story "Teddy" completes the cycle and has to urge the reader to feel the highest and the most subtle, according to the Eastern philosophy, emotion, that is, **a sense of purification, absolutism**, in some way (Галинская, 1975: 70 -77). So **the ultimate aim of the given interpretation analysis** is to distinguish the ways and the means which help to "suggest" the feeling of catharsis.

Traditionally enough, we start with **the composition of the story**, which is (typically of Salinger) similar to the composition of a dramatic work, and contains three distinctive parts. The first one is set in the cabin where Teddy's family is staying on the sea cruise, and consists entirely of dialogues involving parents and Teddy. These are built on the traditional for Salinger "**iceberg theory**"; therefore, comprehension of the part requires a detailed analysis of the dialogues. The latter tell us that the parents are deep into their own world of squabble and zero sum game. The spouses hate each other and they openly wish death on each other. It is quite easy to notice that all their disagreements are solely over the material things. Teddy's parents are generally deprived of the ability to talk about something that is not associated with the material world. So we can conclude that through this passage Salinger was trying create the background for his basic emotion, showing that material passions, which rule over humans, cause nothing but pain and sufferings.

It is a well-known fact that **emotionality** is extremely difficult to render in the translation, because it is not only hidden, but also "secondary"; it occurs as a result of perception and rethinking in the process of the so-called "surface reading" (Guthrie, 2004; Hennings, 1992). Consequently, it is impossible to convey the right mood of the part without adequate translation of the key moments of the subtext. The typical "Salinger" subtext generators found here are **artistic detail** as well as **emotional and evaluative dialogue phrases**. The ones "What the hell", "God damn it", "... kick your goddam head open" (Сэлинджер, 1982: 149-151) are translated like "Долго я буду надрываться?", "Черт возьми" and "... проломил тебе голову" (Сэлинджер, 1997: 409-410). The translator solves the difficult task of conveying the appropriate tone of the dialogue emotions

and uses both synonymous patterns and contextual replacement: Yet negative connotations in the translation fall a bit short for the original that contains ruder, more aggressive expressions, which does not add to the adequacy of the emotional subtext.

The following part of the narrative is devoted almost exclusively to the relationship of Teddy and his sister Booper. Teddy's sister is still just a little girl, but in her movements and words one can feel her inner aggressiveness to the surrounding world. Psychologically, this can be explained by the fact that children aged three to six years old (and this is the period the girl is undergoing now) show certain hostility to the world, as having a lack of social skills in their behavior they are guided by physiological instincts. Booper is not just angry, she shouts out that she hates Teddy and hates the world, and it really feels like the truth. What is the reason for this "adult" rage of the sister? Of course, we can blame the parents, who do not provide enough love and care for the children. However, Booper displays hatred towards everything and everyone around her, even towards those who love her. It seems odd and illogical. Well again, the author leaves a mystery for us. It may have an explanation, if we remember that **each part of the story creates the emotional background necessary for deeper understanding of the whole work**. Booper's character being in stark contrast to Teddy creates the feeling of cruelty of the world and of the person, who dares to oppose it. This emotion enhances the feeling of hostility of materialistic world filled with passions, and at the same time makes the reader feel uneasy concern, some vague imminent peril. If we talk about the translation of this important part, then again, the **emotional remarks** of the conversation come to the fore, as well as **the repetitions** that create tension, and lead to the climax of the episode: "You're the stupidest person I ever met," Booper said to him. "You're the stupidest person in this ocean. Did you know that?"; "–You're a liar.–I'm not a liar. She does," Teddy said."; "I hate you! I hate everybody in this ocean!" Booper called after him" (Сэлинджер, 1982: 157-158).

One might notice that the repetitions are not only lexical, but also syntactic. The translation mostly does not preserve the grammatical structure of the sentences, which is successfully compensated with the inversion, emphatic permutations and adding of emphatic lexemes that end up working for the creation of adequately intense emotional mood of aggression and hatred: "– Я такого дурака еще не видела, сказала Пуппи. – Ты самый большой дурак на всем этом океане. Ты понял?"; "– Врешь ты все. – Ничего не вру."; "–А вдогонку ему неслось: – Ненавижу тебя! Всех ненавижу на этом океане!" (Сэлинджер, 1997: 416-417).

The third part of the narrative is compositionally different from the previous two; although the main style of narration is the dialogue, its form has changed. It is more like an excerpt from a philosophical and religious treatise, where an Eastern philosopher artistically presents the basics of his teachings to his disciple. The most striking is the fact that it is not university lecturer Bob Nicholson, who is the philosopher, but Teddy himself. Teddy talks and talks like an Eastern sage who has learnt the truth – the meaning of life; moreover, he predicts the future and is able to gain an insight into the essence of things.

This time Salinger offers a complicated puzzle to the reader: Can it be true? Why does the author create this hoax? Why, then, does he give a regular boy the traits of the superman? The answer lies in the subtext, but to comprehend it we need to turn to Eastern philosophy. In accordance with the religious and philosophical doctrines of the East, for example, of Buddhism, a man dies and is reborn many times. Man is a ball of fire, a bundle of energy, whose body is just a temporary shell. Through the whole cycle of rebirths, this energy goes from plants and animals to humans, and during the "human" rebirth, it is improved by means of prayer, meditation, abstinence, contemplation. The ultimate goal of every person is the achievement of the highest degree of perfection and liberation. Therefore, he who discovers the divine omnipresent truth reaches the peak of enlightenment and becomes closer to God. The enlightened person regardless of their age and education attains all the truth on Earth and possesses extraordinary abilities, which allow them to arrive at God.

Salinger's character has the ability to see beyond the things, he seeks for their essence, that is, tries to perceive to what degree people and their actions are consistent with the meaning of life how close they are to the Nirvana, to the divine. This proposition can explain the extraordinary peace of mind Teddy shows, lack of any emotion, which contrasts with the passions running high between Teddy's parents, with Booper's emotional anger. Every earthly emotion is mean, far from reality, because it blindfolds a man, depriving of the ability to think clearly, keeps from experiencing true

spiritual feelings. Such emotions lead not only to spiritual death and to the impossibility to arrive at God, they do not even allow one to live their mortal life with pleasure and delight, as the only thing they bring is suffering. In addition, Teddy is endowed with an ability to predict the future. An “enlightened” man, who has discovered the Truth, is able, according to the Eastern philosophy, to foresee the things to come. However, he is not a foreteller; he is just wise enough to clearly understand the essence of other people and phenomena, to observe the cycles of birth and death and at what stage of their spiritual development other people are. That is the reason why Teddy sees his own life in the smallest detail: “For example, I have a swimming lesson in about five minutes. I could go downstairs to the pool, and there might not be any water in it. This might be the day they change the water or something. What might happen, though, I might walk up to the edge of it, just to have a look at the bottom, for instance, and my sister might come up and sort of push me in. I could fracture my skull and die instantaneously.” Teddy looked at Nicholson. “That could happen,” he said. “My sister’s only six, and she hasn’t been a human being for very many lives, and she doesn’t like me very much. That could happen, all right. What would be so tragic about it, though?” (Сэлинджер, 1982: 170). The final episode is **particularly important** for understanding of the hidden meanings of the story. Teddy demonstrates Nicholson his power to predict his own fate as if “for example”. **In the original text it is expressed with the** synonymous modal verbs showing probability: “could”, “might”, “would”. And because of this the reader is convinced that Teddy is really telling the story as an example, to explain that he is not afraid of death, as long as it’s only a step to the further self-perfection. In the translation, this idea is emphasized even brighter with the help of the grammatical forms of the conditional mood (“Я мог бы сказать им...”, “А почему бы и нет?”); synonyms (“допустим”, “например”) and empathic constructions (“Так что все возможно. Но разве это такая уж трагедия?”) (Сэлинджер, 1997: 429). Even when Nicholson rushed to catch up with Teddy and began hastily looking for the way to the pool, the reader still does not understand what is to happen the next moment. It took Nicholson long enough and this creates a feeling of suspense, intense expectation of something unknown and sinister. Tension builds sharply at the very end of the narrative, when Nicholson pushes a heavy, metal door (yet another Salinger’s riddle: How could a ten-year old boy possibly open it?). There was a narrow, uncarpeted staircase (a philosophical hint at the inevitable!). Suddenly there is a long, piercing scream of a little girl... The ending is exceptionally dramatic, it gives the reader the feeling of terror, almost of agony, largely with the help of **emotionally coloured epithets**: “the all-piercing, sustained scream”, “highly acoustical”, “reverberating within four tiled walls”. The readers ask themselves: What has actually happened? Not until now, they return to the text in search of an answer. This is evidently the episode, in which Teddy talks about his death as if “for example”, where the hidden meaning is. The interpretation of the subtext might be as following: “enlightened” Teddy knows all about his future and about his death. The way he talks about this, as if he were talking about somebody else, proves that he sees death as an inevitable yet another necessary step on his way to God. He does not want to embarrass or shock Nicholson; he just means to convey his thoughts to the other person. Teddy knows that he will die by his sister’s hand, who he loves against all the odds, yet quietly walks to meet his fate, as it has been predetermined. He does not make a sacrifice, nor does he become a martyr; this is a step to the Nirvana, the step to catharsis. In this way the ending of the story doesn’t have to be hopelessly tragic, because horror, pain and suffering associated with the last scene are nothing more than earthly emotions and passions similar to those experienced by Teddy’s parents and sister: rage, hatred, anger. These are unimportant, minor things, the main ones being faith, spirituality and serenity. The latter ones are the things Teddy strives after and the things he gains after all.

What about the translation? How does that effect the perception of the emotional subtext? Let us consider the final passage. “Он уже почти спустился с трапа, как вдруг услышал долгий пронзительный крик, - так могла кричать только маленькая девочка. Он все звучал и звучал, будто метался меж кафельных стен.” (Сэлинджер, 1997: 433). On the surface the translator seems to have carried out his task, as the ending sounds surprising, emotional and tragic, like in the original text. However, if we read deep, we comprehend that, as compared to Salinger, the emotions come out more “human”, understandable to everyone. The translator uses **emphatic adverbs** (“почти”, “только”) and the syntactic repetition (“все звучал и звучал”) as well as contextual substitution “маленькая девочка” instead of the colder “a small, female child”. Such

transformations are fully justified for adequate representation of the surface meaning of the story, but they do not contribute to the creation of emotional connotations of tranquility, maturity, enlightenment, which are more important for conveying emotional hidden meaning.

Let us now draw **some conclusions** about the principles and ways to create emotional subtext in Salinger's writings. First of all, **it is essential to possess certain background knowledge to adequately study and understand the hidden meanings** of the stories; in this case, it is the knowledge of basic philosophical and religious principles of the East as well as **the categories of traditional Eastern poetics** (Гринцер, 1987: 141-202). If this were not the case, perception and understanding of the story subtext would be incomplete, or even distorted. This interpretation shows the most important **hermeneutics principle**, namely, that **adequate perception of a literary work requires an adequate reader** (Smith, 2004; Willis, 2008). One of the Salinger's style peculiarities is the power to **"suggest" a certain emotional state**. In a literary text, the function of the "inspired" emotion is twofold: first, its creation is only possible at a subconscious level, not directly, but through intermediate artistic techniques. In this way, the created emotional state is building up the subtext. Second, the "suggested" emotions allow the reader to better understand hidden meanings of the story, encourage the reader to search for them. Thus, in the story "Teddy", Salinger creates the emotional state of enlightenment, which enhances comprehension of the subtext idea of the spiritual purification importance, the need for understanding the meaning of human existence. Taking into consideration all of the above mentioned, we cannot ignore several points related to the adequacy of subtext rendering in the process of translation. **It is of the utmost importance for the translator to identify the key artistic means, which actually create hidden meanings**. Implicit emotional states are "suggested" primarily through **a system of compositional techniques**, with one of the most prominent being **the principle of contrast**. Salinger intentionally divides the story into three parts, each of them stirring its own specific mood. Thus, the first part creates the mood of despair, mental anguish caused by passions, like anger and hatred. The second part "suggests" the idea of the cruelty of man and the world around and causes anxiety with the reader. The third part contrasts sharply with the previous ones, brings out philosophical mood and this very contrast makes the reader ponder over the hidden ideas of the work. The translator should realize that with each part of the text, the emotional state is changed and **their objective is to approximate the emotional impact of the translated text to the emotions "suggested" in the original**. As the author uses a number of artistic techniques to create subtext, like **artistic details, lexical and syntactic repetitions as well as the dialogue based on the "iceberg principle" and emotive language** (Tarnavska, 2019), special attention of the translator **should be focused on these techniques and on the adequacy of their rendering**.

When it comes to the question of high quality artistic translation, it is impossible to overlook **the aspect of individual interpreting style**. Striving for the stylistic integrity of the text, the translator can sometimes neglect the proximity of the translation to the original. In the case with the texts containing emotional hidden meaning, this technique might be even beneficial for the translated text. However, this may be successful only under the condition that **the translator clearly understands mechanisms of subtext creation and uses adequate compensation techniques**.

Finally, it should be noted that the main features of every highly artistic literary work are its depth and openness, which generate a myriad of hidden meanings; hence, the mechanisms of their creation are varied. Thus, we see further exploration of new subtext creation methods and clarifying the features of their adequate representation in the translation as **the prospect of our future research**.

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## ВІДОМОСТІ ПРО АВТОРА

**Марина Тарнавська** – кандидат філологічних наук, доцент, доцент кафедри перекладу, прикладної та загальної лінгвістики Центральноукраїнського державного педагогічного університету імені Володимира Винниченка.

*Наукові інтереси:* інтерпретація та переклад художнього тексту, механізми творення підтекстових смислів та їх переклад.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Maryna Tarnavska** – Candidate of Philological Sciences, Associate Professor at the Department of Translation, Applied and General Linguistics of the Volodymyr Vynnychenko Central Ukrainian State Pedagogical University.

*Scientific interests:* interpretation and translation of artistic text, mechanisms of creating subtext meanings and their translation.

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## ЕМОЦІЙНИЙ КОНЦЕПТ «ЛІБЕВ»-«ЛЮБОВ» У ПОЕЗІЇ Г. ГЕЙНЕ ТА ЇЇ ПЕРЕКЛАДАХ НА УКРАЇНСЬКУ МОВУ

*Руслана ГОНЧАРУК (Рівне, Україна)*

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6858-1647>

e-mail: [Ruslana\\_box\\_2@ukr.net](mailto:Ruslana_box_2@ukr.net)

**ГОНЧАРУК Руслана. ЕМОЦІЙНИЙ КОНЦЕПТ «ЛІБЕВ»-«ЛЮБОВ» У ПОЕЗІЇ Г. ГЕЙНЕ ТА ЇЇ ПЕРЕКЛАДАХ НА УКРАЇНСЬКУ МОВУ.** Дана наукова розвідка присвячена дослідженню емоційного концепту «любов» та способів його реалізації в німецькомовному поетичному дискурсі та його перекладі на українську. Матеріалом для дослідження послужили тексти поезій Г. Гейне циклу «Lyrisches Intermezzo» збірки «Buch der Lieder» та їх переклад на українську мову, який виконала Леся Українка. В ході проведеного дослідження автор приходять до висновків, що культури різних народів можуть по-різному інтерпретувати концепти, та не