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ALLUSIVE PLOTS IN THE INTERTEXTUAL SPACE OF THE NOVEL “NEVERWHERE” BY NEIL GAIMAN

Summary. The article focuses on the study of allusive plots in the intertextual space of the novel “Neverwhere” by Neil Gaiman, who is recognized as one of the top ten contemporary postmodern writers. The category of intertextuality is considered as one of the central ideas in contemporary literary theory which has been researched in various aspects such as historical, linguocognitive, psycholinguistic, semiotic, but is not still transparent enough. Special benefits for its understanding and interpretation are guaranteed by studying the realization of the category of intertextuality in postmodern discourse which accounts for the postmodernists’ powerful appeal to the cultural memory of mankind. We agree that referring to the fund of existing texts, postmodern writers find impulses for the generation of new texts in which the pre-texts are re-coded. The inclusion in the text of fragments from other texts, including intertexts and intertextual elements, add to attaining of the additional meaning and is determined by the author’s strategy. Thus, intertextuality is understood in terms of the spectrum of cross-textual relations in the form of explicit or implicit quotations and allusions, repetitions and transformations of formal and semantic features of pre-texts. Allusive plots as a kind of intertextual elements are mythological, literary and historical events and facts that are introduced into a new context where they are reconsidered. Neil Gaiman in his novel “Neverwhere” reconsiders and interprets the plots of Lewis Carroll’s “Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland” and “Through the Looking Glass” as well as “The Wonderful Wizard of Oz” by Frank Baum in the new context of contemporary world. The allusive plots of “Neverwhere” are based on the borrowed concepts of a trip to another world that is partly a reflection of the real one; the concept of mirror reflection of two kinds – direct and distorted; the concepts of “doors” and “keys” that serve the means of journey between the worlds; the characters’ loss of any initiative, control over their lives and self-identification; the images of strangers who conceal their intentions and manipulate the main character to reach the desired. Thus, the allusive plots of the dilogy by Lewis Carroll “Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland” and “Through the Looking Glass” as well as “The Wonderful Wizard of Oz” by Frank Baum exploited by Neil Gaiman create a special semiotic space in which cultural signs correlate

with the background knowledge and specificity of linguistic consciousness.

Key words: intertextuality, allusive plots, postmodern fiction, semiotic space, cultural signs, pre-texts, texts-recipients.

Introduction. The tendency of modern linguistics to conduct complex studies accounts for considerable interest in intertextuality research. Although intertextuality is recognized as a universal text category, it has not yet got versatile and consistent coverage in the linguistic works. Contemporary theory of intertextuality integrates the provisions of many sciences – linguistics, literary studies, philosophy, cognitology, hermeneutics, textology, cultural studies, etc. Studying the realization of the category of intertextuality in postmodern discourse reveals extra benefits for its understanding and interpretation which is caused by postmodernists’ powerful appeal to the cultural memory of mankind. Thus, intertextuality is the means to express writers’ creative potential and idiosyncrasy as through the construction of systemic relations with the texts of other authors the links to a vast historical and culturological context are set. Neil Gaiman, who was recognized as one of the top ten contemporary postmodern writers [1] by the encyclopedic edition of the Dictionary of Literary Biographies, provides sufficient literary background for the category of intertextuality in-depth study.

Literature Review. Intertextuality is one of the most commonly used and mis-used terms in contemporary critical discourse. Intertextuality is considered to be one of the central ideas in contemporary literary theory, but is not a transparent term and so, despite its confident utilization by many theorists and critics, cannot be evoked in an uncomplicated manner [2, p. 2]. The intertextuality research of antique texts and their reception in Medieval and modern times as well as the relationship between intertextuality and canon has been the subject of contemporary linguistic studies [3]. The postmodern fairy tales and folkloric intertexts in contemporary fiction have been interpreted [4]. A cognitively-grounded framework for hands-on analysis of intertextuality, both in written texts and spoken discourse has been provided with

the focus on what intertextuality is conceptually, rather than how it can be identified, described and analysed. Drawing on research from literary criticism, neuroscience, linguistics and sociology, a cognitive stylistic approach has been dwelled upon, presenting the 'narrative interrelation framework' as a way of operationalizing the concept of intertextuality to enable close practical analysis [5]. Intertextuality has been researched in the framework of psycholinguistics where using concepts such as the unconscious, object relations, desire, abjection, the uncanny, hysteria, the masquerade, and the death drive, a broad range of well-known literary texts in different genres from Sophocles and Shakespeare to Derek Walcott and Jeanette Winterson are analysed to provide the theoretical basis for an investigation of the complexity of human fantasy as it seeks representation in literature [6].

Ukrainian reception of the theory of intertextuality accounts for the works of O. Selivanova who introduces the notions of intersemiotism as a dialogical interaction of texts communicants' modules and semiotic universum – the code of culture, science and literature [7, p. 89].

Results and Discussion. The notion of intertextuality is used to refer to the spectrum of cross-textual relations in the form of explicit or implicit quotations and allusions, repetitions and transformations of formal and semantic features of pre-texts [8, p. 317]. Any text is regarded as a combination of intertextual elements that provide the internal connection of a pre-text with the text-recipient and account for creative links between the author of the text, the pre-texts, and/or their influences it falls under [9, p. 225].

Postmodern literary texts function in a special linguistic cultural realm – in the semiosphere of national and world culture. Referring to the fund of existing texts, postmodern writers find impulses in it for their own creativity, and therefore – for the generation of new texts in which the pre-texts are re-coded [10]. The inclusion in the text of fragments from other texts, including intertexts and intertextual elements, add to attaining of the additional meaning and is determined by the author's strategy [11].

Allusive plots are mythological, literary and historical events and facts that are introduced into a new context where they are reconsidered.

The skeleton of the plot of Neil Gaiman's "Neverwhere" is the trip of the main character – Richard Mayhew, London's office worker, to London Below. After he has helped the mysterious stranger, Richard is "crossed out" from the world of London Above as no one notices him and he turns to have been completely forgotten. To bring his former life back, he is forced to go to London Below.

Comparing this story with Carroll's dilogy, where the core is Alice's journey first to the Wonderland ("Alice's Adventures in Wonderland") and through the Looking Glass ("Through the Looking Glass"), we conclude on the links at the level of the subjects of the pre-text and the text-recipient which is embodied in the traveling of the main character to the fantastic world. Particularly striking is the link between "Neverwhere" and "Through the Looking Glass" – a journey to the world, which is partly a reflection of the real one. The motif of the "reflected reality" in "Neverwhere" is represented in the fact that London Below is a distorted reflection of London Above:

It seemed utterly right, in this unreal mirror of the London he had known, that she should be here and that she should be fighting so dangerously and so well. ("Neverwhere" [13])

Lewis Carroll in "Through The Looking Glass" operates with two concepts of reflection: the first is related to a mirror reflection that provides an identical image of objects. In "Neverwhere", this reflection is not that of material objects, but ideal, proper names in particular. The structure of London Below duplicates the structure of London Above, whose stations coincide with parts of another world and are given the exact names of the stations:

He assumed that the Earl's Court he referred to wasn't the familiar Tube station he had waited in innumerable times, reading a paper, or just daydreaming.

<...>

It was, Richard realized, as if someone had taken a small medieval court and put it, as best they could, in one car of an Underground train. («Neverwhere»)

"There are no shepherds in Shepherd's Bush. I've been there. It's just houses and stores and roads and the BBC. That's all," pointed out Richard, flatly. "There are shepherds," said Hunter. ("Neverwhere" [13])

The other parts get substantially altered which is verbalized by homophony:

The sign on the station said KNIGHTSBRIDGE. ("Neverwhere" [13])

"They walked toward the bridge. <...> "Is there anything, really, to be scared of?" "Only the night on the bridge," she said.

"The kind in armor?"

"The kind that comes when day is over." ("Neverwhere" [13])

The second conception of reflection is related to the property of the mirror to reproduce images "on the contrary". For example, in the garden of fresh flowers to get to a certain place, you need to move in the opposite direction. The elements of the "reflection on the contrary" concept are also used in "Neverwhere":

"You get to the street through the house?" asked Richard.

"No," said Lamia. "The street is in the house." ("Neverwhere" [13])

Another feature that demonstrates the affinity of alternative worlds is their being highly structured and limited by clearly defined boundaries. In the first case, the world "through the looking glass" is represented by a chess board while as for London Below, its structure is delineated by the subway card. Having analyzed the world of London Below, we conclude that it combines the traits of both alternative worlds: the world "through the looking glass" and that of the Wonderland. Alice got to the Wonderland, following a white rabbit and falling into a well:

The rabbit-hole went straight on like a tunnel for some way, and then dipped suddenly down, so suddenly that Alice had not a moment to think about stopping herself before she found herself falling down a very deep well. ("Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" [14])

The motif of "falling into another world" is also evident in "Neverwhere" what accounts for the fact that there is the spatial movement of the main character from the higher level to the lower one that is from London Above to London Below. The verb "to fall" emphasizes the uncontrollability of the very process.

There's London Above—that's where you lived—and then there's London Below—the Underside—inhabited by the people who fell through the cracks in the world. ("Neverwhere" [13])

Studying the intertextual links in the form of allusive plots of "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland", "Through the Looking Glass" by Lewis Carroll and "Neverwhere" by Neil Gaiman, it is worthwhile to analyse the main character's actions in the aspect of their being active and independent. Thus, the plotline of "Through the Looking Glass" is developed round the chess play: Alice starts

it as a pawn and completes it as a queen. Her activity is completely predetermined in advance by the rules of the game:

A pawn goes two squares in its first move, you know. So you'll go VERY quickly through the Third Square—by railway, I should think—and you'll find yourself in the Fourth Square in no time. Well, THAT square belongs to Tweedledum and Tweedledee—the Fifth is mostly water—the Sixth belongs to Humpty Dumpty – <...> the Seventh Square is all forest—however, one of the Knights will show you the way—and in the Eighth Square we shall be Queens together. (“Through the Looking Glass” [15])

Accordingly, Alice is completely deprived of the opportunity to influence her movements in the world “through the looking glass”, acting only within the game. Richard is also far from being independent, in London Below he can only follow his companions, otherwise he will inevitably die. Lost and alienated in the world of London Below, the main character feels that all the events he witnesses are beyond his control and the only option he has got is to yield to the “game”:

As lost as he was in this strange other-world, he was at least learning to play the game. His mind was too numb to make any sense of where he was, or why he was here, but it was capable of following the rules. (“Neverwhere” [13])

One more pre-text element which is sure to be the turning point of the plotline development is the main characters' acute feeling of lost self-identification. Alice's radical changes in the Wonderland make her ponder upon who she is:

Let me think: was I the same when I got up this morning? <...> But if I'm not the same, the next question is, Who in the world am I? (“Alice's Adventures in Wonderland” [14])

'Who are YOU?' said the Caterpillar.

<...> – I hardly know, sir, just at present – at least I know who I WAS when I got up this morning, but I think I must have been changed several times since then.' (“Alice's Adventures in Wonderland” [14])

Richard's self-identification is ruined as well because he is excluded from the world of London Above:

I think I'm going mad or something. <...> It's like I've become some kind of non-person. (“Neverwhere” [13])

The fact that even aggravates the situation is that there is hardly a place for him in the world of London Below:

His life so far, he decided, had prepared him perfectly for a job in Securities, for shopping at the supermarket, for watching soccer on the television on the weekends, for turning up the thermostat if he got cold. It had magnificently failed to prepare him for a life as an un-person on the roofs and in the sewers of London, for a life in the cold and the wet and the dark. (“Neverwhere” [13])

The plotline hallmarks in “Neverwhere” are such objects as “doors” and “key” that serve the means of journey between the worlds. In one of the pre-texts – “Alice's Adventures in Wonderland” – Alice returns to the door leading to the garden with the Red Queen, which can be unlocked with a key and the character cannot obtain it at once. For “Alice's Adventures in Wonderland” this transition through the door is highly significant, because most of the events of the story take place on the premise of the Red Queen.

In “Neverwhere”, the author largely appeals to the ideal aspect of the concept of “door” as a means of moving in space. One of the main characters is a girl, a representative of London Below, named Door, whose magical ability is to open any door. Having

saved her, Richard soon discovered that he had been excluded from the world of London Above. Thus, Door is the very reason that brought Richard to London Below where he was forced to accompany her on a trip to an angel by the name of Islington to get a key that unlocks the door to Paradise. The same key and Door enable him to come back home:

“Hello,” said Door. He had not seen her approach. <...> “Have you got the key?” He put down his bag and rummaged in his back pocket with his good hand. He took out the key and handed it to her. She held it out in front of her, as if it were being inserted in an imaginary door. “Okay,” she said. “Just walk. Don't look back.” He began walking down a small hill, away from the blue waters of the Thames. A gray gull swooped past. At the bottom of the hill, he looked back<...> The orange sunlight gleamed on the key. Door turned it, with one decisive motion. The world went dark, and a low roar filled Richard's head, like the maddened growling of a thousand enraged beasts. <...> There were steps in front of him; Richard began to ascend, and, as he did so, the world began to resolve, to take shape and to re-form. The growling was the roar of traffic, and he was coming out of an underpass in Trafalgar Square. (“Neverwhere” [13])

It is evident that Neil Gaiman has considerably transformed the element of the pre-text by transmitting the qualities of the objects mentioned to one of the characters.

One more allusive plot exploited by Neil Gaiman in “Neverwhere” stems from a literary fairy-tale “The Wonderful Wizard of Oz” by Frank Baum the main character of which – Dorothy – is relocated by a hurricane to the country of Oz. She covers the pathway to Emerald City to meet the wizard who is able to return her back home. She is accompanied by Scarecrow, Cowardly Lion, Tin Woodman. They get an assignment to destroy the evil witch who rules Winkies Country what serves to be the prerequisite for getting what they wish, including Dorothy who longs to come back home:

Then Oz asked, “What do you wish me to do?”

“Send me back to Kansas, where my Aunt Em and Uncle Henry are,” she answered earnestly. “I don't like your country, although it is so beautiful. And I am sure Aunt Em will be dreadfully worried over my being away so long.”

<...>

“Help me and I will help you.”

“What must I do?” asked the girl.

“Kill the Wicked Witch of the West,” answered Oz. (“The Wonderful Wizard of Oz” [12])

However, having destroyed the witch and returned to Emerald City, the characters discover that the wizard of the country of Oz is not the one whom he pretends to be, in fact he has no magic forces and uses Dorothy and her friends to reach his goals – to get rid of witches. In addition, like Dorothy, he is a stranger in the country of Oz, as he got there when his balloon was carried by the wind.

Comparing this plot with the story “Neverwhere”, we can trace how the author reconsiders the events described. Like Dorothy, Richard got to London Below against his will and was desperately looking for a way to return home. In the world of London Below he has no other choice than to follow Door and her companions Marquis de Carabas and Hunter in their journey to angel Islington. So, as in “The Wonderful Wizard of Oz”, we read about a journey of four characters to a powerful creature that can fulfill their desires:

"What would you like to know?"

Door paused. "My family... they were killed by Croup and Vandemar. But—who ordered it? I want... I want to know why."

The angel nodded. "Many secrets find their way down to me," it said. "Many rumors, and half-truths, and echoes." Then it turned to Richard. "And you? What do you want, Richard Mayhew?"

Richard shrugged. "I want my life back. And my apartment. And my job."

"That can happen," said the angel. ("Neverwhere" [13])

Though soon they discover that Islington is a punished angel who is kept in London Below as in prison. Thus, both the wizard from the country of Oz and Islington are strangers who conceal their intentions and manipulate the main character to reach the desired. What makes the difference is that the wizard from the country of Oz turns to be a positive personage who intends to help:

"One of my greatest fears was the Witches, for while I had no magical powers at all I soon found out that the Witches were really able to do wonderful things. <...> I lived in deadly fear of them for many years; so you can imagine how pleased I was when I heard your house had fallen on the Wicked Witch of the East. When you came to me, I was willing to promise anything if you would only do away with the other Witch; but, now that you have melted her, I am ashamed to say that I cannot keep my promises."

"I think you are a very bad man," said Dorothy. "Oh, no, my dear; I'm really a very good man, but I'm a very bad Wizard, I must admit." ("The Wonderful Wizard of Oz" [12])

While Islington from "Neverwhere" is a completely negative personage who turns to tortures to obtain the desired:

"Your family," it said, gently. "You come from a very unusual family. Quite remarkable."

"Then why did you have us killed?"

<...>

Richard knew, then. "The Black Friars were keeping the key safe from you," he said.

Islington let go of the key. Door was chained up beside the door made of black flint and tarnished silver. The angel walked to it, and placed a hand on it, white against the blackness of the door. "From me," agreed Islington. "A key. A door. An opener of the door. There must be the three, you see: a particularly refined sort of joke. The idea being that when they decided I had earned forgiveness and my freedom, they would send me an opener, and give me the key. I just decided to take matters into my own hands, and will be leaving a little early." ("Neverwhere" [13])

Conclusion. Postmodernism is characterized by hybrid artistic forms, the intersection of elitist and mass literature techniques. It relies on any means to ruin stereotypes, including the reader in a never-ending game of decentration; contains a complex of texts built on the denial of the logocentric worldview; is focused primarily on intertextuality. The allusive plots of the diology by Lewis Carroll "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" and "Through the Looking Glass" as well as "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz" by Frank Baum exploited by Neil Gaiman create a special semiotic space in which cultural signs correlate with the background knowledge and specificity of linguistic consciousness thus generating the rhizomatic model of the world with its variability, immanence, mythopoetics, fragmentation, irrationality, hypersymbolism, ambivalence and intertextuality. Neil Gaiman in his novel "Neverwhere" reconsiders and interprets the plots of Lewis Carroll's "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" and "Through

the Looking Glass" as well as "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz" by Frank Baum in the new context of contemporary world.

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Багацька О.В., Козлова В.В., Коваленко А.М. Алюзивні сюжети в інтертекстуальному просторі роману "Neverwhere" Ніла Геймана

Анотація. У статті йдеться про вивчення алюзивних сюжетів в інтертекстуальному просторі роману "Neverwhere" Ніла Геймана, якого наразі визнано одним із топ десяти сучасних постмодерністських авторів. Категорію інтертекстуальності, яку вважають однією із центральних в сучасній теорії літератури, досліджували у різних аспектах, зокрема історичному, лінгвокогнітивному, психолінгвістичному, семіотичному, проте залишається багато лакун невивченого. Особливої актуальності для розуміння та потрактування зазначеної категорії набуває її аналіз у постмодерністському художньому дискурсі, що зумовлено потужним акцентом останнього на культурній спадщині людства. Ми погоджуємося з тим, що звертаючись до фонду вже існуючих текстів, постмодерністи набувають додаткового імпульсу до створення нових текстів, у яких пре-тексти перекодовуються. Включення фрагментів інших текстів як інтертекстуальних елементів сприяють набуттю нових смислів та повністю підпорядковані автор-

ським стратегіям. Отже, інтертекстуальність розглядається нами як міжтекстові зв'язки у формі експліцитних або імпліцитних цитат, алюзій, повторів, а також трансформацій формальних та семантичних ознак пре-тексту. Алюзивні сюжети як різновид інтертекстових елементів розглядаємо як сукупність міфологічних, художніх та історичних подій, які були інкорпоровані у новий контекст і заново переосмислені. Ніл Гейман у своєму романі "Neverwhere" по-новому інтерпретує сюжетні лінії творів Клайва Льюїса "Аліса у країні Див", "У Задзеркаллі", а також "Чарівника країни Оз" Френка Баума. Алюзивні сюжети роману "Neverwhere" ґрунтуються на запозичених концептах мандрівки до іншого світу як часткової репрезентації реального; концепту дзеркального відображення двох видів –

прямого і викривленого, концептів "дверей" та "ключів", які слугують засобом переміщення між світами; втраті головними персонажами ініціативи, контролю над власним життям та самоідентифікації; образи чужинців, які приховують власні наміри з метою маніпулювання головними персонажами і досягнення бажаного. Таким чином, алюзивні сюжети Ніла Геймана, запозичені у Клайва Льюїса та Френка Баума, переосмислені та інтерпретовані, створюють особливий семіотичний простір, у якому знаки культури співвіднесені із загальним знанням та специфічною лінгвістичною свідомістю.

Ключові слова: інтертекстуальність, алюзивні сюжети, постмодерністська художня проза, семіотичний простір, знаки культури, пре-тексти, тексти-реципієнти.