THE SIMULATED "WORLD"
OF THEATER AS A METATEXT FRAMEWORK
IN FOWLES' "THE MAGUS"

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INTRODUCTION

John Fowles' novel "The Magus" is distinguished by its unique polyphony and the fusion of intertextual and metatextual compositional, narrative, and thematic elements within its structure. The resolution of the protagonist's worldview conflict, which unfolds throughout the plot, undergoes a distinctive initiation similar to the hero's journey archetype proposed by Campbell. This is achieved by the creation of multiple semiotic worlds: ancient Greek mythology, an illusory realm of mystical reality, intersymbolic spaces, maintained by allusive semiotic codes related to painting, music, structure, architecture, and others.

One of the simulated "worlds" in the novel is the world of theater, which serves as a metatext – a narrative and conceptual framework that establishes a way of reading and interpreting events and actions through the modeling of an alternative theatrical reality.

1. Theoretical basis

The theoretical basis of the article relies on research on metatextuality and semiotic spaces of alternative worlds in artistic texts. Metatext, which has been explored by Gerard Genette, Roland Barthes, Robert Scholes, William Gass, Anna Wierzbicka, is defined in "Metzler Lexikon" as a "text (or part of a text) containing metareferential features" to itself[1] – its own conceptual and structural characteristics through the prism of "parallel" texts embedded within the compositional structure of the main text. These "parallel" texts allow for the creation of a complex and multi-dimensional semiotic space in which one text is interpreted through another or others.

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[1] Nünning A. Metatext und metatextualitat. Metzler Lexikon Literatur und Kulturtheorie. 2013. P. 52.

Such understanding of metatext is in line with the phenomenon of transtextuality, as termed by Gerard Genette[2], who introduced the term "metatextuality" as the trans-textual connection that unites the commentary and the commented text as well as with the concepts of polyphony and internal dialogism in Mikhail Bakhtin's theory[3] in accordance with which dialogism means a plurality of positions and voices in the text that constantly interact with other works and voices, including incompatible elements of equal value within different perspectives. Metatextual elements in the structure of a text encompasses self-referential statements by the author/narrator, collage and cinematographic elements, allusion, tautology, circular structures within the text, and other similar elements[4]. Metatext, as a linguistic concept associated with the study of how structural coherence is actualized in a text, should be distinguished from metanarrative or metafiction, which is primarily analyzed in literary studies. Metafiction is defined as "literature about literature," specifically an artistic text that contains commentary on its own narrative and/or linguistic identity[5], with a self-referential mode of artistic expression, commenting and self-analysis, and the author's reflections on the nature of the text, literature, etc.

Taking into consideration that references to the semiotic space of "theater," besides serving as metatextual connections, also serve as a means of actu-alizing other transtextual relationships, in terms of G. Genette[6], the article distinguishes between the concepts of metatext, intertext as the "presence" of one text in another, and paratext, which denotes the connections between the text and its title, preface, "strong" textual positions, and so on[7].

In the article, metatext is considered as correlating with various alternative possible "worlds" – intersecting or overlapping semiotic spaces embedded within the text. Umberto Eco, when speaking of narrative structures, defines a possible world as a cultural construction[8]. This approach is supported by Lotman's idea that any semiotic space is characterized by being "crossed by numerous boundaries"[9] and encompasses multiple centers, as the text as a sign system is immersed in different semiospheres that determine its mode of signification[10].

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[2] Genette G. Paratexts: Thresholds of interpretation. 1997.

[3] Bakhtin M. Art and answerability: Early philosophical essays. 1990; Bakhtin M. Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics. 1984.

[4] Uroff M. The waste land: Metatext. The centennial review. 1980. Vol. 24. № 2. P. 148–166.

[5] Hutcheon L. Narcissistic narrative: The metafictional paradox. 1980. P. 1.

[6] Genette G. Paratexts: Thresholds of interpretation. 1997. P. 1.

[7] Ibid. P. 1–7.

[8] Eco U. Lextor in Fabula. 1991. P. 79.

[9] Lotman Y. Universe of the mind: A semiotic theory of culture. 1990. P. 140; Lotman Y. The structure of the artistic text. 1977.

[10] Lotman Y. On the semiosphere. Sign systems studies. 2005. 33(1).

Among the various types of alternative worlds interacting in the semiotic space of the text, researchers distinguish:

(a) The alternative world, archetypally and symbolically associated with the realm of the dead[11], which is connected to the metaphorical death of the hero and their rebirth in a transfigured form as a result of spiritual journey and trials.

(b) The hallucinatory or oneiric world of distorted spatial-temporal relationships[12].

(c) The world of the hero's present contrasting with the world of the past[13].

(d) The world of creative inspiration[14].

(e) The world of spiritual values opposing the mundane world[15], and so on.

The semiotic space of "theater" in the novel "Magus" incorporates to some extent the characteristics of various alternative worlds, which interact and form a complex and multidimensional metatext that determines the meaning and interpretation of the text.

2. Methods

The article employs an integrative methodology that includes:

(a) Textual-interpretive analysis added by stylistic analysis[16].

(b) Elements of the method of dialogical interpretation of the text, consisting of seven stages of analysis[17], adapted to the limited scope and specificity of metatext. Particularly, the sixth stage is utilized in the article, which requires the researcher to explore the dialogical nature of the internal semiotic space of the text and its textual concepts.

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[11] Lévi-Strauss C. The sturctural study of myth. Journal of American folklore. 1955. 68(270); Propp P. Morphology of thee folktale. 2011.

[12] Kravchenko N., Prokopchuk M., Yudenko O. *Afro-American rap lyrics vs fairy tales: Possible worlds and their mediators.* Cogito. 2021. 13(1).

[13] Kravchenko N., Zhykharieva O. Rap artists' identity in archetypal roles of Hero and Seeker: A linguistic perspective. Journal of language and linguistic studies. 2020. Vol. 16. № 4; Kravchenko N., Davydova T., Goltsova M. A comparative study of fairy tale and rap narratives: Spaces specificity. Journal og history culture and art research. 2020. 9(3).

[14] Kravchenko N., Prokopchuk M., Yudenko O. *Afro-American rap lyrics vs fairy tales: Possible worlds and their mediators.* Cogito. 2021. 13(1).

[15] Kravchenko N., Snitsar V. Cultural archetypes in construction of 'possible worlds' of modern African-American rap (based on Kendrick Lamar's texts). Euromentor journal. 2019. X(4); Kravchenko N. Biblical intertextuality devices in African American rap texts (based on the Kendrick Lamar's album 'Damn'). International journal of philology. 2019. 10(2).

[16] Simpson P. Stylistics: A resource book for students. 2004; Жихарєва О. Екопоетика англомовного біблійного дискурсу: концепти, образи, нарації. 2018.

[17] Bakhtin M. Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics. 1984; Селіванова О. Лінгвістична енциклопедія. 2010.

(c) Intertextual analysis[18], used both in a narrow sense to uncover intextextual allusions, including intersemiotic ones[19] and in a broader sense to refer to references to the "theatrical" metatext and its corresponding semiotic space[20].

3. Discussion and results

The construction of the semiotic space of the "theater" as a distinctive metatext, guiding the way of interpreting the novel's meaning, is achieved through a combination of references to theatrical performance as a space of mystification. This is marked by the use of the lexeme "masque" (instead of "theatre"), which designates "a short allegorical dramatic entertainment of the 16th and 17th centuries performed by masked actors" (MW) and "usually based on a mythical or allegorical theme" (CD): *I wanted to say, I like your masque, I shan't spoil it*[21]; *All that happened at Bourani was in the nature of a private masque*[22]. *After all, it was a masque*[23]; *The masque, the masque: it fascinated and irritated me*[24].

The linguosemiotics of theatricality is created through reference to parameters such as:

(1) Scriptedness / staginess.

(2) Acting / role-playing.

(3) Actors' repertoire.

(4) Symbolism, which is achieved through spatial-temporal, somatic-kinetic, and purely symbolic codes.

(5) Allusions to plays, other literary works, mythological plots, and characters.

These parameters contribute to the construction of the linguistic and semiotic framework of theatricality, emphasizing the performative aspects, symbolic gestures, and intertextual references that are characteristic of the theater.

The notion of scriptedness is marked by words and constructions carrying the sememes of "planning," "rehearsal," "staging," "scene" and "play": *I should, both out of politeness and for my own pleasure, not poke my*

[18] Bakhtin M. Art and answerability: Early philosophical essays. 1990.
[19] Kravchenko N., Chaika O., Blidchenko-Naiko V., Davydova T. Polysemantic allusion in a polycultural dimension: Definition, structure and semantics (based on Pratchett's Discworld). Journal of language and linguistic studies. 2021. 17(4); Zhykharieva O.O., Stavtseva V.F. Allusive-based metaphorical nominations in the political discourse. *Transcarpathian Philological Studies*. 2023.
[20] Genette G. Paratexts: Thresholds of interpretation. 1997.
[21] Fowles J. The Magus. 2004. 162. URL: https://yes-pdf.com/book/1671/read.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid. 187.

nose behind the scenes[25]*; because underlying everything he did I had come to detect an air of stage management, of the planned and rehearsed*[26]*; there was a kind of professionalism, an air of having rehearsed the narrative*[27]*, a charade, that had been rehearsed and gone according to plan, but could now be ended*[28]*; as a dramatist tells an anecdote where the play requires*[29]*; a black inversion of the scene on the beach*[30]*; I was tense in expectation of a new "episode"*[31].

The scenographic nature is emphasized through a combination of semiotic codes, including:

(a) the material semiotic code with numerous references to paintings, sculptures, and interior objects as elements of theatrical space: *Above them was a life-size reproduction of a Modigliani*[32]*; He touched the bronze of a young man beneaththe Modigliani. "This is a maquette by Rodin" (...). He turned to the other characteristically skeletal bronze. "And thisis by the Italian sculptor Giacometti"*[33]*; each one with a center pillar and a capital of carved marble*[34]*; There was a music stand on the far side, by the wall. It seemed an unnecessary thing to have with a harpsichord*[35];

(b) the sound and musical code: *began to play, short, chirrupy little pieces, then some elaborately ornamented courantes and passacaglias*[36]*; He laughed and corrected her pronunciation; stopping and conducting her, as if she were an orchestra*[37];

(c) allusive codes related to the plot and characters of Shakespeare's play "The Tempest": *Come now. Prospero will show you his domaine*[38]*; And once again I thought of Prospero (...). Conchis had turned away – to talk with Ariel, who put records on; or with Caliban, who carried a bucket of rotting entrails*[39] and other works emphasizing the game stylistics of the narration: *I suddenly felt like Candide*[40]*; Like the sword between Tristan and Isolde*[41];

[25] Fowles J. The Magus. 2004. 160. URL: https://yes-pdf.com/book/1671/read.
[26] Ibid. 100.
[27] Ibid. 125.
[28] Ibid. 71.
[29] Ibid, 101.
[30] Ibid. 196.
[31] Ibid. 223.
[32] Ibid. 84.
[33] Ibid. 85.
[34] Ibid. 86.
[35] Ibid. 86.
[36] Ibid. 84.
[37] Ibid. 246.
[38] Ibid. 74.
[39] Ibid. 129.
[40] Ibid. 138.
[41] Ibid. 142.

it had awakened in me vague memories of Oscar Wilde – the Wilde of Salomé – and of Maeterlinck[42]*; Every one of us is an island*[43], which is the double allusion to Hemingway's "For Whom the Bell Tolls" and to a sermon by John Donne, whose excerpt serves as an epigraph to the Hemingway's novel, and many others.

The concept of "stage performance" is supported by allusive references from other semiotic systems, such as painting, and architecture. Specifically, there is an intersemiotic reference at the beginning of the novel to a series of paintings by the *artist Hogarth titled "Marriage à-la-mode: The Tête à Tête"*, known for their theatricality and narrative quality.

The sense of unreality and theatricality of events is conveyed through the psychonarrative of the protagonist: *felt rather like a man who has knocked on a cottage door and found himself in a palace*[44]*; I had a sensation that I couldn't define*[45]. The liminality of the narrator's sensations is sustained by the intersection of the semiotic space of theater with the hallucinogenic world, into which the hypnotist-Contchis is capable of introducing his "players."

Acting / role-playing as a parameter of theatricality is actualized through the meanings of "manipulation," "pretense," "mask," "disguise," "game" and "dupe": *But what exactly is the game?*[46]*; thought I could discern two elements in his "game" – one didactic, the other aesthetic*[47]*, if he wants me to seem his dupe, I'll seem his dupe; but not be his dupe*[48]*), thought, she must be an actress. Not a model*[49]*, We are all actors and actresses, Mr. Urfe. You included*[50]*,* which is the allusion to Maugham's "The Theatre"; *a game, distorting makeup, spectacularly terrified, effectively theatrical, a brilliant coup de théâtre*[51]*; I waited most for whoever had acted Lily (150); And it became a sort of game inside a game inside a game*[52].

The meaning of "play" is actualized in the poem incorporated into the antagonist's narrative, realizing the meta-genre intertextuality of the novel: "*the man in the mask manipulates*"[53] – from the poem found by Nicholas in

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[42] Fowles J. The Magus. 2004. 179. URL: https://yes-pdf.com/book/1671/read.

[43] Ibid. 139.

[44] Ibid. 87.

[45] Ibid. 92.

[46] Ibid. 168.

[47] Ibid. 156.

[48] Ibid. 130.

[49] Ibid. 163.

[50] Ibid. 169.

[51] Ibid. 177–179.

[52] Ibid. 273.

[53] Ibid. 87.

Conchis' house, as well as through the use of intertextual encoding with foreign language elements: *des pianistes en costume de bal masque*[54].

References to the <u>actors' repertoire</u> as one of the parameters of theatricality are achieved through metaphors, comparisons, allegories, and allusions to mythological characters. Thus, the means of depicting the main antagonist of the narrator, Conchis, actualize connotations of "strategic play," "mystification," and "wearing a mask," which are characteristic of the Trickster-Shadow role. This evokes liminal sensations of confusion and anxiety in the protagonist: *I was increasingly baffled by Conchis. And now he quite definitely frightened me. It was the kind of illogical fear of the supernatural*[55]*, Russian roulette*[56].

Connotations with the Trickster's role are actualized through explicit and implicit semantic descriptors such as "player", "mask", "mystification", "mimicry", and "pretense": *All I ask you is to pretend to believe. Just pretend to believe*[57]*; He was playing a kind of Talleyrand role*[58]*; I knew (...) that he was playing some kind of trick on me*[59]*; his mask-like face was drained of humor*[60]*; his gnomic answers and mystifications*[61]*; I had the strange impression that he wanted me to believe he was death*[62]*; "I am psychic"*[63]*; he mimicked my emphasis*[64]*; I thought, it's Henry James*[65]. The last allusion to the writer Henry James is explained by his ability to control and manipulate the perception and emotional reaction of the reader through the creation of an intriguing and mysterious setting.

At the same time, the ambivalence of Conchis the mystifier is manifested in the combination of Trickster characteristics with the archetypal image of the Wise Man (*Sitting there steering he looked ascetic, Gandhi-like*[66]) and the Ruler-Director of the entire metagame, implied through allusions to Zeus and Hades, and explicitly indexed by semantic descriptors of the antagonist's appearance and behavior, such as *legate* (imperial deputy), *royal power; to survey, to command; to dominate: The dark figure on the raised white terrace; legate of the sun facing the sun; the most ancient royal power.*

[54] Fowles J. The Magus. 2004. 106. URL: https://yes-pdf.com/book/1671/read.
[55] Ibid. 94.
[56] Ibid. 117.
[57] Ibid. 130.
[58] Ibid. 163.
[59] Ibid. 130.
[60] Ibid. 76.
[61] Ibid. 81.
[62] Ibid. 91.
[63] Ibid. 92.
[64] Ibid. 102.
[65] Ibid. 135.
[66] Ibid. 130.

He appeared, wished to appear, to survey, to bless, to command; dominus and domaine[67].

Symbolism as a parameter of theatrical performance is achieved through spatial-temporal, somatic-kinetic, and purely symbolic codes.

In all the farewell scenes with Nicholas, Conchis employs kinetic semiotic signs such as theatrical gestures and poses, which connote meanings of "grandeur," "royal power," and "mystery," associating them with the characteristics of the Ruler-Director of the meta-theater: *He raised both his arms in his peculiar hieratic way, a way in which I knew now that there was something deliberately, not fortuitously, symbolic*[68]; *he raised both his arms in an outlandish hieratic gesture, one foot slightly advanced, as if in some kind of primitive blessing*[69].

In terms of spatial-temporal perspective, the symbolism of the performance is supported by:

(a) Numerous allusions attributing mythological archetypes to the characters, symbolizing power, deceit, adventure, death, and rebirth: Lily is associated with the allusively marked features of Astarte, Ariadne, Artemis[70], Circe[71] and Persephone; Nicolas is allusively compared to Ulysses, Theseus[72], Orestes[73], etc.

(b) The ambiguity of the chronotope, achieved through (i) the blurring of the spatial-temporal mode by the antagonist: *I have lived a great deal in other centuries*[74], (ii) allusions to past events, the Renaissance era, including the use of intertextual coding through foreign language insertions, such as *I have a direct link with le grand siècle at my table*[75], and (iii) references to artworks from different eras: *They are Venetian. Of the fifteenth century*[76]; *Beneath the lid was enacted, in Boucheresque eighteenth-century terms, exactly the same scene as some ancient Greek had painted in the kylix two thousand years before*[77].

The symbolism is further supported by personifications and comparisons that actualize the concept of "death." This perspective in the novel is associated with the metaphorical death of the protagonist as a transitory stage for his transformation: *I had the strange impression that he wanted me*

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[67] Fowles J. The Magus. 2004. 129. URL: https://yes-pdf.com/book/1671/read.
[68] Ibid. 129.
[69] Ibid. 79.
[70] Ibid. 178.
[71] Ibid. 451.
[72] Ibid. 47.
[73] Ibid. 67.
[74] Ibid. 97.
[75] Ibid. 83.
[76] Ibid. 86.
[77] Ibid. 96.

to believe he was death[78]; *The house was as quiet as death*[79]; *But I am dead. One cannot die twice*[80]; *Death starves us of life. So we learn to fabricate our own immortalities*[81].

The composition, key episodes, characters, conflict, and chronotopic characteristics of the meta-theater serve as a semiotic space in which the protagonist is initiated and undergoes a "journey" similar to the monomyth of Campbell's hero[82]. The allusive markers of scenariness are paratextual devices throughout the novel, blurring the boundaries between reality and mystification, and connecting its "strong positions." The liminality of the narrator's sensations throughout the novel is explicitly marked by words carrying the sememes of "ambiguity" and "unpredictability": *Second meanings hung in the air; ambiguities, unexpectednesses*[83].

At the end of the novel, the semiotic code referencing theater is replaced by references to cinema, which lose their allusive characteristics in order to explicitly signify metatextuality as a format for reinterpreting the entire meaning of the text and transcending the liminal dimension of the novel as a space that is both theater and reality. Nicholas is compelled to watch a film that contains transparent references to all the fantastic events that occurred to him within the metagame space of Conchis. The focus on paratextual allusions, subject to interpretation, is facilitated by the graphostylistic technique of capitalized and graphically highlighted designations of episodes intersecting with real events. We have italicized the paratextual allusions to "real" retrospective events in which the hero was involved.

AS THE UNFORGETTABLY DESIRABLE JULIE HOLMES

Another brief shot: I was standing and kissing her in bright sunlight. The vegetable-garden terrace. She wore the white linen suit. *It had been done on that last morning at Bourani, after the others had left.*

HERSELF!

Blank film. *Then a fade-in shot of Joe in his jackal mask running down the track towards the house at Bourani; a devil in sunlight*; he ran right up into the camera lens, blacking it out.

The only language they know

(...) There was a shot of her running to meet him. He stepped forward and gripped her by the arms and then they were kissing wildly. He forced her back to the bed and they fell across it. (...). *An echo of the hotel on Phraxos*

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[78] Fowles J. The Magus. 2004. 92. URL: https://yes-pdf.com/book/1671/read.
[79] Ibid. 94.
[80] Ibid. 193.
[81] Ibid. 294.
[82] Campbell J. The hero with a thousand faces. 1949.
[83] Fowles J. The Magus. 2004. 76. URL: https://yes-pdf.com/book/1671/read.

Meanwhile

Two people in a crowded restaurant. *With an acute shock, a flush of bitter anger, I saw who it was: Alison and myself, that first evening, in the Piraeus.* (...). Alison walking down a steep village street, myself a yard or two behind her. (…) *I recognized it: our return to Arachova. (...). It was too horrible, too blasphemous (...). Stripped, flayed by the knowledge; and their always knowing[84].*

CONCLUSIONS

The simulated world of the "theater" becomes a key element through which the metatextual play is realized in the novel "The Magus". Linguistic semiotics of theatricality is created through references to parameters of scriptwriting and spectacle, actor/role-playing, actor's repertoire, symbolism achieved through spatial-temporal, somatic-kinetic, and purely symbolic codes, as well as through the creation of playful liminality by alluding to plays, other literary works, mythological plots, and characters. On the metatextual level, the "theater" not only represents a separate space and narrative line but also reflects and comments on the main text. It functions as its self-reference, addressing its content-semantic, structural, and conceptual characteristics of the main text.

On the intertextual level, the world of the "theater" intertwines with other texts and cultural contexts, marked by allusions to works of art, historical events, and to other semiotic systems such as music, painting, and non-verbal semiotics. These intertextual elements enrich and complement the main text, creating a complex network of semantic connections.

The world of the "theater" in "The Magus" represents a multidimensional semiotic space where different alternative worlds intersect and interact, expanding the levels of understanding and interpretation of the text. The world of theatrical performance interacts with the realm of the oneiric world, the worlds of the past and present, and the semiotic space of the transcendental journey of the narrator undergoing trials, including metaphorical death, within the meta-theater, akin to stages of the hero's initiation in the hero's journey.

SUMMARY

The article describes the simulated world of the "theater". It is a key element through which the metatextual play is realized in the novel "The Magus" by Fowles. This simulated world represents a multidimensional semiotic space where different alternative worlds interact. On the metatextual level, the world of the "theater" not only represents a separate space and narrative line but also reflects and comments on the main text.

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[84] Fowles J. The Magus. 2004. 484-485. URL: https://yes-pdf.com/book/1671/read.

It functions as its self-reference, addressing its content-semantic, structural, and conceptual characteristics of the main text.

On the intertextual level, the world of the "theater" intertwines with other texts and cultural contexts, marked by allusions to works of art, historical events, and other semiotic systems such as music, painting, and non-verbal semiotics. The world of theatrical performance interacts with the realm of the oneiric world, the worlds of the past and present, and the semiotic space of the transcendental journey of the narrator undergoing trials, including metaphorical death, within the meta-theater, akin to stages of the hero's initiation in the hero's journey.

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