

Postmodernism literary text: tendencies towards intermediality (based on the novel "Origin" by Dan Brown)

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Paper received 27.02.18; Accepted for publication 03.03.18.

<https://doi.org/10.31174/SEND-Ph2018-159VI46-15>

Abstract. The article focuses on the interaction of different kinds of art within the framework of a literary text stipulated by the increasing value of encoding and transcoding texts as semiotic systems. The results obtained demonstrate the tendencies in intermedial nature of postmodernism literary texts observed both implicitly and explicitly. On a lingual level, explicit means are evident whereas implicit ones require critical analysis which implements sensory perception and reassessing the semantics of ART through the prism of conceptual metaphor, imagery, and symbols.

Keywords: literary text, postmodernism, intermediality, art.

Introduction. Speaking about the current trends of the postmodernism times, it is important to remember that postmodernists do not place their philosophy in a defined box or category. Their beliefs and practices are personal rather than being identifiable with a particular establishment or special interest group.

Postmodernism is all about the connections between texts, including various ways in which one text refers to another or many others. There are all kinds of techniques that authors can use in order to highlight these connections with other texts, including quotes, and direct references, as well as subtler nods to other material. There is a current tendency of involving implication of various arts in the system of a literary text. Such phenomenon is termed as "intermediality". The term 'intermediality' gains relevance as it represents the interaction of various codes in a literary text. Intermediality plays an important role in the understanding of literary text, because it helps to perceive the intended meaning of the selection of words, the special way of text organization and the interaction of codes of various arts, and the creation of a holistic poly-artistic space in the culture system [5, p. 28].

A brief review of publications on the issue. A considerable attention of researchers is focused today on linguistic analysis of literary texts. This fact is stipulated by the complexity of literary texts as a semiotic system that borrows, interprets and assimilates the codes of other media [1, 4, 5]. The text becomes a kind of "information generator" that is able to store various codes, transform the messages it receives and generates new ones. Intermediality is an essential feature of a postmodernism literary text which describes it as a combination of other numerous texts or their fragments, a combination of incongruous, sometimes paradoxical, unpredictable and inexhaustible variations.

This research is aimed at the examination of manifestation of artistic codes within a literary text.

The object of the research is the verbal and narrative means of intermediality of a postmodernism literary text.

Methods of narrative and conceptual analysis are applied for the study, which is carried out the **material** of the novel "Origin" by Dan Brown.

Results and discussion. For postmodernists, it's clear that no text exists in isolation and that works of literature can only be created using material that already exists [1].

Looking at it from this perspective the combination of media is unavoidable.

There are two possible ways to combine different types of art codes in the literary text. Within the first variant, in the literary text, the author may appeal to a certain work of art or submit elementary information about the work of art, or its author to create a background, atmosphere, a certain psychological effect, features of the character, environment, and situation. The merger of several works of various types of art, in this context of the literary text and various arts, is called synthesis. The basis of the second method of incorporation of types of art into literary text is formed due to superimposition of the principles of organizing a work of another type of art, and literature. This is seen on the linguistic level in the reproduction in the artistic word, for example, the color scale of a painting. In this case, it becomes possible to speak of the intermedial nature of the relations between the works of various types of arts [3].

The novel belongs to the postmodern because it comprises characteristic features such as the tendency towards the maximalism which gives the author the chance to experiment, metafiction adds, fragmentation, which Dan Brown uses to create playful text that reflects and explores the chaos of the world and intermediality which enriches the composition of the text.

There are several ways how the author may refer to the art in the text. Firstly, on the denotative, level the inclusion of art descriptions can be easily noticed. The tendency towards the usage of onyms, terms belonging to the art categories, the description of art objects with the reference to the reader's experience and sensory systems through visual and audial codes. Secondly, it is the imagery-symbolic level when the description of art objects is more implicit when art forms are rethought through activation of sensory codes or conceptual metaphors.

1) The following text extracts chosen from the novel, demonstrate the appealing to the art on the **denotative level**. Here the author refers to postmodern installations and outstanding representatives of the current movement. Moreover, Dan Brown emphasizes the opposition of traditional view on art and more modern.

*Langdon followed Winston's directions through an expansive gallery displaying a series of **bizarre art installations**: a steel cannon that apparently shot gooey globs of red wax at a white wall; a wire-mesh canoe that clearly*

would not float; an entire miniature city made of burnished metal burnished metal blocks [6, p. 64]. There is the stereotype about modern art that sometimes it is rather tough for understanding. Here the examples of modern art objects are presented and described by such words as **series of bizarre art installations**. *I've found the strangest piece in the museum <...> a multitude of timber wolves were dynamically posed, sprinting in a long line across the gallery where they leaped high in the air and collided violently with the transparent glass wall, resulting in a mounting pile of dead wolves* [6, p. 65]. The issue with postmodern art is that it demands a certain decoding due to the deep symbolism: *it's called Head On <...> ninety-nine wolves racing blindly into a wall to symbolize a herd mentality, a lack of courage in diverging from the norm* [6, p. 65].

The following text fragment represents the reference to the outstanding artist and his style of work: *Langdon spotted the brightly colored painting up ahead and instantly recognized the trademark squiggles, primary colors, and playful floating eye. Joan Miró <...> playful work, which felt like a cross between a child's coloring book and a surrealist stained-glass window* [6, p. 65]. The author mentions Joan Miró, the outstanding artist of surrealism and personal, experimental movements, whose works are distinguished by their brightness, abruptness, and unpredictability. His style is determined by such words as **squiggles, primary colors, and playful floating eye**. The latter is the particular sign of the artist's creation which is also emphasized by the author: **trademark and floating eye**.

The issue of modern art and understanding art production are highlighted in the text: *Although Langdon had devoted the better part of his career to studying art, it troubled him that he had never quite learned how to appreciate the art world's more avant-garde offerings. The appeal of modern art remained a mystery to him <...> I often find it hard to know when something is 'modern art' and when something is just plain bizarre* [6, p. 37]. The author highlights this idea because it has been noticed by many that human mind seems to have no boundaries when it goes about the creation of artworks. And then he continues speaking about the real purpose of art designs: *in your world of classical art, pieces are revered for the artist's skill of execution – that is, how deftly he places the brush to canvas or the chisel to stone. In modern art, however, masterpieces are often more about the idea than the execution* [6, p. 37].

The understanding of music in modern artistic society has changed as well. The author includes the reference to the performance of music piece created by Yves Klein: *Klein also composed the musical piece Monotone-Silence, in which a symphony orchestra performs a single D-major chord for a full twenty minutes* [6, p. 37]. The idea of this masterpiece was to make people experience musicology of one tune with all the senses. *And the one chord is just the first movement. In the second movement, the orchestra sits motionless and performs 'pure silence' for twenty minutes*. The music is considered to be followed by the silence, in this quietness the continuation of music must be found.

Within the frame of modern art every its type can be presented differently and of course, can be interpreted in

the same manner as well. *The Fog Sculpture outside is a perfect example of conceptual art. The artist had an idea – to run perforated pipes beneath the bridge and blow fog onto the lagoon – but the creation of piece was performed by local plumbers. Although I do give the artist high marks for using her medium as a code. Frank O. Gehry* [6, p. 37]. The sculpture mentioned in the text is actually dense fog which that envelops the museum outside, this explains the ironic urge of specialist to create the installation: **the creation of piece was performed by local plumbers**. And we see the example of coding the message in the piece: the artist's name is used as a core for the masterpiece idea: **Frank O. Gehry**.

Another entertaining sculpture mentioned in the novel is a massive black widow placed outside the museum on the plaza. *Maman. She is a perfect example of the classical notion of juxtaposition* [6, p. 38]. The author refers to the sculpture using the pronoun 'she' as of an animated creature. The sculpture of spider is thought to be an example of juxtaposition and at the same time, it is an example of a comparison of two views on art: traditional and modern. *Langdon eyed the spider, seeing nothing of the sort. When it came to teaching juxtaposition, Langdon preferred something a bit more traditional <...> David. Michelangelo is the gold standard, brilliantly posing David in an effeminate contrapposto, his limp wrist casually holding a flaccid slingshot, conveying a feminine vulnerability. And yet David's eyes radiate a lethal determination, his tendons and veins bulging in anticipation of killing Goliath. The work is simultaneously delicate and deadly* [6, p. 38]. Eventually, the opposition lies in the masculine and feminine beginnings in one character: **effeminate contrapposto, feminine vulnerability, and eyes radiate a lethal determination**.

The modern sculpture of a huge spider can be seen as confrontation, however. Again, the idea of perceiving the art and its justification is key here: *Maman is no different from David. An equally bold juxtaposition of opposing archetypal principles. In nature, the black widow is a fearful creature – a predator who captures victims in her web and kills them. Despite being lethal, she is depicted here with a burgeoning egg sac, preparing to give life, making her both predator and progenitor – a powerful core perched atop impossibly slender legs, conveying both strength and fragility. Maman could be called a modern-day David, if you will* [6, p. 38].

In the novel, we observe the tendency of blurring the boundaries between different fields of knowledge. As postmodern proclaims the principle of the multiplicity of interpretations, assuming that infinity of the world has, as a natural consequence, an infinite number of interpretations, this multiplicity of interpretations determines the appealing to the codes of cultural and historical eras.

2) Within the **imagery-symbolic level**, the aspects of intermediality can be represented in two possible directions: via verbal synesthetic imagery which is revealed due to appealing to sensory experience and via literary symbolism when the types of art are rethought through the involvement of conceptual metaphors.

a) Verbal synesthetic imagery

Verbal imagery is often perceived due to sensory system. On the language level, it is seen through the sensory code: visual code, tactile code and, and audial code.

It had taken Langdon several moments to realize this was all an illusion – a **tremendous work of art** <...> **marveling at the impeccable attention to detail. The star-filled sky above was a projection, complete with a moon, scudding clouds, and distant rolling hills. The rustling trees and grasses were truly there – either superb fakes or a small forest of living plants in concealed pots. This nebulous perimeter of vegetation cleverly disguised the enormous room’s hard edges, giving the impression of a natural environment. Langdon crouched down and felt the grass, which was soft and life-like** [6, p. 76].

Here is the idea that art can make people believe into what they feel, see, sense or experience. Whatever turns to be a result of a creative process is a piece of art. The text fragment is full of details referring to the art installation, which a reader can perceive if only the imagination and the sensory systems are activated: **vegetation cleverly giving the impression of a natural environment**. The details which describe the atmosphere make the reader understand the depth of the situation: **star-filled sky, a moon, scudding clouds, rolling hills, rustling trees and grasses, enormous room’s hard edges**. The illusion of reality is realized thanks to such words as **life-like, truly there**. The words like **rustling trees** belong to audial code, while understanding of the created atmosphere is due to the visual code: **moon, scudding clouds, and distant rolling hills**. The word combinations **felt the grass, soft and life-like** are recognized by tactile code.

Again, the author emphasized the idea that art can lead to wherever its creator wants it: **tonight, the effect was staggeringly realistic, and as the guests around him took it in, Langdon could see that their wonder and delight mirrored his own** [6, p. 76]. The words **wonder and delight** reflect the response to the installation which is described as **staggeringly realistic**.

The breezy meadow inside the Guggenheim Museum had grown quiet <...> **hundreds of guests were reclined on the blankets, gazing up into a dazzling sky of stars. Robert Langdon lay near the center of the field, caught up in the growing anticipation. Langdon could feel the excitement rippling through the crowd** [p. 81]. Here the interaction of art installation and the guests are depicted: **breezy meadow inside the Guggenheim Museum, guests were reclined on the blankets, gazing up into a dazzling sky of stars**. It is very notable that the author uses the word combination **had grown quiet** to refer to guests’ **growing anticipation** and **excitement**. The analyzed text fragments are full of sensory codes: visual code – **dazzling sky of stars**, audial code – **quiet**, tactile code – **breezy meadow**.

The tendency towards implication of sensory code is a peculiar feature of postmodernist text as well as the slant towards the involvement of use of vocabulary with vivid emotional coloring, in order to create a realistic plot and make the reader understand the atmosphere of what is happening.

b) Literary symbols that imply reassessing the semantics of ART.

Images and symbols are multifunctional in the literary text: they are used to affect the imagination of the reader; form a figurative image of the world, make the image more vivid and visible; represent the individual author’s

model of the world; help to realize, create an assumption about the essence of an object.

The holy seat of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Madrid – Cathedral de la Almueña – is a robust neoclassical cathedral <...>. **Almueña Cathedral derives its name from the Arabic al-mudayna, meaning “citadel”** [6, p. 59]. Here the architectural construction (which belongs to one of the types of art) acquires the symbolic meaning, the cathedral is regarded as something sacred, safe and indestructible. This symbolism is revealed on the language level with the usage of the word **citadel**.

A precious lost icon of the Virgin Mary that had been entombed in the walls of citadel for safekeeping. Unable to locate the hidden Virgin, Alfonso prayed intently until a section of the citadel’s wall exploded, falling away, and revealed the icon inside, still lit by the burning candles with which she had been entombed centuries before [6, p. 59]. If to consider the icon not only as a religious portrait depicting God but also as His graphic representation, you can refer it to a work of art. The author activates conceptual metaphor ART IS POWER because in the text extract we can see the hidden emphasis of the power of the art which reveals the idea that art is something that can never be hidden, that it is created to be seen and admired **icon lit by the burning candles** and the power of art can eventually overrule any obstacles. This can be understood on the language level through the implication of such metaphor as WALL IS A DIFFICULTY which should be overcome. The process of revealing the art image and opposition to difficulties is represented by the words **wall exploded, fall away and revealed the icon inside**.

ART IS ORDER is the metaphor which reveals the purpose of art: to create something aesthetically valuable and organized and this very order is hidden in a human’s DNA: **the room trembled suddenly with a cacophony of discordant piano notes** <...> **Langdon and those around him tensed involuntarily** [6, p. 86]. Here, we observe the absence of order which is embodied through the music. It tenses not only the characters of the story (**those around him tensed involuntarily**) but the reader as well, due to the choice of words with the negative connotation: **trembled, suddenly, cacophony, discordant, banging randomly, unbearable**.

“The sound of someone banging randomly on a piano is unbearable! And yet, if we take those same notes and arrange them in a better order...” <...> **The haphazard din immediately halted, supplanted by the soothing melody of Debussy’s “Clair de lune”. Langdon felt his muscles relax. Our brains rejoice** [6, p. 86]. Reorganized cords use the same notes, but the impression is the opposite: instead of **the haphazard din the soothing melody of Debussy** was heard and it is all due to the order: **take same notes and arrange them in a better order**. Our predisposition to organization is written into our DNA [6, p. 87].

The symbolic and imagery level plays a very important role in the literary text. It helps the reader to fill something well-known with a new content. The text is understood as multidimensional space where different mediums compete and argue with each other. The postmodernist text is woven from numerous cultural codes that allow each text to acquire a unique and refined character.

Conclusion. The analyzed text extracts demonstrate that postmodernism literary text is open to various author's experiments. There has been suggested the metaphor that the literary text is a container that can be filled with any type of filler. This idea explains the reason the modern writers address towards the phenomenon of intermediality when they include different medium into the structure of the literary text and appeal to the reader's background knowledge. The issue of interpretation of the literary text written in postmodern period obtains even a deeper meaning as the authors tend to place their message on several levels of understanding, either explicitly or

implicitly and the latter initiates the process of decoding of the meaning. Lingvo-cognitive aspects of intermediality are revealed on language level in two possible manners: either appealing to the art directly, on the denotative level, or art and its functions are decoded through the incorporation of conceptual metaphors. The interrelation of the art and the literary text has been noticed in the postmodern literary text, it could be understood through firstly the description of the art object and secondly via hidden meaning of every art installation and the way it is presented in the text.

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Постмодернистский художественный текст: тенденции интермедальности (на материале романа «Origin» Дэна Брауна)

Е. Пешкова

Аннотация. В статье рассматривается актуальная проблема взаимодействия различных видов искусств в рамках художественного текста, которая обуславливается растущим значением кодирования и перекодирования произведений как семиотических систем. Полученные результаты демонстрируют тенденцию постмодернистского художественного текста к интермедальности, которую можно увидеть как имплицитно, так и эксплицитно. На лингвальном уровне эксплицитные средства проявляются на денотативном уровне, тогда как имплицитные требуют критического анализа, который вовлекает в себя сенсорное восприятие и переосмысление понятия искусства как такового через призму концептуальной метафоры, образности и символизма.

Ключевые слова: художественный текст, постмодернизм, интермедальность, искусство.