

## THE POETICS OF INTERTEXTUAL PLAY AND THE MECHANISMS OF PLOT TRANSFORMATION IN D. YEMETS' CYCLE "TANYA GROTTER"

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### Abstract

The article is devoted to the analysis of the poetics of intertextual play and the mechanisms of plot transformation in the Tanya Grotter series by Dmitry Yemets. The aim of the study is to identify the ways of artistic reinterpretation of the precedent narrative model of school fantasy and to determine the role of hypertextual strategies in shaping the author's poetics. The methodological framework is based on intertextual, comparative-typological, and narratological approaches, as well as on the concepts of hypertextuality developed by Gérard Genette, intertextuality by Roland Barthes, Linda Hutcheon's theory of parody, and Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of the chronotope and the carnivalesque. The study demonstrates that the Tanya Grotter cycle functions as a hypertextual artistic formation grounded in the principle of "recognizable difference," parodic distance, and the systematic hyperbolization of genre clichés. Particular attention is paid to the transformation of the initiation plot, the cultural adaptation of the chronotope, and linguistic play as means of decentering the canon of school fantasy. It is concluded that intertextuality in Yemets's works operates not as a secondary stylistic effect but as a fundamental organizing principle of the artistic world, ensuring a dialogue between tradition and authorial innovation.

**Keywords:** Intertextuality, hypertext, poetics, plot transformation, parody, school fantasy, chronotope, carnivalesque, genre hybridity, Dmitry Yemets.

### Introduction

The poetics of intertextual play in Dmitry Yemets' cycle "Tanya Grotter" is formed as an integral artistic strategy, in which the secondary text is consciously built "on top" of a culturally recognizable matrix focused on school fantasy and, above all, on a series of novels by J. J. K. Rowling. At the same time, it is fundamentally important to clarify that we are not talking about a simple citation or selective borrowing of individual details, but about a systematic reworking of the original narrative model, affecting the plot, composition, chronotope, characterology and speech organization.

This type of connection is most accurately described through the category of hypertextuality in the terminology of J. Genette: hypertext is derived from the preceding text (hypotext), but it arises not as a direct reproduction, but as a transformative "rewriting" that uses the source material as a structural and motive support [5]. Already at this level, it becomes obvious that Tanya Grotter follows the logic not of random allusions, but of a stable model of artistic "palimpsest", where a new, autonomous semantic plan is formed on top of the recognizable layer.

In the poststructuralist tradition associated with R. Barthes, the text is understood as a "fabric of quotations", that is, a space where many cultural "writings" interact, come into conflict and mutually redefine; In this case, the author does not so much "create" from nothing as combine and reorganize already existing discursive elements [2]. "Tanya Grotter" is designed for the reader who recognizes the initial elements of the school-magic canon and at the same time observes how they are systematically

displaced, lowered and inverted. Consequently, intertextual play here is not only an aesthetic, but also a communicative mechanism. Meaning is born at the point of comparison of the "learned" and the "remade". From this logic grows the key plot and poetic principle of the cycle – the principle of "recognizable difference". The narrative retains the basic configuration of events and character roles typical of the school fantasy genre, but each recognizable component receives a comically deformed embodiment. The reader can easily recognize a stable plot model, in which there is the heroine's orphanhood and her initial isolation, the subsequent discovery of the magical world, entry into a special educational space, a series of trials, the formation of a friendly triad, opposition to the antagonistic principle, the repetition of educational cycles and their final competitive culminations. It is in specific scenes and details of the plot that the hypertextual rethinking begins, when the solemn idea of "chosenness" and serious heroic maturation is replaced by a playful mood, and the sublime mythological significance gives way to irony and grotesque. As a result, the same plot move is perceived in two dimensions at once — it both supports the reader's usual expectations, and at the same time violates them due to comic inconsistency.

This effect is directly related to how parody is understood today. A parody is not just a mockery and not necessarily an attempt to destroy something. More often, it works as a special dialogue with the source text, where both irony and recognition of its cultural value are present at the same time. In modern theory, including Linda Hutcheon, parody is described as a repetition with a certain distance — the author seems to retain the form, but looks at it from the outside and thereby emphasizes the differences within the similarities [6]. It is this distance that becomes an important artistic device for Yemets. It needs to leave a recognizable narrative "framework" so that the reader catches a familiar model and then notices how it changes and reimagines in a new cultural context.

It is important to understand due to what techniques the rather stable scheme of "becoming a hero", characteristic of school fantasy, turns into a more mobile and comically colored system in Yemets. It is appropriate to recall the ideas of V. Y. Propp, who showed that a fairy-tale plot is built from repetitive functions and stable sequences of actions. In a broader sense, this means that in many stories about the hero's coming-of-age there is the same plot framework of development [7]. In the Tanya Grotter cycle, this framework is preserved, the heroine goes from vulnerability and loneliness to inclusion in the magical community, gradually moving from ignorance to understanding and from passivity to independent actions. However, each stage of this path is presented with a deliberate reduction through everyday details, exaggerations, language play and comic bodily or objective accents. As a result, the very scheme of growing up does not disappear, but its solemn and symbolic pathos is noticeably softened and transferred to the space of laughter and game culture.

In M. M. Bakhtin's concept of folk laughter culture, laughter is understood not only as a reaction to the funny, but also as a form of liberation from excessive seriousness and a means of revising established values [3]. The laughter tone in the work cannot be considered simply as a genre decoration or a light "seasoning" to the plot. It works more deeply - as a way to build the artistic world itself and at the same time push the usual genre rules into the background a little. In the poetics of "Tanya Grotter", significant elements of school fantasy seem to be turned upside down. Solemn rituals acquire a parody hue, "high" trials are filled with everyday details, and figures of power — teachers, mentors, administrative characters — often look excessively material, ridiculous, or eccentric. As a result, humor here performs not a decorative, but an organizing function. It shows the conventionality of the genre canon, but at the

same time does not completely destroy it, but leaves it as a working framework for the development of the plot.

As the cycle develops, the mechanism of transformation becomes noticeably more complicated, and the intertextual game is no longer limited to a simple comparison of the "British" and "Russian" models of the magical school, but gradually reaches a deeper level of cultural adaptation of the space and time of the narrative. In M. M. Bakhtin's terms, this can be correlated with the concept of chronotope — the unity of spatial and temporal coordinates of the text, which largely determine its genre logic and form the image of a person in the artistic world [4]. In Yemets's work, the usual model of the school magical space is transferred to a different cultural context, and the magical world is filled with post-Soviet realities, everyday details, colloquial intonations and national cultural codes, thanks to which the "magical" ceases to look distant and abstract and becomes more recognizable and close to the reader. At the same time, the fantastic element does not disappear, it only changes the intonation – the miraculous enters everyday life, and everyday life itself often turns into a source of comic effect. Against this background, another stable mechanism of hypertextual transformation is also manifested, associated with the deliberate strengthening and replay of familiar genre elements. The author not only preserves the recognizable structure of the trials, but brings it to hyperbole, so magical competitions, duels, rituals and artifacts become more spectacular, rich in details and sometimes more absurd than in the original model. Such reinforcement performs a double function: on the one hand, it supports the dynamics of the adventure plot and keeps the reader's interest, on the other hand, it creates a parody effect, since excessiveness emphasizes the conventionality of genre clichés and tunes in to the game perception. As a result, the canon is not completely rejected, but rather revealed from within, when its usual techniques are brought to comic obviousness and become part of the author's artistic strategy.

It is logical to pay further attention to how intertextual play affects the system of characters and their artistic embodiment. School fantasy as a whole is characterized by a fairly stable set of roles: the figure of the "chosen" hero, the mentor, one or two companions with complementary functions, the antagonist, and a group of comic secondary characters. Yemets does not destroy this scheme, but noticeably changes its internal accents and methods of implementation. The characters retain typological functions, but they receive a brighter speech individuality and social recognition, more often act in the logic of everyday behavior, enter into ironic dialogues and are involved in everyday situations. In their images, bodily and objective concreteness is strengthened, thanks to which they cease to look like abstract bearers of mythological roles. The hero is no longer perceived as a "pure function" of the plot, but appears as a figure in which the archetypal is combined with culturally and socially determined features. This method of depiction enhances the effect of cultural adaptation of the entire artistic world, since the magical community does not look like a universal and impersonal model, but a space with recognizable national and social intonations, where the fantastic organically coexists with everyday forms of speech and behavior.

At the same time, the linguistic organization of the text is also noticeably changing, since intertextuality is manifested not only at the level of the plot, but also in stylistics. Puns, parody titles, deliberately eccentric speech characteristics of the characters and the inclusion of colloquial intonations begin to play an increasingly important role. Language gradually turns into an independent space of play, where the conditionally "high" genre constantly collides with everyday and lowered registers of speech. This stylistic contrast supports the effect of double perception: the reader simultaneously recognizes the

familiar canon of school fantasy and at the same time perceives its "Russian", ironically reworked version as a separate and self-sufficient artistic world.

Based on this, we can draw an intermediate conclusion that in the first part of the analysis, stable mechanisms of intertextual transformation of the plot in the cycle "Tanya Grotter" are revealed. Among them, the most notable are the hypertextual reworking of the original model, the principle of recognizable difference, parody distance, hyperbolization as a way of reinforcing genre clichés, and the cultural adaptation of chronotope. These elements do not act in isolation, but form an interconnected system. Hypertextuality creates the very possibility of a derivative plot, recognizability allows the reader to "read" the original model, parody distance translates repetition into a playful and critical dimension, hyperbole makes this effect more noticeable, and chronotopic adaptation fixes the text in a different cultural environment, turning the Western genre canon into material for domestic artistic experiment. Further consideration requires a more detailed analysis of specific transformation operations - inversion, decline, burlesque amplification and deconstructive displacements, as well as comprehension of the role of laughter culture and double reader optics in the formation of the integral effect of intertextual play.

Let us take a closer look at how transformational processes manifest themselves in individual narrative devices: inversion, reduction, burlesque amplification, and deconstructive shifts, thanks to which the secondary text is not lost against the background of the precedent source, but acquires its own artistic independence. It is their combination that forms the stable dynamics of intertextual play, in which the plot ceases to be a simple copy of the original model and turns into a system of variations, where recognizability constantly coexists with novelty.

One of the most noticeable ways of such transformation is a shift in value accents. In traditional school fantasy, key events — entering a magic school, obtaining a special item, participating in a tournament, or meeting a major opponent — are usually presented as serious and fateful challenges filled with symbolic meaning. In Yemets, these episodes remain in their places in the plot, but their intonation and emotional coloring change: solemnity gives way to irony, the sense of sacredness is replaced by everyday details, and symbolic significance is often conveyed through objective concreteness and comic shade. At the same time, the sequence of events itself is not destroyed, but its overall sound becomes different — the heroic pathos gradually shifts to the game plane. As a result, the reader continues to recognize the usual plot scheme, but perceives it differently, since each important scene turns out to be not so much a sublime as an ironically reinterpreted part of the author's artistic world.

This inversion is closely related to the method of reduction, which manifests itself in the regular inclusion of everyday, bodily and speech details, which destroy the excessive monumentality of the fantasy world. If we consider this process based on Bakhtin's theory of laughter culture, we can talk about a kind of carnivalization of the genre, when the sublime begins to coexist with the everyday, the heroic with the grotesque, and the official with the unofficial [3]. Reduction here works not as a single stylistic move, but as a repetitive principle of depiction, forming a special type of artistic authenticity. The magical ceases to be perceived as unattainable and gradually enters the sphere of habitual experience, which enhances the effect of cultural adaptation and makes the fantastic space closer to the reader. At the same time, the miraculous does not disappear or depreciate, it only loses its absolute seriousness and becomes an object of ironic gaze, while retaining its artistic significance.

The next notable mechanism is burlesque amplification, based on the deliberate hyperbolization of plot elements. Unlike the technique of reduction, which "grounds" the fantastic and brings it closer to everyday life, hyperbole acts in the opposite way – it brings events and images to the limit of expressiveness and demonstrativeness. Magical trials look overly complex or deliberately ridiculous, artifacts turn out to be overly functional or absurd, and secondary characters acquire an accentuated eccentricity. Such a strategy correlates with the principle of "intensified-remade" repetition described in the theory of hypertextuality [5]. Amplification fulfills a double task: on the one hand, it maintains the dynamics of the adventure plot and keeps the reader interested, on the other hand, it creates a comic effect, since excessiveness emphasizes the conventionality of genre clichés. The reader recognizes a familiar form, but is confronted with an exaggerated version of it, which naturally involves an ironic perception.

Along with hyperbole, an important role is played by deconstructive displacement – a technique in which the usual plot function is formally preserved, but its result turns out to be unexpected or paradoxical. This is especially evident in the images of mentors: the character still serves as a teacher or guide to the world of magic, but his behavior, manner of speech, or social traits undermine the traditional idea of impeccable authority. Such a shift does not cancel the function itself, but it deprives it of unambiguity and creates the effect of double reading. The reader simultaneously perceives the hero as a bearer of a genre role and as an object of ironic observation. This is a manifestation of the orientation to the multiplicity of interpretations, characteristic of postmodernist poetics, when the text avoids the only true meaning and allows the coexistence of different semantic levels.

A special place in the system of plot transformations is occupied by the language game, since it is at the level of speech that intertextuality is felt most clearly. Puns in names, deliberately unusual names of objects, colloquial intonations and stylistic contrasts form an additional comic layer and make the text more mobile and polyphonic. Language ceases to be just a neutral narrative tool and turns into an independent space of artistic play and dialogue with cultural tradition. Here R. Barthes's idea of the text as a "fabric of quotations" [2] is especially noticeable: even in the absence of direct borrowings, the intonation and structure of speech itself remind of the existence of the genre canon and at the same time demonstrate its processing. Thanks to this, the language game enhances the effect of double reading, in which the work is perceived both as a continuation of a well-known tradition and as an ironically reinterpreted version of it.

Gradually, it becomes obvious that such techniques as inversion, reduction, hyperbolization and deconstructive displacement do not form a random set of means of expression, but an integral system. Their interaction forms a stable model of intertextual poetics, where each new episode is perceived through the prism of an already established game with the canon. In this sense, the cycle "Tanya Grotter" demonstrates a kind of genre hybridity: the work retains the main features of school fantasy, but fills them with satirical and parody intonations, creating a space of multiple meanings. Such flexibility correlates with the broader trend of postmodern literature, in which genre boundaries become mobile, and intertextuality turns into one of the key ways of artistic thinking.

The factor of reader's perception is no less significant. Intertextual play involves the active participation of the addressee, who is able to recognize allusions and correlate them with a new interpretation. In this case, the text does not just tell the story, but enters into a kind of dialogue with the reader and encourages him to intellectual participation. The reader becomes a co-author of the meaning, since it is

his cultural memory and reading experience that determine the depth of interpretation. The "double vision" effect, based on simultaneous recognition and distancing, maintains a steady interest in the narrative and largely explains the popularity of the series among mass audiences. Intertextuality here performs the function of a link between the familiar and the new, between the genre canon and the author's variation.

From this point of view, the poetics of the cycle can be considered as a form of cultural dialogue, in which the Western model of school fantasy is reinterpreted in the post-Soviet context. The transfer of chronotope, linguistic adaptation and everyday life of fantasy space form a kind of "magical realism of mass culture", where the miraculous and the everyday coexist without a rigid hierarchy. Such a synthesis does not destroy the genre tradition, but, on the contrary, expands its boundaries and demonstrates the canon's ability to transform and integrate culturally. In this case, the intertextual game is not an external decorative element, but an important mechanism of artistic renewal.

Thus, it can be argued that the mechanisms of plot transformation in the cycle "Tanya Grotter" form a complex and interrelated system of hypertextual operations, including the inversion of value accents (their displacement), the technique of reduction, burlesque reinforcement and deconstructive displacements. Their interaction forms a stable poetics of intertextual play, where repetition becomes the basis for novelty, and the genre canon turns into material for creative processing. Laughter culture, linguistic expressiveness and cultural adaptation of the chronotope ensure the decentration of the original model without destroying its integrity. As a result, Dmitry Yemets' cycle appears as an example of an artistic palimpsest, in which each new semantic layer does not displace the previous one, but enters into a dialogue with it, creating the effect of multi-layered and semantic polyphony.

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