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THE SYNERGY OF LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL DISCOURSES IN THE EPIC SPIDER WORLD BY C. WILSON

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Summary. The article interprets the synergy of figurative description and ideological perception of reality in the work of fiction under study as a process of mutual integration, which facilitates the creation of a realistic worldview due to the convergence of aesthetic and philosophical modes of its cognition. In this respect, the epic series *Spider World* by C. Wilson makes a relevant subject for consideration, being an original work of philosophical prose and formulaic sample of science fiction of the postmodern period. The preliminary review of the four novels of the series suggests an axiomatic presumption that their common imagery setting reflects the current state of modern society from the postmodern point of view of predicting possible future changes. The further exploration of author's futurological project uncovers the principal importance of the first three novels, since their common epic perspective creates a total epistemological horizon for the motivated development of existential ideas along with the progressing narrative story of human destiny in the world. A systemic approach to the architectonics of the novels in question makes it possible to reconstruct their consolidated model and trace the synergic connections between the literary text and the philosophical metatext across the entire structure of the genre form. These connections come out in the semiotic space of the intertext, where figurative representations of real objects function as ambivalent correlatives of phenomenal perceptions and rational concepts of things. The discursive analysis of the discovered synergic correlations leads to the conclusion, that the philosophical conceptualization of their results is effected in the epic within the boundaries of the author's intention to develop the methodological foundation and the literary devices of creative writing in the postmodern period of literary history.

Keywords: philosophical fiction; postmodern culture; formulaic genre; cognitive system; synergic interaction; intertextual semiotic networks

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СИНЕРГИЯ ЛИТЕРАТУРНОГО И ФИЛОСОФСКОГО ДИСКУРСОВ В ЭПОПЕЕ К. УИЛСОНА «МИР ПАУКОВ»

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Аннотация. Синергия образного описания и идейного осмысления реальности в рассматриваемом произведении трактуется в статье как процесс взаимной интеграции, способствующий созданию достоверной картины мира за счет сближения эстетического и философского методов познания действительности. В данном отношении эпический цикл «Мир пауков» К. Уилсона представляет собой релевантный объект исследования, являясь оригинальным произведением философской прозы и формульным образцом научной фантастики постмодернистского периода. Предварительный обзор четырех романов эпопеи влечет за собой аксиоматическое положение о том, что их общий художественный план отражает современную социальную действительность с пост-современной позиции видения предполагаемых изменений в будущем. Дальнейшее изучение авторского futuroлогического проекта раскрывает принципиальную значимость первых трех романов, поскольку их общая эпическая перспектива создает полный эпистемологический горизонт для мотивированного движения экзистенциальных идей по мере развертывания повествовательной истории о судьбе человека в мире. Системный подход к архитектонике отдельных романов эпопеи позволяет воспроизвести их консолидированную модель и проследить синергические отношения литературного текста и философского метатекста в целостной структуре жанровой формы. Искомые связи обнаруживаются в семиотическом пространстве интертекста, где образные репрезентации реальных объектов выступают в качестве двойственных коррелятов феноменальных представлений и рациональных понятий о вещах. Дискурсивная аналитика синергических корреляций приводит к заключению о том, что философская концептуализация их результатов осуществляется в эпопее в границах целевой установки автора на развитие методологической базы и художественных методов писательского творчества в постмодернистский период литературной истории.

Ключевые слова: философская фантастика; формульный жанр; постмодернистская литература; когнитивная система; синергическое взаимодействие; интертекстуальные семиотические сети

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Colin Wilson came into the English literary history of the second half of the twentieth century as a recognized co-author of the contemporary philosophical novel, together with William Golding and Iris Murdoch. Along with his colleagues, C. Wilson merged the figurative description of visual phenomena with reflexive reasoning on their implicit essences. He defined the principal approach to the related objectives in the critical essay “The Outsider” (1956), proving the crucial necessity for a new turn in the development of aesthetic and cognitive means of literature after the modernist shift of priorities from the world of real objects towards the world outlook of an individual subject [Wilson 1956]. Since that time, C. Wilson has written a number of theoretical and fictional works aimed at establishment of postmodern methodological foundation for the reverse move of that shift and, connectedly, the remove of subjective distortions from the picture of objective reality.

The distinctive feature of C. Wilson’s novels is their architectonic design. In each particular case, the structural organization of the text certifies the author’s skills in building the appropriate genre structure to carry wealth of content and high semantic load without any losses for the artistic qualities of the literary work. The most notable turns in the writer’s progress in the craft of novel are marked with the books “Ritual in the Dark” (1960), “The Mind Parasites” (1967), “The Philosopher’s Stone” (1969), “The Space Vampires” (1976). Within the outlined retrospective, “Spider World” stands out as the single follow-up book of the author, which represents the paradigm of the philosophical visionary fiction of the time in four inclusive volumes. These are “The Tower” (1987), “The Delta” (1987), “The Magician” (1992) and “Shadowland” (2003). H. F. Dossor, a literary critic, evaluated the whole succession as “an art achievement of the highest order” which is destined “to be one of the central products of the twentieth century imagination” [Dossor 1990: 284]. Given the implied references of fictional imagery to factual reality, “Spider World”, with its global-scale generalizations, opens a wide field for a query about the probability of the postmodern prognosis for the modern human condition, predicted by the author. N. Tredell wrote in this regard, that C. Wilson foresaw the future of fiction and something of the future of man [Tredell 2015]. However, the purposeful overview of the subject matter leaves within the open area of research only the three foregoing parts of the series, the fourth one being not so much the finishing extension to the postmodern projection of the actual order of things but the presumption of writer’s unfinished plan for eliminating the negative factors of future civilization developments. This suggestion follows from the pronounced intention of C. Wilson to bring the epic to its logical conclusion: “That, as it were, is the first part. So that when it is finished it will be a twelve

volume work” [Brown 2011: 5].

Taken together, the abovementioned factors and facts of the author’s intellectual design make a case for a special insight into the synergy of the descriptive and notionable components of the epic narration as an advancement in the development of literary devices in the postmodern period.

The deployment of the futurological project in several interlinked volumes requires a holistic approach, which would enable to identify the core notions of the literary series with respect to the postmodern frame of reference in contemporary art and culture. The systemic methods of research meet this requirement completely because they comprise the set of appropriate analytical and synthesizing instruments for reproducing the unified genre model of the novels in question. The axiomatic implication for the consolidated modelling is that the individual life stories constitute the ontological dimensions of an epic narration while the gnoseological parameters of the latter depend on the experienced knowledge of individuals about being in the world. This preliminary assumption conforms to the theories of genre architectonics worked out by P. A. Florensky [1993], Yu. M. Lotman [1998], N. D. Tamarchenko [2004], S. N. Zenkin [Zenkin 2017: 519-539] and other scholars. P. A. Florensky, in particular, considered the ontological foundation of architectonic forms as the basic pattern for featuring the most essential values of human existence: “The goal of art is to overcome the sensual appearance, the naturalistic casing of contingency so that to uncover the sustainable and persistent essences, which have general validity in the real world” [Florensky 1993: 70–71]. Yu. M. Lotman, in his turn, discloses the gnoseological functions of the genre structure pointing out to the continuous formation of new semantic fields of cognition along the story line of events: “An event in the text is the transgression of the character across the boundary of a semantic field” [Lotman 1998: 224]. The coherent unfolding of the tales about “being” and “knowing” suggests the intermediate presence of a semiotic network, which provides communication links between the two planes of narration, thus ensuring the aesthetic integrity of the whole architectonic structure. The access key to the construct’s intertextual correlations is the concept of figurative image as a code of artistic conventionality for designating both a real object and its ideal phenomenon in subjective consciousness. S. I. Romanova claims that such conventional codes enable “human consciousness to build a complex figurative-and-semiotic model of the world” through the aesthetic synthesis of substantial contents in mental forms of their artistic expression [Romanova 2008: 31]. I. A. Belyaev specifies the inherent synthesizing ability of literary-artistic images with reference to the initial purpose of these creatively designed forms for reflecting “multifaceted reality, discovered outside its limits” due

to conscious perception of things in the light of their value relevance for human existence [Belyaev 2020: 561].

The abovementioned concepts make up the methodological grounds for reproducing a wholesome model of the three forgoing novels of C. Wilson's "Spider World" with respect to the ontological, gnoseological and aesthetic aspects of their overall epic perspective. The dual nature of the figurative image, with its bilateral linkage to objective realities and subjective representations, allows for achieving this aim through linear analysis of the imagery paradigms delivering the intertextual concordance of eventful and meaningful orders of the literary discourse. Furthermore, the associated systemic research into the semiotic connotations of the ascertained paradigms leads to the discovery of the expected synergic communications between the narrative text and the philosophical metatext in the novels considered, including the emergent effect of the synergy. The statute definition of synergy dictates, that it is "combined performance; the interface of various potentials or types of power in contiguous operation" [Philosophical Encyclopedic Dictionary 2009]. T. P. Berseneva introduces this scientific category in the area of humanities, clarifying its cognitive and didactic modifiers in philosophical, literary and other cultural contexts [Berseneva 2016: 51]. Both qualifying statements are quite applicable to the case study of C. Wilson's epic under the condition of particular regard for the synergic activities of its main human character, who comes forward as the self-sufficient subject of all phenomenal and essential representations of the spiders' world. Since the protagonist derives the essential meanings of visual phenomena from empirical cognizing, his way of experience and knowledge accounts for the total matrix of synergic interactions between the narrative and notional lines of the epic discourse which lead the enquiring mind to the truth through subsequent stages of reality awareness.

In the first novel, "The Tower", the initial stage of the synergy process correlates with the scenes of introductory exposition, the occurrence of dramatic situation and the ensuing hero's life path. The description of the onset scenes in compliance with the conventional principles of visionary fiction forms the primary allegoric framing for the tale about human destiny in the fictitious spiders' world. The secondary conventional pattern results from the creative and intellectual activities of the hero who composes his world picture of phenomenal images complemented with mythological, metaphoric and symbolic features. These polysemous complementary elements endow the visual images with meaningful connections to their objective correlates, thus generating transversal semiotic medium between the epic perspective and the epistemological horizon of the unfolding picture. At the vanishing point of the perspective, the hero conceives the gigantic spiders as an incarnation of absolute evil on the grounds, that these powerful and insidious predators have defeated human civilization, subdued people and established tyrannical rule on them: "Men who challenged the spiders died a horrible death" [Wilson 1987a]. The biased preconceptions came to the young

boy's mind from old legends about spiders' invasion and rooted deep when the spiders took him prisoner to the city from the native desert reservation. Nevertheless, the primeval images of human and inhuman inhabitants of the planet tend to change their phenomenal appearance and semantic contents with the progressing lifeway and the broadening world outlook of the involuntary traveler.

The boy first approaches still dark fields of discovery when deciphering the codes and signs of ancient myths about the great war of people against spiders and their allied beetles. The unraveled riddles lead to the idea that the insects won the battle because of the treachery of human governors, who fostered the enslavement of their kindred for selfish and mercantile motives. The vague guess turns into hard truth while the unfortunate prisoner is threading his path to freedom in spiders' empire passing through its primitive, slave-owning, feudal and capitalistic formations. The most significant finding on this challenging way is the disappointing revelation that people easily entangle in spiders' cobweb of servile dependence because they have never known other bonds than domination and submission: "They were living according a mechanical routine, and each one seemed to regard himself as a mere fragment of a crowd" [Wilson 1987a]. Moreover, the disillusioned but still sincere devotee of freedom witnesses the evident expression of spider traits in human servants who exercise their authority over miserable inferiors to the benefit of spider-masters. The only inspiring event happens in White Tower where the young man accesses the great material and spiritual treasures created by human predecessors before the global catastrophe of their community. The profound research into the values of civilization revived the belief in the dignity of human race and encouraged the hero and his associates to raise the laborers at beetles' factories for the armed revolt against the spiders' feudal regime. However, the attempt of social revolution under the slogans of liberty, equality and fraternity ended in defeat for the rebels but in favour of the bourgeois class of the beetles who got the legalized right for unconstrained exploitation of workers.

Tracing the similar transformations in imagery systems with continuing story lines, J. White defines this collateral process by the term "prefiguration" to signify its impact as a unifying "conventional device" for mutually consistent representation of characters, circumstances and events in a work of fiction [White 2015: 11]. In C. Wilson's novel "The Tower", the integrating functions of prefiguration proceed not only within the narrative text but also at the outer level of the philosophical metatext, whereby the literary discourse is involved in the mainstreams of postmodern ideas. Seen from this level, the conventionally allegoric picture of spiders' evolution and humans' degradation shows evident bias towards the postmodern strategy for deconstruction of the anthropocentric model of the world well established in the New Time culture. M. Foucault, for instance, opposes the post-structural logics of "decentering that leaves no privilege to any center" to the anthropological thought, that orders all

“questions around the question of man’s being”, thus replenishing the speculative paradigm of “absolute axes of reference” [Foucault 2002: 225–226]. If the French philosopher rests his concept on the archeology of knowledge, then C. Wilson relies upon the principle of sense experience to align his postmodern forecast with the realities of actual modernity. In this regard, the fading division line between the profiling images of vanquished people and victorious insects takes on the value of a conventional sign, which indicates on internal premises for dehumanization of the world. Insofar as the existential experience brings the protagonist closer to a deeper understanding of reality, the consequent idea about the inner nature of evil in human community approximates the theory by J.-F. Lyotard, who also refers to real incidents to back up his inference about the immanent reasons for severance of positive ties between people: “This is the case if the victim is deprived of life, or all of his or her liberties, or of freedom to make his or her opinion public” [Lyotard 1988: 5]. After uncovering the shadowed sides of human coexistence, the two explorers follow their own ways of thinking so that to identify the hidden origins of the internal threat. Accordingly, C. Wilson encourages his hero to disclose the background of the ages-old relation of authority and obedience, which lays at the very founding of civilization and still serves as a pillar of a totalitarian society. J.-F. Lyotard suggests that the ultimate beginning of social vices goes back to the passive non-resistance of human consciousness to inhuman reality, due to its “being prepared to receive what thought is not prepared to think” [Lyotard 1991: 73]. In spite some discrepancies, the immanent insight into anthropological issues of being leads both authors to the shared postmodern presumption that the elicited flaws are not subject to revolutionary transformation, which would inevitably incur the emergence of another authoritarian system and, on top of that, at the cost of irreversible losses and deaths. The postmodern critique of radical reforming finds a definite explanation in the works by J. Baudrillard, who proves the historical inconsistency of any attempts to reconcile the objective laws of social life with subjective preconceptions of reasoning mind: “All the great schemas of reason have suffered the same fate. They have only traced their trajectory, they have only followed the thread of their history along the thin edge of the social stratum bearing meaning” [Baudrillard 1994: 8].

Overall, the given juxtapositions allow for the conclusion that the imagery prefiguration in C. Wilson’s novel “The Tower” engenders the synergic effect of meaning comparable with the postmodern philosophical notion about the irrelevancy of the modern ontology, which admits the violent intrusion into social reality with the aim of its transfer from “irrational” into “rational” condition. However, apart from the methods of philosophical anthropology and social analysis, C. Wilson also employs literary devices to capture the global-sized concerns of human being in an individual life story. The art of personalized embodiment of universal conflicts became especially important for the author after the skeptical retreat from

the modernistic guideline on changing the world to the postmodern strategy for changing consciousness in the face of world. The postmodern critic F. F. Centore characterized the similar inversion of priorities in philosophy as a gnoseological bias towards “ontology of mind”, alluding to the theories of radical hermeneutics, deconstructionism and other appropriate concepts of contemporary thinkers: “Instead of an ultimate real course of things, we are left with an intramental attitude, disposition and frame of mind” [Centore 1991: 174]. C. Wilson debates the issues of consciousness with regard to the real course of being with the view to find the possible approach to their reconciliation in literary practice: “The artist has to recognize himself not merely as being able to see the world, but also being able to *alter his perception* of it” [Wilson 1975: 92–93]. The writer achieves this purpose in the novel “The Delta”, applying a complex set of aesthetic, scientific and philosophical instruments of research to the subject matter in question.

The aesthetic framing of the novel “The Delta” is dependent on both the fictional form of the preceding narration and the factual content of the proceeding tale about the further way of the main character in the spider world. Within the local allegoric patterns of the plot, the continued story line assumes the conventional meaning of the ongoing life path, where the surrounding world casts itself as reality through the new knowledge and experience gained by the hero. Therefore, due to the specified relations between being and thinking in the narrative text, the postmodern “ontology of mind” is supposed to transcend the “intramental attitude” and to adjoin the empirical tradition in the theory of cognition at the level of the philosophical metatext. Along with the scientific principle of empiric verification, the other implication of the novel’s intellectual design is the axiomatic statement of phenomenology about the continuity and mutual irreducibility of mental perceptions and their objective correlates. The founder of phenomenology E. Husserl presumed that in every act of cognitive perception, the attitude of the subject is directed “from the pure Ego to the ‘object’ of the consciousness-correlate in question, to the physical thing, to the affair-complex, etc., and effects the very different kinds of consciousness of it” [Husserl 1983: 168–169]. C. Wilson appeals to E. Husserl’s philosophical theory in search of a methodological approach to eliminating the cognitive distortions of the world picture in a work of literature: “There is a philosophical method, whose purpose is to uncover these ‘distortions imposed by thought’; it is called phenomenology” [Wilson 1972: 21–22].

The convergent developments of the given conceptual dispositions in the book “The Delta” prove the feasibility of the author’s project. The basic supporting argument is the expected enlargement of the novel’s epic perspective and its epistemological horizon with the unfolding description of the former rebels’ dramatic travel to the realm of wild nature after the exile from the spiders’ capital city. The cause and effect connections between the existential and gnoseological dimensions of the novel’s fictional world trace back to the commensurably expanding areas of the travelers’

experience and knowledge on their purposeful way to solving the mystery of spiders' saltation, hidden in the depths of nature. Since the guiding motif for the expedition is to disclose the origins of spiders' power for the sake of people's welfare, the explorers act as intentional subjects identifying the essential meanings of natural phenomena not only on the ground of sense experience but also in terms of human values. In spite of the widening field of research in the marshlands and mangroves of the Delta, the accepted empirical and axiological approaches turn out to be insufficient for the adequate sight of findings and discoveries. As a result, the thought-to-be objects of reality make up only a fragmentary picture of hostile nature and mortally dangerous environment for its own inhabitants: "These creatures were being forced to evolve merely so they could destroy one another" [Wilson 1987a: 163]. However, the will to truth helps the team leader to recognize the flaws of the picture and inspires him for further research even after his exhausted fellow travelers had got off the path: "I know there are many dangers in the Delta, but somehow, the greatest danger lies in your own mind" [Wilson 1987a: 165].

The hero achieved his goal, when he managed to get to the summit of the great mountain in the very heart of Delta. At that dramatic moment, a sagacious sense of peak experience awoke the implicit faculty of mind for reflection, that is, the ability of questing consciousness to derive the essential meanings of things from their phenomenal and conceptual representations in the open horizon of single vision. From that point on, the protagonist, in addition to his mission of the cognizing subject, performs the tasks of the agent of synergy, who initiates prefiguration of phenomenal images altering the semiotic network of their objective and notional correlations at the corresponding levels of the narration text and philosophical metatext. The reflective stream of consciousness takes the form an internal dialogue, which conveys the moves of thought in search of the clue to the enigma during the intercourse of the hero with imagined Goddess of Nature. The first mark of his advance to the purpose is a vague guess that people were self-defeated for trying to improve livelihood at the cost of damages to other earth's inhabitants, and, inevitably, to their own living environment. The probable conjecture prompts the idea about a day of reckoning, which came with the invasion of extraterrestrial species in the planet, to the detriment of human race and for the good of beings that had never lost positive connections with nature and managed to evolve under the changing conditions of the earth biosphere. The ultimate effect of the synergic process emerges when the hero's inquiring mind overcomes the limits of phenomenal perception to reach an open field for a holistic understanding of the essential background of visual objects. Then, in the celestial horizon of the coherent picture of the world, the keen observer recognizes the evident divergence of the natural evolutionary law of total being with the rational sense of progress and purpose to human existence: "Evolution itself was a tremendous community effort, in which every individual played its part" [Wilson 1987a: 201].

Apparently, the given settings of the ontological and gnoseological intercourse in C. Wilson's novel "The Delta" entail the synergic outcome complying with the juxtaposition of the principles of evolutionary process and civilization progress in postmodern cultural self-awareness. A similar train of thought is evident in the philosophical judgments by J. Baudrillard, who applies the categories of "a second-order simulacra" and "simulation" in the analytical description of modern cultural artifacts as hyperreal fakes and forgeries of real things: "Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being, or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal" [Baudrillard 1994: 1]. U. Eco shares his colleague's negative assessment of artificial hyperreality, and, in addition, explains its origin by perceptual distortion of authentic reality: "The Absolute Fake is offspring of the unhappy awareness of a present without depth" [Eco 2024: 31]. In comparison to the abovementioned philosophical assumptions, the notional results of synergy in C. Wilson's novel "The Delta" constitute a self-contained aesthetic concept that represents the shortcomings of human attitude to the world and suggests an approach to their elimination by means of an existential research into cultural values with respect to the natural order of things. V. Rapatahana makes a point of the existential establishment for anthropomorphic "prehension" of objects in C. Wilson's fiction, where "the individual gives meaning to the world through their intentionality" [Rapatahana 2016]. The point taken, there is still a place left for the motion, that the author's project of "Spider World" stipulates concurrent directions of existential and axiological queries into civilization developments, leading, on balance, to the issue of the measure of unity between human intentions and the general course of being. This problem accounts for the principal subject matter in the third part of the epic, "The Magician".

In the novel "The Magician", the ontological and epistemological aspects of the problem stated overtake the social dimensions of the narrative story line, when the hero turns back from the virgin forests of the Delta to the capital city of spider-and-human society. By analogy with the previous books of the epic, the protagonist provides the synergic connotations between the semantic implications of the narration and the sense logic of the notional discourse by deriving essential meanings from visual phenomena of reality. The difference is that the subject's creative and cognizing activities focus on the phenomenal images of the events and circumstances, which represent the public life and reflect the collective consciousness of the community members. The baseline for the current stage of the synergy is marked with the crucial change in the destiny of the main hero. The former rebel and outlaw became the absolute ruler of spiders and a worshiped hero of people after his victorious showdown against the insects' sovereign and submitting the credentials from the Delta goddess that authorized the winner's domination over the earthly world in the name of natural justice. The young ruler received the new assignment with the firm decision to build a wel-

fare state where everybody would enjoy the benefits of personal liberty and universal equality. However, the utopian project, based on the simple transfer of natural laws onto social sphere, turned out to be inconsistent despite of the governor's desperate attempts to reconcile the common democracy with his own autocratic policy.

The alarming signs of danger first occurred in dramatically growing crime rate and then showed even worse with descending atmosphere of dread and anxiety. Tracing the distinctive signs of the looming menace against the background of real events and their public awareness, the governor and his associates made sure that the overwhelming threat came from malevolent people, who committed violent murders, while law-abiding spiders, on the contrary, were on the guard of social safety. Nevertheless, the spider-officers of law enforcement agencies failed to solve the persistent series of murders, being confused with their seemingly irrational motives and even more – with the strange details of evidence, which did not give any logical explanation for the cruel overkills. It was the human ability of holistic vision, and primarily that of the young ruler's mind, which diverted the case study from spiders' deductive analytics to completing an integrated pattern from disparate details and making sense of their meaningful connections.

The expected engagement of the protagonist with the socially important investigation caused not only the further extension of the intertextual semantic fields, but also the intensive formation of new semiotic networks between the parallel planes of eventful and notional moves of the narrative. Considering the small figures of idols, amulets and other fetishes found on the crime scenes, the researcher identifies these finds as the objects of worship, which symbolize the surrender of reasonable consciousness to superstitious beliefs. The subsequent ordering of the symbolic items by their dual correlations with occult ideas and real things resulted in building a semiotic paradigm, where each sign pointed out to the old-regime authoritarianism as a still practiced principle of relations between people. The only difference was that, apart from the past times of the spider world, the contemporary marginal authorities exercised their power not by physical violence but through ideological compulsion, that is, by instilling views and faiths, which made people die and kill for them as if these were their own sacred beliefs.

Eventually, the semiotic query into the symbols of power upgrades the criminal case study to the level of sociological and political generalizations where their emergent result coincides with the philosophical concept of domination and submission worked out by postmodern thinkers. M. Foucault, for instance, argues that the traditional means of violent abuse have given way to sophisticated methods of ideological pressure onto consciousness in the contemporary system of rule and discipline. According to M. Foucault, such subdued consciousness bears the traces of “the impact, whereby the power relations induce a certain entity of knowledge, and the knowledge facilitates and enhances the effects of the power” [Foucault 2004]. Similar ideas

or their augmented versions constituted the theoretical presumptions for the critique of postmodern society and culture in the works by G. Deleuze [Deleuze 2004: 31–51] and J. Baudrillard [Baudrillard 1994: 79–86]. C. Wilson's literary experience fits in with the philosophical theories of the named authors by witnessing the outer manifestation of supervision and subjection in social being and the possibility for uncovering their inner origins through deep insights into individual consciousness. Thus, the traditional person-centered literary narration in the novel “The Magician” promotes the cogitable development of the dilemma in question towards the premise about its immanent nature, first stated by M. Foucault: “The human represented for us, whom we are supposed to free, is already in himself the subject to subjugation much more profound than himself” [Foucault 2004]. Taken as a distinctly expressed notion, this statement provides a clue to the signs of artistic conventionality, which make up the hierarchal pattern of omnipresent power in C. Wilson's novel.

The accepted code key opens the access to the sense logics of this semiotic system with the progress of the hero-narrator in the investigation of continuing crimes against humanity. His inquisitive thought reaches the top of the symbolic pyramid of power in search of a rational solution to the mystery of the black magus, whom the folk rumor endowed with a supernatural capacity for spreading his ill will and all-pervading evil over the entire world: “Magic is the art of causing changes in consciousness at will” [Wilson 2002]. Considering the causal links between the real atrocities and their conceivable implications in peoples' minds the investigator comes to understand, that the infernal apparition of the almighty evil emerged as an ideation of mythological mentality, or as a hypostatized delusion to which the anguished collective consciousness ascribed real existence. The guess about the evolving of reified image from the mental phenomena encourages the researcher for reflexive introspections into his own mind so that to derive meaningful essence from the seeming appearance of the wicked sorcerer. Despite the expected discovery of the magician in the innermost depths of the subconscious, the young governor finds the clue trail to the mystery only with the sharp hint of a wise councilor. The judgement of the councilor was that the inner vision of the sinister magus appeared as the projection of the governor's lurking ego, striving to become sovereign Lord: “Your magician sounds like that” [Wilson 2002]. However, the protagonist's act of self-identification, although prompted by another character, complies with the crucial stage of cognitive and creative activities, described by Ph. Lacoue-Labarthe and J.-L. Nancy as the “auto-excess” of the postmodern literary hero in his quest for truth out of the egocentric vision of reality: “The ‘auto’ movement, if it can be called like that – auto-formation, auto-organization, auto-dissolution, etc. – is always a state of excess with itself” [Lacoue-Labarthe, Nancy 2000: 54].

In C. Wilson's book “The Magician”, the transgression of the acting subject over the limits of self-centered consciousness leads the sequential lines of

literary and philosophical discourse to the crossroad in the ex-centered sphere of ethics, where their synergic outcome incurs humanized measures of truthfulness and validity. The moral experience of the hero confirms the ethical setting of the further knowledge path, when he recognizes the demonic incarnations of his own will to power in the terrifying phantoms of the magician and a great host of the suppressed and obedient revenants, unable to think and to act independently. According to S. R. L. Clark, the illusive images of monsters in the human-sized perspective of C. Wilson's visionary fiction imply the persistent in-fighting of humans for the victory over the demons in their minds, souls, and ultimately in their being in the world [Clark 2017: 12]. The open ending of the novel "The Magician" allows for the feasibility of this prediction, and the follow-up story proves its fulfilment in the book "The Shadowland", closing the "Spider World" series.

Overall, the research into the synergic interaction of the narrative text and philosophical metatext the C. Wilson's epic "Spider World" enabled to clarify some essential uniformities in the developments of literary devices and their methodological foundation after modernism. The emergent effects of the synergy evidence, that the regular pattern of the said uniformities took its shape under the influence of the postmodern shift of axiological priorities in the framing and features of the general picture of the world. The contemporary offsets from the modern outlook on order of things have well established ontological, gno-seological, socio-cultural and aesthetic parameters, which manifested themselves, inter alia, in C. Wilson's art system. Its ontological dimensions are compatible

with the postmodern frame of reference where modernist innovative strategies come under severe criticism and direct rejection on the grounds, that they permit violent intrusion into natural and social reality contrary to the law of evolution. The determined deviation from the guideline for changing the world causes the reverse turn of the thought in search of possibilities for changing consciousness of the world in the face of actual reality. The way back from the object to the subject of cognition leads to the query about the social and cultural background of the New Age rationality with particular regard to individual consciousness as the concrete agent of commonly shared ideologies and their variable transformations. The personalized approach to the issues of mentality focuses the aesthetic aspects of postmodern discourse on the modernized art world, with its borders biased towards the limits of vision and existence a singular subject. In C. Wilson's literary work, this "all-new" genre model accounts for the initial paradigm of the narrative organization, which vividly reflects the self-centered attitude of the hero-narrator to the outer environment. However, supporting the modernists' concept of the literary character as the autonomous subject of all representations, the writer also appeals to the old masters' moral ideas, so that to encourage the new hero for the auto-excess from the egocentric circle of living and thinking, and hence to avoid the cognitive distortions of the picture of reality. Eventually, the revived principle of historical continuity and its consistent implementation with respect to modern and classical art inheritance proves to be a most significant effect of the intertextual synergism in the epic "Spider World" by C. Wilson.

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