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TEMPORAL WORLD-SWITCHES IN THREE TEXTS OF DIFFERENT GENRES

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Application of the principles of Text World Theory to texts of different genres gives us a clearer idea of the diversity of roles performed by the same discourse technique. In this study, we look into the technique of changing temporal parameters of the basic text-world which can involve the appearance of new entities and the relocation of setting in discourse. The analysis shows that temporal world-switches in three texts of different genres – an excerpt from a novel, a free verse poem, and an archival project review – transfer a reader mostly to the past. Yet in each text, temporal world-switches are put to a different purpose. In the excerpt from a complex psychological detective novel they are aimed at foregrounding the role and place of a particular enactor in the network of motives and events; in the free verse poem they serve to convey the theme; in the review of archival papers, temporal world-switches bind together the facts of the past and their contemporary interpretation. The results of the current study suggest that temporal world-switches are polyfunctional, their role depending largely on the genre of writing.

Key words: discourse, genre, temporal world-switch, the past, time-zone.

Introduction. Text World Theory is a cognitive-linguistic model that looks into the processes of creating and understanding/interpreting various types of discourses [11; 3; 4]. It embraces both philological and linguistic aspects, and is therefore an effective tool for analysis and comparison of different genres of texts. According to Paul Werth, the originator of the theory [11, p. 7], text worlds are “conceptual scenarios”; they correspond to complex utterances which people hear or read and use in their oral speech or in writing in order to express their thoughts and attitudes. In this study, we concentrate on the reception end of the author – text – reader line. A reader uses the text to construct the text world (alternative spelling: text-world). The structure of the latter, especially in fictional works, is rather complex as it may encompass a great number of switches (deictic, attitudinal, epistemic). These switches generate “embedded” worlds, called sub-worlds [11, p. 205; 9, p. 140] or world-switches [3, p. 48]. One of the most common world-switch trigger is shifting temporal parameters of narration; it often involves spatial and environmental shifts, and sometimes, change or partial change of entities. The aim of the current study is to establish the role of temporal world-switches in the discourses of three pieces of creative writing of different genres: an excerpt from the detective novel *Lethal White* by Robert Galbraith (aka J. K. Rowling) (2), free verse poem *Marco Polo* by Michael Swan (3), and the review of the collection of historical and cultural research papers *The Vitality of Letters, Memoirs and Diaries from Taken Lands* by Gabija Bankauskaitė (1). It is hypothesized that the same technique of temporal world-switch can be used for different purposes depending on the genre and purpose of a particular piece of discourse.

Previous Research in the Area. In the late 20th century, Werth [11] developed Text World Theory, a cognitive-linguistic model aimed at explaining human discourse processing. In the 21st century, its chief proponent and developer is Joanna Gavins [3; 4; 5]. The theory is designed to explain the relationships between the real world, the knowledge of which is the foundation of our perception of discourse, the text, and its mental representation [11, pp. 6–16; 3, pp. 8–10; 5, pp. 1–3; 7, p. 86; 8, p. 29]. The text-world (or text world) is defined as a mental representation of a particular text in a person’s mind, built with reliance on linguistic cues that are present in the text and its context, as well as on a reader’s general knowledge of the world and his/her literary experience [11, p. 7; 3, p. 10; 4, pp. 3–5; 5, p. 3].

Text World Theory has a wide range of application. It is used to study various types of discourses, from the Hebrew Bible [10] to a classical fairy tale and a modern poem with fairy-tale motives [12] to dramatic [1] and telecinematic [2] discourses of the 21st century.

In this study, the texts of three different genres – fictional prose, free verse, and scientific review – are considered from the perspective of Text World Theory with a view to explore the role of temporal shifts in the structure of a particular discourse.

Methodology. The analysis of temporal world-switches in the three texts of different genres was carried out according to the procedure suggested by Werth [11], Gavins [3; 4; 5], and Peter Stockwell [9].

Crucial for text-world creation are world-building elements (deictic markers that set temporal and spatial parameters, enactors (characters), objects present in a text-world); relational processes that “specify how two or more elements exist in a text-world in some sort of relationship with one another” [3, p. 43]; function-advancing propositions that “constitute

the states, actions, events and processes, and any arguments or predications made in relation to the objects and characters in the text world” [9 p. 137]. Numerous new text-worlds, called “sub-worlds” (Werth and Stockwell) or “world-switches” (Gavins), evolve within the basic text-world. Both basic and new text-worlds are categorized as deictic, attitudinal, and epistemic [11, pp. 82–83, 187–188, 205, 216; 9, p. 140].

In the current study, temporal world-switches in the excerpt from the novel *Lethal White*, in the poem *Marco Polo*, and in the review of archival researches *The Vitality of Letters, Memoirs and Diaries from Taken Lands* were considered from the perspectives of world-building elements and function-advancing propositions; deictic/epistemic nature of a particular world-switch; narrator-/enactor-accessibility; linguistic means of building a new text-world.

Results and Discussion. In this study, we aim at establishing the role of temporal world-switches in three pieces of writing of different genres.

The excerpt from Galbraith’s novel *Lethal White* (2, pp. 397–398) is a third-person narrative. The temporal and spatial parameters of the basic text-world are as follows: the story is set in London; it is a Saturday morning, the summer of the 2012 Olympics; the enactor is private detective Cormoran Strike¹. He is in a McDonald’s restaurant, reading news stories and a blog about the separation of Minister for Sport Della Winn and Mr. Winn who runs his wife’s constituency office in the House of Commons. Mr. Winn is a suspect in a case Strike investigates. We tentatively call it Strike’s time-zone, the temporal markers being the past tense verbs *made a detour to; coffee, which he consumed; was reading; stories popped up*, etc.

There are several temporal world-switches in a page-and-a-third-long excerpt. The titles of the news stories ‘*Minister for Sport Splits from Husband: Separation “Amicable”*’, ‘*Della Winn Calls Time on Marriage*’ is the first world-switch. This world is enactor-accessible (the news is presented by unnamed journalists); it has different enactors and a different, slightly more distant time-zone. Conventionally, present tense verbs are used in the titles (*Splits, Calls*), but our general world experience tells us that the separation decision and consequent actions must have preceded the announcement of ending marriage.

The next paragraph returns a reader to the basic text-world: the omniscient narrator uses past tense verbs to describe the newspaper stories (they *were all factual and on the short side, a few padded out with details of Della’s impressive career*) and Strike’s further actions (*limped out of the restaurant; brought up the website of a well-known and scurrilous political blogger on his phone*, and others). It is noteworthy, however, that the return to the basic text-world is split with Strike’s reflections on why the press is reserved about the hot piece of news: *The press’s lawyers would, of course, be particularly careful around the Winns just now, with their super-injunction [against discussing Mr. Winn’s alleged blackmailing of the late Minister for Culture] still in place*. The technique of merging the “voices” of the narrator and the enactor is known as free indirect discourse [3, p. 128]. It is a world-switch to a different, enactor-accessible epistemic text-world, the indicators being future-in-the-past tense form of the verb in combination with a colloquial parenthesis: *would, of course, be ... careful*. The time-zone in this world-switch is modified in a particular way. On the one hand,

¹ Throughout this study, we use the present tense forms of the verbs for the events that are presented as past in the analyzed texts (as is common when discussing texts) and past tense forms for the events that precede the time of the action in the basic text-world.

the super-injunction is *still in place*, which means that it is Strike's time-zone. On the other hand, it is implied that the status quo will be preserved for a certain period of time until the ban is lifted (the hypothetical future).

Then Strike starts reading a paragraph by a *scurrilous political blogger*, which *had been written only a few hours previously*. The past perfect form of the verb and the temporal adverbial phrase are markers of a step back into the past. As to the content of the paragraph itself, the matters are more complicated. The news (highlighted as in the original) presented by the blogger is a new enactor-accessible text-world: ***Which creepy Westminster couple known to share a predilection for youthful employees are rumoured to be splitting at last? He is about to lose access to the nubile political wannabes on whom he has preyed so long, but she has already found a handsome young 'helper' to ease the pain of separation*** (2, p. 398).

The relational process *Westminster* implies the location of the action. The compound verbal predicate *are rumoured to be splitting* suggests that it is still Strike's time-zone. Yet the decision to separate must have been made and the rumours must have started before the blogger caught wind of the scandal. The question is followed by a compound-complex sentence. *He is about to lose access to the nubile political wannabes* is the blogger's prediction, an epistemic world-switch into the future. The present perfect tense forms of the verbs and the adverbial phrase in the rest of the sentence – *on whom he has preyed so long, but she has already found a handsome young 'helper' to ease the pain of separation* – are markers of two separate world-switches into the past: Mr. Winn's interest in young women is his life-long predilection, while Mrs. Winn's relationship with her young employee is described as recent one.

The next paragraph, the last one in the excerpt chosen, continues the line of the basic text-world with an insignificant shift in spatial and temporal parameters: forty minutes later the detective comes out of Barons Court Tube station still reading the news about the Winn's separation. What he reads, though, is a world-switch into another, a rather distant time-zone: *They had been married over thirty years*. The approximateness of the temporal deictic form *over thirty years* indicates that, once again, we are given access to Strike's thoughts (free indirect discourse). The next sentence is the detective's memory awoken by the comparison between two couples that have been staying together for so long: the Winns and Strike's aunt and uncle. The memory involves young Strike, his sister, and their aunt and uncle *back in Cornwall*, who took care of the two children whenever their mother, a famous supergroupie of the 1970s, was chasing her own whims.

Thus, the excerpt from *Lethal White* contains several world-switches, many of them being caused by stepping back from the temporal dimension of the basic text-world. The story's time-zones are the past, the hypothetical future from the past perspective, the recent past, and the distant past. Apart from changes in temporal and spatial parameters, the world-switches discussed involve the appearance of major and minor enactors.

Temporal detours in the excerpt from *Lethal White* are important for at least two reasons. They propel the plot and highlight the characters that inhabit the novel: Strike is shown as a shrewd and persistent investigator; a glimpse of his childhood implies important factors in molding his character; the Winn's marriage has gone badly wrong; public and private morals of Mr. Winn are opposed to those of Strike's aunt and uncle.

The second text, Michael Swan's free verse poem *Marco Polo* (3, p. 8), is much shorter than the excerpt above, yet the poem features no less interesting range of world-switches: a sequence of enactor-accessible worlds – the narrator, our contemporary, and the medieval explorer talk about their travels.

The beginning and the end of the poem are the first-person narratives: *I was talking to Marco Polo* (stanza 1); *I had expected disbelief, / but he understood pretty well / what we can do* [modern technologies allow us to move fast around the world]. // *I had not expected pity* (stanzas 9 and 10). This is the basic text-world, located presumably in a country far away from China since the narrator says: *You know / I said / I was in China yesterday. / (True enough. / We hit Terminal 3 / at 7.20 this morning)* (stanza 8). The time-zone of the conversation is an unspecified recent past, as is suggested by the past tense forms of the verbs and the term designating an airport component.

Stanzas 2–7 are the story told by Marco Polo; it is a series of world-switches into the very distant past, the 13th century. The enactor presents the events in reverse order, starting from the book about his travels (the first world-switch) that was written after his return from Asia: *He said / Yes, OK, / he went over the top a bit / in the book / to push up the sales* (stanza 2). Here *the book* is a cue; a reader is supposed to recognize a reference to *Book of the Marvels of the World*, or *The Travels of Marco Polo*. It is believed that Marco Polo's stories about his travels through Asia between 1271 and 1295 were written down by Rustichello da Pisa, who shared a cell with the explorer when they were imprisoned in Genoa in 1298–1299. The book's "narratives about places intermix the objective and systematic with the romantic and fanciful" [6, p.78], which explains a seemingly incoherent statement *he went over the top a bit / in the book / to push up the sales*. Michael Swan's poem is an intentional blending of time-zones; it brings together enactors and conceptions from different epochs: for example, the basic text-world *I was talking to Marco Polo*, the function-advancing proposition *to push up the sales*, which does not fit into the social and cultural context of the 13th century, and others.

The first world-switch *He said / Yes, OK, / he went over the top a bit / in the book / to push up the sales* takes a reader to the time of issuing the book, which, chronologically speaking, should come after Marco Polo's story of his travels. The latter, taken as a whole, is switching back into the even more distant past. The story is a succession of several world-switches: *The years on the road. / Turkey, Armenia, Persia, Afghanistan, ... // Disease, / and a year to recuperate / in Badakhshan. // Bandits, / sandstorms and spirit voices / in the Gobi. // The Pamirs were the worst / he said, / with the bloody horses dying / below the high passes / where your bones froze* (stanzas 4–7). Sometimes a locative (a nominative sentence) is sufficient to cause the emergence of a world-switch; in other cases, several factors work together – temporal parameters, objects/phenomena, relational processes; alternatively, the triggers are objects and entities, spatial parameters, relational processes, and function-advancing propositions. Each successive world-switch, including those represented only by the name of a new location, is a step forward in time.

Then a reader is returned to the basic text-world: *You know / I said / I was in China yesterday. (True enough. / We hit Terminal 3 / at 7.20 this morning)* (stanza 8). Telling about his visit to China the previous day, the narrator makes another world-switch – a very short step back into the past, the narrator's *yesterday*.

On the whole, the action in the poem switches backward from the recent past to the very distant past, and then returns to the recent past again. Yet there is an interesting case of world-switching that should not be overlooked. The poem implies that the temporal deictic centre is the narrator's time-zone, which means Marco Polo's transference from his very distant past to our epoch.

It is noteworthy that in the poem that juxtaposes our contemporary times with the past, there are only four temporal indicators: the enactor's name *Marco Polo*, the past tense forms of the verbs, and two explicit temporal parameters *I was in China yesterday* and *We hit Terminal 3 / at 7.20 this morning*. On the other hand, special prominence is given to the locatives *Turkey, Armenia, Persia, Afghanistan, etc.* as indirect indicators of temporal world-switching. Also, two unspecified indicators *The years on the road* and *a year to recuperate* stand out. The final lines of the poem *I had expected disbelief* and *I had not expected pity* (stanzas 9 and 10) leave a reader with an impression that the medieval explorer feels superior to modern people. All these considerations taken together suggest that in the poem the accent is put on the conceptions of aim, process, and experience rather than that of time.

The third text we discuss in this study is *The Vitality of Letters, Memoirs and Diaries from Taken Lands*, Bankauskaitė's (1) review of the publication *Memoirs and Letters of Polish Authors from Taken Lands in 19th Century – Role and Place in the Historical Research* (*Polskie dziewiętnastowieczne pamiętniki i listy z Ziemi Zabranonych – rola i miejsce w badaniach historycznych*, 2017. Eds. W. Caban, L. Michalska-Bracha. Wydawnictwo DiG).

The first paragraph of the review provides explanations concerning the 2012–2017 project carried out at the Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce, the Republic of Poland. Further on, Bankauskaitė characterizes 41 articles of the publication. Two opening articles by W. Caban and W. Molik respectively present the main results of the project team and explain its guiding principles and the publication's policy. According to the reviewer (1, pp. 211–213), other articles highlight a wide variety of issues concerning the history and general moods of the period, people's aspirations, psychological aspects of the stories of different individuals: social, political, cultural, and private life of Polish male and female authors from the Taken Lands, their administrative-economic correspondence, activities and life of participants of the anti-Russian Uprising, political views of convicts deported to Siberia and their perception of the Russian/Siberian cultural context, their contacts with the local population and their historic homeland, and the activities and life of the noble women during and after the Uprising. The reviewer's analysis of each new article constitutes a separate text-world, within which there are one or several temporal world-switches.

Temporal world-switches in *The Vitality of Letters, Memoirs and Diaries from Taken Lands* are predetermined by the genre of the review of archival researches. In the two introductory paragraphs, the reviewer makes to-and-fro switches between several time-zones: 2018, the year of publishing the review; the end of 2012, when *a research team formed at the Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce was granted a project within the framework of the National Programme for the Development of Humanities by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of Poland*; 2013–2017, the years of project implementation; 2016, the year of *the international scientific conference held <...> in the framework of the national project "Memoirs and Letters of Polish Authors from the Taken Lands (Lithuania, Belarus*

and Ukraine) in the Period 1795–1918” (both citations above come from Bankauskaitė’s (1, p. 210) review); the name of the project indicates a switch into the distant past, the late 18th–early 20th centuries.

The typical pattern of temporal world-switches in the rest of the review, except for the concluding paragraph, is as follows: (i) the present, i.e. the time of publishing the review → (ii) the distant past, the time when the archival documents were written → (iii) back to the present → (iv) the distant past again. These steps can repeat themselves. Consider the following example: *Lilia Kowkiel carries out the investigation of (the present) the image of a female reader from the Lithuanian-Belarusian province in the light of the letters to the Zawadzki, a family of booksellers from Vilnius (the distant past). The correspondence testifies to (the present) a steady increase in the number of female readers in the 19th century (the distant past) and confirms (the present) their autonomy in choosing books or articulating specific requests (the distant past). Moreover, it also documents (the present) the diversity of their needs, tastes and reading habits (the distant past)* (1, p. 213). Occasionally, there are switches to the recent past (e.g., *The memoirs and diaries have been preserved at the Manuscript Department of Vasyl Stefanyk National Scientific Library of Ukraine in Lviv, and at the Central State Historical Archive of Ukraine*); there are also a couple of implied switches to the indefinite future as imagined by the author of a particular document (e.g., *The letters of this man [Zygmunt Sierakowski] convey a wide range of emotions, belief in the future, and the ability to influence it*) (1, pp. 211 and 212 respectively).

The indicators of temporal world-switches in the review are a particular year, century or a historical period; the names of lands and countries related to particular historical periods; the names of historical events and organizations; the proper names of the authors of the letters and diaries analyzed; descriptions of the authors’ activities and views; the use of the present/past forms of the verbs.

A characteristic feature of the review is that world-switches from the present to the past often occur within the same simple sentence (e.g., *The problem of Poles in the education system of the Russian Empire, in the Vilnius Science District (School) is outlined in Andzej Szmyt’s research*) or within the same complex/compound sentence (e.g., *The correspondence from the Lithuanian State Historical Archives provides an illustration of how Poles searched for their place in the 19th century reality <...>*) (1, p. 212 for both citations above).

Obviously, the concluding paragraph, which emphasizes the importance of intercultural researches, stays within the frame of the present time-zone.

Conclusions and implications for further research. Comparison of temporal world-switches in the three texts of different genres shows that the method of shifting temporal parameters can be used to achieve different purposes.

Lethal White by Robert Galbraith is a detective novel with many themes, characters, plot lines, and twists. Its complex discourse structure, exemplified in the excerpt above, requires constant “detours” to different time-zones, which typically involves world-switching. In our opinion, the main function of temporal world-switches in this text is to highlight particular enactors, their place and role in the elaborate network of motives and events in the psychological “whodunit”.

A poem is by definition much shorter than most prose fiction pieces, therefore every single feature of the former, its general discourse structure in particular, is designed to convey its theme and acquire special significance. Michael Swan's *Marco Polo* is a metaphorical bridge across the gap between two epochs, which makes temporal world-switches inevitable. Both enactors travel in their stories, each one to his own past. The theme of the poem is the juxtaposition of two types of worldviews, determined by the realities of two different epochs; the role of temporal world-switches is to foreground the difference between them. Thus, here world-switches are an instrument of developing the theme of the poem.

The Vitality of Letters, Memoirs and Diaries from Taken Lands by Gabija Bankauskaitė is a review of an archival research. A typical world-building pattern in such a type of scientific discourse is temporal world-switches within the same complex/compound sentence or the same paragraph: an issue is introduced, an explanation or comment is provided, and references to persons from some past period and to past events/documents/activities are made. The role of temporal world-switches here is to indicate connection between a past event and its today's interpretation.

Thus, it may be concluded that temporal world-switches are polyfunctional; it appears that their role in a discourse largely depends on the genre of writing. Further research into discourses of other genres – for instance, popular science discourse, the discourse of sport, theatrical discourse – may confirm or disprove this claim.

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ТЕМПОРАЛЬНІ ПЕРЕМИКАННЯ СВІТІВ У ТРЬОХ РІЗНОЖАНРОВИХ ТЕКСТАХ

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Одна із можливостей, яку відкриває застосування принципів лінгвокогнітивної теорії світу тексту при вивченні різножанрових текстів, – це дослідження різноманітності ролей одного й того самого дискурсивного прийому.

У цій студії розглядається прийом зміни темпоральних параметрів у дискурсі, що спричиняє перенесення дії в інший часовий і локальний простір, а також появу нових персонажів. У теорії світу тексту такі перенесення класифікуються як підсвіти, або ж перемикання світів, які можуть ініціюватися автором тексту і (умовно) персонажами через презентацію їхніх думок, спогадів тощо. Базові світи і світи, що виникають унаслідок перемикання, поділяються на дейктичні, модальні та епістемічні. Викладені вище положення є методологічною основою нашого дослідження, проведеного на матеріалі уривку з детективного роману Р. Гелбрейта *Lethal White*, верлібрового вірша М. Свона *Marco Polo* і рецензії Г. Бенкаускайте *The Vitality of Letters, Memoirs and Diaries from Taken Lands* на

збірник досліджень архівних матеріалів під назвою *Polskie dziewiętnastowieczne pamiętniki i listy z Ziemi Zabranej – rola i miejsce w badaniach historycznych*.

Проведений аналіз засвідчує, що у всіх трьох текстах темпоральні перемикання світів здійснюються головню у вимір минулого; однак у кожному тексті цей дискурсивний прийом використовується з іншою метою. В уривку із психологічного детективу переміщення у минуле висвітлюють місце і роль конкретного персонажа в складній мережі взаємопов'язаних подій, вчинків та їхніх мотивів. У верлібровому вірші, концептуальній метафорі містка між двома епохами, перемикання світів і перехід у минуле використовуються як один із засобів вираження теми твору. У рецензії на збірник архівних досліджень темпоральні перемикання світів часто реалізуються в межах одного абзацу, але найчастіше – в межах складносурядного чи складнопідрядного речення, пов'язуючи тим самим факти історичного минулого з їхньою сучасною інтерпретацією. Результати нашого дослідження вказують на поліфункціональність дискурсивного прийому темпорального перемикання світів і на змінність їхньої ролі залежно від жанру тексту.

Ключові слова: дискурс, жанр, темпоральне перемикання світів, минуле, зона часу.