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Kravchenko N. K.
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4190-0924
National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine

Snitsar V. P.
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9553-574X
Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv

STYLISTIC MEANS OF CONSTRUCTING LIMINAL TIME IN *THE MAGUS* BY JOHN FOWLES

The study addresses the problem of temporal liminality as an underexplored aspect of linguistic research within the broader field of liminality studies. While liminality has been extensively examined in literary and cultural studies, its linguistic actualization, particularly in relation to temporality, remains insufficiently investigated. The relevance of the research is due to the need for a systematic analysis of linguistic means that represent the nonlinear, ambivalent, and threshold nature of time in artistic discourse. The object of the study is temporal liminality in the novel The Magus by John Fowles, while the subject is the system of stylistic devices that actualize liminal temporality. The aim of the research is to identify, analyze, and classify these stylistic means. The methodology combines stylistic analysis, intertextual analysis of allusions, and elements of conceptual metaphor analysis, which enables a comprehensive examination of the interaction between linguistic form and liminal meaning.

The results demonstrate that temporal liminality is constructed through a set of interrelated stylistic mechanisms. A key role is played by mythological allusions to Ancient Greek figures, identified with the narrator, which blur the boundaries between archetypal and actual time, shifting the narrative into a state of temporal indeterminacy. The effect of temporal ambivalence is reinforced by the integration of allusive names associated with mythological and philosophical chronotopes into everyday contexts, which disrupts expected semantic correspondences for both narrator and reader, generating cognitive dissonance. The inversion of temporal reference points and the disruption of linear temporality are realized through antithesis and the conceptual metaphor TIME / AGE AS A CONTAINER, which models time as a closed space, as well as the metaphor EXISTENCE IS A DESERT, contributing to the representation of cyclical and suspended temporality. An inversion of temporal orientations together with the destruction of linear temporal sequence emerge through a paradoxical structure combining the directional semantics of back with units, which indicates a later stage of the life cycle, producing a paradoxical temporality, where movement “backward” is conceptually associated with the future. The transition from spatial to temporal liminality is ensured through allusions to the mythologeme of katabasis, actualizing the space of “timeless” time.

The novelty of the study lies in the systematic linguistic analysis of temporal liminality and in the identification of its stylistic markers. The prospects for further research lie in the continued approach to a wider corpus of literary texts and the interaction of temporal liminality with other types of liminal structures.

Keywords: *temporal liminality, stylistic devices, conceptual metaphor, allusion, narrative, John Fowles.*

Statement of the problem. The study of liminality, originating from the anthropological works of ethnographer and folklorist Arnold van Gennep on archetypal rites of passage rooted in archaic models of the world [17], has become one of the most relevant areas in contemporary humanities studies, expanding from anthropology “to dozens of other research contexts, from literary and cultural studies to marketing and consulting” [14, p. 7].

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The ontological characteristics of liminality include transitivity, ambivalence, thresholdness (of spaces, sensations, experiences, etc.), ambiguity, the "simultaneous presence of the recognizable and the unrecognizable, as well as freedom from conventions and rules" [9; 16, p. 95; 19]. Liminality is associated with sphere of the transcendental – which lies beyond our ordinary experience and understanding of space and time itself [6, p. 22]; with a domain of pure freedom and possibility from which new configurations, ideas, and relationships may emerge [15, p. 5; 16, p. 97].

In the humanities, liminality has been widely explored from a literary studies perspective as one of the approaches encompassed by the umbrella term "poetics of liminality." From a linguistic perspective, the means of expressing liminality have been addressed only in isolated studies, primarily focusing on spatial liminality and mediators of transition between worlds [1; 2; 3; 12].

The Magus by John Fowles [7] in which the blurring of boundaries between worlds serves as a structurally defining principle, has not previously been studied from the perspective of temporal liminality, which determines the novelty of this research.

Analysis of recent research and publications. The problem of liminality has been extensively studied from a literary perspective. Summarizing such research, Kravchenko and Nikolska identify the following aspects of liminality studies: "a focus on 'threshold' spatial images; on the ambivalence of the liminal subject existing in multiple guises and states of consciousness; on temporal and spatial liminality; on the boundary experiences of the author and the reader; on liminal beings and objects, etc." [8, p. 68].

From a partially linguistic perspective, Semeryn [4] substantiated the role of such boundary signs as "threshold," "window," "door," "wall," and "mirror" in shaping the dwelling as a "borderline semiosphere" in the poetry of Vasyl Stus. The articles by Lysova [1; 2; 3] investigate liminal imagery in the contemporary English-language poetic discourse.

The problem of liminality in *The Magus* has been addressed from a literary studies perspective by Kravchenko and Nikolska [8], who identified the specificity of mythological allusions as means of constructing liminal spaces and revealing the liminal states of the characters in the novel. From a linguistic-semiotic and stylistic point of view, liminality in *The Magus* was explored by Kravchenko, Zhykharieva and Stavtseva [18] in terms of linguistically marked intersemiotic codes in the narrative-semiotic coding of borderline space.

At the same time, the problem of temporal liminality remains a lacunary aspect of contemporary linguistic research. In interdisciplinary studies, liminal time is understood as a departure from the linear projection of time, a sensation of timelessness, suspended, frozen, or cyclical time [10; 11], as well as a process of separating the individual from an ordered chronological system while simultaneously integrating them into an alternative, anti-chronological one. From a chronological perspective, liminality represents an "ambiguous relationship between the past, present, and future" [13, p. 17].

The present article seeks to fill a gap in the study of temporal liminality from a linguistic perspective. **The aim of the research** is to analyze and classify the stylistic devices employed in *The Magus* by John Fowles to actualize temporal liminality. The study employs **methods** of stylistic analysis, intertextual analysis of allusions, and elements of conceptual metaphor analysis.

Results and Discussion. The analysis of the novel's text from the perspective of stylistic devices made it possible to distinguish three principal groups of means employed by the author to create the effect of liminal time: antithesis, metaphor, and allusion. Particularly frequent is the combination of these devices through the integration of metaphor or allusion into the structure of antithesis, as well as the actualization of metaphor on the basis of allusion. In particular, such a polycomponent nature of figurative means in *The Magus* is confirmed in the work of V. Snitsar, who distinguishes in this regard a polysemantic allusive metaphor and a symbolic-hermeneutic metaphor [5, p. 109].

One of the means of constructing liminal temporality is the combination of antithesis and metaphor:

"I rejected my own age yet could not sink back into an older" [7, p. 47].

At the syntactic level, the antithetical structure is explicated by the conjunction *yet*, whereas at the semantic level it is realized through the opposition *my own age – an older*. However, in this case the issue is not merely one of contrast, but of the impossibility of transition between these temporal poles: the subject simultaneously distances himself from his own time and proves incapable of integrating into another. Thus, he becomes localized within an intermediate, transitive zone – a state of temporal uncertainty in which the previous identity has already been destabilized, while the new one has not yet acquired definiteness.

The liminal effect is intensified through the disruption of habitual temporal vectors manifested in

the construction *could not sink back* (into an older). The combination of the directional semantics of *back* with the form *an older*, which indicates a later stage of the life cycle, produces a paradoxical model of temporality: here movement "backward" is conceptually associated not with the past but with the future. As a result, an inversion of temporal orientations emerges together with the destruction of linear temporal sequence.

In addition to the complex antithetical structure that generates temporal ambivalence, liminality in the fragment is actualized through the interaction of two conceptual metaphors. First, the adverb *back* implicitly activates the orientational metaphorical model of inverted temporality (BACK AS FUTURE), within which the direction "backward" loses its conventional orientation toward the past. Second, the verb *to sink* indicates an ontological metaphor in which age or a temporal period is conceptualized as an environment capable of "absorbing" the subject. This makes it possible to reconstruct the underlying conceptual schema AGE AS A CONTAINER, which, in turn, correlates with a higher level metaphorical structure TIME AS A CONTAINER.

Such a metaphorical model is directly connected with liminal time, as it presupposes the existence of a boundary between "inside" (within the temporal container) and "outside" the temporal continuum. In a liminal situation, the subject can neither fully "enter" another temporal dimension nor definitively leave the previous one, which determines their existence in a state of intertemporal "thresholdness." It is precisely this impossibility of completed transition that produces the effect of temporal indeterminacy, which constitutes a key feature of liminal time.

Temporal liminality in the novel may be actualized through the interaction of a contextual semantic opposition and allusive references to Ancient Greek mythology, which, in turn, serve as a foundation for the unfolding of metaphorical identification.

"…it was like physically, moment by moment, to have been young and ancient, a Ulysses on his way to meet Circe, a Theseus on his journey to Crete, an Oedipus still searching for his destiny" [7, p. 151–152].

The liminal effect of the "blurring" of time is achieved through the activation of the contextual semantic opposition *young and ancient*, which functions here as the coexistence of polar temporal states within a single subject. Such a superposition of age parameters neutralizes the dichotomous boundary between youth and old age, generating an effect of temporal ambivalence. A further intensification of liminality is ensured by allusions to mythological figures – Ulysses, Theseus, and Oedipus – which, in this context, are metaphorically projected onto the narrator. As a result, mythological and individual-psychological chronotopes overlap, blurring the boundaries between archetypal and actual time and shifting the narrative into a state of temporal indeterminacy.

Another example of the combination of allusion with metaphorical projections as a means of actualizing liminal time is the metaphorization of allusions to works of art.

"*Those Bonnards, their eternal outpouring of a golden happiness, haunted me; they were like windows on a world I had tried to reach all my life, and failed*" [7, p. 377].

The allusive reference to the works of Pierre Bonnard activates a culturally marked artistic chronotope associated with the visualization of harmony, intimacy, and the "golden" fullness of being. However, within the narrative context, this aestheticized world appears as an unattainable reality, almost a transcendent dimension that can never be integrated into the narrator's experience. The allusion to artworks underlies several metaphors in which the paintings are conceptualized simultaneously as streams of light, happiness, a pursuer, and windows onto an unattainable world, thereby foregrounding the boundary ambivalence and indeterminacy of the narrator's perception.

The liminal effect is constructed through the metaphorical reinterpretation of the paintings as "windows" (*windows on a world*), which presupposes both openness and inaccessibility: they provide visual access to another world but do not allow for physical or existential transition into it. Such a metaphor structures a specific threshold situation – the narrator exists on the boundary between the "self" and the "other" world, contemplating the latter yet unable to attain it.

Additional liminalization is provided by the temporal dimension of the fragment. The constructions *eternal outpouring* and *all my life* actualize an extended, almost static duration within which the desired future is constantly deferred and never realized. As a result, a temporal structure of "endless approach without achievement" is formed, where the subject is permanently oriented toward an unattainable goal, remaining in a state of incomplete transition.

Thus, the interaction of allusion and metaphor constructs liminal time as a state between the realized and the possible, in which past experience of failure (*failed*) and a prolonged striving toward another world coexist without achieving completion. This ambivalent indeterminacy between the desired and the attainable constitutes the essence of the liminal chronotope.

The blurring of the temporal boundary between the mythological past and the present in which the narrator resides on the island is also achieved through the integration of allusive names into an everyday, mundane context:

"I had become far too used to hearing not conspicuously brilliant boys called Socrates and Aristotle, and to addressing the ill-favored old woman who did my room out as Aphrodite" [7, p. 64].

In this fragment, the allusive names *Socrates*, *Aristotle,* and *Aphrodite*, traditionally associated with a sacralized mythological or historical-philosophical chronotope, are desacralized through their transfer into the sphere of the everyday, where they denote ordinary, even ironically devalued, characters.

Such contextual transposition creates an effect of overlapping temporal planes: mythological time becomes embedded in modernity as its integral, albeit transformed, component. As a result, a specific temporal ambivalence is formed, in which the boundary between the "high" (archetypal, mythological) and the "low" (mundane, everyday) is blurred and deprived of hierarchical stability.

The ironic effect arising from the discrepancy between the culturally entrenched connotations of the names and the characteristics of their bearers (*not conspicuously brilliant boys, ill-favored old woman*) further intensifies liminality, as it disrupts expected semantic correspondences and introduces a state of cognitive indeterminacy. In this state, the narrator is compelled to simultaneously maintain two mutually exclusive interpretive frameworks – the mythological and the everyday – which produces the effect of temporal indeterminacy.

A particular means of constructing liminality in the novel is the interpenetration of spatial and temporal characteristics, specifically the transformation of spatial "thresholdness" into temporal liminality. This phenomenon is illustrated in the following fragment:

"Boredom, the numbing annual predictability of life, hung over (…) like a cloud. I could not spend my life crossing such a Sahara" [7, p. 7].

At the initial stage, the liminal effect is formed through spatial imagery: the metaphorical representations *hung over like a cloud* and *crossing such a Sahara* create a sense of a stagnant, inert space devoid of dynamism and prospects of escape. However, this spatial characteristic is gradually transformed into a temporal one, as the semes of repetition (*annual predictability*), monotony (*boredom, numbing*), and duration implicitly structure the perception of time as endless and cyclical.

As a result, a shift occurs from the spatial to the temporal dimension: the "crossing of the desert" is interpreted not as physical movement but as the unfolding of existence in time, which loses its linear directionality and acquires features of stagnation. Such time does not move forward but rather "stretches," fixing the subject in a state of prolonged immutability. It is precisely this stagnant duration that generates the effect of temporal liminality – a state of being in-between without the possibility of transition to a qualitatively different stage.

The transition from a geographical image to a psychological state is realized through metaphorical projection, within which the desert as a spatial concept is reconceptualized as an existential one. This allows for the reconstruction of the structural metaphor EXISTENCE IS A DESERT, in which such features as barrenness, monotony, and exhaustion are projected onto the subject's life experience. At the same time, this metaphor correlates with the broader conceptual model LIFE IS A JOURNEY, where movement through space represents the course of life.

Within the liminal dimension, this model undergoes transformation: movement is formally preserved (*crossing*), yet it loses its teleology and directionality, turning into an endless process without goal attainment. Thus, the spatial image of the desert, symbolizing existential desolation, also models a specific type of time – static, cyclical, and devoid of development, which defines its liminal character.

The transformation of spatial liminality into temporal liminality is constructed not only through allusions, metaphors, and antitheses, but also by means of comparison, as exemplified in the fragment:

"*The house was as quiet as death"* [7, p. 94].

In this case, the comparative construction *as quiet as death* actualizes both an emotional effect of eeriness and a specific temporal model. Death is implicitly conceptualized as a state of atemporality in which any movement, change, and duration cease. Consequently, the comparison shifts the space of the house into a mode of temporal suspension: time within it is not merely slowed down but effectively eliminated as a category. Such "frozenness" generates a liminal effect, as the subject finds themselves in an intermediate state between time and its absence, between life as a process and death as its cessation.

In subsequent fragments, this type of temporal liminality is intensified through allusions to the underworld, particularly to Tartarus: "a metaphorical, perhaps even literal, descent into a modern Tartarus" [7, p. 609]; "some Orphean performance that would gain me access to the underworld…" [7, p. 568];

"I had apparently found the entrance to Tartarus" [7, p. 668]; "She seemed as strange to me as if she had come from Tartarus; so cold, so calm (...). Returned from the dead" [7, p. 609].

The allusive introduction of the motif of catabasis (descent into the underworld) transforms the temporal organization of the narrative, since in mythological tradition the underworld functions as a space of non-linear time. It lacks development, and existence within it is characterized by stagnant duration or eternal recurrence. The transposition of this chronotope into a modern narrative produces an effect of temporal dislocation: the subject simultaneously inhabits the "present" and an archaic, atemporal dimension.

Particularly revealing is the combination of allusion with lexemes such as *descent, entrance*, and *returned*, which imply movement and transition, yet lead into a space where movement itself loses its teleological orientation. This gives rise to a paradoxical temporal structure: dynamism is directed toward a state of complete stasis. As a result, a liminal chronotope of "transition without completion" is formed, in which the act of entering the otherworldly dimension does not culminate in a final transformation, fixing the subject on the threshold between life and death, time and atemporality.

Thus, comparison (*as quiet as death*) and allusions to the underworld function as complementary devices that model a specific type of temporal liminality: a state of suspended or eliminated time in which the subject exists within a threshold zone between being and non-being.

Conclusions. The analysis conducted in this study has made it possible to identify the role of stylistic devices in the actualization of liminal temporality. It has been established that a key role in the construction of such liminality is played by mythological allusions to Ancient Greek figures, metaphorically identified with the narrator, which blur the boundaries between archetypal and actual time, shifting the protagonist's psychonarrative into a state of temporal indeterminacy. The effect of temporal ambivalence is also ensured through the integration of allusive names referring to mythological or historical-philosophical chronotopes into an everyday context, which disrupts expected semantic correspondences for both narrator and reader and introduces a state of cognitive indeterminacy.

The inversion of temporal reference points, accompanied by the breakdown of linear temporal sequence, is realized through the integration of antithesis, actualizing the opposition between temporal poles and the impossibility of transition between them, with metaphor TIME / AGE AS A CONTAINER. Through the ontological metaphor, time is conceptualized as a closed space from which the subject cannot "exit" into another temporal dimension, which underpins the state of intertemporal "thresholdness." The transformation of spatial liminality into temporal liminality is ensured by the structural metaphor EXISTENCE IS A DESERT, through which a specific type of liminal time, cyclical and "suspended", is modeled.

The shift from spatial to temporal liminality – into a space of non-linear time – is constructed through the allusive introduction of the motif of death and *catabasis* (descent into the underworld).

The ambivalent indeterminacy between the desired and the attainable, as a defining feature of the liminal chronotope, is shaped by allusions to works of art, which serve as the basis for a set of metaphors conceptualizing the same artistic object in ambivalent and boundary-oriented terms.

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Кравченко Н. К., Сніцар В. П. СТИЛІСТИЧНІ ЗАСОБИ КОНСТРУЮВАННЯ ЛІМІНАЛЬНОГО ЧАСУ В РОМАНІ «МАГ» ДЖОНА ФАУЛЗА

У статті розглянуто проблему темпоральної лімінальності як одного з найменш досліджених аспектів у межах лінгвістичного вивчення лімінальності. Попри значну увагу до цього феномена в літературознавстві та культурології, мовні засоби репрезентації нелінійного, амбівалентного та порогового часу залишаються невивченими, що зумовлює актуальність цього дослідження. Об'єктом дослідження є темпоральна лімінальність у романі «Маг» Джона Фаулза; предметом – стилістичні засоби її актуалізації. Метою роботи є виявлення, аналіз і класифікація цих засобів. У дослідженні застосовано методи стилістичного аналізу, інтертекстуального аналізу алюзій та елементи аналізу концептуальних метафор, що дозволило комплексно описати механізми формування лімінальної темпоральності.

У результаті дослідження встановлено, що темпоральна лімінальність конструюється через систему взаємопов'язаних стилістичних прийомів. Визначну роль відіграють міфологічні алюзії на персонажі давньогрецької міфології, що ототожнюються з наратором, розмиваючи межу між архетипним і фактичним часом, і переміщуючи наратив у стан часової невизначеності. Ефект часової амбівалентності посилюється інтеграцією алюзивних імен, пов'язаних з міфологічним та філософським хронотопом, у повсякденні контексти, що порушує очікувані семантичні відповідності як для наратора, так і для читача, породжуючи когнітивний дисонанс. Інверсія часових зав'язків з порушенням лінійної темпоральності реалізуються через прийом антитези та концептуальну метафору ЧАС / ВІК ЯК КОНТЕЙНЕР, яка моделює час як замкнутий простір, а також метафору ІСНУВАННЯ – ЦЕ ПУСТЕЛЯ, що сприяє репрезентації циклічної та «підвішеної» темпоральності. Інверсія часових орієнтацій із руйнуванням лінійної часової послідовності виникає також через парадоксальну структуру, що поєднує семантику спрямованості «назад» з одиницями, що вказують на пізніший етап життєвого циклу, створюючи парадоксальну темпоральність, де рух «назад» концептуально асоціюється з майбутнім. Перехід від просторової до часової лімінальності забезпечується через алюзії на міфологему катабазиса, актуалізуючи простір «позачасового» часу.

Наукова новизна полягає в системному лінгвістичному описі темпоральної лімінальності та виокремленні її стилістичних маркерів. Перспективи подальших досліджень вбачаються у застосуванні запропонованої методики до ширшого корпусу текстів і вивченні взаємодії різних типів лімінальності.

Ключові слова: *темпоральна лімінальність, стилістичні засоби, концептуальна метафора, алюзія, наратив, Джон Фаулз.*

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