

TIBOR ŽILKA
Nitra

POSTMODERN NARRATIVE TEXT

In the framework of the Central European literature there is evidence of two types of postmodernism.

1. the existential type represented in Slovak literature by the works of D. Tatarka, R. Sloboda, J. Johanides, D. Mitana, D. Dušek and even more so by B. Hrabal and M. Kundera in Czech literature;

2. the palimpsestic type based on inter-textual linking, i.e. on inter-textuality; this type is dominant in works of P. Vilikovsky, L. Grendel, M. Bütora, and, partly, in P. Pištánek in his prose work *Skazky o Vladovi* (1995; *Tales about Vlado*).

Existential Prose and its Genesis

Jean Paul Sartre (1905-1980), the French philosopher and writer uses in his study *Existentialism* an example from a war to demonstrate how difficult it is to make a decision under certain particular circumstances. A man in this situation is, according to Sartre, left on his own. During the war Sartre was visited by one of his students who wanted Sartre's advice: the student's father, who left his wife and collaborated with the Germans; the student's brother was killed by the Germans and he wanted to take revenge. The student stayed with his mother who was depressed by the death of her older son and her husband's collaboration and had only him to rely on. Under these circumstances the student had to decide whether to go to England to join the resistance movement within the Free French Army, that is whether to leave his mother or to stay and support her. He knew that his mother lived only for him and his departure and eventual death would bring her to despair. He could decide whether to help his mother or the collective (nation), although the

latter option was uncertain, doubtful (he could be taken into captivity or killed). Sartre asserts that, *a priori*, one cannot make decision in this situation. Compassion helped him to decide: he stayed! Filial love is a value and this value was the key to the internal dilemma (Sartre, 1991, p. 47-49).

The most eminent philosopher of existentialism is, however, Martin Heidegger. He was the first to grasp the changes in the thinking of people of the 20th century. Our thinking moves from epistemology more towards ontology, from *cogito* (I think) to the essence of being, i.e., towards *sum* (I am). He explains this move of thinking theoretically, too (Heidegger, 1996, p. 63).

J. P. Sartre, drawing on Heidegger's analysis of existence, stresses choices from the possibilities in certain existential (pressing) situations. And existential situations are an especially rewarding theme also for authors – representatives of existential prose.

The existential type of prose (literature) focuses mainly on the protraction of situation of crisis. J. P. Sartre, as a writer, transformed his philosophical ideas into his literary work when describing the last hours of four prisoners sentenced to death in a cell in the presence of a Belgian doctor whose task was to observe them. A short story, *Le Mur* (1939; *The Wall*), draws its topic from Spain where four captured militiamen are to be executed. Each of them goes through his despair and fear differently expressed by the author through Ich-Erzählung.

In his prose J. P. Sartre often uses a description of external signs through which he points out the internal state of his characters. This type of narration is also called the camera-eye technique as if visual perceptions became a carrier of essential information and expressed important feelings of the characters. In the short story *The Wall* the urinating of Tom, seen and evaluated by Pablo (the narrator), can be considered as an external sign. Naturally the urinating can be unambiguously considered as a sign of fear and despair, even though Tom struggles with the feeling by unceasing talking, continuous chattering.

It seems that there is a conflict between what Tom says and Tom's internal state. Outwardly he denies his fear and struggles with it. However, he feels it. His urinating represents the inward process; words, verbal utterances are the language masks to suppress fear. He says the reverse of what he thinks. He deceives himself and his environment (the Belgian doctor and three other sentenced prisoners) to come to terms with imminent death. It is known that J. P. Sartre, as well as Heidegger, is a representative of atheistic philosophy within existentialism. There-

fore, death is projected as nothingness, as a total termination of human's life. There is no room for consolation, the narrator himself does not regret anyone. Alienation is present in the work – the inmates are repugnant, he hates them, he does not pity them. Neither the youngster Juan nor Tom is sympathetic to the narrator. The alienation grows in crisis, brings characters to the brink of despair. This type of prose utterly negates the Three Divine Virtues: love, hope, and belief. If love is absent, there is no understanding for the others because the cultivation of soul and the self is missing. Where hope is absent, there remains only nothingness and emptiness. The narrator convinces us of that by means of his view of the inmates. The convicts do not have a fixed point from which everything would seem to be different due to lack of belief. Essentially the convicts are shipwrecks who became a research object for the doctor.

From the perspective of the development of prose, it is essential that the angle of view changes: the characters are ambiguous, they provide many interpretations. The carriers of meaning are things and gestures. The external signs express the internal state better than long commentaries, explanations, and sentimental characterization. The external signs projected in words and explanations form only a mask: under the influence of film art it is possible to form a true reality from the visual perceptions. Sartre's text is a simple example of this phenomenon; excellent and more convincing examples of this type are the prose works of A. Camus, mainly *L' étranger* (1942; *The Outsider*) and *La peste* (1947; *The Plague*). This type of existential prose creates an individual poetics which becomes a starting block for the so-called "nouveau roman" represented mainly by French authors (A. Robbe-Grillet, M. Butor, N. Sarraute, S. Becket, C. Simon).

The existential form of postmodernism developed mainly in the Central and Eastern European region where societal absurdity reached such a degree that the themes readily presented themselves to be worked on. From this point of view it would seem to be noteworthy to extrapolate an idea of the Czech writer Milan Kundera (now a French citizen), who used Jewish proverbs: Man is thinking, God is laughing (*Der Mensch denkt, Gott lacht*). Within this conception, the political reality is either negated or it is re-evaluated from the perspective of so called radical irony and parody. The age of postmodernism rejects or re-evaluates all the great ideas of salvation and Messianism.

Kundera's most literary work from the time of his home-residence is the novel *Žert* (1965; *The Joke*, 1984), and published for the first time in

Prague, in 1967. A critique (by Zdeněk Kožmín) described, at the time, the piece as an "existentialist work" and as a novel about "human existence." The said critic noted that: *Individual actors of the novel are representing more than just types of their own period: they are, at the same time, a distinctive sign of certain existential states of life, for there are possibilities of how one can live face to face with the threat and absurdity of reality. The always successful ideologist, Zemánek, is fully exposed only at this existentialist level of the prose and convicted accordingly* (Kožmín 1991, pp. 315–316). Kundera's novel is based on a proposition and an analysis of existentialist questions within the totalitarian regime and is, therefore, representing the existential form of prose.

A cleaner form of existentialist prose-type is represented by the story of *Eduard and the God* (1969), in *Směšné lásky* (1991; *Funny Love-stories*). A young teacher accused of religiosity is resolving his existential problem through a love affair with a lady school principal under rather unusually grotesque and even absurd circumstances. Just prior to a love-making act the lady school principal is forced to kneel down while lifting her hands into a praying position. "Pray so that the God will forgive us", hissed Eduard at the school principal. The novice-pedagogue is existentially saving himself through a tasteless act of erotic adventure.

M. Kundera defines also theoretically the move of topics of literary work itself. The key term of Kundera is the existential situation because under special circumstances his characters become objects of the story. The characters lose their identity and also the possibility to choose freely under dictatorship.

The tendency to incline towards existentialist literature began, under the typically Slovak conditions, in the 60's, with the prose work of J. Johanides' and R. Sloboda. J. Johanides' début was a collection of stories entitled *Súkromie* (1963; *Privacy*) and considered to be a beginning of literature (prose) of this kind. Privacy replaced an empty socialist pathos; where there is an increase in concentration on the individual's life there an existentialist character of a literary work will, as if by law, come forward. The author remained faithful to these principles until today; his preference for a "balladical" literary form is a testimony to the fact. Already two novels have in their title the "ballad" as a genre description [*Balada o vkladnej knižke* (1979; *The Ballad about a Deposit Book*), *Najsmutnejšia oravská balada* (1988; *The Saddest Orava Ballad*)].

R. Sloboda's début was his novel *Narcis* (1965; *Narcissus*), and it is considered to be one of the most prominent post-war Slovak prose works. He construed an anti-hero type and, in the novel itself, demonstrated a disintegration of human self-identity but, at the same time, never losing sight of ever-changing life perspectives. That kind of aesthetic level was not reached until after his novel *Rozum* (1982; *Reason*) and his subsequent plays written just prior to his tragic suicide, in 1995 [*Armagedon na Grbe* (1995; *Armageddon on Grb*] Macocha [1995; *A Stepmother*]).

Out of the Slovak classics traversing from modernism to postmodernism the furthest would seem to be Dominik Tatarka. He, too, represents existentialist form with his trilogy written during his dissident period and titled *Písačky* (1984; *Scribblings*). The entire volume has an autobiographical character not omitting passages about friends and past friends (M. Kundera, V. Mináč). Fictional and non-fictional elements overlap in Tatarka; lyric parts and presentation of facts as seen by the author alternate. Bartolomej Slzička (the author's alter ego) is pictured as a lover of woman's beauty. The erotic is, therefore, an organic part of the theme. Moreover, the author's description of erotic scenes borders on bad taste. This part of artistic creativity, too, belongs to the sphere of postmodernism and it has its pendant in American literature. John Irving's novel *The World According to Garp* can serve as an example. The biting off of Michael's penis by Helen during oral intercourse can be found shocking by some people, but here it has rather a function of the grotesque (Pokrivčáková, 1996, pp. 120-121). D. Tatarka remains on the grounds of existential prose even in segments dominated by bad taste. This type of literature is represented by *Navrávačky* (1988; *Tattle*), formed as recordings of the author's chattering.

The existential type of postmodernistic prose often uses non-literary genres: notebooks, letters, memoirs, feuilletons, etc. It is not the pure literature of a fictional origin. Storytelling gives way to the individual objectives of the author. Documentary is generally equal to fiction, a lyrical segment can be followed by quotations from a newspaper or a piece of scientific research that are, without providing the source, absorbed into the overall structure of the literary work. A story can be put together artificially piece by piece as it was done by Erika Podlipná who was one of the receivers of Tatarka's letters. Erika Podlipná created a special book from Tatarka's letters called *Koláž* (*Pocťa Dominikovi Tatarkovi*) (1993; *Collage*); the main characters of this piece are Bartolomej Slzička (Dominik Tatarka) and Terencia (Erika Podlipná).

In addition to facts, Tatarka's letters contain dialogues, tropes and figures, incorporate humor, and have love connotations.

D. Tatarka went through many hardships in the seventies, the outset of his career as a writer, due to the autobiographical character of his literary works. His 'friends' turned him down, few people helped him, and even his financial situation was not satisfactory. Tatarka's books were published illegally (mostly in Prague with assistance from L. Vaculík). Therefore, the author inclined towards existential prose which strengthened existentialism as a philosophical current. It is said that authenticity is set in motion by a crisis. The philosophy of existentialism grew from the catastrophe of the last war; despair emanating from the loss of hope was at its roots. Hope was lost, once again, after the 1968 conquest of the country (Czechoslovakia) by foreign armies as many people were fired from their jobs and forced to the periphery of social life. D. Tatarka was one of those people. In the crisis, he decided to carry on his writing, to overcome daily obstacles through work.

Younger authors joined in the train of existentialism in the 70's and out of them D. Mitana traveled furthest, especially in his novel *Patagónia* (1972; *Patagony*) and in his collections of short stories *Psie dni* (1970; *The Days of the Dog*) and *Nočné správy* (1976; *Night News*). Alienation, nothingness, internal emptiness are characteristic signs of his short story *Dohady* (*Guesses*) in which he describes the funeral of his grandmother, the main character of the short story.

The grandmother's death does not touch existentially on any participants of the funeral - they move easily to different spheres of thinking, if there is an opportunity. The author conceals this truth at the very beginning of the text. The replicas, some excerpts from the dialogues only confirm the author's proposition. Moreover, the replicas prove that the contemporary literary text can absorb different linguistic and stylistic elements from various aspects of life to create an aesthetic impression. The genres of the spoken style are becoming an integral part of the artistic text which is ceasing to exist *ad hoc* and is opening up to other texts of both literary and non-literary substance.

The existential prose-type is also represented by P. Pištánek's *Rivers of Babylon* (1991), placed thematically in a post-1989 landscape. Although previous examples of the so-called radical irony do not reach the level of Milan Kundera's work despite the fact that undoubtedly, in some of the texts the flash-backs of these aesthetic categories do occur as a part of the literary norm (*Balada o vkladnej knižke* or the drama *Macocha*), P. Pištánek seasons his disgust with his own radicalized

ironic stand against the present-day privatization as well as against the readjustment to new circumstances by former agents of the State security apparatus (the ŠTB). Finally, the role of the main actor is also educational, based on intrusiveness, illiteracy, rudeness and rusticity. Existentially, a type of man possessing a substandard vocabulary and lacking drawing-room manners continue to be better-off which, in itself, is a source of irony and even cynicism.

The Palimpsestic Prose and its Genesis

The palimpsestic type of prose relates to the notion of inter-textuality, and the relationships between the texts and transition of topics, characters, motives, entire paragraphs or smaller parts from one literary work into another. Currently the notion of inter-textuality is linked to a publication *Le text du roman* (1976) by Julia Kristeva; according to the author, each text is a permutation of former literary works – many literary and non-literary elements of other texts intermingle to form a new one. However, we can say nothing new under the sun! Indeed, M. M. Bakhtin considered a novel as a dialogue; the notion of dialogue is understood as a plethora of different genres, passages, replicas that in the framework of the theme structure create a chain of contradictions. M. M. Bakhtin asserts that from the chaos of languages and dialects arises a compact and harmonic artistic system. Therefore, the author demands creation of so-called sociological stylistics whose role would be to investigate a character and the social competence of individual statements in an artistic text. Bakhtin's conception originates from an informal (spoken) style, from its various genres. The question of what he means by the genres is prominent. He means, for example, short daily greetings, excuses, congratulations, various requests, inquiries on someone's health, inquiries about a job, different parlor debates and common, social, aesthetic and other topics, intimate family, friendly and other forms of social interaction. The speech genres are, however, unstable, modifiable and changeable. Not everybody can use them offhand in daily life (Bakhtin, 1988 pp. 287-290).

M. M. Bakhtin, by revealing the aspect of dialogue of the novel, turned attention away from the existence of text and its structure itself – towards daily communication, the genres of colloquial style. He did not remain, however, at the colloquial level, at the level of conveying oral forms of speech into an artistic text. M. M. Bakhtin found in the English

humorist novel a parodistic reproduction of almost all levels of colloquial as well as written formal language – parody of parliamentary speech, florid legal address, protocol, style of journalist reportage, slandering, gossiping, language of a fastidious scholar, the high biblical style and literary epos, the style of hypocritical moralizing. Different genres are needed for the composition of a novel. They coexist and create a dialogue, therefore, it is necessary to utilize other styles. The novel would be tedious without them, it would not have an apt influence on the reader. While Bachtin stresses the dialogue aspect, Kristeva discovers intertextuality as the key term.

It shows that there are two levels and contexts of intertextuality; incontestably, there are two types of intertextuality and even two independent extents of meaning. 1. Adaptive linking of artistic texts; the utilization of mythological and biblical topics can serve as an example [Herodes, Herodias and Salome in Flaubert, Hviezdoslav, O. Wilde and R. Strauss; *Josef und seine Brüder* (1933–43; *Joseph and his Brothers*) from the Old Testament in Thomas Mann; *Ulysses* of Joyce as a reference to Homer's epos]. 2. Various forms of citations (including quasi citations) or allusions in the framework of text as references to other texts.

There are several meanings of the word adaptation. In biology it refers to the adjustment of organisms, animals and plants, to new natural conditions. In sociology it refers to the adjustment of individuals and social groups to new social conditions. In the latter case it mainly pertains to the interactive acquisition of social norms by the individuals of the society.

In art, the notion of adaptation means a rearrangement or a creative transcription of the literary work – into a play, film, radio or a TV piece. Hečko's novel *Červené víno* (1948; *Red Wine*) was transcribed into a TV film, Ballek's novel *Pomocník* (1977; *The Helper*) was translated into a film and a play, his sequence of stories *Južná pošta* (1974; *The Southern Post*) was made into a film, Milo Urban's story *Za vyšším mlynom*, (1926; *Behind the Upper Mill*) was a basis for Suchon's opera *Krútnava* (1926; *Whirlpool*) (Hess – Lüttich 1991, pp. 1–2).

Adaptation requires a creative approach to the original. There is a need for respecting the specifics of the new art (in drama, the conflict must come to a head and the descriptive parts must be dampened and even eliminated). Adaptation is realized through the following re-arrangements: 1. elimination of certain parts or elements – a character or a part of the story); 2. addition (expanding of the new piece of certain

passages, parts, and characters; 3. contamination (several texts are amalgamated into a new one). Elimination dynamizes the story and can change the whole concept of the work. By addition the author usually undertakes creative changes in the story due to the expansion of particular parts of the work. In an Argentinian film of *The Plague* by Luis Puenza, which is an adaptation of the novel of the same name by A. Camus, the journalist Rambert and chronicler Tarrou fuse into a female journalist.

In modernism and especially in postmodernism, adaptation (adaptive linking) became an integral part of the artistic process. If the notion of adaptation is expanded by adaptive linking then the sphere of these specific problems includes also linking of one text into another (the one which originated before). In this way the novel of *Joseph and his Brothers* by Thomas Mann can be explained as a work stemming from the Old Testament which includes this story. *Ulysses* (1924) by Joyce freely draws on Homer's *Odyssey*, but in essence it rewrites it, it gives the story a completely new meaning. In this context we have to work with two notions: pre-text and post-text. Pre-text is the original text, the original model, and post-text is the end text, linked to the pre-text. The original text is sometimes called the architext – an architext for the story of Salome is the Bible. From this perspective, Homer's epos is a pre-text for Joyce's *Ulysses*. Joyce's novel is a controversial adaptation of the pre-text because it turns its essence (a noble content) upside down, parodizes it, takes an ironic approach towards it. Bloom in the position of a new Odysseus is not a noble man but an ordinary representative of Irish (Dublin) society, his wife as a modern Penelope is not a prototype of loyalty as her famous predecessor of the epos because she has a lover and her thinking is in complete opposition to her prototype, too. Joyce's work (post-text) therefore refers to the ancient work but at the same time denies its thematic specifics, the properties of Homer's work. *Ulysses* is a negation of aesthetic and artistic qualities, and the value system of the original text. However, if the pretext had not been identified as a basis, source for the creation of the new text, the parody of the author with all its components and meanings might not have been understood.

Joseph and his Brothers by Thomas Mann is of a different type. The author utilizes the story from the first book of the Old Testament. The mythical character of the story remains but the author develops the biblical characters and personifies them. The main character is a representative of spiritual aristocratism, which is a product of F. Nietzsche.

An individuality against the masses, the chosen as an outcast, this is the whole picture of Joseph's character. As an exceptional and a popular man, Joseph provokes his brothers, and even becomes to be hated by them. His eccentricity and superiority make his brothers hate him. They want to kill him. In the end they sell Joseph as a slave to Egypt. The author states, using artistically expressive language, that the weak, average, suppressed, and cowards commit evil; the reign of evil is the strongest there. The lowest man will see the reign of evil everywhere – even his own brother can become an enemy of his because his brother is intellectually superior. Joseph is a representative of superman in the sense of Nietzsche's philosophy; this is the philosophy of modernism. Nietzsche contemplates that man is a monster and superman. Joseph is a superman as compared with his brothers who represent an average. And when Joseph's brothers consider to murder him, they become monsters.

The difference between literary modernism and postmodernism is visible here. While modernism was based on the principle of creative links between post-text and pre-text, postmodernism is based on deconstruction of pre-text by post-text. Pre-text is a starting point, an original model serving as a foundation for deconstruction. J. Gennett uses the term hypotext instead of pre-text while post-text is a result of transformation in his understanding by hypertext. (Calinescu 1997, pp. 243 – 244).

Existential prose is a precursor for the formation of postmodernism. It originates in the transition period, i.e. in times of neoavantgarde after the heroic topics of war have dried up. The war, too, is depicted in existential prose [for example the works of Leopold Lahola or his stories from the book *Posledná vec* (1968; *The Last Thing*) as well as his drama] but from the perspective of an individual tragedy, from the aspect of a personal engagement in critical situations. A typical example of postmodernism is, however, palimpsestic prose.

This kind of literature is considered to be the original model for Cervantes' *Don Quixote* and its transcription by one of the founders of postmodernism – Jorge Luis Borges. Borges's transcription can be found in a short prose *Pierre Menard, the Author of Quixote*. While literary modernism rarely used historical topics, today, there is a greater interest in citations, allusions, incorporated in the text in the form of palimpsest. Palimpsest means that the creation of the text is intentionally based on other texts and that the citations and quasi citations are directly included into the new text without an apparent reference to the pre-text.

The creative process was re-focused on the relationship TEXT(1) - TEXT(2). It is also related to the fact that art, instead of forecasting and imagining an uncertain future, turned its attention to the past, it draws more from literary tradition than from reality. Imitation is not a derogatory term anymore. It is almost required as a part of literary (artistic) norms. But, if a known segment, text passage is inserted into the new context, the meaning changes, the parody takes over and so called radical irony becomes a dominant element (aesthetic, stylistic). Today's texts are infused with the spirit of humour as if everything was re-evaluated through the prism of ironic perspective. Therefore, too, Cervantes is the source, the real model for the works; his stand gives many impulses for contemporary authors of postmodernism.

It was exactly J. L. Borges who realized that the reproduction transferred into a new environment can have an unusual artistic value even if there is a significant time span from the creation of pre-text. A new meaning can be achieved by copying the pre-text in a palimpsestic way, i.e. the pre-text can be transferred into a new meaning. The literary work becomes, under the influence of Borges's invention, a kind of cyclical iteration of text passages (segments), while the same sense and meaning is not the same.

In general, it can be said that the text exists only in relationship with other texts, it is tied epistemologically and gnozeologically to other existing pre-text or pre-texts. While until recently this relationship was apparent (remember Joyce or Thomas Mann), now citations and allusions become an integral part of post-text; it is hard to determine the source of some of the allusions. The literary (artistic) norm has changed: priority of production was replaced with priority of reproduction. The aura of uniqueness ceases to be the requirement of the artistic work because the focus switches to mass production, mass existence of the same segment, element, phenomenon; the originality is manifested by how the elements are put into the new context. The focus changes from writing to re-writing. In this instance we can talk about the palimpsestic form of new artistic works because there are many segments, passages, known from other works that have to be determined, are mixed in their structure. But it is not a necessary prerequisite for the reception; the experience can exist without the identification of the palimpsestic pretext. A new text can serve as a commentary on the previous text, it can be tied to the previous text, to re-evaluate or to change it as well as to add to it. Many renowned works - in the spirit of radical irony - have a tendency first of all to take away the aura of

heroism, mystique, and mythological aspects of the great men of the national and the world history (Per Olov, Eugene Ionesco, Karol Horák, Milan Lasica and Július Satinský, L'ubomír Feldek, Stanislav Štepka).

In contemporary works of postmodernism whole passages are taken from texts of other authors. As a matter of fact, it does not have to be a literal reproduction of foreign thoughts, sentences or segments, as sometimes it is rather an imitation, quasi citation or just an allusion. The novel *Lolita* (1955) by the author of Russian origin, émigré Vladimir Nabokov, excels in the adaptation of segments (motifs, characters, conflicts). In Nabokov there are no literal citations but rather allusions to other texts. The researcher Carl R. Proffer made a list of literary texts to which Nabokov refers. In the novel there are allusions to works of these authors:

Andersen, Aristophanes, Baudelaire, William Blake, Robert Browning, Lewis Carroll, Catullus, Cervantes, Chateaubriand, Agatha Christie, Cocteau, Coleridge, Chekhov, Dante, Dostoevsky, Flaubert, Galsworthy, Gide, Goethe, Gogol, Goldoni, Victor Hugo, Ibsen, Joyce, Keats, Kipling, Maeterlinck, Christopher Marlowe, Herman Melville, Merimee, Milne, Ovid, Petrarch, Poe, Proust, Pushkin, Rimbaud, Ronsard, Rostand, Rousseau, de Sade, Walter Scott, Shakespeare, Shaw, Stevensen, Swinburne, Sophocles, Turgenev, Virgil, Verlaine.

There are 50 names together (Békés 1987, p. 346). The most allusions are to E. A. Poe. The main character of the novel Humbert Humbert recalls his first love whose name was Annabel Leigh, at the French Riviera. But the last finished poem of E. A. Poe is called Annabel Lee. Their first names are the same and they both die young. There is a parallel relationship between *Lolita* and Carmen of Bizet's opera. When Humbert loses the love of Lolita, he tries to regain her affection - then he quotes several times from the literary pre-text (P. Mérimée: *Carmen*) of the famous opera. But *Lolita*, as her predecessor Carmen, holds out. Lastly, Humbert Humbert murders out of jealousy like the jealous hero José of the opera. However, it has to be said that Nabokov moved the mentioned motifs (and characters) into a completely different position because jealousy is a parody of jealousy here, everything is as if upside down here. The author created a strange world, dominated by perversity and irrationality, around the main character. The educated reader easily discerns the aim of Nabokov behind the erotic relationship of the professor and the teenage girl - to deride Freud's psychoanalysis and mainly the so-called Oedipus complex. We know that paneroticism, i.e. the whole theory is based on people's

sexuality, dominates in Freud. Nabokov's skepticism with the theory was developed in the novel. Its second meaning is the derision of the theory, a parody. The novel *Lolita* is the first successful attempt of "pla(y)giarism"; this playfulness is based on the adaptation of citations and also characters, motifs, ideas from other texts with an intention not just to use them but also to make fun of them, to make a parody, to give them an ironic content.

The conclusion briefly summarizes our reflections on inter-textuality and palimpsestic prose (literature). It seems this methodology existed in the previous stages of literary development also, indeed, it was, except for Cervantes, applied in the works of other authors too. A good example is Henry Fielding who intentionally inserted citations from other texts into his work *Tom Jones*. In contemporary literature (also in art), the palimpsestic method has become a legal, even required, method for construction of valuable literary (artistic) text complying with the contemporary artistic norm. It does not mean, however, that a good, artistic text of aesthetically high quality is to be excluded if it lacks citations or allusions.

Translated by S. Pokričáková

References

- Bachtin, Michail Michailovič. *Estetika slovesnej tvorby*. Bratislava: Tatran, 1988.
- Békés, Pál: *Utószó*. In Nabokov, Vladimir: *Lolita*. Budapest: Európa Könyvkiadó, 1987, pp. 335-350.
- Calinescu, Matei: *Rewriting*. In Berthens, Hans - Fokkema, Douwe (eds.): *International Postmodernism. Theory and Literary Practice*. Amsterdam-Philadelphia: John Benjamins Company, 1997, pp. 243-248.
- Heidegger, Martin: *Bytí a čas. (Sein und Zeit.)* Praha: Oikymenh, 1996.
- Hess-Lüttich, Ernest W. B.: *Literature and other Media*. Kodikas / Code. Vol. 14, No. 1-2, 1991, pp. 1-7.
- Kožmín, Zdeněk: *Román lidské existence*. In Kundera Milan: *Žert. (The Joke.)* Brno: Atlantis, 1991, pp. 315-318.
- Pokrivčáková, Silvia: *Grotesknosť v súčasnom postmodernom románe*. In Žilka, Tibor (edit.): *Textové podoby postmoderny. Vizuálna poézia, próza, dráma*. Nitra: Vysoká škola pedagogická v Nitre, 1996, pp. 113-130.
- Sartre, Jean Paul: *Existencializmus*. Budapest: Studio, 1991.

NARRACJA POSTMODERNISTYCZNA

(Streszczenie)

Autor rozróżnia dwa typy postmodernizmu literackiego we współczesnej prozie: egzystencjalny i palimpsestowy, zwany również intertekstualnym. Postmodernistyczna proza egzystencjalna wywodzi się, zdaniem autora, z twórczości literackiej Sartre'a i filozofii Heideggera. Dlatego podstawowym obiektem jej zainteresowania są zazwyczaj ludzie postawieni w sytuacji kryzysowej, w której dokonać muszą trudnych wyborów moralnych. Pośród słowackich i czeskich pisarzy, uprawiających ten typ literatury, autor wymienia m.in. D. Tatarkę, R. Slobodę, J. Johanidesa, D. Mitana, B. Hrabala i Milana Kunderę.

Autor odrzuca powszechnie przyjęty pogląd, jakoby teoretyczne podwaliny literatury intertekstualnej położyła Julia Kristeva, i przyznaje w tej kwestii pierwszeństwo Bachtinowi. Wśród pisarzy zachodnich jako intertekstualistów autor wyróżnia Nabokova i Borgesa, a wśród Czechów i Słowaków – P. Vilikovsky'ego, L. Grendela i M. Butorę. Przegląd przykładów prozy intertekstualnej połączony jest ze zbadaniem rozmaitych sposobów wykorzystywania intertekstualności we współczesnej prozie postmodernistycznej.