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**POSSIBLE WORLDS — TEXT WORLDS —  
DISCOURSE WORLDS AND THE SEMIOSPHERE**

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**Abstract**

This article analyses the notion of *possible world*, which was developed in American analytical philosophy and modal logic in the 1960s and 1970s (Kripke, Hintikka, Lewis, Rescher) but was soon adapted to the needs of literary linguistics. The adaptation, due to L. Doležel, N. E. Enkvist and U. Eco, among others, led to the emergence of the concept of *text world*, a much richer (contextualized) world-model. The cognitive turn in textual studies (Werth, Stockwel, Gavins) expanded the notion of text world into the most comprehensive formation called *discourse world*, which brings into focus the readers' dependence on their actuality in the process of reconstructing a text world.

The author of this article argues that text/discourse worlds possess a dialogical nature and thus can be studied within the framework of *game-theory*. Accordingly, she postulates a typology of textual games (semantic games of the author, pragmatic games of the reader, games of the text itself, games of critics, games of translators) in order to show how the creation and re-creation of text/discourse worlds is a gamesome enterprise. Her second claim is that text/discourse worlds as semiotic construals are immersed in the *semiosphere* as the all-encompassing *space of culture*. In this way she tries to bridge the gap between the Western studies on possible/text/discourse worlds and the semiotic model of Yu. M. Lotman and B. Uspensky.

**Keywords**

Possible worlds, text worlds, discourse worlds, contextualization, game-theory, semiosphere.

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### Introduction

The author's aim is to analyse in some detail the triad of constructs applied in literary semantics, cognitive poetics and, partly, literary criticism. These are: 1) *possible worlds* of the logically oriented *possible-worlds semantics*, developed in the 1960s and 1970s by the American school of logicians, analytical philosophers and philosophers of language, most prominently by Saul Kripke (1963/1971, 1972) [45, 46], Jaakko Hintikka (1969, 1989) [38, 39], David Lewis (1972, 1979) [48, 49], and Nicholas Rescher (1975) [56]; 2) *text worlds* (called also, in a limiting way, *fictional worlds*) of literary semantics and theory of literature (cf. *represented worlds* in the phenomenological theory of the literary work of art by Roman Ingarden 1931/1973 [41]), described from the linguistic and semiotic perspective by, among others, Lubomír Doležel (1989) [27], Nils Erik Enkvist (1989) [30], Umberto Eco (1990) [29], Robert-Alain de Beaugrande and Wolfgang U. Dressler (1990) [3], as well as Paul Werth (1999) [66] in the cognitive framework; and finally, 3) *discourse worlds* postulated by Werth (1999) [66], expanded by Peter Stockwell (2002) [63] and Joanna Gavins (2007) [34] within the model of cognitive poetics called Text-World Theory, and described as the most mature narratological and literary application of *possible-worlds theory*.<sup>1</sup>

The fact that references to Doležel's and Enkvist's opinions will not be infrequent in our discussion is a proof that their articles, written in the late 1980s, have preserved their timeliness and perspicacity of observations. No less important is Eco's contribution to the understanding of the concept of *possible world* in literary, semiotic and cultural studies.

Since the analysis below will make recourse to two key notions, that of *text* and *discourse*, for the sake of our exposition I will roughly follow Enkvist (1989) [30] and assume that a *text* is a structural, purely linguistic concept (with a realization in either the written or the spoken medium), whereas a *discourse* is a text enriched with a specific context. In this sense, discourse emerges as a mixed semantico-pragmatic notion, which apart from the core structure (text) possesses additionally a strong functional facet (context). This definition of *discourse*, in turn, is heavily dependent on the notion of *context*, a fashionable catchword in much of pragmalinguistic and culture studies today.

The term *context*, often misused or inconsistently applied in the literature of the subject, covers different aspects of a very complex phenomenon. For the needs of my analysis we have to distinguish at least the following types of context:

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<sup>1</sup> De Beaugrande and Dressler (1990) [3, ch. IX] briefly mention discourse-world model in their semantics of textual communication. They describe it as an integrated configuration of concepts and relations that underlie all texts constitutive of a given discourse. Michel Foucault (1969/2002) [31] referred to a set of all texts forming a specific thematic discourse evolving historically as a discursive formation, which is to be analysed diachronically. A discourse-world model for a discursive formation will, of necessity, be extremely complex.

- *spatiotemporal*, enriched with the presence of the participants in the spoken or written event;
- *situational* (often described as the information shared between the participants, relevant to a particular situation but covering also the encyclopaedic knowledge of the world);
- *linguistic* (the knowledge of what is sometimes called *co-text*, that is a set of purely semantic intra- and intertextual relationships, dubbed the “surrounding discourse” by Lewis in 1972 [48, p. 174]);
- *social* (interpersonal connections between the participants, reflecting their mutual status, social standing, power, etc.);
- *cultural* (in the broadest sense of all inter-semiotic systems operative in a given society, cf. also Lotman and Uspensky 1978 [53]; Lotman 1990 [51]; Leech and Thomas 1990 [47]; Chimombo and Roseberry 1998 [10]).

Each of the above-mentioned aspects of context creates its own *contextual space*, which functions as a container for all texts embedded in it. With the exception of the spatiotemporal context, which is purely physical,<sup>1</sup> the situational, linguistic and social contexts are partly culture-induced. The all-encompassing *space of culture*, the powerful *semiosphere* of Yuriy M. Lotman (1990) [51], conceived as an intricate network of all coding systems, of all semiotic ‘texts’, of all real and virtual contexts and relationships, is genuinely unbounded and strongly *intertextual*, being the place of constant “explosions” of novelties (Lotman 1992/2009) [52].

Thus terminologically furnished, we can turn our attention to the three types of *worlds* operative in linguistic and literary text criticism, seeing them as a succession of constructs that are steadily enriched, both cognitively and pragmatically.

### Possible Worlds

A *possible world* is a technical construct devised in the late 1950s by modal logicians within *model-theoretic semantics* (cf. Partee 1989 [55]), in order to cope with the old problem of truth-valuation in the more resistant sub-fields of natural language such as modalized propositions and sentences with propositional attitude verbs (opaque contexts). Yet, this notion has a philosophical tradition reaching back to *possible universes of discourse* of Gottfried W. Leibniz. The best known definition of a *possible world* as a conceptual artefact, due to Kripke and Hintikka (cf. also Bradley and Swartz 1979 [6]), defines it as a situation in which the speaker might possibly find or have found him/herself, if only in his/her imagination. In other words, possible worlds are possible and impossible states of affairs or courses of events, non-factual and counterfactual situations of our hypothesizing, conjecturing, planning, etc. For some reason, possible worlds have found as many enthusiasts as unfavourably or sceptically-minded critics. One of crucial allegations raised against possible worlds as creations of analytic philosophers is that they are *austere*, in the sense of being *de-*

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<sup>1</sup> It can be claimed, however, that the way we cope with space and time is also culture-dependent.

*contextualized*. But are they really devoid of any context? Before answering this question, we have to examine what the building blocks of possible worlds are. The standing description takes them to be *sets of possible individuals*, where the individuals run along the scale from genuinely possible to totally impossible ones, depending on whether the world we construe is *proximate* to or *remote* from our experience (cf. Rescher 1975 [56], Chrzanowska-Kluczevska 1994 [11]).

If possible worlds were only sets of individuals, they would be genuinely decontextualized and of little value as a descriptive tool for the study of texts.<sup>1</sup> Logicians and linguists, however, have also mentioned *properties* as smaller constituents out of which individuals are built. They have also suggested to add *configurations* that mutually relate the possible individuals, which often go under the name of *possible states of affairs*. Yet another conception was voiced by Rudolf Carnap in 1947 [8]. The philosopher never used the term *world*, preferring instead to talk about *state-descriptions*. Barbara H. Partee (1989) [55, p. 93] sees in them a direct predecessor of the notion of *possible worlds*. Carnap's theory, contrary to further developments mentioned above, passes for a purely linguistic approach to possible worlds. The Carnapian *world* is — actually — a complete and non-contradictory set of all sentences (propositions) that describe a specific state and as such it corresponds to a text as a linguistic artefact but not to its design in the mind of the creator like in the aforementioned conceptualist approach. Personally, I assume the latter to be the most reasonable view on condition we perceive a possible world as a conceptual construct paired, in the majority of cases, with its linguistic realization. This dual nature of possible worlds is often too easily forgotten.

The logicians' possible worlds, whether taken as either conceptual, or linguistic, or mixed creations, have never been fully satisfactory for the theoreticians of fictionality and narrativity. Paradoxically, although the notion of the *world* as applied by the logicians is a metaphor coming from literary studies (cf. the *represented/portrayed worlds* of Ingarden), “[i]n a Model Theory, Possible Worlds concern sets, not individuals, and a Possible Worlds Semantics cannot be a psycholinguistically realistic theory of language understanding” (Eco 1990 [29, p. 65]). The second allegation raised by Eco against constructs called *possible worlds* is that they are *empty*. “They are simply advocated for the sake of a formal calculus considering intensions as functions from possible worlds to extensions” (Eco 1990 [29, p. 65], with *intensions* signifying *senses* and *extensions* standing for references/denotations). Though Eco does not clearly explain what he means by the pejorative epithet *empty*, it can be deduced from his argumentation that *emptiness* refers here to the lack of contextual details.

Despite these critical observations, exposing the ontological austerity and emptiness of possible worlds, we should remember that they are *consistent* and *complete*

<sup>1</sup> Although our discussion concerns fictional texts of literature, many of its claims bear also on non-fictional and non-literary texts.

in a narrow, theoretical sense: the (*im*)*possibilia* that inhabit them have to be *compossible*, that is non-contradictory (cf. Rescher 1975 [56] but the idea goes back to Leibniz). A similar condition is imposed on the set of descriptions that specify a given possible world. For this reason Doležel (1989) [27, p. 233] refers to them as “complete (‘Carnapian’) logical structures.”<sup>1</sup>

### Text Worlds

Against some voices that have tried to undermine the utility of possible worlds in the description of natural language, researchers in text semantics, most prominently Doležel, Enkvist and Werth, decided to enrich this concept in such manner as to make it more palatable for the analysts of literary works. Enkvist (1989) [30] introduces two mutually related terms: *text world* and *universe of discourse*. Whereas the former is a possible world that supports a particular, prototypically fictional, literary creation, the latter is a semantic model of the world without which the interpretation of the text world would be hindered, if not altogether impossible.

“Universes of discourse indeed come from a general semantic knowledge of the world, whereas text worlds are characterized by sets of specific states of affairs constrained by the specifications given in individual texts, and the relevant inferences: they are pragmatic in nature insofar as they reflect the use of language to describe one specific world” (Enkvist 1989 [30, p. 170]).

Noteworthy is the fact that Enkvist envisages *text worlds* as pragmatic phenomena, while *universes of discourse* are for him purely semantic objects, i. e. knowledge patterns abstracted as frames, scripts, schemata or scenarios of the theory of human information processing and of artificial intelligence (cf. Schank and Abelson 1977 [58]). If text worlds are pragmatic in nature, the assumption must be made that they ought to be *contextualized*, contrary to possible worlds of formal semantics. In a similar vein Doležel (1989) [27, pp. 228-230] opts for a fusion of *possible-worlds semantics* and *text theory* in the analysis of literary fictions. He provides the following description of literary text worlds:

“Literature deals with concrete fictional persons in specific spatial and temporal settings, bound by peculiar relationships and engaged in unique struggles, quests, frustrations” (Doležel 1989 [27, p. 228]).

Quite obviously then, the spatiotemporal context in which fictional characters exist and act is mentioned here explicitly and enriched not only with “peculiar relationships” (cf. *configurations* of possible individuals in possible-worlds semantics) but with beliefs, expectations, wishes, etc., as well as emotions<sup>2</sup> of literary characters

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<sup>1</sup> Lewis’s definition (1972) [48, p. 175] corroborates this claim: “A possible world corresponds to a possible totality of facts, determinate in all respects.”

<sup>2</sup> Whereas propositional attitudes (beliefs, doubts, hopes, desires, etc.) can be accommodated within possible-worlds semantics as instances of various modalities, emotions would hardly find a place in such a formalized system.

that can be inferred through deductive capacities of the interpreters. It is in this sense that we can refer to fictional worlds as *non-empty* or *furnished*, to borrow Eco's terminology (1990) [29, p. 65]. Consequently, literary textual worlds contain individuals ("endowed with properties," as Eco underlines) involved in specific courses of events and carrying each a bunch of *propositional attitudes* in their minds.

Despite this seeming ontological richness of text worlds, we should bear in mind that their denizens are, logically speaking, *incomplete*, that is indeterminate (under-specified) with respect to certain attributes. In this they differ from us, real (actual) individuals that are complete and even overdetermined in their make-up (cf. Ingarden 2000 [42], Chrzanowska-Kluczevska 1994 [11, pp. 200-201]). The incompleteness of individuals is accompanied by the *gappiness* of fictional worlds in what concerns events, relationships, causal links, etc., in brief all the matters never mentioned by the author (creator) of the text itself. This *incompleteness* of fictional texts, which from the logical perspective is a deficiency, from the pragmatic viewpoint makes the text exciting for the interpreter.<sup>1</sup>

Ingarden (1931/1973 [41], also Wolfgang Iser 1976/1978 [43], as a continuator of the same phenomenological tradition) talked about *concretisation/actualisation* as a necessary reader-response tactics, that is *gap-filling*. Enkvist (1989) [30, pp. 166-167] points to inferencing capacities of text interpreters. Doležel refers to this skill as "aesthetic efficiency" and modern schools of poetics use also the term *literary competence* to describe all the operations that a reader is bound and expected to perform when enriching the text with his/her guesses, etc. Italo Calvino (1993/1996) [7], while discussing six major values of good literature ("six mementos for the next millennium"), mentions *speediness*, that is the economy and brevity of narration, where the events follow one another quickly, with a considerable amount of information suppressed, and where the author leaves a broad margin to the interpreter's imagination. The amount of suppression is controlled by the exigencies of a given genre but also by cultural requirements (some cultures pass over and withhold a certain amount of information on purpose, often due to the Politeness Principle, others are less indirect).

*Gap-filling (concretisation)* constitutes an obvious case of contextualization, which in game-theoretic terms can be seen as the *pragmatic game of the reader(s)* (cf. "Discourse worlds as dialogues and games" below and Chrzanowska-Kluczevska 2004 [15, ch. 3.2]; 2016 [20]). I propose to refer to this kind of context, which at the first stage of interpretation is text-driven, as *internal context* of a given text. Within Discourse Analysis this kind of context is sometimes called *textual setting* or *inner context* (cf. Chimombo and Roseberry 1998 [10]). The reader relies here basically on the text proper and the process of inferencing/guessing/eliminating alternative hy-

<sup>1</sup> De Beaugrande and Dressler (1990) [2, a. o. Ch. V.2, IX.29] suggest that a text can be perceived as a cybernetic system, the coherence of which is heavily dependent on the continuity of senses. This continuity is largely maintained by the addressee, who fills in empty spaces with his/her general knowledge of the world and through inferential processes.

potheses depends on his/her ability of close reading heightened by the power of imagination.

A noteworthy aspect of text worlds is that they consist of smaller units, dubbed *sub-worlds*. This term is used by Stockwell (2002) [63], though the idea comes from the Model Theory of formal semantics, with Hintikka calling them *small worlds*:

“If we are really free to re-interpret our language, we can choose freely also the “universe of discourse” it is designed to apply to. This universe hence does not have to be an entire world in the commonplace sense of the word (i. e., a possible world history). It can be a “small world,” that is, a relatively short course of local events in some nook or corner of the actual world. Hence the idea [...] that possible-worlds semantics somehow presupposes a Leibnizian framework where the alternative are entire grand universes, is not only mistaken but contrary to the way of thinking on which possible-worlds semantics is based” (Hintikka 1989 [39, p. 55]).

Eco (1990) [29] also devotes one of the chapters to *small worlds*. In fact, every literary character (fictitious individual) builds around him/herself a small universe of beliefs, emotions, attitudes, etc., hence also the terms *embedded worlds* or *mini-worlds* functioning in text criticism.

One of interesting aspects of reader-response is a relative ease or difficulty of movement of the interpreter from one world to another. Stockwell (2002) [63, p. 142] describes this mechanism of *world-switching* as *toggling*, that is, popping in and out of particular sub-worlds. In Chrzanowska-Kluczevska (2007) [18] I discuss in some detail this mechanism and propose to divide text worlds into *reader-friendly* and *reader-unfriendly*, depending on the degree of proximity vs. remoteness of a given world, that is its *accessibility* (imaginability, conceivability). This extremely interesting aspect of text-interpretation calls for a constant *(re)contextualization* by the reader, for the *internal context* of a complex piece of fiction will, in turn, consist of *sub-contexts* required for the understanding of sub-worlds. This takes us to the ultimate stage in text reception, which calls for a new, still richer, conceptual construct called *discourse world*.

### Discourse Worlds

In the process of interpretation the reader cannot and will not stay exclusively within the internal textual setting of a piece of fiction. The recourse to the surrounding reality, to the actual world around us is a *sine qua non* of the reader-response strategies. And so despite the fact that text worlds are ontologically much richer than possible worlds and despite the fact that they possess their own inner contextual information, we need a broader setting for the understanding of fiction. It is an old Aristotelian truth that reality is the ultimate measure in our dealings with possibility. Hence, textual worlds are embedded in reality.<sup>1</sup> As mentioned above, Enkvist postulated universes of discourse as a supporting mechanism of interpretation for text worlds. Still,

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<sup>1</sup> The actual world, *aw*, of modal logicians, often equalled with the real world, is indeed an abstraction over reality, a model of reality, but not reality itself.

his universes are only specific semantic models that may be thought as inadequately furnished for the interpreter to rely on, that is why within the current of cognitive poetics dubbed Text-World Theory, Stockwell (2002) [63, p. 93], in the footsteps of Werth (1999) [66], postulates to utilize constructs called *discourse worlds*, which he defines as: “dynamic readerly interactions with possible worlds: possible worlds with a cognitive dimension.” Hence by *discourse worlds* Stockwell, as well as Gavins (2007) [34], mean expanded *text worlds*, which now become combined with the real world of the reader, the actuality that shapes his/her dealings with the authorial text world handed over for interpretation.

Consequently, discourse worlds are combinations of the creative imagination and knowledge of their inventor (author) on the one hand and of the knowledge and emotional attitudes of the addressee on the other. The very word *discourse* should now be interpreted in its twofold etymological signification: firstly, as a text surrounded by context, and secondly, as an ongoing conversation between the world-creator and the world-interpreter, a dialogical formation. But the context that is now taken into consideration is what I choose to dub *external context*, no longer limited to one particular text and its inner organization. My *external context* is related to what Discourse Analysis has called *outer context* or *metatextual setting* (Chimombo and Roseberry 1998) [10]. The interpreter has now at his/her disposal the whole world, including other texts, to which the interpreted text has been related.<sup>1</sup>

This ultimate recourse to the reality around us (even if it is perceived and described through simplified models called *actual worlds* or *universes of discourse*) is what Kripke (1963/1971) [45], as well as Hintikka (1969) [38], expressed in the formula for possible-worlds semantics, where the basic model structure for modal semantics is represented as:

$$\langle \mathbf{G}, \quad \mathbf{K}, \quad \mathbf{R} \rangle$$

**aw,      set of all pw's, relation of accessibility among pw's.**

G, the actual world, serves as a default value for any kind of “reading,” as a very broad contextual setting for our interpretative endeavours. The American analytic philosophers refer to it as *actualism*, an old philosophical tradition reaching back to Aristotle and reverberating in the famous Leibnizian saying that our world is the best among all possible universes of discourse (cf. de Beaugrande and Dressler 1990 [3], who juxtapose *Textwelt* and *reale Welt*; also Chrzanowska-Kluczevska 2007 [18]).

This time, the interpreter can draw from all types of contextual information listed in the Introduction — linguistic (in the broad intertextual understanding), situational (in the sense of the real, extra-textual situation in which the author and the interpreter are placed), social, and — finally — cultural. For this reason Doležel (1989)

<sup>1</sup> Thus, intertextual setting seems to be a better term than metatextual setting, though — of course — metatextuality is another interesting though less common and quite sophisticated mechanism of text structuring, cf. Chrzanowska-Kluczevska (2004) [15, ch. 3.2] on the game of metatextuality.

[27, p. 229] aptly notices that “[f]ictional worlds of literature have a specific character by being embodied in literary texts and by functioning as cultural artefacts.” He rightly states that fictional worlds do not have to be limited to literature only, but can be discovered across several semiotic systems. “The construction of fictional possible worlds occurs, primarily, in cultural activities — poetry and music composition, mythology and story telling, painting and sculpting, theatre and dance performance, film making, etc.” (Doležel 1989 [27, p. 236]). Similarly, Eco (1990) [29, p. 66] claims that possible worlds “can be viewed [...] as cultural constructs, matter of stipulation or semiotic products.”

At this stage of text interpretation a discourse world can be perceived as a text immersed in a very powerful unlimited context, out of which the interpreter can draw according to his/her needs, level of education, linguistic and pragmatic competence, etc. Already in 1973, in his work titled *Logics and Languages* Max J. Cresswell pointed out that, as Partee (1989) [55, p. 96] paraphrases him, “there is no limit in principle to the aspects of context that may be relevant to interpretation.”<sup>1</sup>

### Discourse worlds as dialogues and games

#### *Discourse worlds as dialogical formations*

Teun A. van Dijk (2001) [25, p. 10] enumerates the following three major dimensions of discourse: a) the use of language, b) the transmission of ideas and c) interaction in social situations. As far as the second and third aspect is concerned, one of models that describe the functioning of texts compares them to *dialogical machines*. The idea of *machine* is drawn from Gilles Deleuze, who in the book co-authored with Felix Guattari, *L’Anti-Oedipe* (1972) [26] introduced this notion into theoretical discussion of language and literature. On the Polish ground, Wincenty Grajewski (2003) [35] called texts *dialogical machines*, the devices that produce sequences of *dialogical events*. This stance refers to the creative function of texts as go-betweens mediating between the author and the addressee (audience, target, receptor, etc.). Doležel’s description fits well into this “mechanistic” paradigm: “From the viewpoint of the reader the fictional text can be characterized as a set of instructions according to which the fictional world is to be recovered and reassembled” (Doležel 1989 [27, p. 236]).

The very act in which the interpreter invests a given text with meaning through a number of different though intertwined cognitive, psychological and social processes, is a conversation taking place within the discourse world. Philosophically speaking, the dialogue can play an enormous interpersonal role as emphasized, among others by Hans-Georg Gadamer (1960/1989 and 2003) [32, 33] and Jürgen Habermas (1985/2000) [36]. Gadamer’s philosophy of dialogue is very close in spirit to Hintikka’s successful project of bringing together two formal systems: possible-worlds semantics and game-theoretic semantics.

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<sup>1</sup> G. G. Grabowicz in his Introduction to Ingarden’s *The Literary Work of Art* claims likewise that “every object appears in the absolute plenitude of its virtual contexts and relationships” (Ingarden 1931/1973) [41, p. xx].

To sum up, discourse worlds, the dialogic formations operative between the text creator (or the text itself) and its collective addressee (readers, interpreters) are thus text worlds embedded in the rich, complex *space of interpretation*. Culture stands here for the widest and most *comprehensive space* — the semiosphere — in which discourse worlds function.

*Discourse worlds as gamesome formations*

From another perspective, set by Ludwig Wittgenstein (1953/1958) [67] and Hintikka (cf. Hintikka and Kulas 1983 [40], also Chrzanowska-Kluczevska 2004; 2016 [15, 20]), discourse worlds as dialogical formations qualify for the description within the *language-game theory*. We can perceive the interpretation of a text, embedded in a discourse world, as an instance of a *two-person game* played by the author/creator and the reader/interpreter. Upon a closer inspection we will discover, however, that this activity tends to be a *non-standard game with a largely non-cooperative player (author)*. In a regular dialogue (which can be likened to a game of chess), we can observe a constant feedback between the participants, who — conventionally — try to cooperate. Yet, such a situation is rare in the case of texts, especially literary, fictional texts. The hermeneutic procedure expressed through the game-theory will point to one physically absent player — the author, who under such circumstances may be viewed as non-cooperative. It is rather uncommon that the interpreter should have the chance of facing the author and negotiating the interpretation with him/her personally, though — most certainly — we can envisage the situation when the readers “converse” with the living and available author via the Internet and other media or meet personally at book fairs and promotions.

Notwithstanding the often non-standard nature of games played between authors and readers/interpreters of texts, I find it useful to subdivide the games played within fictional discourse into several categories (Chrzanowska-Kluczevska 2004; 2016 [15, 20]).

*Semantic games of the author* include at least the following:

- 1) the game of constructing a possible/text world, called also the game of authorial imagination;
- 2) the game of embedding (encasing) worlds inside other worlds;
- 3) the game of inviting the reader to enter the fictitious space (the game of make-believe);
- 4) the game of mimesis, or better, of a transcription of reality;
- 5) the game of empathy with the characters created;
- 6) the game of distancing oneself from the world created;
- 7) the game of multi-perspectivism within the text;
- 8) the stylistic and rhetorical super-game of figuration;
- 9) the macro-game of style, inclusive of all micro-games played at the phonetic, morphological, syntactic, semantic and graphic levels of linguistic representation;

- 10) the game of disclosing unnoticed aspects of the world (the game of semantic and cognitive innovation);
- 11) the game of intertextuality;
- 12) the game of metatextuality.

*Pragmatic games of the reader*, which are a constitutive feature of both text and discourse worlds, will cover at least the following activities:

- 1) the game of opening and exposing oneself to the text;
- 2) the macro-game of interpretation that subsumes all micro-games of interpreting particular stylistic and rhetorical devices (the deciphering of figurative meanings being of great import here);
- 3) the game of uncovering the *intentio auctoris* or the reader's quest for the authorial meaning;
- 4) the game of understanding the aesthetic nature of a literary artwork (cf. Ingarden 1931/1973, 2000 [41, 42]);
- 5) the game of concretisation/actualisation, that is of gap-filling (including the games of making guesses and forecasts, of inferencing, of verification/falsification, of coping with suspense, etc.);
- 6) the game of achieving a broader ego and self-understanding;
- 7) the game of assigning multiple readings to open/polyphonic texts;
- 8) the game of identifying narrative modes and narrative modalities;
- 9) the game of appropriation (getting an insight into somebody else's perspective and liberating oneself from one's own illusions; the term comes from Ricoeur 1981 [57]).

*Mixed semantic-pragmatic games of the author and reader*, in turn, are as follows:

- 1) the game of shared pretence/imagination;
- 2) the games of empathy and distancing in relation to personages and events described;
- 3) the game of intertextuality;
- 4) the game of broadening one's horizons (through straining one's imagination);
- 5) the fusion of the author's and reader's horizons (*Horizontverschmelzung* in the Gadamerian terminology);
- 6) the game of appropriation, that is, a ludic transformation of reality;
- 7) the game of sharing in suspense;
- 8) the educational game of teaching and being instructed.

*Games of the text.*

Although we should be cautious about personifying the text, it cannot be denied that both in autonomous semantics and deconstructionist theories of discourse, the text is perceived as an entity in its own right, neither directly controlled by the author nor totally subjugated to the interpreter. In this capacity, the text itself (taken as an autonomous creation) displays some characteristics describable within the game-theoretic approach, to wit the games of:

- 1) calling for an active participation by the reader;
- 2) deceiving the reader;
- 3) creating its Ideal/Model Addressee;
- 4) the game of telling the story about itself (in the case of metatexts);
- 5) literary genres and sub-genres can be likened to conventionalized game-strategies.

*Games of critics.*

Apart from the above-listed major types of game-like textual activities, two additional categories of games deserve a special mention, viz. those practised by critics and translators, thus two groups of unusual readers and sophisticated interpreters who play their own peculiar games within the *ludic space* of discourse worlds.

Let us, then, dwell briefly on the former group (cf. Chrzanowska-Kluczevska 2004 [15, Sect. 3.2.5]). It could be argued that whereas the Ideal (Model) Reader once postulated by Eco is a player who assumes a positive attitude towards his/her partners in the game (the author, the text, or both), the critic never qualifies as an Ideal Reader (despite his/her sophistication) for the simple reason s/he has to be critical. His/her attitude is not spontaneous and, what is more, s/he is expected to be partly negatively evaluating the game of the author/text (cf. Bachelard 1957 [2], who calls critics “severe readers”). The fact that the critic acts at the level elevated above that of a regular reader and that his/her activity boils down to playing *critical games* with the texts that are already gamesome constructs in themselves means that s/he is involved in what I propose to call a *meta-game*, a commentary on the texts in which other games are played abundantly. Yet, since critics are frequently involved in the criticism of other critics (de Man 1971 [54] is an epitome of such a game) and only indirectly of original works of fiction, their texts assume the status of meta-meta-games in relation to the original literary texts. In the literature devoted to critical activities (de Man 1971 [54]; Bloom 1973, 1975/2003 [4, 5]; Hillis Miller 1977 [37]) some other games of critics are suggested:

- 1) the game of subjugation (forcing ideas on the readers);
- 2) the game of filling out the empty spots in texts (called “areas of blindness” by de Man) and getting insight into the author’s intention;
- 3) the game of creative misinterpretation of other writers (played especially by poets, cf. Bloom 1973, 1975/2003 [4, 5]).

Tzvetan Todorov (1990) [64], de Man (1971) [54] and David Carroll (1982) [9] point to the conflictive nature of the critical games relative to the author and his/her creation. Thus, they are played not within the space of communication, cooperation and compromise but within the *space of conflict and contradiction*. This may be, of course, an overgeneralization, but the element of disapproval or negative judgement is, even etymologically, inherent in the name ‘critic’ itself. Bachelard (1957) [2], among others in the Introduction to his book devoted to the poetics of space, castigates literary critics for being too shallow in their endeavours at objectivity, too rational to understand the rapture of experiencing the depth and unpredictability of poetic imagery and not adequately prepared to cope with utter novelty of linguistic expression.

*Games of translators.*

Translators, in turn, can be seen as involved in a “double-game” — first of the reader/interpreter (Ideal, if not Critical) and then of a writer/re-creator. The well-known saying *Traduttore — traditore* seems to lay emphasis on the fact that the translator — traitor is bound to be involved in *dishonest games*, based on the transgression and violation of certain norms or rules of the game and an insincerity towards the source text. Thus, numerous translation strategies and techniques can be treated as deceitful, to wit:

- 1) the game of misreading/misinterpretation (due to the uniqueness of every hermeneutical act and the uniqueness of the space of culture in which it is contained);
- 2) the game of undertranslation (diminution, loss) — reduction of difficult, troublesome or ‘untranslatable’ material;
- 3) the game of overtranslation (amplification, wadding) — amplification of the source text through the addition of explanations of, e. g., culture-specific terms;
- 4) the game of compensation — substitution of the original portions of the text with new material, often applied in the ‘domesticated translation’ (‘dynamic translation’ aligned with the process of acculturation);
- 5) the game of shift (inversion) — where for different reasons certain parts of the original text change their position in the target rendering (cf. Chrzanowska-Kluczevska 1999, 2001, 2005, 2007 [12, 13, 16, 17], where I discuss several translation techniques and strategies, albeit not in the game-theoretical terms).

This very summary treatment of gamesome activities opened to translators should not, however, leave us with the impression that their games are always insincere. In the total count, translators are involved in dialectical occupation founded on the clash between the often unavoidable “treacherous behaviour” and the drive towards *restitution* (Steiner 1998 [62]), that is, a wish to achieve a balanced and reliable translation, at least partly adapted or assimilated to the target language and its space of culture. This is, undoubtedly, a positive and sincere game with the text, though its results do sometimes fail short of the readers’ and even the translator’s expectations. This *game of assimilation to/ domestication in a new language and cultural space* has been likened to the *game of saving the text* equally for the author’s and the reader’s sake.

**Possible Worlds/Text Worlds/Discourse Worlds  
as semiotic construals within the *semiosphere***

A long tradition of Russian formalism and semiotic studies, evolving from Viktor Shklovsky (1917/1986) [60] through Roman Jakobson (1956) [44], Yuriy M. Lotman and Boris A. Uspensky (Lotman 1970/1977, 1990, 1992/2009 [50-52]; Lotman and Uspensky 1978 [53]; cf. also Shukman 1977 [61]), has drawn our attention to the need of considering other artistic means of expression, apart from literary texts, as real textual products. In this broadened semiotic approach *texts* can be understood in such a way as to be inclusive of other aesthetic objects, such as paintings, sculp-

tures, architectural creations, musical pieces, films, theatrical performances, artefacts of crafts, design, fashion, etc. (cf. Chrzanowska-Kluczevska 2016 [21]). All these phenomena, if placed within a proper context of interpretation, become *semiotic discourse worlds*. Speaking metaphorically, they not only hang within *the space of culture/semiosphere* but actively construe it in co-operation with a wide spectrum of other 'texts', artistic and non-artistic alike (this is close also to Eco's semiotic programme).

One conspicuous feature of discourse worlds so conceived deserves a brief mention. As addressed to ever-changing recipients and, theoretically, capable of being embedded in an infinite number of novel contexts, discourse worlds call for constant *re-reading* (also understood broadly) and *re-contextualization* (cf. Chrzanowska-Kluczevska 2010 [19]). Re-contextualization, a fascinating phenomenon in itself, can be perceived as an active transformation of the interpretive, artistic and cultural space (cf. also Toporov 1983/2003 [65]). Paradoxically, discourse worlds are simultaneously limited (textually) and unlimited (through the unbounded power of imagination of their interpreters). Hence the space of culture/semiosphere, as an intricate network of real and virtual (possible though as yet unrealized) contexts and relationships, is genuinely unbounded and in the state of constant flux.

This squares well with Eco's (1979) [28] theory of *opus apertum*. Eco applies in this treatise the philosophical terminology referring to the *dialectics* between the author or the work of art and the recipient, which is of utmost importance for the "open work." And yet, this dialectics can be severely hampered in the situation when we deal with texts brought to us from older literatures or alien cultures. It may happen that the linguistic, social, cultural and even historical context will not be recoverable. In such marginal cases, when re-contextualization fails, the dissatisfied interpreter may possibly turn away from an incomprehensible text of culture.

Yet, in the huge majority of cases, semiotically understood discourse worlds, as the richest methodological construct revolving around the central notion of *world*, should help the interpreter in what Enkvist (1989) [30, pp. 165-166] has aptly called an "incremental text comprehension." Discourse worlds are, after all, rich formations, within which the process of interpretation, accompanied by culturally and semiotically driven re-contextualization, is constantly taking place.<sup>1</sup>

The semiotic essence of culture, so emphatically stressed by Lotman and Uspensky (1978) [53, p. 213-214] as being creative in nature but also based on the "nonhereditary memory of the community", on the "longevity of the texts of the collective memory", requires "the continual actualization of a coding system which ha[s] to be constantly present in the consciousness of both the addressee and the addresser as a deautomatized system" (Lotman and Uspensky 1978 [53, p. 226]). In this way the semiosphere, which is *explosive* (Lotman 1992/2009 [52]) in the sense of possessing

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<sup>1</sup> Contrary to Enkvist's (1989) [30, p. 184] idealistic assumptions it should be remembered that the re-created text world of the particular and collective interpreter is rarely, if ever, isomorphic with the text world of its author.

a high degree of modelling potential, is endowed with “the ability to describe as wide a range of objects as possible, which would include as many as yet unknown objects as possible, this being the optimal requirement for cognitive models” (Lotman and Uspensky 1978 [53, p. 222]). What better way of describing the space for a constant birth of ever new possible/text/discourse worlds within an unending semiotic game of imagination? (cf. Chrzanowska-Kluczevska 2016 [20]).

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## ВОЗМОЖНЫЕ МИРЫ — ДИСКУРСИВНЫЕ МИРЫ — ТЕКСТОВЫЕ МИРЫ И СЕМИОСФЕРА

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### Аннотация

В данной статье анализируется понятие *возможного мира*, разработанное в американской аналитической философии и модальной логике в 1960-х и 1970-х гг. (Крипке, Хинтиikka, Льюис, Ресчер), но вскоре адаптированное к потребностям литературной лингвистики. Эта адаптация, благодаря Л. Долежелу, Н. Е. Энkvисту и У. Эко среди прочих, привела к появлению концепции *текстового мира* — гораздо более богатой (и контекстуализированной) модели мира. Когнитивный поворот в исследованиях текста (Верт, Стоквел, Гэвинз) расширил понятие текстового мира в самое всеобъемлющее образование, называемое *дискурсивным миром*, в фокусе которого находится зависимость читателей от их действительности в процессе воссоздания текстового мира.

Автор этой статьи утверждает, что текстовые/дискурсивные миры обладают диалогическим характером и поэтому могут быть изучены в рамках *теории игр*. Соответственно, автором постулируется типология текстовых игр (семантические игры автора, прагматические игры читателя, игры самого текста, игры критиков, игры переводчиков), чтобы показать, как создание и воссоздание текстовых/дискурсивных миров представляют игровое занятие. Второе утверждение автора состоит в том, что текстовые/дискурсивные миры как семиотические конструкции погружены в *семиосферу* как всеохватывающее *пространство культуры*. Таким образом, автор пытается преодолеть разрыв между западными исследованиями о возможных/текстовых/дискурсивных мирах и семиотической модели Ю. М. Лотмана и Б. Успенского.

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**Ключевые слова**

Возможные миры, текстовые миры, дискурсивные миры, контекстуализация, теория игр, семиосфера.

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