

THE ROLE OF INTERTEXTUALITY IN MODERN FANTASY NOVEL "GOOD OMENS"

Catherine Popravko

VSU named after P.M. Masherov, Vitebsk, Belarus

Over the past few decades, there has been an ongoing debate on the definition of "intertextuality". In general, intertextuality implies the interrelationship between texts, especially works of literature. It also means the way similar or related texts influence, reflect, or differ from each other. Intertextuality produces meaning. Knowledge does not exist in a vacuum, and neither does literature [2, p. 84].

The study of the phenomenon of intertextuality in literary texts, especially in fantasy novels, is the most promising at the moment since new and more advanced means of communication are emerging; and the number of books and articles published every day is growing. This has led to the fact that the flow of information received by a person in the modern world has dramatically increased. Consequently, the number of borrowings that require research and interpretation has also increased.

In this regard, the aim of our research is to identify intertextual connections in the novel.

Material and methods. Our research material is a novel "Good omens" written by Terry Pratchett and Neil Gaiman. The methods of the research include contextual analysis, descriptive research, interpretation method.

Findings and their discussion. The novel is humorous urban fantasy; it was published in 1990. It contains many references both to classical works such as the Bible, and to the modern ones such as The Lord of the Rings. The novel itself is similar in structure to the Bible: it is divided into seven parts named after the days of the week. Just as in the Bible, God created the Universe in seven days, so the novel also takes place in seven days.

The plot of the book is also based on the Bible: an angel and a demon are trying to sabotage the coming of the End Times (the Apocalypse). At the same time, there are such characters as the God, the Antichrist, angels, archangels, demons, the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, (Conquest, War, Famine, Death) in "Good Omens".

The authors of the novel use references to specific biblical passages, in some cases even quoting verses directly as they also refer to common biblical knowledge and popular versions of these myths that are known throughout the Christian world.

We may notice a reference to Revelation 6:1-8 in the following quotation:

"Message for you, sir."

FOR ME?

"Yes, sir." He wished he still had a throat. He could have swallowed, if he still had a throat. "No package, I'm afraid, Mister ... uh, sir. It's a message."

DELIVER IT, THEN.

"It's this, sir. Ahem. Come and See." [1, p. 63]

The original one is *"And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see."*

Paying attention to the names of the main characters, once again we can notice references to the Bible: the main character, the Antichrist, is called Adam Young, who was named after Adam, the first man created by God. The angel Aziraphale and the demon Crowley are trying to sabotage the Apocalypse.

"I'll call him Dog,' said his Master, positively." [1, p. 49]

There we can see a nice resonance with the biblical Adam giving names to all the animals in God's creation (Genesis 2:19).

Aziraphale was the guardian of the Eastern Gate of Eden, the demon Crowley, originally named Crawly, was the serpent who tempted Eve to eat the apple. These two are the representatives of Heaven and Hell on Earth, they have become used to living their comfortable lives and have, in a perverse way, taken a liking to humanity. They are good friends and despite the fact that they represent the polar opposites of Good and Evil, they decide to work together and keep an eye on the Antichrist, destined to be the son of a prominent American diplomat stationed in Britain, and thus ensure he grows up in a way that means he can never decide between Good and Evil, thereby postponing the end of the world.

According to Terry Pratchett, the name of the angel is fictional: *"It was made up but... er... from real ingredients. [The name] Aziraphale could be shoved in a list of 'real' angels and would fit right in..." [1, p. 8].*

As for the demon, he was given a surname and initial in honor of the famous British mystic, theosophist, black-arts practitioner Aleister Crowley: *"Hi. This is Anthony Crowley. Uh. I --" [1, p. 158].*

It is worth noting that songs are also mentioned in the novel. For example, 'Killer Queen' by Queen, 'The Four Seasons' by Italian composer Antonio Vivaldi, 'I should be so lucky' Kylie Minogue.

British rock band Queen is given a lot of attention in the novel:

"Admittedly he was listening to a Best of Queen tape, but no conclusions should be drawn from this because all tapes left in a car for more than about a fortnight metamorphose into Best of Queen albums" [1, p. 12].

"A heavy bass beat began to thump through the Bentley as they sped past Heathrow.

Aziraphale's brow furrowed.

"I don't recognize this," he said. "What is it?"

"It's Tchaikovsky's 'Another One Bites the Dust'," said Crowley, closing his eyes as they went through Slough.

To while away the time as they crossed the sleeping Chilterns, they also listened to William Byrd's "We Are the Champions" and Beethoven's "I Want To Break Free." Neither were as good as Vaughan Williams's "Fat-Bottomed Girls" [1, p. 52].

As we can see, all the tapes that are in Crowley's car become songs of Queen. The demon can't get rid of them. In this case he can't get rid of "Queen's legendary song 'Bohemian Rhapsody':

"He rummaged in the glove compartment, fumbled a tape at random, and slotted it into the player. A little music would . . .

. . . Bee-elzebub has a devil put aside for me, for me . . .

"For me," murmured Crowley. His expression went blank for a moment. Then he gave a strangled scream and wrenched at the on-off knob. " [1, p. 70]

"Queen fans have pointed out that at the time *Good Omens* was released, there was no (or at least no easily available) Queen greatest hits album that actually contained all of these songs. A more recently released double album has remedied this situation" [p. 413].

In addition to the biblical characters, the novel mentions such characters as Mary Poppins, Brother Rabbit, the goddess Ashtoreth (Astarte), Florence Nightingale, Abraham Lincoln, Cyrus Reed Teed, and Edward Bulwer-Lytton.

There are even references to popular movies and TV series "Dynasty", "Santa Barbara", "The Karate Kid", "Them!", "Mad Max", "Alien", "You Only Live Twice".

Even the title of the novel "Good Omens" is a reference to the series of supernatural horror films by Richard Donner "The Omen", which tells about the reign of the Antichrist on Earth.

In the text, we can also find references to historical events such as the the Second Boer War, World War I, the Anglo-Spanish War, World War II, and the Caribbean crisis.

Conclusion. After analyzing the examples of intertextual relations, we can conclude that the definition of this term is ambiguous. The role of such types of connections is of great stylistic significance in communication. Using intertextuality in their works, the authors enrich their text, report on their cultural orientations, pragmatic attitude, and give an assessment of what is happening, since the intertext generates a certain assessment, describing one text through another.

Noting the large number of references to the Bible, it is clear that "Good Omens" is not a traditional story about the triumph of Good over Evil, the novel tells about the triumph of humanity over the combined forces of Heaven and Hell, since the Apocalypse is stopped.

1. Gaiman N., Pratchett T., *Good Omens: A Novel* / N. Gaiman, T. Pratchett. – New York : HarperTorch, 2006. – 512 p.

2. Kristeva, J. *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* / J. Kristeva. – Columbia University Press, 1980. – 305 p.