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THE IMPORTANCE OF GRAPHOSTYLISTIC EXPLORATIONS IN CONTEMPORARY ANGLO‑AMERICAN NOVELS[2]

Although our previous studies provided valuable insights into the characteristic graphostylemic features of main literary genres in general, the question of adapting to the technological developments in print requires more attention. Not only did the advancements cause considerable changes in writing practice and the perception of the novels, but they also indicated the rise of a new medium – the one between verbal and visual. This has become quite prominent, especially in contemporary novels in English: the possibilities of digital print emphasize the idea of media equality, of the text remaining the same regardless of its form. However, the way we attribute a meaning to a text does not depend solely on its content but its physical form as well. The notion "if a medium is changed, the content of the message also changes" is what nowadays motivates Anglo-American novelists to constantly test the novel's materiality and us to explore the reasons behind it. This paper identifies all the graphostylemic techniques observed in several paradigmatic examples in English and the subject of our qualitative analysis is the overall significance of authors' suggested patterns. Since their perspective on the current developments is revealed through the extreme graphostylistic markedness, this type of analysis seems inevitable. The main goal is to describe and classify the graphic devices, determine their functions and the effects they produce. With respect to the extralinguistic constraints of period and genre, the concluding remarks put forward the value of the most common graphostylistic means used by Anglo-American authors and the importance of similar analyses.

Keywords: graphostylistics, graphostylemes, graphostylistic features, new media, digital print, contemporary Anglo-American novels.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introductory remarks

Due to numerous technological developments, we have recently witnessed considerable changes in various social practices, especially in communication and everything it might involve – languages and literature, media,

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arts, sciences, travelling or simply – culture in general. New, easily accessible software tools have become an indispensable part of our everyday reality. As communication seems greatly affected by the swift and steady "onward march of progress", stylistic research shift in focus is not an unanticipated fact. For instance, the obvious printing innovations have led to the total transformation of the writer-reader relation and the approaches writers adopt in styles. Another direct result is the change in reader expectations and overall perception of written text. In his article "New forms of writing, new visual competencies" Theo Van Leeuwen argues that the correction of previous theories is necessary because the visual communication has changed and once marginal codes (e.g. typography and color) have become more prominent. As we can see, a new type of writing integrates writing and image in a different manner, blurring the distinction that, until recently, seemed clear. The language of this new literacy can be either verbal or pictorial, but the structure is always expressed visually – through typography or diagrams, the use of color and other stylistic elements. It creates new connections between writing and painting, meanwhile breaking the connection between writing and speech, long introduced by writing. Of course, it is possible to present images without words or to combine them, but the semiotic forms generated by the new "script" differ from the previous ones (Van Leeuwen 2008: 130).

During the period of digital technology expansion in print, the domination of form over content has become a common practice that present-day computer-literate readers and critics are able to recognize and respect, as digital has provided modern writers with the possibility of graphic innovation like never before. This brings us to *remediation* (Polk 2009: 5), a term used to mark the switch from the old to the new medium by borrowing and reorganizing written features and reforming their space. The integration of images into contemporary literature represents a type of remediation that creates new writing traditions. The production of virtual written practices affects publishing, even the conservative readers, those familiar with the narratives where images are integrated into the text, who easily accept the phenomenon in a genre such as novel. Graphostylemes, like the ones we find in Anglo-American novels, show the greater or lesser degree of deviation from the norm and occasionally determine the style. The accumulated techniques alter the form, but the authors use this possibility purposefully. This in fact means that graphostylemes should not be such that a reader cannot decipher them: the idea is to slow reading down (sometimes in order to establish a specific relationship between the text and the reader) and not to prevent it altogether (Palibrk 2017: 173).

Thus, contemporary fiction writers are attempting to erase the oldest oppositions of the alphabetical world: to show and name, to shape and say, to reproduce and articulate, to imitate and mark, to watch and read. Typographic evolution is considered inevitable "because it is necessary for our intelligence to adapt to a synthetic-ideographic instead of an analytic-discursive conception" (Mencia 2003: 17). The modern authors are aware of the relationship between the referential function of language and the language as an entity consisting of specific graphemes and phonemes and the rules that bind them.

Visual form is a complex and elusive phenomenon that is not a constituent of conventional linguistic patterns or just another way of destructing or disarranging them, but it certainly has the potential to organize the poetic structure and create meaning (Palibrk 2017: 180).

A language based on new combinations of different signs leads to a different conception of reality, but this is possible only if this language is formed on a complex semantic level of interpretation, which makes semantic production limitless, in the similar way that language productivity is limitless. Many researchers believe that our experience of the world depends on language – however, in terms of visual art, there is no satisfactory explanation for the exact relationship between language and non-discursive arts. Some interpretations of modern art refuse to view visual works as anything other than a certain kind of language or define modern art as a silent language, not because it has nothing to say but because it says too much at once. It seems to express self-contained meaning which is impossible to interpret. The fact that various means of non-verbal symbolism are called languages is a matter of terminology, as language is essentially discursive and non-verbal symbolism is non-discursive and untranslatable (Langer 1957). In discourse, linguistic meanings are understood one by one and then summed into a whole, while non-verbal symbols that create one larger articulated symbol are understood only by the given whole and their connections within that whole. For example, some of the works analyzed here contain words that form images and these works are manipulated through their visual form; words appear as visual phenomena, but still remain the recognizable producers of linguistic meaning. The rise of multimedia in literature has become a legitimate method of defying conventions. Sometimes they make extremely complicated or rather simple visual representations, many of which can be viewed but not read aloud, but none can be adopted without a certain notion of verbal. Even if we cannot read specific parts at all, they do not represent merely an image. The viewer/reader must understand through their visual and verbal experience - the double act of reading and watching has become unique because the separate categories of a viewer and a reader have been abolished - the viewer is required to read the words and the reader to watch. In general, literacy is a term that has begun to denote a wide range of different skills: from traditional concepts of reading and writing to any cognitive operation that requires perception, manipulation of data and their production (Parent 2005: 46), which could also be observed throughout our research.

1.2. Literature Review

In our dealing with the subject over the last several years a need for the deeper examination of the relationship between not only words and images in language, but also written language and speech, arose. Although both issues have been studied in linguistics or other areas and the drawn conclusions are well known, several studies have addressed the factors that influence the art of written language and the technology that enables it. Traditionally, in a literary text, an image is constructed verbally: descriptive language awakens

mental representations or images in the mind of the reader, meaning that the representations are evoked and created during the very process of reading; images are drawn in the mind, not on the book page (Sadokierski 2010: 5). The works we interpret involve combining verbal and visual, basically words and images, or creating images from words, parts of words and punctuation marks and therefore it is necessary to make clear distinctions regarding the type of graphic representation. The reason for this lies in the fact that verbal and graphic images are interpreted with the help of different perceptual modules, because the human brain perceives language and images in different ways. Leonard Shlain covers this in detail in his monograph "The Alphabet Versus The Goddess". Namely, written words and images require a complementary, but opposite perceptual strategy, because images are primarily mental reproductions of our sense of sight. Due to their close connection with the material world, images lean towards reality, i.e. they are concrete and the human brain perceives all parts of the whole simultaneously. It integrates them synthetically into the gestalt so that most images are perceived in an all-at-once way. Reading words is a different process, because when the eye scans different letters arranged in a certain linear sequence, a word with meaning appears. The meaning of a sentence develops word for word, which is a process that takes place at a high speed, without us even being aware of it. Alphabets mostly consist of around thirty symbols that do not represent images of anything concrete but abstract. Although some groups of words or even whole sentences can be seen at once, the understanding of written words is achieved in a one-by-one way. Thus, in order to perceive objects through images delivered to the eye, the brain uses integrity, simultaneity and synthesis, whereas in interpreting the meaning of alphabetic writing, the brain relies on sequence, analysis, and abstraction (Shlain 1999: 4–5).

The other question mentioned before is the relationship between written and oral language and the characteristics of that relationship have been established within numerous linguistic schools and theories and represent common knowledge. However, we are interested in this relationship in the light of the third medium, the one between the older two, as it was found in the examples covered here. Halliday states that this must be considered within three interrelated aspects: the nature of the means of expression, the functions performed and the formal properties presented. Writing is not a faithful representation of speech; the relationship is more complex: the forms replace each other, each has its own value and both serve as manifestations of a single system. Together they constitute language, but language is more important than either (Halliday 1985: 78). It must be noted that the overall differences relate to the physical medium through which speech and writing are transmitted, to the memory systems that process them, and to the functions they serve. Different carriers of sound waves and optical signs affect how they can be used to convey expression, but these differences are not always strictly defined. Genres, purposes, and communicative situations seem more important than a means of expression. The distinction between speech and writing is becoming less clear as a consequence of modern technology (Hård af Segerstad 2002: 38). In "Orality

and Literacy" Walter Ong asserts that it is no longer easy to imagine a purely oral tradition, because writing makes words look like objects that we think of as visible signs: the words in texts and books we can see and touch (Ong 2012: 8–11). He also believes that without writing, the human mind would not be able to reason as it does, because writing has transformed human consciousness more than any other invention. By removing words from the world of sound where they came from and placing them onto the visual surface, as well as exploiting that surface in dozens of ways, the press allowed us to think of internal elements as objects (Ibid.: 49). Avant-garde plots became impressionistic, graphic variations of the stories that precede them, permanently bearing the mark of writing and typography. Nowadays almost all printed books are digital files before they become books; it is the form in which they are created, corrected, assembled and sent to computerized machines that make books out of them. This means that, although the printed tradition influences the way these works are created and written, the mark of digital writing space is also present. In his "Remediation of the Digital in Contemporary Print Fiction" Polk states that everyone who grew up without a computer knows that writing with a pen on a piece of paper is different from writing on a computer in a word processing program, which is again different from writing with a printing press. It all comes down to the fact that writing is evolving with the introduction of new ways of creating, with computer programs available to authors who compose and set their own texts: it logically follows that such process is significantly different from the situation when the author needs to set hundreds of sheets of paper (Polk 2009: 13).

When writing transitions from one medium to another, it does not leave behind the accumulated knowledge of genres, poetic conventions, narrative structures, figures and tropes, etc. As a rule, this knowledge is transferred to the following medium in an attempt to imitate the effects of the previous medium in the specific environment of the new one. Manuscripts were created as a visual string of characters that was supposed to resemble a string analogous to the speech flow; innovations were gradually introduced, e.g. space between words, paragraphs, etc. Polk claims that narration is not a product of oral tradition, but a palimpsest of recordings in various media (Ibid.: 19–20).

Mike Sharples feels that the time has come to reintegrate illustrations and text design with writing: when an author becomes aware of the code or the combination of language, visual appearance and physical form of the text and how it could be accepted in different cultures and contexts, they can deliberately manipulate all aspects to achieve different reading effects (Sharples 1999: 131). The change from the uniform nature of "transparent text" whose font, colors, page position, and other physical elements did not impact how readers interpret the work (which used to be the case in the previous century) to the printed texts including visual media was gradual. With transparent texts, readers should ignore the physical side of the text and "see" only what is said. Most published books still fall into this category. In prose and poetry, reading strategies have changed over time and become more numerous and diverse, and digital forms provided new ways of presentation and expression

in literature. This is the context in which contemporary novels are printed and materialized. Whether we see the text as an attempt to master existing conventions or to challenge new forms, the printed novel of our times examines the boundary between printed and digital writing (Worthen 2005: 157).

1.3. Methodology and theoretical framework

As our society becomes more visually sophisticated, examining the relationship between words and images is an imperative, not only in the studies of communication, media or design, but also in stylistics, where researchers focus on both what certain images mean and how they function as part of the text. Analyses of certain contemporary works require understanding and interpretation of this interrelation, and this does not mean prescribing but discovering the rules and principles of detecting graphological mechanisms and their essence.

This paper examines distinctive graphostylemic techniques employed in contemporary novels in English and represents the continuation of our previous stylistic endeavors. The identification of the mechanisms observed in several examples is performed taking into account the abovementioned innovations and changes. The subject of our qualitative analysis is the overall significance of the patterns developed and widely accepted by modern novelists, as this might point to the prose manner of adapting to the ever-new digital growth. As the primary goal is to classify graphic devices and determine their functions, we must add that our description of certain cases involves other linguistic fields, whereas the explanations of effects achieved by graphostylemes require the implications of both literary and visual art theories.

Theoretically diverse studies have shown that there is a relatively small number of those who deal with typographic activity in any systematic way (Palibrk 2017: 37), and the reason lies in the fact that the development of literary and visual art criticism by the middle of the twentieth century led to defining these two areas in terms of mutually exclusive assumptions. The critics of visual art at the time claimed that the visual equaled soundless and that all connections with literature and meaning had been severed. In her study "The Visible Word: Experimental Typography and Modern Art, 1909–1923" Drucker states that the distinction between visual presence and semiotic/literary absence once made experimental typography a deviation according to the high modernist criticism guidelines (Drucker 1996: 3–4).

2. ANALYSIS

What needs to be addressed in this part is the question of the corpus. Namely, the examples are paradigmatic, chosen for their visual distinctiveness that reaches a peak. Secondly, most authors are partially acknowledged, and some of them have suffered harsh criticism precisely because of the techniques they use. We can discuss whether these works belong to high or popular literature (since these two are perceived as opposites), with the former having the

status of classics and the latter being given less value. However, this division depends more on social evaluation than on the linguistic one and whether certain novels belong to one or the other is still debated by critics (Jeffries, McIntyre 2010: 15). This does not mean that there are no differences, and above all the stylistic (but not necessarily linguistic) ones are the reason for different statuses, but the most visible are in presentation and context. The assessment of aesthetic value is certainly contextually determined, because it has a basis in the society that determines it. To the question "why contemporary prose?" the answer is obvious - this period is a time of great shifts in literary and linguistic written conventions. As the period of advances in printing technology provides authors with a wide range of possibilities, it follows that the phenomena we aim to describe are mostly found in the works of the proposed era.

Prose writers usually strive to create plausibility, so no literary device should disturb the reader's attention considerably. Written and graphic elements are combined to form what Sadokierski calls a hybrid text (Sadokierski 2010: 3). She does not refer to the hybrid novels which represent a genre mix, but to the ones where graphic devices are integrated into the primary text. This also does not cover picture books, comics or art books, although the definition could put all of the above in the same category. Semioticians use *multimodal* because the text carries verbal and visual modules, but the term *hybrid* seems more appropriate: multimodal implies that word and image coexist on the page of a book, while hybrid implies combining words and images (or words into images) to create new content. Verbal and visual elements are intertwined in such a way that they form an aesthetic whole, i.e. the text and the image cannot be separated – the image becomes the text, and the text becomes the image. The second half of the eighteenth-century exploitation of graphic devices in novels shows that this phenomenon cannot be called new (Ibid.: 28–30). Stern's "Tristram Shandy" is probably the oldest illustration of graphostylemic deviation in novels and the most (in-)famous one that has been examined extensively. The researchers often mention the fact that William Faulkner wanted to separate the characters and chapters in "The Sound and the Fury" by requesting different colors of printed text. As that was not available in 1929, he was advised to use italics instead (Ibid.: 71). Although English literature cites Stern, Dickens and Joyce as the authors particularly interested in the expressive power of a written symbol (who also seem most successful in exercising that power), we are going to show how contemporary writers achieve extreme graphic markedness. Within the prose genre, stylistic textbooks usually deal with narrative techniques, focalization, speech and thought presentation or figures and tropes, so one might get the impression that the given contemporary novels do not belong to *belles-lettres*, but to a sensationalist phenomenon on the verge of distaste and current "consumer demand".

Graphostylemic distinctiveness in Anglo-American novels – Irvine Welsh's "Marabou Stork Nightmares", Jonathan Safran Foer's "Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close", Russell Hoban's "Riddley Walker" and Steven Hall's "The Raw Shark Texts"– was also the subject of previous explorations of the field and the detailed descriptions of procedures, methods and findings have

already been presented in several papers (see Palibrk 2014a, 2014b, 2020). Without further stylistic interpretation, in the following sections, we are going to outline only the results in order to point out the effects and determine the contemporary authors' perspective on current developments in print that make a major impact on their styles. Firstly, the analyzed novels are neither biographies nor children's books (where graphic anomalies are even expected) and all graphostylistic elements belong to the original manuscript, i.e. they do not appear or disappear in different editions. Secondly, time and again, each novel has been labeled as experimental by the audience and/or critics not simply for their form, but for a variety of reasons. The ideas are uncommon, the motifs and references are numerous, which makes each reading material too extensive for the usual reader's comprehension. An exhaustive interpretation would probably require the same amount of effort it took the authors to put everything down. This assessment may sound too harsh, but the fact that too much is expected of the implied reader remains – one needs a broad knowledge of art, culture, modern technology and science to understand all allusions or at least be persistently interested in the areas mentioned, covered or indirectly presented through their narratives. Although plot summaries could be suitable in order to fully grasp the functions of graphic devices the authors used, presenting them would lie beyond the scope of this paper. Instead, following the proverbial "A picture is worth a thousand words", every subsection will contain an image of a page from the novel, so that the results would be clearer and our explanations evident.

2.1. Marabou Stork Nightmares

MSN, p. 5

"Marabou Stork Nightmares" abounds in typographic devices, the most numerous of which are those related to the typeface, font size and the elements between typographic and ephemeral (letters, e-mails, flyers, lists and notes), those that the word processing program allows. As for the letters, italics are used to indicate the differences in monologue types, capital letters in emphasizing, and other fonts and font sizes are applied to separate the speakers and highlight points. Various ephemeral elements are used in the characterization of heroes or in an attempt to non-verbally describe specific situations in the novel. In terms of punctuation marks, the treatment of dashes and ellipsis is foregrounded as these are used to indicate the transition from one state of consciousness to another. The eye dialect is achieved by the spelling anomalies, a device used to present the Scottish dialect of English, in order to emphasize social or cultural differences between the characters. So, the characteristics of written English enabled Welsh to successfully portray the dialect of the Scottish working class. Thus, the deviations are mostly typographic. This is, after all, what leads critics to characterize the process as nifty or gimmicky. The first comment was taken from "The Guardian" and that is the only acknowledgement of graphological distinctiveness. Graphostylemes also appear in other novels by Irvin Welsh, so this feature could be considered his personal style. However unconventional it is, Welsh's novel is moderately grapho-stylistically marked, especially in comparison with the following American contemporary novels (Palibrk 2017: 180).

2.2. Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close

In Foer's novel, the two distinctive techniques are observable – typography and pictorial elements. The typographical devices refer mostly to the page layout or the presentation of text on certain pages: moving parts of the dialogue to portray specific conversational situations, blanks and text breaks that show the breakdown of communication or speech pauses, absence of text or overtyping in displaying character traits.

EL&IC, p. 278-284

All these contribute to the author's specific view of communication. Another foregrounded feature is the use of italics and capital letters in emphases. Fewer spelling deviations play a role in characterization. The previous analysis dealt only with those pictorial elements which, although inherently non-linguistic, form a whole with the text and as such cannot be left out in any

edition, because it is Foer's choice of visual elements instead of ekphrasis that calls into question both linguistic and literary vision of a "new novel".

After all, the critics labeled both Welsh's and Foer's techniques as nifty and gimmicky, but Welsh's originality and moderation did not provoke a torrent of negative comments. The justifications for Foer's magnitude and the expressiveness of Welsh's endeavor can be provided in structuralist and semiotic theory as well as in post-structuralism, which leads to the idea of the eclecticism of postmodernist literature.

2.3. Riddley Walker

A lot about Hoban's choices we learn from the preface, appendix, notes and glossary, such as the fact that he was struggling with this novel for five years, having revised it several times and then he reduced five hundred pages to two hundred and twenty. The numbers speak of quantity, but the preface author believes that this procedure is the essence of modern identity and that the phonetic "rawness" of Riddley Walker's orthography represents precisely his struggle with written language and the reader is expected to do the same (Hoban 2002: ix).

> On my naming day when I come 12 I gone front spear and kilt a wyld boar he parbly ben the las wyld pig on the Bundel Downs any how there hadnt ben none for a long time befor him nor I aint looking to see none agen. He dint make the groun shake nor nothing like that when he come on to my spear he wernt all that big plus he lookit poorly. He done the reqwyrt he ternt and stood and clattert his teef and made his rush and there we wer then. Him on 1 end of the spear kicking his life out and me on the other end watching him dy. I said, 'Your tern now my tern later.' The other spears gone in then and he wer dead and the steam coming up off him in the rain and we all yelt, 'Offert!'
>
> The woal thing fealt jus that littl bit stupid. Us running that boar thru that las littl scrump of woodling with the forms all roun. Cows mooing sheep baaing cocks crowing and us foraging our las boar in a thin grey girzel on the day I come a man.

RW, p. 2

What is immediately visible even to those unfamiliar with the English language are the numerous irregularities. From the first paragraph, one can sense the writer's intended point - to present one possibility, and how successful his attempt was can be determined by analyzing the graphological level of his "Riddleyspeak". Since this was an attempt of phonetic transcription, because Riddley writes as he speaks and hears, we can notice several changes in relation to the standard (although not always to certain varieties - e.g. Southern England dialects, Cockney and American).

As far as the writing system is concerned, in the English language, phonology and graphology are inextricably linked. While in present English

the units of the alphabet relatively successfully mark sounds (Palibrk 2017: 180), in Riddleyspeak, which is a modified version, they do not serve as a reform proposal. It follows that the recorded phonological changes must be reflected in the spelling. From a linguistic perspective, we can discuss credibility and consistency, historical validity and plausibility, but practically and in the context of a given fictional world - this version is very functional, no matter how much effort it takes to decipher. Another function is to position readers at the same level as the twelve-year-old narrator. In his grapholect the following features are marked: vowel and consonant eliding, dividing of compounds, arbitrary or more likely, creative writing of individual words (to show characters' misunderstanding or their misinterpretation of certain technical terms), compounding (especially in proper nouns and neologisms with clear connotations or satirical effects), writing numbers and certain terms is always done in digits.

In terms of punctuation and text presentation, the non-use of commas in complex sentences is specific: thoughts flow and are separated by conjunctions, and commas serve to introduce indirect speech. Thus, certain sentences, especially those that illustrate free indirect thought, are difficult to follow. However, the use of quotation marks in direct speech and segmentation in general are interesting: the novel is divided into chapters, those into paragraphs, the usual dialogues appear, folk songs (clearly divided into verses) and numbered lists. This is a common procedure for text manipulation in prose and should not be disputed. Although this meticulousness is more related to the issue of literary construction, we must note - if Riddley does not read books as they do not exist, how is it possible for him to write his story like this? However, there is a logical explanation: most likely the author felt that a denser graphostylemic form would deter readers from further decoding the text. Italics are also used in names and emphases, so again we can ask where it came from in Riddley's untrained grapholect. In any case, punctuation marks present the prosodic features of the novel's language. The potential inconsistencies in spelling and punctuation can be attributed to the skill of the young narrator, the characteristics of the narrative flow which is most similar to the conversational style, and finally, minor technical omissions. The presentation of the text is a consequence of both the technical possibilities and the writer's moderation - different choices would result in a greater amount of effort in reading, and ultimately in illegibility (Palibrk 2020: 418).

2.4. The Raw Shark Texts
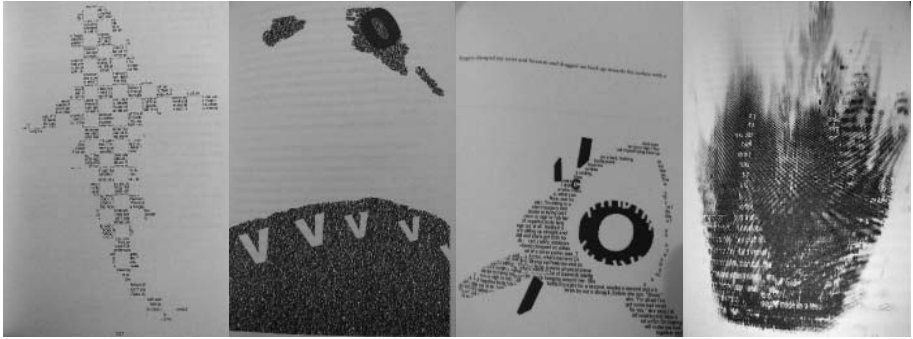
RST, p. 157, 219, 375, 421.

In this novel, the most obvious devices are typographic and somewhat pictorial. The pictorial elements include two postcards, a draft of "Orpheus", a shark hunting boat and a newspaper clipping. This does not mean that there are no more pictorial elements in the novel, on the contrary, but the above are images in a narrow sense. The rest was achieved typographically or by a word processing program.

As far as the typographic elements are concerned, almost every page contains foregrounded use of italics: to express emphasis, prosody, to achieve comic, more picturesque or irony, to show speech and thoughts or the difference between the narrator's voice and thoughts, to mark allusions. It is interesting that the upper-case letters are rarely used, even in the usual cases, and by that we do not refer to spelling restrictions. Hall uses them exclusively while naming a concept, which is conditioned by the context and only two chapter subtitles are written in upper-case bold. The epistolary elements and other messages the narrator receives are always displayed in a smaller font size. The change of both font and size is visible in a single instance of "telephone conversation". However, the most significant are the images of coders and tunnel maps and the most astonishing are sharks and other parasites of the conceptual ocean, created exclusively by letter (or another symbol) manipulation in a word processing program, all of which is supported by digital print. As Katherine Hayles explained – "represented verbally, the shark combines the morphology of an actual shark with flesh comprised of ideas, language, and concepts […] Such descriptions create homologies between the action in the diegesis, the materiality of the shark as it appears within the story and the materiality of the marks on the page […] the entanglement of print mark with diegetic representations" (Hayles 2012: 206). The dilemmas we find here are obvious to present readers, because "contemporary subjects are caught between their biological inheritance and their technological hybridity". Novels like this help us imagine a (post)human future in which language, writing and books prevail because it seems that after "The Age of Print" written documents cease to be the default medium of communication (Hayles 2011: 132).

3. *DISCUSSION*

As we could see, graphostylistic techniques related to typography, punctuation, and spelling occur in all four novels mostly with the same or similar functions, and if this is not the case, the causes are of stylistic or extralinguistic nature. Namely, capital letters and italics appear everywhere within the emphasis or to indicate the difference in speech presentation category (Welsh, Foer and Hall) or within the micro-discourse (Hoban and Foer). Characteristic typographic devices in Welsh's novel refer to the typeface, font and font size, as well as typographically derived ephemeral elements. Their functions are universal, such as characterization and non-verbal description, but also specific - to mark the protagonist's attitude towards other characters or shifts between states of consciousness. Of course, we must also consider the genre of the novel itself. By his typographic techniques, Foer focuses more on the page layout, using blanks, text segmentation and overtyping to mark pauses or inability to speak, thus demonstrating the communication between the characters. Spelling deviations are universally used to characterize, to emphasize social or cultural differences among the characters. However, specific devices include the eye dialect in MSN and grapholect in RW, both obtained through the writing system features of the English language. The use of different pictorial elements in EL&IC and RST, conditioned by the period of the novels' production, belongs to the class of specific devices as well. The use of typographically created ephemeral elements and pictorial content is not a consequence of the structural features of English, but the increasing frequency of these techniques is obvious. Their originality lies in the presentation of the third medium, the one between word and image or speech and writing (Palibrk 2017: 197). Again, the causes can be discovered in non-linguistic factors such as the epoch, i.e. the technological possibilities that were available to the writers at that particular time. For example, by composing his narrative in the manner presented above, Hall probably intended to urge contemporary readers to pay closer attention to the present state of various media –writing, novels, print and language in general.

If we take a closer look at McLuhan's statement "The medium is the message" (controversial at the time), we might observe that it marked a significant shift in perspective in culture and media theories and outlined momentous changes in new media technologies. Simplified, this thesis means that the perception of a message depends solely on its form, or that semantic and cultural content should not at all be the focus of media studies. Although the fact that a change of medium shapes our experience remains, McLuhan was afterwards heavily criticized for his technological determinism. However, the very notion "if a medium is changed, the content of the message also changes" seems to motivate contemporary writers to test the physical aspect of a novel. In her paper "Memory Pressed Flat into Text" Julia Panko also confirms that Hall's inclusion of non-textual elements challenges the traditional boundaries of the print novel, and argues that by his novel he proposes textual inscription as a preferred form of storage. The print itself, in other words, remains of primary

importance. She states that textual inscription is simultaneously embodied form and an informational representation. While the ways in which print is dependent upon digital media is recognized in RST, the novel systematically problematizes electronic and digital storage technologies, insisting on the rare storage properties of the inscribed text. These kinds of texts are presented as more durable and more material compared to the electronically stored information – they are tactile objects which can be touched and held. She feels that this materiality has several functions as a storage medium: it invests the book with value as an artifactual object, proposes a resemblance between the bodies of books and human bodies, and it further complicates the textual inscription/electronic data dichotomy. In her opinion, RST's most original contribution to the question of the textual inscription storage potential (thus of its own medium, print) is to consider how it might function as a record not only in terms of representative capacity, but also in its material form (Panko 2011: 266). Relying on McLuhan, Chartier states that the possibilities offered by digitalization underline the idea that all media are equal and that the text remains the same regardless of whether it is printed or digital. This proposition is incorrect, because the procedure by which the reader assigns meaning to a certain text, consciously or subconsciously, does not depend only on its semantic content, but on its physical form as well (Panko 2011: 284–285).

4.   CONCLUSION

To sum up, graphostylistic devices are genre-specific (in terms of poetry, prose, and drama), and the graphostylemic frequency within individual genres varies. If a novel is being analyzed, one must also keep in mind whether it is a science-fiction novel, a stream of consciousness or some other subgenre. In the novels presented here, the typographic techniques are more prominent, but the foregrounded use of pictorial elements marks a "pictorial turn" in contemporary literature, which is a direct outcome of the progress and digitalization of the press. In the new media culture, perspectives on life and our role in society are changing incessantly and so does the theoretical context from which prose fiction is read and in which it is being created.

Devices can also be divided into structurally/textually conditioned and those extra-textually, or culturally determined. In terms of structure, we can observe the text organization and the relations between its parts and units. The text organization is manifested through various typographic techniques and generally regards page layout – whether it is expected for a given genre or not, but also whether non-verbal symbols such as drawings, notes, etc. occur. The interrelation of the text as a whole with the units it consists of is reflected through punctuation and spelling, and punctuation deviations are defined by numerous manipulations, mainly to highlight the intended parts or avoid the predictable. Spelling deviations often include intentional errors in the speech presentation of characters that belong to different origin or class. Another spelling "anomaly" is eye dialect, a trait of the English grapho-phonological system and a rather challenging one to be carried out properly, due

to the relationship between English phonemes and graphemes. It is also used for characterization and achieving the comic effect.

Hence, in terms of language, we can consider universal and specific graphostylemic techniques that are systemically conditioned. As we could determine, only those derived from spelling are specific, as it allows the creation of eye dialects. The fact that such deviations make novels almost untranslatable or translatable with a loss of expressive value, speaks in favor of their distinctiveness. Others are universal and appear in literary works in most languages, and the difference is perceived in the frequency, which can be genre-dependent. Specific procedures, such as the application or creation of pictorial elements, might be considered a consequence of extra-linguistic factors i.e. context.

Despite the fact that the tradition of graphological experimentation in novels is old, some contemporary novelists use tested techniques, adding the new or available ones to express their attitudes toward the marginalized position of the print in the last two decades. Some theorists view these efforts as research into relations with other media, in order to provide yet another response to the development of information technologies. As we could see, the response is revealed through the extreme graphostylistic markedness, which makes this type of analysis inevitable. Certainly, the evaluation of novels' artistic value should be carried out within the literary theory, but we can hope that our description of the graphostylistic means delivered by contemporary Anglo-American authors and the proposed analysis appropriately illustrated the importance of similar (future) researches.

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VAŽNOST GRAFOSTILISTIČKIH ISTRAŽIVANJA SAVREMENIH ROMANA NA ENGLESKOM

Rezime

S obzirom na činjenicu da su neprestana tehnološka dostignuća u štampi izazvala velike pomake u praksi pisanja i čitalačkoj percepciji, u dosadašnjim proučavanjima problema primećeno je da se više pažnje mora posvetiti adaptaciji romana na pomenuti fenomen. Ovim radom identifikuju se svi grafostilemski postupci zabeleženi u četiri romana na engleskom jeziku, a predmet kvalitativne analize je ukupni značaj obrazaca predloženih od strane autorâ. Pošto se njihovo viđenje trenutnih tokova ogleda u izrazitoj grafostilemskoj markiranosti, ovakva analiza čini se nužnom. Cilj je opisati i klasifikovati postupke, odrediti njihove funkcije i objasniti efekte koji se njima stvaraju. U uvodnom delu bavimo se teoretskim okvirom i istorijatom problema, dok se centralni deo odnosi na pregled analiziranih romana i pojašnjenja predstavljenih primera. U završnom delu sumiraju se predložena analiza i rezultati relevantni za predmet ovog rada i iznose zaključci o najčešćim postupcima u romanima na engleskom, uslovljenim ekstralingvistickim ograničenjima, kao i razlozi važnosti sličnih proučavanja danas.

Ključne reči: grafostilemski postupci, novi mediji u romanima, digitalna štampa, grafostilematika savremenih romana na engleskom