

Volosin Margarita

Transfer, Hypertextuality and Allusion in Terry Pratchett's *Wyrd Sisters*

### **Abstract**

This thesis explores the book *Wyrd Sisters* by Terry Pratchett, published in 1980, denoting it as a palimpsest, the product of transfer, generated by means of allusion-based humor. Pratchett's work has been analyzed in this thesis so as to comprehend the nature of the connection between Pratchett's text and the texts used as its foundation, especially that of *Macbeth* (1999 [1606]) by William Shakespeare, and to determine the various processes through which this connection is achieved.

Transfer studies and other relevant theories constitute the theoretic premises of this paper. Even-Zohar (1990) developed transfer theory based on the work of Jakobson (1959). Jakobson proposed three types of translation: intralingual, interlingual and intersemiotic (Jakobson, 1959, p. 233). Even-Zohar perceived all three as part of an arch-category he named "transfer", as well as another type of translation added by Even-Zohar: translation of models without the mediation of concrete texts. Even-Zohar found resemblance and drew a parallel between all four types of translation. He postulated that both interlingual and intralingual translations should be part of transfer studies. Petrilli (2003) built her own work on Jakobson's findings, independently of Even-Zohar. In her research, Petrilli suggested a sub-division of endolingual (intralingual) translation: translation from oral verbal signs to written verbal signs, translation to another register, and translation between high and low languages. Weissbrod (2007, in Hebrew) chose to follow in the footsteps of Even-Zohar and engage in transfer studies. Weissbrod elaborated on Even-Zohar's definition of transfer as arch-category and added in-depth empirical analyses of case studies. However, the theoretic scope of this paper is not limited to the field of translation studies alone. My thesis also combines Genette's work on hypertextuality (1997); Ben-Porat (1967) and Machacek's (2007) research on allusion, namely – an embedded reference to another text; the work of Haberkorn (2007) and Dillon (2005) on palimpsest – a process of creating a new text while simultaneously borrowing elements from and destroying previous texts. In his research, Genette proposes a binary division of the means by which a text is created on the basis of an existing text, distinguishing between transformation and imitation. Ben-Porat and Machacek elaborate on the relation created between two texts through allusion and its effect on

the evaluation of the new text, as well as of the referenced texts. The palimpsest, as described by Haberkorn, constitutes another means of forming a relationship between two texts, however the nature of the relationship in this case is negative, since it entails deliberate destruction of the text(s) used as building blocks for the palimpsest.

The body of this thesis is dedicated to the analysis of closed segments of text and significant intersections, according to the method described by Toury (1977, p. 100, in Hebrew). Illustrative excerpts from the book containing explicit allusions that provoke re-evaluation of the texts alluded to were selected for this purpose. In light of the abovementioned theoretical framework, I have examined the ways in which Pratchett's work relates to Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and *Hamlet* as far as characters, structures and fundamental ideas at the core of the Shakespearean texts are concerned. In addition, I have examined the affinity between Pratchett's book and various other elements to which it alludes, pertaining to either classical or modern literature, or to cultural phenomena not limited to the realm of written texts.

My findings, listed in the concluding chapter of this paper, indicate that the relationship between Pratchett's text and the works used as its building blocks is grounded in allusions that bring about the destruction of the canon by means of incongruity and humor, according to the definitions offered by Vandaele (2002). Elements from the previous texts continue to exist within the new text although they carry a different meaning due to the altered context in which they were affixed. Thus, Terry Pratchett's book encourages reevaluation of the canonized texts themselves as well as of their underlying ideas, which were part of the literary tradition and gained further popularity through the works of Shakespeare, among others.