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**STYLISTIC PECULIARITIES OF HISTORIOGRAPHIC  
METAFICTION IN *YEAR OF WONDERS* BY G. BROOKS**

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# CONTENTS

Introduction .....	3
Chapter 1 Historiographic Metafiction .....	5
1.1 Postmodernism .....	5
1.2 Postmodern literature .....	7
1.2.1 – Intertextuality: types and forms .....	14
1.3 Historiographic metafiction .....	18
1.3.1 Stylistic peculiarities of historiographic metafiction .....	21
Results .....	25
Chapter 2 Stylistic peculiarities in Geraldine Brooks' <i>Year of Wonders</i> .....	26
2.1 Geraldine Brooks as a journalist and writer .....	26
2.2 <i>Year of Wonders</i> : summary and history of creation .....	27
2.3 Choice of vocabulary in <i>Year of Wonders</i> .....	31
2.4 Character sketches in <i>Year of Wonders</i> .....	35
2.5 <i>Year of Wonder's</i> intertextuality .....	45
Results .....	48
Conclusion .....	49
References .....	50
List of Literature used for analysis .....	53
Dictionaries and Encyclopedias .....	54

## INTRODUCTION

The research is vital because Mankind entered a new phase of its history, so-called postmodern. This new era changed people's understanding of art and literature altering the way they perceive history and themselves. Considering all the changes in the society and culture it is not possible to write as the ancestors. As a result, within this multifaced movement there appeared dozens of new genres that did aim at reflecting on the paper these changes in people's mind. Resorting to the history in attempt to answer the challenges of our times postmodernism created a genre that is a subject of interest of this paper – historiographic metafiction.

Our final objective of the research is to analyze the stylistic peculiarities of the modern historiographic metafiction.

The intermediate aims of the research include the study of theoretic sources, defining major features of historiographic metafiction, analysis of the cultural and historical context of the novel, and stylistic peculiarities of *Year of Wonders*, summing up the results of the research.

The research material is a historiographic metafiction *Year of wonders*, a novel written by Geraldine Brooks and published in 2001.

The research project of our graduation paper is to investigate stylistic peculiarities of historiographic metafiction by Geraldine Brooks and prove if this novel can be classified as such.

The research is based on linguistic methods of investigation. The main method is a semantic and stylistic analysis that includes not only the description of separate language units but their contextual usage as well. While searching examples for our practical investigation we used the method of total selection. Interpreting the examples, we applied to the method of direct observation of the object of study, componential analysis on the basis of dictionary definitions, contextual and intertextual methods, and summarizing the results.

As for theoretic sources, our investigation is based on the works of such eminent scholars and theorists of postmodernism as Linda Hutcheon and William Irwin. In

our research, we also touched upon the works of such scholars as Julia Kristeva, Irwing Howe, Ramen Sharma et al., and others.

The theoretical novelty of this investigation is that it overtly explains the link between postmodernism and historiographic metafiction and tries to trace stylistic peculiarities on the basis of the novel *Year of wonders*, which has not been an object of fundamental study so far. Thus, identifying and proving the pattern and continuity in the author's writing in the framework of historiographical genre.

The practical value of the investigation is accounted for by the possibility to use the results of the investigation in the courses Stylistics and History of the literature of Great Britain and the USA as well as to be a contribution to the Theory of Postmodernism and Metafiction in the framework of historiographic genre.

Structure and volume of the research. Our project has 52 pages and consists of an introduction, two basic units (History of Historiographic metafiction, Lexical, stylistic and extralinguistic analyses of the novel), conclusion, and references. Each unit consists of several logically interconnected paragraphs followed by a conclusion where we enumerate the results of our work concerning that very unit. The total outcome of the research is summarized in a separate conclusion. Our references consist of 47 sources represented by books of Russian and foreign scholars, issues of American newspapers, interviews, seminars, encyclopedias, and dictionaries.

## CHAPTER 1 HISTORIOGRAPHIC METAFICTION

The 20<sup>th</sup> century was an age of great changes, great accomplishments, and great losses. It burst out with the beginning of the First World War, continued with the Second World War, was stricken by fear and distrust during Cold War, ending in the early 90's with the collapse of the USSR. During that time of constant conflict and surveillance, both art and technology were booming. Different movements of art and philosophy came and passed. New theories and methods evolved or were rejected. In such uneasy realia, postmodernism was born.

### 1.1 Postmodernism

The term postmodernism appeared for the first time in the context of literary sciences by the American scientist Ihab Hassan in 1971 (Hassan, 1982). He also made a received classification of postmodernism's peculiarities. In his opinion, the literature of postmodernism is an antiliterature, because it transforms burlesque, grotesque, fiction and other literary forms and genres into anti-formes that have a charge of violence, madness and of apocalyptic that turn cosmos into chaos (Кучменко, 2013).

Although, the term postmodernism is not easy to define. As it belongs to different domains: architecture, painting, literature, music, linguistics, psychoanalysis, and many others, it is hard to indicate the precise moment of its emergence. One thing is certain: it is a clever combination of contradicting notions and values "that uses and abuses, installs and then subverts, the very concepts it challenges" (Hutcheon, 1988).

Modern German philosopher Wolfgang Iser argues that this term is as contradictory as the movement it represents. It has become omnipresent and is used every now and then, creating such hybrids as "postmodern" theology book published in the USA in 1984, as well as a book on "postmodern" traveling in 1985 and on "postmodern" patients in 1986. Likewise, debates were prompted by the date of its origin. In the US and in Europe after 1975 it was believed to have started in the 1950s. Some scholars insisted that it had started in 1875 in response to which

Umberto Eco wrote his Post Scriptum to the historiographic metafiction novel *Name of the Rose* stating that at this rate it was possible to find the category of postmodern even in the works of Homer (Вельш, 1992).

L.U. Bronzino in her article states that a number of researchers claim postmodernism to be a direct opposition to modern as it neglects and strongly criticizes its methods and traditions which contradicts absolutely the thesis of Wolfgang Iser (Бронзино, 2010).

She believes that postmodernism offers a dual type of knowledge: rational one, based on the fact and logic and the other that is not burdened by the idea of progress and concepts of industrial civilization. It is stated that the adequate date of the beginning of postmodern era would be the students' protests in France in 1968. Without fully realizing it, students called into question basic principles of the Western society organization: democracy and a liberal economy that was created on the basis of an almost a priori in its unconditional approach motto, the motto that served as a foundation for the French Republic: *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité*.

Furthermore, the author claims that modern society is a society of the spectacle. The Shakespearian phrase "All the world's a stage" (Shakespeare, 1623) can now be seen from the same perspective that it was seen in the Elizabethan era (Давыдова, 2016). The theater and life differentiate only in the amount of energy being put into the performance, theater becomes once again a microcosm of the society.

The very essence of postmodernism is a conscious pluralism, differentiation, and inclusion even of the polar notions such as purism. Postmodernism stands against monism and unification in any form. French philosopher of postmodernism Jean-Francois Lyotard is aware of the danger connected with unlimited and too primitive pluralism as permissiveness, indifference, or forthright eclectics. He writes in his book *The Postmodern Condition*: "The cause is good, but the argument is not. Consensus has become an outmoded and suspect value. But justice as a value is neither outmoded nor suspect. We must thus arrive at an idea and practice of justice that is not linked to that of consensus" (Lyotard, 1983).

Researchers of the phenomenon claim that ideologically postmodernism was founded on an important for that time philosophic theory: poststructuralism (Тарасов, 2008).

Poststructuralism emerged as an opposition to structuralism denying its central concept structure. During students' protests in 1968, a thesis that *structures do not go in the streets or build barricades* was popular. It meant that studying impersonal and objectively existing in the culture structures gives little for the understanding of social processes.

This philosophy movement is interested in a subject which seeks maximum pleasure and limitless desires. Thus, we are able to distinguish features of poststructuralism based on modern philosophic research as the emotion of doubtfulness, criticism of a subject, elements of relativism and skepticism. Claiming that everything is important and equal, the traditional categorical apparatus built on the principle of dialectical opposition makes no sense in this new philosophy.

## **1.2 Postmodern literature**

As it was mentioned above, postmodernism is an immensely variable philosophical movement, comprising dozens of different fields: from anthropology to political science. Although, in the scope of this work, we will concentrate on one of its fields, specifically on *postmodern literature*.

It is undeniably important to understand that literature and philosophy had always been going hand-in-hand since the very emergence of the human civilization. The philosophical thoughts had first manifested themselves in speech, then in literature, and only then in philosophy which headed towards having its own way, though close to that of literature.

Postmodern literature resists definition or classification as “movement”, as the postmodernism itself. Indeed, any author identified as “postmodern” tends to oppose this labeling and deny any kind of connection to postmodernism whatsoever. Truly, the merging of postmodern literature with various types of critical theory: reader-

response and deconstructionist approaches, in particular, and the rupture of the implicit bond between an author, text and reader by which its works are often characterized; this has led to pre-modern fictions such as Cervantes' *Don Quixote* (1605, 1615) and Laurence Sterne's eighteenth-century satire *Tristram Shandy* being considered with hindsight by some scholars as early samples of postmodern literature (McCaffery, 1986).

Postmodern works are seen as a response against dogmatic following of Enlightenment thinking and Modernist approaches to literature (Felluga, 2002). While there is little consensus on the precise characteristics, scope, and importance of postmodern literature, as is often the case with artistic movements, postmodern literature is commonly defined in relation to a precursor.

Particularly, in the beginning, postmodernism was regarded as a degradation of literature, compared to a grand literature of modern: Eliot, Joyce, Proust, etc. Irving Howe wrote in 1959 that modern literature was “feeble, lacking the innovative ability and striking power” (Howe, 1959). Though it was not made in the form of accusation, but rather as a statement of facts: after a success of modernism, the phase of consolidation has begun and this time of postmodern offers less opportunity to prove its individuality.

In fact, individuality is an impossible thing to achieve in literary moves, or devices nowadays. The main task of a writer now is not to show one's *originality* as all the plots were invented already millennia ago, but to provide one's own *interpretation* of another text, situation, or experience. Indeed, modern literature is closer to the Medieval epoch in this regard where the whole culture was based on providing comments on somebody's words. This tradition of commenting on the preceding works has a lot of in common with contemporary intertextual dialogues.

Not surprisingly we experienced the shift from the *kind* of art being produced to the *aesthetic* value of the produced work. A composer George Rochberg, in the liner, notes to the Nonesuch recording of the String Quartet no. 3 describes these changes as following: “I have had to abandon the notion of 'originality,' in which the

personal style of the artist and his ego are the supreme values; the pursuit of the one-idea, uni-dimensional work and gesture which seems to have dominated the aesthetics of art in the twentieth century; and the received idea that it is necessary to divorce oneself from the past” (Dixon, 1992).

Nevertheless, the postmodern literature is more complex than we are trying to conceive of it. Even though many scientists have this urge to name it anti- or trans-modern, it is not so. It does not oppose modernism at any rate, on the contrary, it includes it and even puts it in the important – though not the leading – place (Вельш, 1992).

Most of the researchers of this phenomenon agree that no matter how inclusive and diverse the postmodern literature is it has a number of specific features that distinguish this type of literature from all others such as:

- Irony
- Parody
- Intertextuality
- Conscious quotation
- Rhizome principle
- Metalanguage game
- Organizing role of rhythm
- Limitless pluralism
- Metafiction
- Poioumena
- Suspension with a help of language mask
- Entertaining and simultaneous superintelligence
- Pastiche (stylization) (Sharma, et al., 2011)

Poststructuralism is a reason of existing some of postmodernism’s prominent features. Thus, we can find a root of the “*rhizome principle*”, an inherent part of the postmodern type of thinking, in this movement of modern philosophy.

Rhizome as a concept was first introduced by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in their *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* project (1972–1980) (Deleuze, et al., 1980). Deleuze thought that every historic period is characterized by different types of modeling the world. Thus, classical epoch understood a world as a hierarchical multilayered structure based on binary oppositions. Post-structural model is that of a “bush” or “multiple root” (Deleuze, 1992). It is based on the image of a botanical rhizome: “a prostrate or subterranean root-like stem emitting roots and usually producing leaves at its apex; a rootstock” (Simpson, et al., 2017).

The rhizome opposes the coherent structure of the root-tree which traces its causality along chronological lines, looks for the origin of “things” and even further to their apex or conclusion. The rhizome, on the contrary, “ceaselessly established connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles” (Deleuze, et al., 1980). It maps culture and history as objects with multiple sources of influence with no specific genesis or root, as a “rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo” (Deleuze, et al., 1980). “The planar movement of the rhizome resists chronology and organization, instead favoring a nomadic system of growth and propagation” (Berry, et al.).

Thus, the rhizome is a perfect metaphor for the actual status of historical and cultural development. It is indeed impossible to state the accurate and objective center of culture nowadays. According to Derrida, one of the biggest thinkers of poststructuralism, “the center can be anywhere” (Derrida, 1970).

As stated earlier, *limitless pluralism* is one more specific characteristic of the postmodern artistic culture. Although, how do the representatives of this movement decide where a border is?

As Jean Francois Lyotard states: “I shall call modern the art which devotes its “little technical expertise” (son “petit technique”), as Diderot used to say, to present the fact that the unrepresentable exists. To make visible that there is something which

can be conceived, and which can neither be seen nor made visible: this is what is at stake in modern painting” (Lyotard, 1983).

Thus, the main goal of modern artwork from the point of view of postmodernists is destroying exterior and interior boundaries in art. By bringing them down, postmodernism urges the mass consumer to the forbidden, abnormal. This approach coincides with the position of poststructuralists who reject everything that is bound with rational, starting with the concept of “universal” and ending with any kind of explication that is based on the logical foundation of reality.

This type of attitude to culture and, especially, mass-culture resulted in a wide use of *parody*. Parody is an imitation of the style of artist or genre with an intentional and deliberate exaggeration in order to achieve a comic effect. It may also deflate the original by applying the imitation to a lowly or inappropriate subject (Mambrol, 2016).

Fredric Jameson stated that “the general effect of parody is, whether in sympathy or with malice, to cast ridicule” (Jameson, 1998). Jameson and Hutcheon are convinced that the parody is unavoidable for postmodernism, and vice versa: the elements of postmodernism could always be found in the works of parody (Mambrol, 2016). Hutcheon argues that “through a double process of installing and ironizing, parody signals how present representations come from past ones and what ideological consequences derive from both continuity and difference” (Hutcheon, 1989 p. 93). Hutcheon thus sets herself against the prevailing view among many postmodern theorists: “The prevailing interpretation is that postmodernism offers a value-free, decorative, de-historicized quotation of past forms and that this is a most apt mode for a culture like our own that is oversaturated with images” (Hutcheon, 1989 p. 94).

Such a willingness to play with society's contradictions means that “parody is doubly coded in political terms: it both legitimizes and subverts that which it parodies” (Hutcheon, 1989 p. 101); however, this position does not mean that the critique is not effective: postmodern parody “may indeed be complicitous with the

values it inscribes as well as subverts, but the subversion is still there” (Hutcheon, 1989 p. 106). Hutcheon at one point likens such an ironic position to the convention of the inverted comma:

“It is rather like saying something whilst at the same time putting inverted commas around what is being said. The effect is to highlight, or “highlight,” and to subvert, or “subvert,” and the mode is, therefore, a “knowing” and an ironic – or even “ironic” – one. Postmodernism's distinctive character lies in this kind of wholesale “nudging” commitment to doubleness, or duplicity. In many ways, it is an even-handed process because postmodernism ultimately manages to install and reinforce as much as to undermine and subvert the conventions and presuppositions it appears to challenge. Nevertheless, it seems reasonable to say that the postmodern’s initial concern is to de-naturalize some of the dominant features of our way of life; to point out that those entities that we unthinkingly experience as “natural” (they might even include capitalism, patriarchy, liberal humanism) are in fact “cultural”; made by us, not given to us” (Hutcheon, 1989 pp. 1-2).

By ironically playing with society’s contradictions, postmodern parody makes us question a range of traditional assumptions that are connected to aesthetics:

- 1) the notion of artistic originality and the cult of personality that surrounds the artist;
- 2) the assumption that subjectivity is stable, coherent, or self-determining;
- 3) the capitalist principles of ownership and property;
- 4) all contentions that meaning or identity is natural rather than artificial;
- 5) the belief that one can know history the way it really was (to echo a famous formulation of the German historian, Leopold von Ranke);
- 6) the belief that there is such a thing as a neutral or non-ideological position;  
and
- 7) the claim that one can secure an autonomous yet still effective realm for the aesthetic product, separate from either a mass audience or the mass market (Felluga, 2011).

By questioning this, postmodern parody reminds of a modernist one, which, Hutcheon states, can be found in “in the writing of T. S. Eliot, Thomas Mann, and James Joyce and the painting of Picasso, Manet, and Magritte” (Hutcheon, 1989 p. 99). Though, instead of modern, postmodern parody questions the “unacknowledged modernist assumptions about closure, distance, artistic autonomy, and the apolitical nature of representation” (Hutcheon, 1989 p. 99). It wants to obliterate distinctions between “real” and “fictional”, to incorporate mass-market forms in its critique, to which ends serve both photography and cinematography. Hutcheon states that “Postmodernism is both academic and popular, elitist and accessible” (Hutcheon, 1988 p. 44), and only because of these contradictions postmodernism can provide a successful critique.

Metafiction is a style of prose narrative in which attention is directed to the process of fictive composition (Klinkowitz, 2017). In fact, metafiction is used to show “the artificiality of art or fictionality of the fiction apparent to the reader” (Sharma, et al., 2011 p. 195). As if we are stepping back from the frame of fiction, recognizing our self-awareness of the unreality and non-existence of what is happening in the novel. “It is often employed to undermine the authority of the author, for unexpected narrative shifts, to advance a story in a unique way, for emotional distance, or to comment on the act of storytelling,” (Sharma, et al., 2011 p. 195).

The most obvious example of a metafiction work is a *poioumena*, a specific type of metafiction in which an author tells a story about the process of creation (Sharma, et al., 2011 p. 195). In numerous cases, the novel is depicting the process of creating the book, the protagonist of the story might share the name of the author and each book should have the same title. A good example of that would be a famous Anthony Burgess’ novel *The Clockwork Orange*. Such a method challenges both the tradition of the novel itself, which has proclaimed the form to reflect and represent an account of the real doings happening in the world for over two hundred years, and aesthetic theory, prevailing since first developed in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century by

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, proclaiming that the reader of such work will partake in a prolonging and believing in an illusion made by the creator willingly.

A phenomenon, tightly connected to metafiction technique, has recently experienced a renaissance and had been widely used in course of time even before introducing the term *metafiction* now flourishing in mass-culture and fanfiction. It is generally known as “fourth wall breaking”. Lately, it has become a common trend to make the characters of movies, stories, games, etc. show that they are aware of being in the fictional environment and talking directly to a spectator, thus, breaking the fourth wall between them and creating the effect of recognizing the artificiality and fictionality of the process. In some cases, this is used for showing the character’s thoughts or making comments on the situation happening at the moment, as it is actively being exploited by creators of *House of Cards* series, where the protagonist – congressman Francis Underwood – talks to the camera in order to help us understand what is on his mind.

### **1.2.1 – Intertextuality: types and forms**

Though, the most prominent feature of postmodernism literature is *intertextuality* and the concept of intertext that was also introduced by the representatives of the philosophical movement of poststructuralism. According to Merriam-Webster dictionary, intertextuality is the complex interrelationship between a text and other texts taken as basic to the creation or interpretation of the text.

The “intertext” problem has been existing for a long time. But first, it was regarded as a problem of parody, imitating or citation, allusion problem from different points of view (Застёла, 2009). The theory of intertextuality was developed recently in the 1980's of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is agreed that the theory has four major sources: the F. de Saussure's anagram theory, the theory of historical poetics by A.N. Veselovsky, teachings on the parody of J. Tynyanov, and polyphonic literature of M. Bakhtin (Денисова, 2003) (Ямпольский, 1993).

Even though the term “intertextuality” was first presented as part of the poststructuralism it is deeply rooted in the school of Russian thought. It was a book written by Russian scholar M. Bakhtin *The Problem of the Content, Material, and Form in Verbal Art* published in 1924 that inspired famous French theorist of poststructuralism Julia Kristeva to introduce this term in 1967 in her work *Bakhtine, le mot, le dialogue et le roman*. In the context of polyphonic theory, Bakhtin writes that no statement can be the first or the last, but only a link in a long chain of statements. Thus, it should be studied as one (Бахтин, 1979).

Developing Bakhtin's view on the literary language, Kristeva states that “each word (text) is an intersection of other words (texts) where at least one other word (text) can be read”. She also wrote that the “literary word” is a “dialogue between several writings” (Kristeva, 1966). By creating this theory, she opposed the New Critical principle of textual autonomy and proclaimed that a text is not able to function as a closed system or exist as a self-sufficient entity without being influenced by other texts.

Robert S. Miola states in his work *Shakespeare, Italy, and Intertextuality* that there are seven types of intertextuality (Miola, 2004). He adds that this list can be enlarged further. Miola distinguishes such types of intertextuality as:

- Revision;
- Translation;
- Quotation;
- Sources;
- Conventions and configurations;
- Genres;
- Paralogues.

Intertext has several forms of self-manifestation in the text. These are a quotation, allusion, and reminiscence. Even though all of these are closely connected and interwoven to one another, they have important distinguishers.

The quotation is the “bluntest” and the most obvious way to represent the connection of the text with a pretext. Even though this phenomenon was thoroughly studied in the past centuries, the introduction of intertextuality prompted to look at it from a new angle. Although, Nathalie Piegay-Gros thinks that its principal function – authoritativeness – was one of the reasons the quotation was first left out during the intertextual analysis (Piegay-Gros, 2002).

Unfortunately, there is no received classification of quotation, concerning their typology or division. However, one could define the most important features of quotation as clarity, relevance, and accuracy. In this case, it is easy for a reader to distinguish the author’s speech and speech of the author of the quotation without using any extra information. Finally, the quotation is a wider generic term that comprises both allusion and reminiscence.

The allusion is a more complicated form of intertextuality. The term *allusion* first appeared in the works of many European scholars in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Nevertheless, it has been studied only since the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

As it is stated in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*: “Allusion, in literature, an implied or indirect reference to a person, event, or thing or to a part of another text. Most allusions are based on the assumption that there is a body of knowledge that is shared by the author and the reader and that therefore the reader will understand the author’s referent. The word allusion comes from the late Latin *allusio* meaning “a play on words” or “game” and is a derivative of the Latin word *alludere*, meaning “to play around” or “to refer to mockingly.” (Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.)

Most of the scholars believe that the allusion’s main specific is an indirect link to other literary texts which makes a reader’s memory work. Though it does not straightforwardly manifest itself as a stylistic device in the text, allusion introduces a game element to the narration.

In the article *What is an allusion?* William Irwin investigates the allusion as a phenomenon. He states that even though this stylistic device is often treated as “a covert, implied or indirect reference” as it is defined by *Oxford English Dictionary*,

the degree of its “covertness” is a matter of debate. He writes that allusion can be not only a covert but also overt one. Irwin explains with the help of the example of a man saying “I am not Prufrock” to a woman. It may lack the deep aesthetic value, but nonetheless, it is an allusion. The reason we can consider it as such is that these references depend on something more than mere substitution of the referent, we have to make a correct association to fully understand it. “Unless I realize that Prufrock would not likely approach the young woman but would impotently wonder, “Do I dare? And, Do I dare?” I have missed the point of the allusion” (Irwin, 2001).

Irwin also contests Michael Leddy’s belief that it is easy to point to allusion on a micro level instead of the irony (Leddy, 1992). He argues that context and authorial intent can clue us both to irony and to allusion. Even though it may not be typical to claim that an entire epic poem alludes to the *Odyssey*, it is also not impossible. He elaborates further his point of view stating that an entire stanza can allude to a stanza in another poem. Imitation of the style or form of a work can occur, on the contrary, without any allusions – direct or indirect – to that work. Indeed, “not every Petrarchan sonnet need be an allusion to Petrarch” (Leddy, 1992 p. 114).

The allusion is a one-way phenomenon as we can say that Iris Murdock alludes to Shakespeare, but Shakespeare does not allude to Iris Murdock. As Ross writes in her article *Art and Allusion*: “When one artwork alludes to another <...> it is not a case of some predicate or concept referring to the two of them. Rather, one of the works refers to the other. Thus, allusion involves reference *between* two works of art” (Ross, 1981 p. 63).

In his article William Irwin states that for an allusion to being present the author must:

1. Intend to allude;
2. Use words or structures that can be recognized as alluding (Irwin, 2001 p. 290).

Although the audience's reaction is an important constituent of recognizing the allusion, it should not be recognized as one in the text to actually *be* one. Sometimes a reader may even assume that this is an allusion even though it has never been an author's intention in the first place which is one of the basic requirements of allusion to exist. The other problem is when a reader "fills in" the blank in another manner that an author intended. It means that he or she has failed to understand the allusion. As Carmela Perri suggests, "in allusion, the referent must be recognized, and the relevant aspects of its connotation determined and applied" (Perri, 1978 p. 292).

The last of the forms through which intertextuality manifests itself in the text, thus, showing the connection between texts, directly or indirectly, overtly or covertly, is *reminiscence*. The reminiscence may be defined within the Russian literary studies tradition as "non-literal reproduction – involuntary or intentional – of other structures, words, that reminds us of another work" (Усачева, 1974). Thus, if we base on this definition, every inaccurate quotation is a reminiscence. Morozov marks that it targets reader's memory and associative perception (Морозов, 1985).

Other scholars define this phenomenon in a wider manner, they also include plot borrowing, the introduction of the characters, some previously created works, parodies, etc. As Khalizev defines it, "reminiscence, these are images of literature in the literature" (Хализев, 2009).

Even though allusion and reminiscence may seem to be alike because of their functions and peculiarities, the crucial difference between the former and the latter is that the allusion presents a reference to a real well-known historical or literary fact, while the reminiscence is an abstract image or memory that is reflected in the author's works in general or in a specific one.

### **1.3 Historiographic metafiction**

Linda Hutcheon, the Canadian scholar and researcher of contemporary literature, was the first one to introduce the term *historiographic metafiction*.

It is important *how* she defines postmodernism in her book *A Poetics of Postmodernism*, she writes that it is “fundamentally contradictory, resolutely *historical*, and inescapably political” (Hutcheon, 1988 p. 4). She also adds that the contradictions inherent to postmodernism “are certainly manifested in the important postmodern concept of “the presence of the past” (Hutcheon, 1988 p. 4).

Although, this “presence of the past” given as a title to the 1980 Venice Biennale is not a nostalgic return. One should understand that postmodernism does not bow down before the past, nor does it eulogize it. As Linda Hutcheon put it in her book “it is a critical revisiting, an ironic dialogue with the past of both art and society, a recalling of a critically shared vocabulary of architectural forms” (Hutcheon, 1988 p. 4).

Historiographic metafiction refers to certain novels in her words which are both incredibly self-reflexive and, at the same time, lay claim to historical events and personages. These are novels that reveal a theoretical self-awareness of metahistorical and metafictional processes and that have made the foundation for a revisiting, reviewing, and reworking of the forms and contents of the past. This category of novels includes *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, *Name of the Rose*, *The French Lieutenant’s Woman* or *Ragtime*.

One can think about modernist historical fiction in these terms of course. Works like *Absalom, Absalom* written by William Faulkner, and *Orlando* written by Virginia Woolf, can be viewed as works of a historiographic metafiction in their amalgamations of fact and myth.

Historical fiction has always played with official written history in various ways. As Dickens rewrites a passage from Sir Thomas Carlyle to put it into his work *A Tale of Two Cities*. Or the author of *Jicoténcal*, the Spanish language anonymous historical novel written in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, incorporating entire passages, word for word, into the text of his conquest narrative. In historiographic metafiction, though, as Hutcheon puts it, certain known historical details are deliberately falsified, in order to foreground the possible mnemonic failures of recorded history

acquiring the constant potential for both deliberate and inadvertent error. What she is suggesting, in other words, is that history, according to writers who are creating historiographic metafiction, is often liable to lapses in memory. It often puts certain parts of the past into a kind of state of oblivion, that can only be remembered through fictional recreation.

The clearest examples of historiographic metafiction in the modern period are postmodern historical novels that began to appear in the 1970s, and throughout the '80s and '90s. Like Salman Rushdie's novel *Midnight's Children* that has very powerful political implications and statements. Published in 1981, *Midnight's Children* takes place in India and Pakistan in the decades following India's independence in 1947. Rushdie places his narrator Saleem at the epicenter of each major historical event, in the 30-year wake of independence, like Woolf's and Faulkner's protagonists, Rushdie sullenly self-reflexively interprets his own history, as well as India's history at large.

“Who what am I? My answer. I am everyone everything whose being in the world affected was affected by mine. I am anything that happens after I've gone which would not have happened if I had not come. Nor am I particularly exceptional in this matter. Each I, every one of the now 600 million plus of us, contains a similar multitude. I repeat for the last time, to understand me, you'll have to swallow the world” (Rushdie, 1981 p. 535).

Saleem undercuts the idea, that history can be known with any authority or continuity, unfiltered by our conscious and unconscious shaping. The past, in the end, is irretrievable, and therefore any recreation is by necessity fictional. Celine imagines in the Being an alternative to history, not as the facts handed down by the government, or official history, but as something to be recreated, and thus something that justifies the writing of historical fiction. Rushdie gestures at the possibility of writing a new time into being to escape the violence and oppressive continuum of history through a rupture with the past.

And the technique or mode for this kind of self-reflexive approach to history is historiographic metafiction. It is a tendency we see in many very different historical novels in the postmodern era, particularly in the last 30 or 40 years. For example, certain of Toni Morrison's novels, like *Beloved* and *A Mercy*, which construct a highly skeptical literary approach to the historiography of slavery and its memorialization. Or Thomas Pynchon's *Against the Day*, set in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, in locations around the world, and enlisting numerous narrative styles to question the authority of chronological narratives. And traditional models of realism. Or Ishmael Reed's *Mumbo Jumbo*, a 1972 novel set during the 1920's that blends history and imagination to create a new kind of history of the medieval knight's templar through the lens of modern music and religion.

### **1.3.1 Stylistic peculiarities of historiographic metafiction**

As stated earlier, historiographic metafiction is concerned with the question of how we imagine the history, with objectivity and subjectivity of our knowledge of the past and with the representation of the past how the author imagines it.

Means of representation of the historical epoch have not been changed since Sir Walter Scott who is revered as the father of the historical novel genre. Historiographic metafiction shares with historical novel some means of recreating the picture of the past on its pages such as:

- Character sketch
- Archaic words
- Artifacts
- Setting and atmosphere
- Historic background

The very first feature of historiographic metafiction genre is a specific setting, i.e. time and space. The task of the writer is to transport the reader in the very first paragraphs into the past. For example, in one of the most prominent and best-sold worldwide example of historiographic metafiction – Umberto Eco's novel *The*

*Name of the Rose* – the novel starts with the author telling about the authenticity of the manuscript by claiming that it was a work of German-speaking monk who lived in the 14<sup>th</sup> century travelling with his mentor through Italy. Thus, Eco is establishing the timeframes and indicates the place where the action is taking place. The writer has to do a big amount of research in order to make readers believe in his created world and there are some means that help the author to do it.

Firstly, there are various kinds of artifacts that were used by people in the epoch the novel is set. The author resorts to brief or lengthy descriptions of apparel, transport, little rituals that constituted the customs and traditions of people living years or centuries ago, food, furniture, housing, toiletries, entertainment, landscape, architecture, conveyances, sounds, smells, tastes, and hundred other aspects. By mentioning them throughout the novel, the author is able to create the necessary setting, helping readers to better imagine the scene of crowded Roman town or sullen muddy English village of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

Secondly, one the most straightforward way to make the picture even more colorful and veritable along with enumerating the artifacts is to use archaic words or dialectisms of certain territory. It may not serve only as a characteristic of a character depicted as an “outsider” or “trespasser”, but also it helps to recreate supposed dialogues that could have taken place in the past thus contributing to general plausibility and prolonging of illusion created by the author with the help of expressions and words that were used only at that time. Text stylization also takes place if the author wants to bring it closer to the “original”. What was done by Umberto Eco in the Prologue to *The Name of the Rose*:

“In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. This was beginning with God and the duty of every faithful monk would be to repeat every day with chanting humility the one never-changing event whose incontrovertible truth can be asserted. But we see now through a glass darkly, and the truth, before it is revealed to all, face to face, we see in fragments (alas, how illegible) in the error of the world, so we must spell out its faithful signals even

when they seem obscure to us and as if amalgamated with a will wholly bent on evil” (Eco, 1994 p. 11).

Undoubtedly the plot is a central part of any novel, but the plot of historiographic metafiction is different from that of the postmodern novel by its inextricable bond with some historical events taking place at the time. For example, in the novel mentioned before, political strike and military actions of Louis IV the Bavarian against Pope John XXII for the throne of Rome and notorious, tense period of Avignon Papacy serves as an explanation for the protagonist’s journey to Italy and his traveling with an elder Franciscan monk. Joseph Heller’s *Catch-22* can be another vivid example of a postmodern historical novel where historical events dictate the author the conduct of characters, situations that could have taken place and the setting itself. All of that is conditioned by war, the life of the characters goes by and ends because of the war, while airmen are desperately trying to maintain their sanity and save their lives in the meat grinder of military action. Although these events are not represented as an immutable truth, there is no longer innocence and certainty of direct reference of the historical novel, as both literature and history are asserted as human constructs in the context of metafiction (Hutcheon, 1989 p. 4). In that way, historiographic metafiction is not fooling readers and, what is more important, itself into believing in the irreproachableness of its descriptions and narrative. These works are not documentary realism, they tell us about our *understanding* of the picture of the past.

Another important way of creating the historiographic metafiction is the character sketches. Usually, protagonists of such novels are ordinary real people as Franciscan friar William of Baskerville or Captain Yossarian who lived or could have lived in the historical setting. As all people are the product of their environment, naturally, those characters are shaped by the setting, otherwise, it would undermine the foundation of deliberate illusion as something improbable or odd.

However, historiographic metafiction has some features that were inherited from the postmodern literature. Linda Hutcheon, in her work *Historiographic Metafiction: Parody and Intertextuality of History*, argues that intense reflexivity and parodic intertextuality are the main features which serve to “distinguish this paradoxical beast from traditional historical fiction” (Hutcheon, 1989 p. 3). The terms intertextuality and parody both have already been deconstructed and explained earlier in this work, so we would not stop on it here. The overt intertextuality of historiographic metafiction signals us of this textualization of the present, as well as the past. Hutcheon writes that: “The reader is forced to acknowledge not only the inevitable textuality of our knowledge of the past but also both the value and the limitation of that inescapably discursive form of knowledge, situated as it is “between presence and absence” (Hutcheon, 1989 p. 8).

This coincides with the recent historiography theory’s point of view on the narrative nature of history writing which means that we cannot possibly “know” the past, only through accounts, notes, texts that were made by contemporaries, historians, writers, etc. Narrativized history makes us reshape and rethink any kind of material in the light of the present events and challenges, thus, helping us interpret a historiographic metafiction set in any century to reflect modern issues. Thus, intertextuality is one of the pillars on which stands historiographic metafiction.

## **Results**

In this chapter, we identified the origin of historiographic metafiction which is one of the techniques of postmodern literature. As we can see, it is impossible to divide postmodern and this type of metafiction. It is merely part of a bigger movement which is characterized by limitless pluralism, rhizome principle, overt intertextuality, and parody. Historiographic metafiction uses and abuses these principles in order to distance itself from its predecessor – historical novel. Despite the seeming likeness and common means of expression, historiographic metafiction shows no longer incredible self-certainty in its infallibility of presenting the events nor does it eulogize the past turning it into the romantic story. It is aware of impossibility to “know” of the past and is using historical decorations and events to mirror the issues and challenges we face today.

## CHAPTER 2 STYLISTIC PECULIARITIES IN GERALDINE BROOKS' *YEAR OF WONDERS*

### 2.1 Geraldine Brooks as a journalist and writer

Geraldine Brooks is an Australian American journalist and novelist born in Sydney the 14<sup>th</sup> of September 1955. She grew up in inner-west suburbs of Ashfield. Her father and her mother were both connected with journalism. Her father Laurie Brooks became a newspaper sub-editor after finishing his big-band singer career and her mother Gloria was a public relations officer with radio station 2GB in Sydney. Geraldine Brooks attended a secondary school for girls at Bethlehem College and later the University of Sydney. After graduation, she was a newcomer reporter for the Sydney Morning Herald and, winning a Greg Shackleton Memorial Scholarship, she moved to the United States to complete in 1983 a master's degree at New York City's Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism.

She worked as a foreign correspondent for The Wall Street Journal, where she covered crises in the Mideast, Africa, and the Balkans. In 1990, she received the *Overseas Press Club's Hal Boyle Award* for "Best Newspaper or Wire Service Reporting from Abroad". In 2006, she was awarded a fellowship at Harvard University's Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study. Both she and her older sister Darleen Bungey have become writers.

Brooks' first books were non-fiction: *Nine Parts of Desire*, published in 1995 and later revised in 2007, was based on her experience living among Muslim women in the Middle East. She had a hard time being a reporter in Islamic countries, and as Sian Cain, a reporter from *The Guardian* newspaper, writes, she was "shunned by Muslim men for interviews, refused access to politicians and denied opportunities that were offered readily to male colleagues" (Cain, 2016). She made use of these problems getting in touch with women of different social classes, focusing on telling their personal stories. This book became an international bestseller and was translated into 17 languages.

The next one, entitled *Foreign Correspondence* and published in 1997, was a memoir about her childhood, adult travel adventures, and experience as a foreign correspondent. For this book, she won the *Nita Kibble Literary Award* for women's writing.

During her writing career Brooks also wrote five fiction novels. She received a Pulitzer Prize for her second novel *March* in 2006; although she was eligible for the prize only due to her American citizenship, she is the first Australian author to receive it. This book was inspired by Louisa May Alcott's novel *Little Women* and tells a chronicle of wartime service for the "absent father" of the March girls.

Her first historical novel, *Year of Wonders*, was published in 2001 but it is not the only novel based on historical events that she has written. The second one was *Caleb's Crossing*, a story about the first Native American graduate of Harvard University; which proved once again Brooks' urge to meticulous research and drive to give authenticity to her storytelling. Her recent historical novel titled *The Secret Chord*, a rich and utterly absorbing novel about the life of King David, was issued later in 2015 and was based on a life of the biblical king in the period of the Second Iron Age.

In *Backstage at Pen & Podium* interview Geraldine Brooks said herself that she is a big fan of poetry (Brown, 2014), thus her writings sometimes recall a poem in a prose and can be described as "overwhelming lyrical fiction" (Cain, 2016). In the article mentioned before Sian Cain also writes about her style: "In her fiction, she returns most frequently to the beauty and blood found in religion, exploring faiths in a quiet, reverent voice that recalls Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead*. She also writes often about nature, painting landscapes of brutal, untamed beauty reminiscent of Annie Proulx" (Cain, 2016).

## **2.2 Year of Wonders: summary and history of creation**

The novel that is of interest to us in the scope of this study is entitled *Year of Wonders*. The book came out in 2001 and was published by British publishing

house Penguin Books. It was the first novel of the author and came into its own right from the start. Despite the fact, that Brooks did not receive any prize for this work, it was chosen as both *New York Times* and *Washington Post* Notable Book.

Brooks described during the numerous interviews the beginning of this breathtaking story, which is, in fact, a mini-novel itself. Brooks likes to quote Ernest Hemingway's famous saying on that occasion. He said that an idea for a novel can be something one is lucky enough to overhear, or it can be the wreck of one's life. Even though, the origin of *Year of Wonders* was more former than the latter.

It was ten years before the publishing of the book that she had become a novelist, even though she did not realize that at the time. They were hiking with her husband in England's Peak district taking a break from her real job at the time, which was a foreign correspondent for the Wall Street Journal. During this rambling in the Peak district, they saw a sign that had the name *Eyam*. An underneath of the town's name it said, *Plague Village*. It was not the most common name to attract visitors, thus, they walked to the village.

There they explored the exhibition in the Parish Church of Saint Lawrence that showed and told what happened in the year 1665 when bubonic plague brought with the infected bolt of cloth came to this little village. When the village succumbed to the plague, it was the only one to quarantine voluntarily itself and oppose the spreading of the infection throughout the surrounding villages and towns. The first character emerged when the couple went to the graveyard. There they found the stone marking the gravesite of the minister of the village's wife at the plague time.

She explains why she was so amazed by these events in a seminar given within the course *War, Plague and Witches* presented and made by professor Holsinger: "[T]he engraver had botched the inscription. You could see where he'd misspelled the name and then somebody had had to come and chip away at the stone and take out the wrong letters and insert the right ones. And I just looked at that little detail and suddenly I was transported by that detail back to that time. Because from that detail, I could sense the story that, by the time the minister's wife died, probably the

accomplished stonemason was himself dead. And probably it was his young apprentice who tried to make her stone. And he'd got it wrong. And then I started to think about all the other people in the village and what that loss would be like as one skill after another was lost to you. And you found yourself not only coping with the tragedy of the deaths of your neighbors and your family but also having to do things that were unfamiliar to you. Who's bringing the crops in? Who's shoeing the horses? All those little details. And so, this story just took a powerful hold on my mind” (Holsinger, 2016).

Ten years had passed since that trip to *Eyam*, and after having her first child, she decided to step down from a position of a foreign correspondent in hot zones. At that time, she started to think about that earlier story and that catastrophe accounts which she witnessed in the Parish Church. She was thinking non-fiction first because she was in the fact business, as a journalist and besides, she had written two books of non-fiction before that. But after she had started working on a book, she found that there was hardly anything that could be considered as first-hand common folk's evidence of the catastrophe because the people were mostly illiterate, they were lead miners and they were shepherds and they left no records of their experience during that year. There was a handful of letters from the Rector and wills, as well as there were documents about the material culture of the place, but nothing that felt like living through that experience.

She returned to Eyam to do her research and was lucky to find that local authorities had built a museum dedicated to the pestilence that had succumbed the hamlet. There was a great deal of information about the plague, what people's beliefs about the plague were and information about lead mining and how one actually did it. Therefore, she had a great start for working on the book.

The novel tells us a story of a young woman called Anna Frith. Before the plague comes to their village she is a widow of a lead miner who has died in the accident leaving her nursing two children alone. As she has lost the bread-winner, she has to work at the rectory and provide occasional service at the Hall, when there

is a need for extra hands. While working at the rectory, Mrs. Mompellion teaches her, and Anna becomes her protégée, learning how to read and write.

One day a journeyman tailor called George Viccars comes to her house looking for lodging. He is a fine man in his late twenties who has seen the world and gone places. Finally, he comes to their village to secure the post with Anna's neighbor Alexander Hadfield, who has a surfeit of orders to fill. Living under one roof with the protagonist, Mr. Viccars brings joy and laughter into Anna's house but only for a short time.

Once Mr. Hadfield has ordered a box of cloth from London which causes a great excitement in the village. On arriving, it appears that the parcel is damp, therefore Mr. Hadfield asked his assistant, Mr. Viccars, to see to its drying contriving lines in the garth of their cottage and slinging the fabrics out to air. Shortly, after that Mr. Viccars shows first symptoms of illness – his head pounds, the ache is probing his bones and he feels a grudging of ague throughout a day.

He dies in few days and Anna burns all his belongings that she still has in a fire. Unfortunately, it does not stop the plague from spreading. While butchering the hogs her son Jamie and one of her neighbors, Edward, are playing with rats. Children die as well as dozens of other people in a matter of days after that. People, driven by fear and despair, claim Gowdies to be witches and murder them. To raise the spirits of villagers and shepherd them through the time of trials, the rector, mustering people, proposes them not to inflict a pestilence on any other hamlets and crofts by spreading the seeds of the Plague but to give the oath to rest in the village to prevent it. All the villagers have agreed to that, although, the Bradfords flee the Hall and go to Oxford, despite the rector's expostulations.

When the village is left without their wise women and is cut off from the rest of the world by the Sunday Oath, Mrs. Mompellion and Anna have to undertake the responsibility for women in labor and ill people tending them as best as they can. Although being struck by the number of dead, Anna starts to take opium which she has stolen from Elinor's whisket. Shortage of a drug makes her go to Gowdies's

cottage where she bumps into Elinor and tells her about her goal. In turn, Mrs. Mompellion unveils the mystery of her infertility, telling how she eloped and was ruined.

They spend much time in this cottage further on, digging the roots, picking the herbs. They make oil, spirits, syrups, and decoctions in attempt to fortify the health of still living. To avoid contamination, as spring comes, the rector closes the church giving sermons in the Cucklett Delf, where people could stand without infecting each other. The Black Death is not the only trial for Eyam. The Miner's Court judges Anna's father for an un-attempted murder and theft after which he dies in the cold. The heretic teaching is spreading Eyam, delivering a dire blow to the minister's reputation, and provoking people to fast, harm themselves and wear sackcloth. Though, the biggest ordeal is Aphra's madness that takes Elinor's life and makes her commit suicide shortly after that. This breaks Michael Mompellion, causing him to neglect all his friends and duties while staying in his room until Anna rides Anteros, Mr. Mompellion's horse. Rage brings him back to life and Anna spends a night with him. After learning that he never had a wedding night with Elinor, she rushes to the graveyard, full of remorse that she stole him from her. Near in the church, she meets Elizabeth Bradford, with whom she goes to help her mother deliver a child. Anna saves the child from death as well as from her sister who does not want a bastard to live. Then, Anna takes the child from Eyam and settles in the Oran, home of the Andalus Arabs, where she raises the girl and her own daughter, Elinor.

### **2.3 Choice of vocabulary in Year of Wonders**

To create the atmosphere and setting of the 17<sup>th</sup>-century village Brooks uses several means which we enumerated in the previous chapter, e.g. introducing artifacts, descriptions of day-to-day life, and usage of archaic, dated, historical, obsolete, informal, or British dialectal words.

The depicting of village realia in an essential part of the novel which we could analyze through distinguishing some major semantic fields. One of the fields we can find is connected to household and agriculture. Brooks pays a lot of attention to daily routine description and resorts to the words like *hay, cartload, snath, beastings, pail, to till, eaves, hearth, wool-clip*, etc. Which is one of the central semantic fields since the protagonist has to deal with it every day throughout her life in Eyam and her story would not be full without this insight into her everyday occupations.

Another major semantic field we may find in the novel is connected with the names of plants which are very important in terms of describing not only Anys', Eleonor's or villagers' knowledge of herbs, but also witchcraft and medicine where poultices and potions were made from herbs. It comprises words as *timothy, dandelion, lavender, forget-me-not, larkspurs, mallow flowers, rue, chamomile, thistle, arrowroot*, and others. The number of herbs and flowers could be overwhelming but all of that was and is used in natural home remedies. The herbs and roots were especially important for the people of Eyam since they had no barber-surgeons or physicians, i.e. representatives of official physic to rely upon.

Although, the treatment of a man was considered to be less potent than aid of God at that time, thus, another semantic field, crucial to the novel, is connected with the Church: *sexton, Bible, pastor, rectory, Papal, pray*, etc. which had an enormous influence on people under such circumstances.

*Year of Wonders* is filled with archaic, dialectal words and the author is no stranger to informal words and expressions. One can see the list of archaic words in Table 1.

Table 1 – Archaic words used in the novel

№	Word	Definition and Etymology	Context
1.	sennight, less commonly se'nnight	week, from Old English <i>seofon nihta</i> – seven nights	The courtyard hadn't been swept in a <i>sennight</i> .

№	Word	Definition and Etymology	Context
2.	steed (arch. or literary)	a horse being ridden, from OE <i>stēda</i> – stallion	...such a fine stallion was no fit <i>steed</i> for a priest.
3.	handfast	a contract or covenant especially of betrothal or marriage, from OE <i>handfæst</i>	...too young to be <i>handfasted</i> .
4.	bid (arch. or lit.)	invite smb to do smth, from OE <i>biddan</i> – ask	...Mrs. Mompellion <i>bade</i> me borrow any book I chose.
5.	break one's fast	to eat breakfast, from the Middle English phrase <i>breken fast</i>	Mr. Mompellion <i>broke his fast</i>
6.	slattern	a dirty, untidy woman, probably from German <i>schlottern</i> – to hang loosely, slouch	How dare you smirk at me, you insolent <i>slattern</i> !
7.	garth	a yard or garden, ME, from Old Norse <i>garthr</i> – yard	...as I came from the <i>garth</i> .
8.	Mistress	used a title prefixed to the name of a married woman, Mrs; ME <i>maistresse</i> , from Anglo-French <i>mestresse</i>	If you please, <i>Mistress</i> Frith...
9.	morrow, morn	morning, the next day; ME <i>morn</i> , <i>morwen</i>	Why do you not seek advice on the <i>morrow</i> ...
10.	nigh	near, from Old English <i>nēah</i>	...it was <i>nigh</i> to noon...

Evidently, by using these archaic words the author is trying to give us a sense of the 17<sup>th</sup>-century speech which was rich in expressions that we may see now in the writings of that period or dictionaries, e.g. in Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* "Good *morrow*, sweet Hero" (Act III, scene iv) or *As You Like It* "...if the interim be but a *se'nnight*, Time's pace is so hard that it seems the length of seven years" (Act III, scene ii). The use of such vocabulary also contributes to describing the time of narration established by Brooks, i.e. the year of 1666. It also gives more plausibility and adds exotica in the reader's eyes if the less modern language is being used. But as we know the author applies dialectal words as well.

It is interesting to note that Brooks tries to use mostly the words of Germanic origin over those of foreign origin (mostly French and Latin) in Anna's and other villagers' speech. On the contrary, the Mompellions use mostly elaborate and

sophisticated vocabulary which overtly shows their good education and knowledge they possess. As the story unfolds, we may notice a shift in Anna's speech to favoring more Romanized vocabulary apparently under the influence of her friend, Elinor. The list of dialectal British words which the author resorts to is presented in Table 2.

Table 2 – Dialectal British words used in the novel

№	Word	Definition and Etymology	Context
1.	croft	a small farm worked by a tenant, from OE; akin to Middle Dutch <i>krocht</i> – hill	My father's <i>croft</i> had ever been a joyless place.
2.	boose	a stall for a horse or a cow, ME <i>boos</i> ; akin to Old English <i>bōsig</i> – cow stall	So I drove her inside and fitted it up as her <i>boose</i> ...
3.	brawn	the flesh of a boar, ME, from Anglo-French <i>braon</i> – flesh, muscle, of Germanic origin	...serving of oatcake and <i>brawn</i> was the only meal...
4.	tup	a ram, ME <i>tupe</i>	...like a collie facing down an unruly <i>tup</i> .
5.	whisket	a straw provender basket, probably of Scandinavian origin	...all the fabric scarps from Mr. Viccars's <i>whisket</i> .
6.	summat	somewhat	...one who knows <i>summat</i> more than we do...
7.	her'n	hers, her own	...in that croft of <i>her'n</i> ...
8.	fair-clemmed	very hungry, cold, or miserable, ME <i>clemmen</i> – to pinch	...Tom would be <i>fair-clemmed</i> ...
9.	bavin	a bundle of brushwood or kindling used for fuel or in fences or drains	...towers from the <i>bavins</i> ...

A vast number of dialectisms were used by the author to establish in the mind of the reader not only the *time* of narration that can be easily seen on the pages of the preceding chapters, such as *Leaf-Fall, 1666* or *Spring, 1665*; but a *place* of narration as well. Considering the fact, that a handful of people have heard the name of the village *Eyam* it would have been a challenging task to place the village without dialectal words generously provided by Brooks. Even though many of these words

belong to dialectal British stock, it is important to understand that some words, such as *nowt* (meaning: nothing) or *bing* (a heap of metallic ore), are of Northern English dialect specifically, which may help us locate the hamlet on the world map having in disposal only a good dictionary. Another special vocabulary stratum consists of informal, chiefly British, words, the examples of this word type can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3 – Informal words used in the novel

№	Word	Definition	Context
1.	tumble	have sexual intercourse with smb	...his idea of lovemaking was a swift and sweaty <i>tumble</i> ...
2.	to nick	to steal	...they had <i>nicked</i> his stowe...
3.	prick	penis	...he might have put his <i>prick</i> .
4.	snot	nasal mucus	At least my nose isn't stuffed with <i>snot</i> ...
5.	pot	drink	I have said that he loved a <i>pot</i> .
6.	summat	somewhat	...one who know <i>summat</i> more than we do.

The use of such vocabulary is conditioned by the need to describe not only nobility or a pastor who can use hexasyllable words and are able to discern *elicit* from *illicit* but common folk as well. They did not use subtle language upon which one may stumble in Francis Bacon's or Christopher Marlo's works but, on the contrary, preferred strong language rich in scathing irony and double-entendre jokes.

#### 2.4 Character sketches in Year of Wonders

Characters are important constituents of a modern novel that guide us through the piece of literature, make us sympathize and watch the history through their eyes. In the novel *Year of Wonders*, we may find a huge quantity of characters, the majority of whom are secondary ones that may show up only once in the narrative.

The abundance of characters makes us understand what the 17th-century village society was like. It is unthinkable nowadays to know all the inhabitants of the city or even your neighbors, so this avalanche of *dramatis personae* makes a reader experience the lifestyle of these people who become more familiar to you by the end of the book than the people who live next to you in one block. Although, the biggest impact on the reader is made by the protagonists and some prominent secondary characters who are Anna Frith, a single mother working as a servant in the rectory and the Hall; Mr. Mompellion, the rector of the village; his wife, Mrs. Mompellion; and Anys Gowdie and her aunt, the wise women living in Eyam.

Like many other authors, Brooks had complications with the protagonist at first. She could not find a suitable person who would have a solid historical background and simultaneously would be able to have access to people of different professions, origin, background so that would be plausible and credible, i.e. someone from domestics. Evidently, they were absolutely invisible, thus, nobody made any records about them. Therefore, the author decided to invent her character.

Brooks explained in the seminar mentioned before that it was hard to create her narrator, a servant woman Anna Frith. The biggest challenge – as the author tells – was to hear her “voice”. As I mentioned earlier, there were practically no documentary evidence that common people would create, e.g. letters, books, accounts, etc. because of their illiteracy. However, she found a way to get a picture of her and her character through the verbatim transcripts of the 17<sup>th</sup>-century courts which are the best example of a commoner’s speech at the time. Women were always being hauled in the court. In England, it was the assizes or the traveling magistrates’ courts. They were meticulous record keepers; therefore, now it is an invaluable and, probably, the only possibility to hear women speaking for themselves since that time. Women were often called in for terrible crimes such as being a scold which meant that you would have been overheard criticizing a man in public. For example, a woman was accused of being a scold because she had been overheard berating her building contractor for being overdue on the work and

shoddy on the work and over budget, which can remind us of similar cases in our times as well.

Despite the fact, that we think that women in the 17<sup>th</sup> century were not so smart as they are now, or they did not understand their position in the society and the wrongs of it, it was not true at all. As we see from these charges and verbatims, women stood up for themselves and were very outspoken about their position on the matter. That is why Anna Frith may seem a bit ahead of her times and sounds the way she does.

At the beginning of the novel, it is a young woman of eighteen years old who has two children and tries to make her living working for two houses. It was not easy for her to lose her husband and recalling that time she says: “Since then, I’ve tended so many bodies, people I loved and people I barely knew. But Sam’s was the first”.<sup>1</sup>

She is shown to be an open-minded person whose judgment was clearly ahead her times, thus, talking to Mr. Viccars, her lodge, she reacts to the story about a king being pickpocketed in the whorehouse quite unusually for a person who was raised in Puritan tradition. She is not apt to blame the lady in question for choosing this way of life and says that before she blamed her, she would like to know what made this person lead such a life. “If you are drowning in a sewer, your first concern might be that you are drowning, not how vile you smell”<sup>2</sup>. Then, she demonstrates an uncommon at that time tolerance and understanding to Anys, she “admired her for listening to her own heart rather than having her life ruled by others’ conventions”<sup>3</sup>, instead of hating and obviously envying her for having unknown for many women freedoms. Obviously, she was a shrewd and emphatic person to realize that the well-being of the whole village rested on Anys and her aunt’s work.

Although her open-mindedness stretched even further, when hearing Anys’ blasphemous and overtly triggering remarks, she was not labeling her a sinner.

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<sup>1</sup> Year of Wonders, Geraldine Brooks, p. 26

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 45

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 72

Curious and insightful from the birth she learned from her and even used these spells that wise women had used to help a woman in labor and simultaneously to calm her down. Her willingness to learn and intelligence are also shown in her attempts at teaching herself how to read and write. Anna recalls the episodes when she learned by heart and cited the whole snatches of liturgy or when she was “trying to copy the forms of the letters inscribed upon the tombstones”<sup>4</sup>.

She has become feisty and resolute during the hard times she experienced. The tragedies of her life hardened her and made her battling for her own existence with no regard for the status or wealth of a person. Through Anna’s image, we see that the whole village has transformed and discarded the previous importance of position in the local society since the closeness of Death taught them that there is little distinction between a dead commoner and a dead noble in the end.

We can see these metamorphoses in the very first chapter when Elizabeth Bradford of Bradford Hall shows up at the doorstep of the rectory gate requiring to speak with him at once. Although her family left as soon as the plague showed up whilst their influence and money could have helped the village, she behaves in an impertinent and arrogant manner common for the gentry as if nothing has happened.

Despite all her expectations, her ex-servant Anna overtly mocks at her while being unctuously polite, she says: “[I]t is a great surprise, and an honor un-looked for, to see you here in our village. You left us in such haste, and so long since, that we had despaired of ever more being graced by your presence.”<sup>5</sup> However, overwhelmed by pride and having little understanding Ms. Bradford hears only the words and misses the tone. Anna feels no respect for a young woman and sees no purpose in further discourse with her. She is not going to inflate her sense of self-importance or to be obsequious. “[T]imes had changed in the Bradfords’ absence, and the sooner she accustomed herself to the inconveniences of the new era the better”<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 54

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 30

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 31

Unlike many protagonists of classical idealistic historical novels, the author does not want to present her lead character as a saint. The character is round, given a complex personality that makes her more human-like, which is more characteristic for modern writings. Suffering from her solitude and death of people around her, she starts taking opium, only to be caught by Elinor. Thus, she has her moments of envy when she witnesses the Mompellions caring for each other, living together, whilst she “writhe on [her] cold and empty bed”<sup>7</sup>. Or haunted by her childhood memories of beating, she refuses to defend her father at the Court, silently looking at the crowd. We also see her gossiping and betraying Anys’ trust when she tells her friend Lib about Anys and Mr. Viccars intercourses which later will become one of the nails in Gowdie’s coffin. The complexity of human behavior in a critical situation as that presented in the novel is well shown by Anna Frith’s character. It allows us to see a real human with her weakness and faults instead of romanticized heroes of the historical novels.

The second-important character of the story is the pastor, Michael Mompellion, who appears in the very first chapter. To fully comprehend the character, it is necessary to compare him before and after the Plague that struck Eyam.

We know of his childhood from his own words and words of his wife, Elinor, who says that her family took care of Michael, and made him an apprentice to their steward where he acquired “his easiness with all manner of trades and classes of people”<sup>8</sup>. Elinor’s family sponsored his education, after taking notice of his intelligence. After finishing his study in Cambridge, he returns home only to see Elinor, frail from her long illness and remorse. He marries her soon after he takes Orders. And after some time, he becomes a pastor of Eyam. Despite his young age, he has a quick mind and a kind heart to make peace with the previous pastor and give him permission to the sermon to Puritans. He has won the respect of the people of Eyam and has good relations with them. The tolerance and understanding he preaches are brightly illustrated in his phrase “knowledge is not itself evil, it is only

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 248

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 172

the use to which one puts it that may imperil soul”<sup>9</sup> which Anna cites to Mr. Viccars.

Recognizing the signs of the Plague in Mr. Viccars, he writes to his friends in hope to acquire some means to fight it. He puts his faith in God, praying for deceased, settling down the conflicts that were triggered by people’s ignorance and dread. He is the person who offers the Sunday Oath to Eyam and tries to persuade the Bradfords to stay. Showing his endurance and will-power, he restlessly works in the churchyard as well as sitting with people at their deathbeds. “His body is strong, but I fear that the strength of his will far exceeds it”<sup>10</sup>, says his wife.

The author is interested in the process of losing one’s faith and she is investigating it through one of the most believing person in the village – the pastor. And though his faith endured the Black Death, it could not endure the sudden murder of his wife. He proves his lack of faith in God, answering to the Calvinist pastor: “*Falsus in uno, falsus in omnibus*”<sup>11</sup> (Untrue in one thing, untrue in everything), which made Mr. Stanley leave his house directly and never come back. Even though the phrase is connected to law and is used in case of false testimony, it seems Mompellion using this phrase expresses his opinion about God, who took the life of his wife not by means of pestilence (which he was afraid of); but through the hands of a madwoman. The intensity of his pain is shown up in the episode in the first chapter, where in attempt to soothe him Anna starts reading from the Psalms as Elinor used to do. The reaction of the rector was a contrariety to what she wanted to achieve. He read Psalm 128:3 “Your wife will be like a fruitful vine” as if to show the God’s macabre sense of humor that sounded like a mockery to Mompellion. As if all sacrifices, all pain and misery people endured had been for nothing. “Then slowly, deliberately, he opened his hand. The book slipped from his fingers. Instinctively, I leapt forward to catch it, but he grabbed my arm, and the Bible hit the floor with a dull thump”<sup>12</sup>. After so many struggles to know the God, to have an

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p.46

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 178

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p.285

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 38

insight in His plans, Michael is crushed by the futility of these attempts which makes him understand the falseness of doctrine he promoted so eagerly.

The irony of the situation is that the name Michael literally means “Who is like God?” What does it mean for a man who embodied so much of exuberant faith and then ended in such tragic way? We see Michael saying in the last chapter: “And now it seems that there is no God, and I was wrong. In what I asked of Elinor. In what I asked of myself. (...) I thought I spoke for God. Fool. My whole life, all I have done, all I have said, all I have felt, has been based upon a lie”. He, who had a strong will, cared about his faith, who really seemed to care about his people, was now a broken man not knowing what to do with his life. However, we may find these doubts not only in Michael’s words. The problem of divine intervention and faith lurks in the mind of villagers as well. In Anna’s ruminations, we may see the questions she is asking: is the Plague the work of Devil or God? Does God even care about our petty souls? She says to herself: “One of these beliefs we embraced, the other we scorned as superstition. But perhaps each was false, equally”<sup>13</sup>.

When the Bradfords show up in the village, the pastor behaves exactly in the same manner as his maid, apparently pained by the death of his wife, suffering from his powerlessness in face of the calamity and crisis of faith, he feels nothing but disdain to the people who have rushed from the village while all the others have sworn to stay in it to avoid spreading the plague to other cities. He does not wish to see his parishioner and even being forced to come out of his hermitage, despite all pleas and despair of Elizabeth Bradford, he denies her mother the satisfaction to see him on her deathbed. “If your mother seeks me out to give her absolution like a Papist, then she has made a long and uncomfortable journey to no end. Let her speak direct[ly] to God to ask forgiveness for her conduct. But I fear she may find Him a poor listener, as many of us here have done”<sup>14</sup>, he says. The Mr. Mompellion’s stance shows the attitude that was common to all villagers as well as his opinion about God.

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 234

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p.35

Brooks pays a lot of attention to the appearance of this man. Perhaps, more than to any other character. His looks are not typical of a presbyter, as Anna notices he has a “hard hand of a laboring man rather than the limp, white paw of a priest”<sup>15</sup>. His face is very eloquent of his intellectual abilities and his character, e.g. crow’s feet beside his eyes that witness that he “frowned much in contemplation and laughed much in company”<sup>16</sup>. However, his most striking quality is his voice. Through Anna’s remarks, we get to know that it was a timbre that made you listen to it and it was easily heard not only from the pulpit but “over the whine and the groan of the wind”<sup>17</sup>. This quality of his voice is represented in the scene of Anys’ death, enraged by the atrocity of his parishioners he first roars at them, but then, gaining control over himself, rebukes them in the leveled self-restrained voice. “It was a voice full of light and dark. Light not only as it glimmers, but also as it glares. Dark not only as it brings cold and fear, but also as it gives rest and shade”<sup>18</sup>. The author also compares it to the thunder, describing it: “Michael Mompellion’s voice, when it came thundering down the clough, was louder and fiercer even than the wind”<sup>19</sup>. And once she puts these words into Michael’s speech at the Hall when he tells the guests about *God’s* voice: “Perhaps they might believe that God now is preaching to the city, and what needs add their small utterance to the thunder of His voice?”<sup>20</sup> Which brings us again to the most eloquent speaker in the novel – Michael himself, who thinks he knows what God wants and is left crushed at the end of the novel by the murder of his wife, with no faith and no hope to sustain him.

The personality of Michael Mompellion, his magnetism and charisma show us how dangerous people like him could be. People, who think that they know the will of God, convincing people to act in a way against their selfish self-interests to the point of death. This character is yet another proof that the road to hell is paved with

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 62

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 62

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 112

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 63

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 109

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 81

good intentions, even when one genuinely believes that he does it for the Greater Good.

The wife of the rector, Elinor, is an important character for the story as well, as she is both the catalyst for Anna's studying and Michael's crisis of faith. She is a small feeble woman of the rich noble family. And although connections of her family draw the attention of Colonel Bradford, this does not stop him from insulting her and hinting at her conspicuous past in her husband's face. "Your wife, it seems, is expert at making poor choices. She certainly has had some practice"<sup>21</sup>.

Indeed, it is hard to tell from the appearance of that lithe pale young woman that she was a victim of poor judgment and was ruined by one of the young gentries. After violating herself with a fire iron, she almost died and while recovering she was given opium to ease her pain. "They gave me poppy at first for the pain, and then I think to keep me quiet"<sup>22</sup>. But that was Michael Mompellion who saved her from this life. "He instructed me how futile it is to wallow in regret for that which cannot be changed and how atonement might be made for even the gravest sins", she says, telling how Michael guided her out of the poppy dream. This story seriously influenced Elinor's life. As a result, she had acquired "kindness and her unwillingness to judge the faults in others"<sup>23</sup>.

We know from the narration that it is a learned woman who loves studying as much as teaching. Anna has become her student and she uses every opportunity to better her. Her education proves itself useful when they try to restore the knowledge that was lost after Gowdies' death. This way, she translates from Latin and Greek the books consecrated to medicine, together with Anna they study Gowdies' garden to extract roots and herbs they could find there. Her vigorous and sometimes trickster character leaves a mark on all her projects, e.g. when she made Anna help a woman in labor or mining ore for Wickford's orphan. She pushes Anna to test her

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 130

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p.170

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p.171

strength taking part in them herself providing opportunities for her maid to master the art of midwifery and healing, being the driving force of all of their undertakings.

Another important character who is radically different from all other female characters mentioned before is Anys Gowdie. She and her aunt collect herbs and provide the services of a midwife to the villagers. Her aunt has been accused of witchcraft once and this mark is now following Anys as well. People of Eyam have little trust to this couple and, despite all the help they have received from them, are prone to gossip about them and often fear that they would harm children. Encircled with distrust, hobgoblin terrors, and envy, she has always been a confident young woman with a stiff upper lip.

Anys has a quick mind and a sharp tongue which are the only line of defense she had to protect herself from village children insults: “And she listed all our defects to us, standing there taller than any other child her age and glowing with good health...”<sup>24</sup>. Because of a tense relationship with people she acquired different life values and was happy to have her work and her garden without being “any man’s chattel”<sup>25</sup>. She says that instead of most women she can enjoy freedom and “will not lightly surrender it”<sup>26</sup>. After the spread of the Plague, her aunt is beaten under the pretense that she brought the pestilence and cursed the village. Despite desperate Anna’s efforts to help her, the drunken crowd throws her into the water to see if she is a witch or not. Her niece Anys arrives just in time to save her aunt only to be accused of witchcraft and be murdered afterward.

As we can see from this story, women that had some liberties and were non-conformists in the eyes of society were prone to be blamed for all the malice. The images of Anys and her aunt are invaluable in showing us how irrational fear, desire to blame somebody in one’s misfortunes and superstitious beliefs can be the ground and driving force even for such atrocities as murder. Being the part of historiographical metafiction, these characters are called to draw our attention to the

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 71

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 72

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 72

problems that nonconformist women face nowadays not only in highly religious but in our own societies as well.

Within the scope of *historiographic*, character sketches draw us a picture of lifestyle and human relations better than any other stylistic device. Divided by four centuries, we understand and sympathize with the characters, that should be both similar to us, showing consistency in human behavior and emotional core, and being somehow different from us, defending values and credos inherent to people of that time, that could be sometime puzzling, and yet making us curious why they are doing it. At the same time, considering the domain of *metafiction* through characters and their thoughts we can feel the self-reflexivity of prose. The author interprets reality looking at it through Anna's eyes, causing the protagonist to look more like a woman from the 21<sup>st</sup> century trapped in a 17<sup>th</sup>-century woman's body, making her thoughts echoing ours.

### **2.5 Year of Wonder's intertextuality**

Another peculiarity of historiographic metafiction is seen through the implication of religious texts as the Bible and Psalms. Naturally, Geraldine Brooks used real sources that were at her disposal to write sermons. She admits during the seminar: "I read a lot of sermons to do this book both to create the voice of the rector, and to create the sermon that he might have given. But also, just to hear what Anna would have heard when she was sitting in church".

The novel is imbued with direct quotations from these texts, e.g. citing repeatedly Psalm 91:5 "Thou shalt not be afraid of the terror by night" that people might have sung in these turbulent times. Rector's sermon is rich in referring to the Holy Bible, when he preaches about king David that despite all his faults God "gave us, through him, the glory of the Psalms"<sup>27</sup>. Or when he proposes to burn all their things on the pyre, referring to verses "And Moses said, Thou must give us also sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice unto the Lord our God."

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 179

(Exodus 10:25) and “Make an altar of earth for me and sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, your sheep and goats and your cattle” (Exodus 20:24).

Folklore stories have a big part in folk’s worldview, especially stories about witchcraft and how one should recognize them that was thoroughly described in *Malleus Maleficarum*. These traditions and beliefs are shown from the two different sides: one, that was inherent for common folk who were prone to believe in superstitious, and the other – I dare say – modern view on these things now. Michael Mompellion is a bright example of the modern view of the problem. Even being a churchman, he does not believe in sorcery but only in foul thoughts and ill will. When a drunken crowd tries to defend their murder of Anys, claiming that she has admitted her connection with Devil, he, enraged, roars: “Oh, yes, the Devil has been here this night! But not in Anys Gowdie! Fools! Ignorant wretches! Anys Gowdie fought you with the only weapon she had to hand – your own ugly thoughts and evil doubting of one another! Fall on your knees, now!”<sup>28</sup> Same goes for a case with Aphra who lost her mind and started to conduct rituals with snakes and suspended her dead daughter like a puppet in her house. Michael Mompellion did not trust the men to break the door of the croft after they had left Aphra in the cistern with manure for the whole night. After all sufferings she brought on them, they would refuse “to understand Aphra’s behavior as a lunatic malady”<sup>29</sup> and would consider her to be a witch.

One could not pass by a reminiscence to fairy tales when Elinor was telling about her childhood. Because even though she could have anything she liked, such studying Greek or natural philosophy, “[h]er father thought to keep her sheltered from the world, and so she did not leave the estate”. The situation here resembles the Rapunzel story, who was kept in the tower and had no communication with the outer world until a prince finds her and with time it appears that Rapunzel is

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p.111

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p.269

pregnant. Even though Elinor was more successful in her elopement, but she was also left pregnant by her lover, Charles.

The novel resembles a Nathaniel Hawthorne's magnum opus *The Scarlet Letter*. Both stories are set in the Puritan villages, because even after the Restoration of 1660 and the 1662 Uniformity Act it is hard to accept that people would have changed their beliefs as they continued to wear the same garments as before, go to the same church, some even to a Puritan pastor Mr. Stanley: "And if two or even three times five souls gathered from time to time in the Billing's parlor, none of us were inclined to inquire the purpose for it"<sup>30</sup>. However, the most striking feature that these two works share is a figure of a minister of a church. Both Mompellion and Dimmesdale are young, energetic, and charismatic churchmen who later greatly suffer mentally as well as physically. But instead of Mompellion who in the end loses his faith and thinks that all he did was false, Dimmesdale cherishes his faith and actually thinks that he is going to repent for his sins before the Lord Almighty. It gives him not only the resilience to acknowledge in front of the village that he is the girl's father but also certainty in the way he has chosen whilst Michael Mompellion reaches a point of no return and cannot decide what to do with his life anymore.

As well as Hawthorne in his work, Brooks explores themes of sin and guilt. She examines the former through characters as Josiah Bont who represents greed, Michael being depressed and denying his duty exercised sloth, Colonel Bradford who represents the sin of pride, drunken crowd murder Anys deluded by wrath, or Jane Martin, who driven mad by the death of her relatives, turned from a chaste and stiff Puritan girl into a representation of lustiness and salacity. The latter is explicitly represented in Michael's character when he tells Anna about his thoughts that he made people stay in the village or he refused his wife in any physical contact.

In the characters that are represented by the author, we can feel the continuation of Austen's strong female characters tradition. They do not run from the difficulties,

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 117

are able to do hard choices and be responsible not only for their lives but for their nearest and dearest as well. Surprising independence of Anna's character coincides with Elizabeth Bennet's "rebellious" behavior and warm Anna's friendship with Elinor reminds us about the same understanding and empathy we see between elder sister Bennets.

While giving her lecture, Brooks also confesses of her intentional allusion to the works of the French author, Albert Camus: "I thought well, that's what I want for Anna, I want her to be able to pursue this healing gift, that she has developed. And so, a little naughtily, I decided, that I would send her to Oran because that's where Camus' book, *The Plague*, is set". This little detail is easy to miss, especially when one has never read Camus, although, it shows us not only the intertextual relations but an irony that the author puts into this novel, together with the aforementioned name of one of the protagonists.

## **Results**

In this chapter we have seen that Geraldine Brook's novel is indeed an example of historiographic metafiction, where we may come across such stylistic devices inherent to historical novels as the usage of archaic vocabulary and dialects in order to create the atmosphere of the 17<sup>th</sup>-century Eyam or enumerating artifacts that belong to that time, as well as common features of historiographic metafiction as self-reflexivity, intertextuality and intentional irony that manifest themselves through a character's speech, actions, places and names throughout the whole novel.

## CONCLUSION

In this paper, we described the genre of historiographical metafiction, tracing its connection to postmodernism and poststructuralism and showing the roots of this postmodern technique. In the scope of this work, we also analyzed features of postmodernism, such as intertextuality, irony, limitless pluralism, and others. Presented major features of intertextuality and enumerated peculiarities of historiographic metafiction genre that uses an expression by means of classical historical novels complementing it by metafictional and metahistorical views.

In the second part of our work, we analyzed the novel of the contemporary author Geraldine Brooks *Year of Wonders*. In our research, we found features mentioned in the first part of this work, made a lexical and stylistic analysis of the text, described the most important characters of the story, and explained the importance of their images for the reader. Our research proves that today's historical novel can be considered as part of the historiographic metafiction genre because of combining stylistic means of historical fiction and insight of postmodern metafiction.

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