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Halyna AVKSENTIEVA,
orcid.org/0000-0001-7767-540X
Candidate of Philological Sciences,
Associate Professor at the Department of Ukrainian and Foreign Literature
Southern Ukrainian National Pedagogical University named after K.D. Ushynskiy
(Odesa, Ukraine) skarllet77777@gmail.com

WOODY ALLEN AND HIS LUDIC VIEW UPON REALITY

This research delves into the ludic view of reality as portrayed in Woody Allen's short story narratives. Allen, known for his cinematic genius, extends his playful yet profound exploration of reality into the realm of short stories. This abstract aims to scrutinize how Allen's narrative craftsmanship imbues these succinct tales with a whimsical yet thought-provoking perspective on the complexities of human existence. Drawing upon ludic philosophy as a conceptual framework, this study endeavors to analyze the thematic nuances present in Allen's short stories. These tales, often tinged with humor and existential contemplation, serve as condensed reflections of his cinematic repertoire, offering glimpses into a reality that oscillates between the playful and the profound. The research focuses on dissecting the interplay of wit, irony, and philosophical depth within Allen's short story narratives. Through an exploration of select works, it aims to unravel the ways in which Allen challenges conventional perceptions of reality within the constraints of these shorter literary forms. Moreover, this investigation aims to illuminate how Allen's ludic lens manifests in the concise yet impactful canvas of short stories. It seeks to elucidate the broader philosophical and cultural implications embedded in these succinct narratives, delving into the universality of themes and the resonance of playful storytelling across diverse cultural contexts. Ultimately, this research strives to offer a nuanced understanding of Woody Allen's ludic view upon reality as depicted in his short story narratives. By unraveling the layers of wit and philosophical introspection woven into these condensed literary pieces, it seeks to highlight Allen's ability to provoke contemplation and amusement in equal measure within the compact yet profound world of short fiction.

Key words: *humour, ludic, short stories, fiction, Woody Allen.*

Галина АВКСЕНТЬЄВА,
orcid.org/0000-0001-7767-540X
кандидат філологічних наук,
доцент кафедри української та зарубіжної літератури
Південноукраїнського національного педагогічного університету імені К.Д. Ушинського
(Одеса, Україна) skarllet77777@gmail.com

ВУДІ АЛЛЕН І ЙОГО ЛУДИЧНИЙ ПОГЛЯД НА РЕАЛЬНІСТЬ

Це дослідження заглиблюється в лудичний погляд на реальність, як це зображено в оповіданнях Вуді Аллена. Аллен, відомий своїм кінематографічним генієм, поширює своє грайливе, але глибоке дослідження реальності в сферу коротких історій. Ця анотація має на меті детально дослідити, як майстерність оповідання Аллена наповнює ці лаконічні історії химерним, але спонукаючим до роздумів поглядом на складність людського існування. Спираючись на лудичну філософію як концептуальну основу, це дослідження намагається проаналізувати тематичні нюанси, присутні в оповіданнях Аллена. Ці розповіді, часто відтінені гумором і екзистенціальним спогляданням, служать стислим відображенням його кінематографічного репертуару, пропонуючи проблески в реальність, яка коливається між грайливим і глибоким. Дослідження зосереджено на аналізі взаємодії дотепу, іронії та філософської глибини в оповіданнях Аллена. Досліджуючи вибрані твори, він має на меті розгадати способи, якими Аллен кидає виклик традиційному сприйняттю реальності в рамках обмежень цих коротких літературних форм. Більше того, це розслідування має на меті висвітлити, як лудичний об'єктив Аллена проявляється в стислій, але вражаючій канві коротких оповідань. Він прагне з'ясувати ширші філософські та культурні наслідки, закладені в цих стислих оповіданнях, заглиблюючись в універсальність тем і резонанс ігрового оповідання в різних культурних контекстах. Зрештою, це дослідження прагне запропонувати детальне розуміння дивного погляду Вуді Аллена на реальність, зображеного в його оповіданнях. Розкриваючи шари дотепності та філософського самоаналізу, вплетені в ці стислі літературні твори, він прагне висвітлити здатність Аллена проковувати споглядання та розваги однаковою мірою в компактному, але глибокому світі короткої белетристики.

Ключові слова: *гумор, лудичний, оповідання, художня проза, Вуді Аллен.*

Introduction. Within the vibrant tapestry of Woody Allen's creative endeavors lies a lesser-explored realm – his world of short story narratives. Renowned for his cinematic brilliance, Allen extends his probing inquiry into the nature of reality beyond the confines of film, weaving intricate and concise tales that mirror his ludic view of existence. This introduction sets the stage for an exploration into Allen's literary endeavors, elucidating how his short stories serve as distilled reflections of his philosophical musings and playful contemplation of reality.

Woody Allen's foray into short story narratives presents a captivating fusion of brevity and depth, encapsulating within a few pages the essence of his cinematic oeuvre. These narratives, imbued with Allen's trademark wit and existential ponderings, offer glimpses into a reality painted with strokes of irony, humor, and profound philosophical introspection.

Much like his films, Allen's short stories beckon readers into a world that straddles the ordinary and the whimsical, the mundane and the profound. Each tale, crafted with precision and nuance, becomes a microcosm of existential dilemmas, societal observations, and the enigmatic dance between reality and imagination.

This exploration aims to dissect the thematic intricacies present in Allen's short story narratives, delving into how his ludic view upon reality permeates these condensed literary forms. By examining select works, this study seeks to unravel the interplay of humor, irony, and philosophical depth, tracing the threads that connect these succinct narratives to the broader canvas of Allen's creative repertoire.

Beyond the scope of mere literary analysis, this investigation endeavors to elucidate the universal themes embedded in Allen's short stories. It aims to unveil how his ludic portrayal of reality resonates across cultural boundaries, inviting readers from diverse backgrounds to engage in a contemplative yet entertaining exploration of the human condition.

In essence, this exploration embarks on a journey through the pages of Woody Allen's short story narratives, unveiling the richness of his ludic perspective and its profound impact within the compact yet expansive world of literary fiction. It endeavors to unravel the layers of wit, introspection, and existential musings embedded in these concise tales, inviting readers to partake in a whimsical yet thought-provoking odyssey through the intricate fabric of reality itself.

Problem statement. The exploration of Woody Allen's ludic view upon reality within his short story narratives poses a compelling yet underexplored terrain for critical analysis. While Allen's cinematic works have garnered widespread attention for their

philosophical depth and playful contemplation of existence, his venture into the realm of short fiction remains a relatively uncharted territory. The problem at hand involves delving into the thematic and philosophical dimensions of Allen's short stories, dissecting how his ludic lens shapes the portrayal of reality within these condensed literary forms.

This research seeks to address the lacuna in scholarly discourse by investigating how Allen's narrative craftsmanship, known for its wit and existential underpinnings in cinema, translates into the succinct yet profound canvas of short stories. The problem statement hinges upon unraveling the nuances of Allen's ludic portrayal of reality within these narratives, pinpointing the thematic threads that echo his cinematic explorations and examining their implications in a different narrative medium.

The absence of a comprehensive analysis of Allen's short story narratives from a ludic perspective necessitates a closer examination. The problem lies in uncovering how Allen challenges conventional perceptions of reality, infusing his tales with a playful yet thought-provoking quality that engages readers in an intricate dance between amusement and contemplation.

The research endeavors to bridge this gap by dissecting select works and deciphering the interplay of humor, irony, and existential inquiry within Allen's short stories. By doing so, it aims to offer a deeper understanding of how his ludic view upon reality manifests within the confines of short fiction, shedding light on the thematic universality and philosophical depth embedded in these condensed literary pieces.

In essence, the problem statement encapsulates the need to explore Woody Allen's short story narratives as a canvas for his ludic perspective, unearthing the nuances of his portrayal of reality within this literary domain and unveiling the profound implications of his philosophical musings in a more compact yet equally evocative narrative form.

Analysis of research publications on the topic.

It is known that the problems of researching the category of the ludic, its types, genres, methods of creation, various visual and expressive means of verbalization of language with the aim of creating a ludic effect, have been actively developed since antiquity. However, this problem received a full scientific justification in the second half of the 20th – beginning of the 21st century in the works of A. Makaryan, A. Koestler (1964), V. Raskin, D. Chiaro (1992), S. Attardo, V. Propp, A. Luka, G.-V.-F. Hegel, A. Bergson, M. Bakhtin, and others.

The relevance of the research. However, this phenomenon remains understudied to this day, despite numerous attempts to research this category.

No scholar has yet succeeded in giving a clear definition to the concept of "ludic" and establishing criteria for determining its components.

The relevance of this study is in the fact that modern researchers show an increased interest in a thorough study of the ludic category and ways of its implementation in English literature; in the insufficient level of study of the ludic category and the peculiarities of the use of linguistic means and techniques in order to achieve a humorous effect in the genre of the English short story and play.

The aim of the work is to determine linguistic and stylistic means of creating a ludic effect and the peculiarities of their functioning in short English.

To achieve this goal, we set the following **tasks**: give a meaningful definition of the concept of the ludic category as an aesthetic category; to identify the main forms of the ludic, give examples of their use; to analyze the study of the ludic category in linguistics; to analyze the peculiarities of the individual style of creating a ludic effect; to determine the peculiarities of creating a ludic effect in the author's plays; to study the specifics of Woody Allen's national humor.

The object of research is ludic forms in literary works at the level of their linguistic structure.

The subject of the study is the peculiarities of the implementation of linguistic stylistic means of conveying the main forms of the ludic at different speech levels (lexical, syntactic, textual).

The purpose and tasks outlined in the work, as well as the specifics of the object of research determined the use of the following **methods and techniques** of linguistic analysis: the method of etymological analysis – used to reveal the ontological essence of the ludic; the semantic content of lexical units to indicate ludic effect in the works of Woody Allen is carried out by means of a semantic analysis of the definitions contained in encyclopedic dictionaries; interpretative and textual analysis is used in order to determine linguistic stylistic means of ludic expression.

Traditionally, the ludic is considered one of the main aesthetic categories and at the same time almost the most complex and even mysterious. After all, the internal interrelationships of the categories of aesthetics come to an end in the ludic, since it records the absence of spiritual grounds in the phenomena for the elevation and affirmation of the idea in the image (Baxter, 2000).

The "ludic" category reflects the contradictions of life in the form of aesthetic elevation over its negative manifestations and overcoming the defects of its bearers with laughter. The perception of phenomena as ludical is due to their internal contradiction, in which spiritual limitation seeks to mask itself with an out-

wardly spectacular form. That is, the essence of the ludic consists in constant contradictions, contrasts, inconsistencies, incompatibilities, as well as, of course, witty, sometimes even sharp criticism (Blake, 2007).

It is worth noting that, reading Woody Allen's plays, it is very easy to imagine their performance not only on the stage, but also on the screen. This can be considered a feature of Allen's drama – it is very cinematic.

It's no secret that in the era of classic Hollywood there was its own, detailed system of genres with their own characteristic features, which became the hallmark of the genre. So, for example, the genre of the crime thriller by A. Hitchcock stood out, the genre of musicals with F. Astaire and J. Kelly, the genre of noir with G. Bogart and B. Stanwyck, westerns by J. Ford and G. Hawkes, there was a huge number of various melodramas (from cloak and sword films with the participation of Errol Flynn to the socially acute films of D. Sirk) and, of course, the genre of film comedy. It is only necessary to mention the names of the bright figures of the comedy genre of the silent film era, as the famous images created by them immediately appear in front of the eyes: M. Linder, Chaplin, the Marx brothers, etc. It is also impossible not to mention B. Keaton with his original gags (a gag is a comedic technique based on obvious absurdity, most often it is solved visually, but in the case of verbalization it loses its charm), although the obvious record holders for the number of gags were considered the Marx brothers. There was also the genre of lyrical comedy by E. Lubitsch and J. Cukor and the genre of burlesque comedy by F. Capra and G. Hawkes (Martin, 2007).

Allen walked the first stage of his journey alone, if there was a tangible influence on his work, it was not Bergman, but the Marx brothers. In the beginning, Allen had a word, or rather a play on words, "slapstick" ("Sleeper" (1973), a parody of "Love and Death" (Love and Death) (1975)). Then there was "Annie Hall" (1977) with a new, nervous urban hero, with a newfound narcissism, with endless jokes about sex.

Analyzing the ludic effect in Woody Allen's short stories involves examining how he employs playful elements and philosophical depth to create an engaging and thought-provoking narrative.

Allen infuses his short stories with witty dialogue and ironic situations. For instance, in "The Whore of Mensa", he creates a humorous scenario where intellectual escorts are hired to engage in stimulating conversations, blending intellectuality with humor.

Allen often breaks the fourth wall or employs meta-fictional elements, engaging readers directly or blurring the lines between reality and fiction. In "The Kugel-mass Episode", a character enters the world of a novel, blending reality and literary realms in a playful manner.

Allen's stories often delve into existential questions within mundane settings. In "The Lunatic's Tale", he explores philosophical ideas through a psychiatric patient's reflections, using absurdity to tackle profound themes.

Allen's stories occasionally satirize societal norms or literary conventions. In "Retribution", he satirizes the concept of karma and justice by portraying a comedic yet thought-provoking scenario of divine retribution.

Allen creates absurd situations or plot twists that challenge conventional storytelling. In "The Irish Genius," a protagonist claims to be the true author of Shakespeare's works, playing with literary history and absurd claims; often blurs the boundaries between reality and fantasy, creating surreal yet relatable scenarios. In "Mr. Big", he explores the consequences of an ordinary man becoming a giant, using this fantastical premise to comment on societal perceptions.

Dialogues in Allen's stories serve as vehicles for philosophical musings. In "The Rejection", characters engage in witty exchanges that subtly explore deeper existential questions amid seemingly ordinary conversations.

These examples illustrate how Allen infuses his short stories with a ludic effect by combining humor, irony, philosophical reflections, and narrative experimentation. His ability to merge playful elements with profound contemplation characterizes his ludic view upon reality within the condensed format of short fiction.

One cannot help but agree with those researchers who claim that Woody Allen is following the path of buffoonery (slapstick, grotesque, caricature of actions, phenomena, characters) and farce. It is easy to give an example, the plots of the plays themselves hint at this: psychoanalyst who did not notice her husband's numerous betrayals not only with her best friend, but also with young patients, two married couples connected by mutual betrayals turn out to be only characters in the author's play, whom they managed to "neutralize" in order to live on their own, nervous man, who has arranged a meeting with his lover, shares his worries with a crazy vagabond, who offers him to kill his lover and thereby solve all problems (Smith, 1991).

However, behind all this eccentricity, Allen has a much deeper meaning. The reader's first acquaintance with Allen's dramatic texts gives an opportunity to feel the difference compared to his stories. This refers, first of all, to the ludic tonality that prevails in prose and in plays. In the latter case, we encounter Allen's irony, which is easily recognizable and which is based on a specific Jewish humor that Allen inherited from his

grandparents who immigrated to America at the time.

At the same time, we note that the uniqueness of the artistic world created by Allen is that the humor in his works was never only Jewish, the author actively interacts with American reality, American realities, American worldview, spirit and stereotypes. His plays are a synthesis of Jewish and American. And this synthesis gives a fundamentally new aesthetic effect, which is noticeably different from the one that would arise if he used purely Jewish or purely American humor (Lax, 2009).

That is why it would be more accurate to say that the ludic effect inherent in Allen's plays has a hybrid, Jewish-American (American-Jewish) character. And if its American component is quite obvious and manifests itself at the plot-motive, thematic and character levels (constant appeals of the heroes to psychoanalysis and psychotherapists, a large number of topics related to the role and place of sex in the lives of married couples, the roles of the characters are easily guessed, taken from mass cinema and literature, etc.), then its Jewish part is hidden much deeper.

At first glance, it would be fair to say that the humor in Allen's plays manifests itself, first of all, in the speeches of the characters, in the jokes they exchange. Moreover, most often these jokes are of an anecdotal nature, which fits perfectly into the manner of a dramatic narrative (an anecdote is often considered a small dramatic genre) (Martin, 2007).

Conclusion. Summing up, let us emphasize that one of the leading features of the dramatic works of the famous American screenwriter, actor and director Woody Allen is the presence of a pronounced ludic effect in them. We tried to prove that in addition to the obvious comedy, the variety of forms and techniques of the ludic in the language of the characters (including the use of anecdote), in the characterized plays you can find another, internal layer of this phenomenon, connected with the nationality of the author. Based on American material, Allen's works contain features of Jewish humor, which makes itself felt in the special, tragicomic pathos of the plays, as well as in the author's ironic attitude to the world in which his characters live. In this world, traditionally high categories such as God and death have a Jewishly ambivalent character. From the above analysis, it is easy to identify the differences between Allen's plays and stories. The first thing to note is the nationality of the main characters. In Allen's stories, the main character is often the same famous Jewish neurotic intellectual, while the heroes of the plays are mostly Americans.

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