Intertextuality of Personosphere as a Factor of Gender Metamorphicality: Clifford Simak's Novel *Shakespeare's Planet*

Alyona TYCHININA
"Yuriy Fedkovych" National University, Chernivtsi, Ukraine
a.boychuk@chnu.edu.ua

Dan PARANYUK
"Yuriy Fedkovych" National University, Chernivtsi, Ukraine
paranyukdan@gmail.com

Abstract. The article deals with the issue of intertextual potential of the personosphere of Clifford Simak's novel *Shakespeare's Planet*, as well as investigates its generative function in the process of gender-making (from science fiction to a crossover of a fantasy type). This gender's metamorphicality is ensured by a creative significance of a confocal character, which is presented in the text by William Shakespeare. The personosphere of the text understudies rests on the opposition "mine-thine", which forms twin dichotomous rings. The authors of the article conclude that the intertextual image of Shakespeare is of a reincarnational nature, being eventually implemented in the simulacrum of the proto-text.
Keywords*: intertextuality of personosphere, gender metamorphicality, William Shakespeare, Clifford Simak.*

The notion of "confocal" (the one having common focus) came to the literary terminology from the field of Natural Sciences and is often referred to as "an accumulation of several receptive aspects in the focus of the selected sample" [Chervinska, 2009: 84]. In particular, O. Chervinska points out that methodological essence of confocality lies in considering numerous points of view and observations [Chervinska, 1997: 61]. This is why the major peculiarity of a confocal character is (despite its secondary status) its ability to attract readers' receptive attention due to its individuality, recognizability, and intertextual significance. In this respect, "elaborating the theme of encounter of the characters" from different texts [Vasilyev, 2017: 449], the texts with an intertextual character may be regarded to have been written in the gender of "crossover".

E. Vasilyev lays particular emphasis on the popularity of "crossovers" in science fiction, fantasy and adventure literature of the 20th century on the whole, and in the text by C. Simak "Out of Their Minds" in particular [Vasilyev, 2017: 451]. The researcher does not only distinguish the gender signs of "crossover" (like the "intersection of plot lines and characters from different works by the same author or even different authors) [Vasilyev, 2017: 464], but also suggests his own typology of this gender modification from the point of view of personoshere. Firstly, there is a fictional "crossover", where characters from different fictional worlds come across each other. Secondly, there exists a quasi-

BDD-A30734 © 2019 Editura Universităţii din Suceava
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.108 (2026-11-17 21:49:14 UTC)

documental "crossover", with the intersection of real historical figures. Eventually, there is also a mixed "crossover", whereby real people interact with the representatives of fictional worlds" [Vasilyev, 2017: 464-465].

A. Sedykh offers to divide any personosphere into two categories of characters – real and fictional [Sedykh, 2011: 154], with intertextual heroes linking them. It is worth mentioning that the novels by an American writer C. Simak (1904-1988) are marked with an efficient synthesis of all the types of personospheric design. Hence, the science fiction texts by C. Simak, which possess a variety of gender polymorhicality (remakes, sequels, sidequels, remixes), are most likely to be defined as mixed "crossovers" in the aspect of the intertextuality of their personospheres.

Naturally, such texts should be interpreted in the context of reception, since readers' consciousness (according to H. R. Jauss) passes through various identification levels together with a literary character (associative, sympathetic, admiration, cathartic, ironic [Jauss, 2011]), which depends, above all, on the reader's apperceptional background. Similarly, G. Khazagerov emphasizes that any recipient of a pesonosphere correlates himself with its characters, differentiating the so-called "parallels" (reader's correlating himself with the personospheric characters) and "meridians" (correlating with the images of those, who they have to deal with), the latter two permanently intersecting with each other [Khazagerov, 2002]. A. Sedykh reaches similar conclusions, while pondering over the difference between conceptosphere, which he associates with Antonomasia (the interconnection between the individual's personal features and protagonist's name), and personosphere (associating oneself with a famous character, with the purpose of creating models) [Sedykh, 2011: 154]. Thus, a competent reader's receptive attention responds most actively to the characters with significant intertextual weight, stipulating a considerable degree of implication into the text.

The personospheres, created by C. Simak, indicate lots of such samples: "Aesop" (1947), "The Spaceman's Van Gogh" (1956), "Way Station" (*Ulysses*, 1963), "The Goblin Reservation" (*W. Shakespeare, painter Lambert*, 1968), "The Outer Limits" (*Don Quixote*, 1970), "Shakespeare's Planet" (1976). In this case, we mean the permeation of some well-known historical figure, real person or a character from a literary text into the fictional space of a book. What is more, we regard this permeation as one of "the basic elements of the text subject structure, together with the author-creator and the narrator", whose spheres of activities are also implemented in the depicted fictional world" [Polshikova, 2008: 163–164].Consequently, this type of character does not only perform a certain intertextual function, but also activates readers' attention as a powerful resonator.

Let us dwell in more detail on C. Simak's novel "Shakespeare's Planet", which draws reader's attention to the very parameters of personosphere above all: "THERE were three of them, although sometimes there was only one of them. When that came about, less often than it should, the one was not aware there ever had been three, for the one was a strange melding of their personalities, When they became as one, the transformation was something more than a simple addition of the three, as if by this pooling of themselves there had been added a new dimension which made the sum of them greater than the whole" [Simak]. This "merge" of Shakespeare and his Ghost takes place in the end of the plot of C. Simak's novel "The Goblin Reservation", which proves a deep intertextual connection between the works of the American science fiction writer. In this way, C. Simak draws his readers closer to the hermeneutics of his plan – such outstanding figures as Shakespeare appear to possess very peculiar sacredness: "…The holiness was a quality that could not be defined In words or delineated in a thought, for it was outside

BDD-A30734 © 2019 Editura Universităţii din Suceava
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.108 (2026-11-17 21:49:14 UTC)

and beyond any sensation or accomplishment that the creature known as man could have conjured up even in the utmost exercise of his not inconsiderable imagination" [Simak].

Taking the above into consideration, the criterion of real holiness is the existential of death, as a prospect a new beginning. Moreover, the souls of such prominent personalities are implicated into the infinity of space and time, whereas the Universe becomes their Motherland: "Under this condition of unity they were kin to the stars and neighbour of the galaxies" [Simak]. Therefore, the very fact of C. Simak's appealing to the figure of Shakespeare seems rather logical and relevant: "Writing it is, most certainly: Shakespeare is the Canon. He sets the standards and the limits of literature" [Bloom, 1994: 50].

It is important that the novel "Shakespeare's Planet" has a quite distinct, though not numerous personosphere, and its twists are mostly built up by means of the principle of polylogue, which stands responsible for plot arrangement of the dichotomous personospheric pairs. Not accidentally, L. Ginsburg reveals the ways of describing protagonists' behavior and characters' direct speech (both inner and outer), which may be regarded as the stereotypes of the processes of its behavior [Ginsburg, 1979: 4]. Her concept is completely consonant with the idea of M. Hirschman on the specifics of author's language and that of his characters.

Relying on the ideas of D. Likhachev and G. Khazagerov, L. Gekman claims the existence of the so-called "nucleus" in every personosphere [Gekman, 1979: 74]. In this way, C. Simak integrates the figure of Shakespeare into the plot center of his novel. He outlines Shakespeare's confocal position, as well as makes it resonant with other functions (according to V. Propp), thus provoking "the characters' interaction, substantiated by the principle of consistency" [Nikoriak, 2011: 182].

Apart from that, Shakespeare is viewed (according to Yu. Lotman) as a "moveable" character that is "segregated into a cluster-paradigm of different characters" [Lotman, 1996: 216], all the confocal images of the text arise as either intertextual or symbolic. For instance, the text contains an exponential description of a close connection between Shakespeare and Carnivore (literally "Flesh-Eater"), as the latter image is associated with extreme sensitivity, predator instincts, flesh eating, and essence deconstruction:

> "He was human-tall and stood upon two legs.
>
> His arms, hanging limply at his side, did not end in hands, but in a nest of tentacles. He wore no clothing. His body was covered by a skimpy, molting coat of fur. That he was a male was aggressively apparent. His head appeared to be a bare skull. It was innocent of hair or fur, and the skin was tightly stretched over the structure of the bones. The jaws were heavy and elongated into a massive snout. Stabbing teeth, set in the upper jaw, protruded downward, somewhat like the fangs of the primitive saber-tooth of ancient Earth. Long, pointed ears, pasted against the skull, stood rigid, overtopping the bald, domed cranium. Each of the ears was tipped with a bright red tassle." [Simak].

What is more, his actions transcend to the format of Anthropophagy, even though at the request of dying Shakespeare, who is experiencing a sort of reincarnation in the text: "Your fangs must pierce the flesh in that small moment before death. You must not kill me, but eat me even as I die." [Simak]. Carnivore, who devours other forms of life, proudly confides that he has eaten Shakespeare: "The flesh only […]. Careful not to eat the bones. […]. He was tough and stringy and not of a flavor that I relished. He had a strange taste to him." [Simak]. To his mind, quick and pure death is far better than suffering, diseases and old age. Accounting on their conversation, readers realize that such an event is not a

BDD-A30734 © 2019 Editura Universităţii din Suceava
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.108 (2026-11-17 21:49:14 UTC)

precedent. A rather weird way of burying Shakespeare provokes readers' predictable anticipation, and, undoubtedly, the further horizon of their expectations, prolonged later by two more narrative versions – Carnivore's and Shakespeare's.

The receptive focus of the text has been concentrated in the image of Carnivore for a long while. Calling himself "Shakespeare's best friend", he points out the latter's "otherness": "Not an ancient one at all, […] although not really young, and he had a sickness in him. He described himself as human. He looked very much like you" [Simak]. Emphasizing the English playwright's unlimited capabilities, Carnivore refers to all human beings as Shakespeare's people: "I admire him very greatly. He could do many things" [Simak]. In this manner, the author implements Shakespeare's confocal image. The narration about him seems to be the only focus of all comparisons. Carnivore constantly stresses the fact that Shakespeare has literally raised him, setting him as an example of morality: "You go ahead of me […] You are guest of mine. Shakespeare said guests all go first. I was guest of Shakespeare. He was here ahead of me." [Simak].

The image of Carnivore is in no case an accidental one. His teleological essence is of intertextual nature: in one of Shakespeare's early tragedies "Titus Andronicus", there is also a somewhat exaggerated (hyperbolized) hint on cannibalism:

> Hark, villains! I will grind your bones to dust,
> And with your blood and it I'll make a paste,
> And of the paste a coffin I will rear
> And make two pasties of your shameful heads,
> And bid that strumpet, your unhallow'd dam,
> Like to the earth swallow her own increase [Shakespeare, 2012: 145].

In such a way, C. Simak ensures an attraction value of the above figure in the world of characters of "Shakespeare's Planet". It moves all along the narrative space, marked with the influence of a preliminary text.

L. Ginsburg has once stated that character's name may be considered as a specific signal [Ginsburg, 1979: 11]. For example, the robot's name Nicodemus is perceived as an anthroponomical illusion to the personality of a Pharisee and Crist's secret disciple – Nicodemus: "The very first encounter with a literary hero should be marked with recognizability, with some momentous concept. In other words, there should be some typological and psychological identification of a character" [Ginsburg, 1979: 16]. In Simak's text, Nicodemus arrives at the planet, very similar to the Earth, together with Horton – the protagonist of the novel, who, ignoring a generally accepted practice does not carry out the main thematic idea of the novel.

Neglecting the criterion of time, this personospheric pair comes out of an abiosis, in which state they have spent on the Ship 954 years, 8 months and 19 days. This is why O. Kibalka, in this novel by C. Simak, chooses to focus her attention on depicting the cosmos, calling it an "air ocean". This fits perfectly well "the system of fictional details, assigned for creating a universal picture of the cosmic space as a star ocean" [Kibalka, 2010: 33]. The integrity of the personoshere (Shakespeare's acquaintance with Carnivore) indicates a great deal of interesting facts, capable of revealing the figure of Shakespeare. It turns out that the English playwright has made some paths on the planet and even taught Carnivore to speak the human language. Thus, he is being presented as an "organizing index" of the plot: "Any character may be a mystery, may receive temporary, false assessment; however, it can never be of a zero value, even temporarily. The point of character's exposition lies in creating

BDD-A30734 © 2019 Editura Universităţii din Suceava
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.108 (2026-11-17 21:49:14 UTC)

immediately the readers' attitude, perception and adjustment, without which it is not able to perform its functions. Therefore, the very first times the character appears in the text, the very first messages about it and references to it are extraordinarily essential and efficient" [Ginsburg, 1979: 17]. Hence, one of the most significant aspects of personosphere (according to G. Khazagerov) is the availability of lacunae [Khazagerov, 2002], which are filled with readers' consciousness. Taking into consideration his concept, personosphere rests on the oppositions "I – someone different" (Horton – Nicodemus, Shakespeare – Carnivore), "we – someone different" / "mine – thine" (Horton, Nicodemus – Shakespeare – Carnivore), thus becoming a part of literary imagology.

The conversations between all characters inevitably touch upon the implicated figure of Shakespeare, the latter being a meaningful "intertextual paradigm" (the concept of R. Dzyk): "But Shakespeare now is dead, and I miss him greatly. I am desolate without him." [Simak]. Horton regards Shakespeare as a very ancient man, who, unlike the others, has got to the planet not on a space ship, but through the tunnel – a peculiar time portal: "Shakespeare try and I try, but we cannot fix it. Shakespeare pound upon it with his fists, he kick it with his feet, he yell at it, calling terrible names. Still it does not work" [Simak]. In this way, in spite of a traditional plot situation, the main characters of the novel reveal characteristic features of Shakespeare as of a confocal image, as well as introduce him into the timeless context.

It is crucial that readers' attention comes across the Shakespeare's materialized image for the first time, when Horton, Nicodemus and Carnivore see a smiling human skull that undoubtedly belongs to Shakespeare, fastened over the door: "Among prehistoric people, there was ritual cannibalism – doing a true friend or a great man a special honor by the eating of him." [Simak]. By means of the above mystification, C. Simak modifies the consistency of his text (inner semantic content).

Judging from Carnivore's words, who performs the role of a witness and, consequently, is granted a high coefficient of receptive trust, it becomes obvious that Shakespeare was a boring man. What is more, he always laughed at Carnivore: "The Shakespeare strange. He always laughing at me. Not outside laughter, inside laughter. I like him, but he laugh. He makes laughter so he be better than I am. He laugh most secretly, but he lets me know he laughs" [Simak]. In fact, Shakespeare's laughter is presented as irony, comprehensible for the readers, as well as an essential condition for the "communication with the character" [Ginsburg, 1979: 15]. This laughter sounds particularly relevant regarding the existence of magic spells, as he claimed that myths are the essence of racial reminiscences. It is very indicative that Carnivore has associated Shakespeare's reading by the candle with magic spells: "He held the book and it talked to him. Then he talked to it. He makes little marks upon it with a special stick he have." [Simak].

Certain fragments from "The Complete Collection of Shakespeare's Works" are inserted into C. Simak's novel and perform, above all, an intertextual function, although Horton does not quite understand both spelling and abbreviations of the bibliographic description. This proves an accentuated historical distance: "London. No, not London. Someplace else. No place I ever heard of. Maybe not on Earth." [Simak]. Reading Shakespeare's book shows a completely different version of the relationship between Shakespeare and Carnivore than the one, fixed in the text. Written in pencil, by a trembling hand, it arises as a sort of a warning message: "If you are reading this, there is a probability you may have fallen in with that great monster, Carnivore. If such should be the case, don't, for an instant, trust the miserable son of a bitch. I know he intends to kill me, but I

BDD-A30734 © 2019 Editura Universităţii din Suceava
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.108 (2026-11-17 21:49:14 UTC)

shall have the last laugh on him. The last laugh is an easy thing for one who knows that, in any case, he is about to die. The inhibitor I carried with me is all but gone by now, and once I have no more of it, the malignancy will continue to eat into my brain. And I am convinced, before the final killing pain sets in, it would be an easier death for this slobbering monster to kill me than it would be to die in pain…" [Simak].

Shakespeare points out that Carnivore is a real predator ("Killing is not only a way of life for him; it is a passion and religion" [Simak]), a very peculiar creature for his race. Perhaps, even a legendary hero, who is craving to become an absolute champion among the great murderers. From the introductory fragments of Shakespeare's mystified text, we find out that he did not like the planet he lived on, whereas Carnivore's insanity, sensitivity and despair generated the feeling of fear. In this way, readers are able to have a look at the "reverse side" of the narrative: "He sits across the table from me as I write and I can see him measuring me, knowing full well, of course, that I am no worthy subject of his ritualistic killing pattern, but still trying to psych himself into believing that I am. Someday he will do it, and that will be the day. But I have him beat hands down. I have an ace tucked up my sleeve. He does not know that within me lies a death that has only a short time now to run. I shall be ripe to die before he is ready for the killing" [Simak]. Thus, Simak's Shakespeare lays out the program of his further actions, shifting the plot frames that were determined by Carnivore: "I shall use him to cut short the final agony which I know must come, and I shall rob him of his final killing since killing done in mercy will not count for him. He shall not count coup upon me" [Simak].

Turning over the pages of Shakespeare's collection, Horton comes across the plays "Richard III", "The Comedy of Errors", "The Taming of the Shrew", "Twelfth Night", "Othello", "King Lear", and "Hamlet". Nevertheless, particular attention is drawn by the so-called "Marginalia" – margin notes. On reading Shakespeare's comments, Horton concludes that the English Classic was a lonely, sick and frightened man with a complex of superiority. This is why Horton even refers to him as "lost and insane". Further on, the collection of Shakespeare's texts performed the function of the Artefact, serving as a directory for treasure search, as the result of which Horton runs into Shakespeare's spiritualized skull. In this connection, he addresses a rhetoric question: "Is this your spirit talking to me? Your shade? Your ghost?" [Simak]. Naturally, readers' receptive attention immediately responds to such an allusion, decoding the tie between the author (Shakespeare) and the character from the tragedy "Hamlet" (buffoon Yorick). In Simak's "Shakespeare's Planet", this intertextual tie is distinctly fixed at the end, when the skull humorously "winks", thus activating in the readers' consciousness Hamlet's notorious monologue: "Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio: a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy: he hath borne me on his back a thousand times; and now, how abhorred in my imagination it is! my gorge rims at it. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now? your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar? Not one now, to mock your own grinning? quite chap-fallen?" [Shakespeare, 2001: 123]. So, we are able to observe a characteristic metapsychosis of Shakespeare's image from a writer into his resonating confocal image – a generative center of the personosphere in C. Simak's "Shakespeare's Planet". Its intertextual significance arises as an essential factor of gender metamorphicality of the novel, whose gender model is located at the intersection of science fiction and fantasy cross over.

BDD-A30734 © 2019 Editura Universităţii din Suceava
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.108 (2026-11-17 21:49:14 UTC)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bloom, 1994: Bloom Harold, *The Western Canon. The Books and School of the Ages*, New York: Harcourt Brace & Company.

Shakespeare, 2001: Shakespeare, William, *The Tragedy of Hamlet. Prince of Denmark*, Book Caps Study Guides, available at: https://www.w3.org/People/maxf/XSLideMaker/hamlet.pdf

Shakespeare, 2012: William Shakespeare, *Titus Andronicus*, Book Caps Study Guides, available at: https://www.currituck.k12.nc.us/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=6236&dataid=11460&FileName=TitusAndronicusInPlainandSimpleEnglish.pdf.

Simak: Clifford D. Simak, *Shakespeare's Planet*, available at:
http://www.correctenglish.ru/reading/literature/clifford-simak/

Васильєв, 2017: Є. М. Васильєв, *Сучасна драматургія: жанрові трансформації, модифікації, новації:* монографія, Луцьк, ПВД «Твердиня».

Гекман, 2006: Л. П. Гекман, "Персоносфера традиционной культуры: теоретикометодологический аспект [Электронный ресурс]" / *Вестник АлтГПУ им. И. И. Ползунова, Барнаул, Изд-во*, № 1, С. 74-75.

Гинзбург, 1979: Л. Я. Гинзбург, *О литературном герое*, Ленинград, Советский писатель.

Кибалка, 2010: Е. Кибалка, "Образ океана в волшебной сказке и научной фантастике"// *Літературознавчі обрії: праці молодих учених*, Вип. 17, наук. ред. М. М. Сулима, К. Інститут літератури ім. Шевченка НАН України, С. 31-37.

Лотман, 1996: Ю.М. Лотман, *Внутри мыслящих миров. Человек, текст, семиосфера, история*, М. Языки русской культуры.

Нікоряк, 2011: Н. В. Нікоряк, *Автентичність кіносценарію як сучасного літературного тексту*, Чернівці, Місто.

Полышикова, 2008: Л.Д. Персонаж Полышикова, "Поэтика: слов, актуал. терминов и понятий| / М. *Издательство Кулагиной,* Intrada, С. 163-164.

Седых, 2011: А. П. Седых, "О Персоносфере французской культуры" // *Филологические науки. Вопросы теории и практики*, № 2 (9), Тамбов: Грамота, С. 154-156.

Хазагеров, 2002: Г. Г. Хазагеров, "Персоносфера русской культуры: два свойства персоносферы" // *Новый мир*, № 1, С. 133-145. URL: http://magazines.russ.ru/novyi_mi/2002/1/hazag-pr.html

Червинская, 1997: О. В. Червинская, *Акмеизм в контексте Серебряного века и традиции: монография*, Черновцы, Alexandria cel Bun, Рута.

Червінська, 2009: О.В. Червінська, "Психологічні аспекти актуальної рецепції тексту: Теоретико-методологічний погляд на сучасну практику словесної культури: Науковий посібник" / *Зварич І. М., Сажина А. В.*, Чернівці, Книги, XXI.

Яус, 2011: Г. Р. Яус, *Досвід естетичного сприйняття і літературна герменевтика*, [пер. з нім. Роксоляна Свято і Петро Таращук], К.: Вид-во Соломії Павличко «Основи».

BDD-A30734 © 2019 Editura Universităţii din Suceava
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.216.108 (2026-11-17 21:49:14 UTC)