

## THE GENIUS OF THE MAZE OR THE MAZE OF A GENIUS (SOME FEATURES OF C. R. ZAFÓN'S LITERARY STYLE)

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### Abstract

The **topicality** of the research is due to the fact that under the conditions of high-speed development of information technologies and theory of information the text evokes growing interest of researchers as a traditional and reliable source.

The article proposes a **research hypothesis** that reveals the nature of the text, disclosing its internal structure, functional and communicative characteristics. The leading approach to the study of the problem was the **method of linguistic analysis of the text**. In this paper, linguistic analysis is combined with literary analysis and is understood as a **linguistic semantic analysis**. The method of complex text analysis used in this article includes an analysis of a set of factors that distinguishes a specific text from other types of text.

Zafón's works are samples of magical realism, in whose **aesthetics** the reality of reality itself is put under question. His novels are polygenic; the **style codes are eclectic**: tracing the **unique chronotope and the spatial dominant**, providing an extensive linguistic material that allows **to elicit the features of psychological architecture and personification of architectural images**.

The idea of the labyrinth is considered as a metaphorical concept of the writer's view of the world and the features of the **structural organization of works**. The works analyzed belong to the gothic aesthetics and the polygenic and eclectic character of the author's style codes is justified. The authors characterize it as a hybrid style, which is a sum of motifs, symbols and obsessions, constantly recurring from novel to novel. The authors trace a unique chronotope and spatial dominant, providing extensive linguistic material that allows us to reveal the features of psychological architecture and the personification of architectural images. The authors come to conclusion that the notion of the labyrinth is both a structural feature of constructing the texts, as well as an ideological basis of creativity and a vital position of the author.

The materials of the article can be useful for subsequent translations of Zafón's works, describing the artistic effect, to decode the author's metaphorical picture of the world that could help the interpreter to bring the appropriate **psychological effect** on the reader.

**Keywords:** gothic novel; individual style; magical realism; metaphor; maze; labyrinth of thoughts

### 1 INTRODUCTION

Carlos Ruiz Zafón's works can undoubtedly be considered as a significant event not of only in the Hispanic world. This author has a unique and inimitable voice in the multilingual choir of the literature. Zafón's books

are always a full plunge into the mystical and enchanting atmosphere of Barcelona, the incredible journey into the secret library, which stores all the world's books, puzzles and secrets, love and betrayal.

At the beginning of the XXI century, a new term of "Zafónomania" emerged in the literary world. Today Zafón's novels have been translated into 40 languages and published in 45 countries, and his first "adult" book "The Shadow of the Wind" is considered the most successful work published in Spain since "Don Quixote" of Cervantes. It must be noted that the mere release of this book has generated controversy even in politics. Catalan nationalists who consider Zafón a Catalan writer (his mother is Catalan), expressed their frustration by the very fact that the book was written in Spanish and not in Catalan.

We consider his novelism a fascinating material for linguistic and literary analysis. In this paper, the authors attempt to give some comments on his works without any noticeable claim to carry a comprehensive analysis of the writer's works.

It seems necessary to refer to the initial stage of the author's writings. His first works were dedicated to the teenage audience. This series opens by a novel entitled "The Prince of Mist". Later three more works were written: "The Midnight Palace" and "The Watcher in the Shadows", then "Marina" was published. These books fully reflex the writer's characteristic patterns and represent a mixture of adventures, detective, mystery and horror.

To some extent, Zafón's style was predetermined by the place of his birth. The author was born in one of the most mystical and mysterious cities of the world, Barcelona. The family was living near the gorgeous architectural ensemble of Sagrada Familia, so his childhood was spent on the background of this Gothic scenery, the magic of which undoubtedly influenced his perception of the world. Further, the writer was educated at the Jesuit College of Sarria, whose image was later displayed in his novel, "Marina". Dark, mysterious corridors and cells of the monastery where he studied, led him to other worlds of magic realism and realistic magic. It is probably one of the reasons why the author contrasts the reliable and reasonable life focused on the reality of the world to the one, freed from the down-to-earth credibility – the world of fantasy with dark colours, and the plot covered with historical and geographical romanticism and sinister atmosphere. In an interview Zafón puts it this way: "At the age of 10, my two friends and I created a publishing house in the college. I used to go to this college, which belonged to the Sarria Jesuits brotherhood. It was a huge Gothic castle, decorated with an endless succession of towers and passages. I wrote horror stories that were sold well. It went on until the tutor found out about it and terminated the publishing house" (Vila-Sanjuán, 2006, 28 de junio).

He recreates this biographical element in the novel «The Shadow of the Wind» where Carax has the traits of Zafón: "As a child, he spent his life telling stories to local children" (Zafón, 2001 p. 138). "Once Julian told the children on the stairs, that he used to have a sister, who only could be seen by him because his sister might come out of the mirror as if she was woven out of steam and she lived with Satan on the bottom of a lake". (Zafón, 2001, p. 144).

Being a distinctive author, Zafón positively was influenced by various genres. The writer's style include "Gothic elements": all Zafón's stories and novels fully meet the description of the Gothic novel which is based on the horror story reader's "pleasant" sensation, romantic «black novel» in prose with the elements of the supernatural "horror", mysterious adventures, fantasy and mysticism (family curses and ghosts). Incidentally, the name of the literary style originates from of Gothic architecture. It is appropriate to quote Zafón: "When it comes to human-made wonders, there is nothing more beautiful than Cologne Cathedral. My readers know that I have a special interest in Gothic architecture, and Cologne Cathedral is its best example. When I enter the building, its size and complexity make me speechless. I'm not a religious person, but I feel the awe of those who designed and built it". (Vila-Sanjuán, 2006, 28 de junio).

Nathan Drake described the Gothic genre as: "... nothing affects so much a human as gothic, mystery <...> even the most refractory brain, mind, free from any trace of superstition involuntarily recognises its authority and power" (Punter, 1996, 116).

## **2 THE AESTHETICS OF THE GOTHIC NOVEL**

Zafón indeed continues the aesthetics of the Gothic novel; the plot is built around a secret, for example, someone's disappearance; unexpected emerge; and unsolved crimes. He can create the eerie atmosphere of the supernatural, which gives his horrors frightening vitality while they remain unexplained. The author does not fully comply with the Gothic decoration, choosing contemporary reality, such as Barcelona or the Costa Brava landscapes for his narratives, but this does not apply to the Gothic spirit and type of event.

Commonly not one secret but a combination of several topics are used. The disclosure of secrets is

postponed until the very end. Second rate and by-side secrets are added to the central mystery and are also disclosed in the final. Zafón himself believes the secret or mystery to be the core of his writing, the centre of all his works: "The story of mystery, whether a short story, a novel or a drama, perhaps is one of the cleanest and most powerful forms by which fiction seizes our mechanisms of perception. In fact, we might define a literary mystery or secrecy as a literary form, a story in which there are two intersecting narrative structure: one is the false and obvious which the reader sees, the other is the true and invisible, which the author uses to tell the story, replacing the fragments of the first narrative structure with the fragments of the second, thus, leading the reader to conclusion, in which the reader finds that (as does the life itself) the author was deceiving him from the very beginning, with the only difference when the consequences of this fraud are much more pleasant and harmless". (Zafón, 2000, p.41).

In Zafón's novels, one can quite clearly trace the common elements which, to some extent make his work a single unit. Mysteries and secrets are one such common features. According A. Sáiz, "typically one of the characters, most often a teenager, randomly encounters the mystery of the past, which seemed to be asleep and was forgotten, and the story gradually awakens its main actors from the sleep - those who are still alive, and awakens their consciousness, and they offer us a half-truth. It is because almost no one ever tells the truth, either because they do not know it or because they want to protect themselves or to confuse the trail. Moreover, from these small particles, the reader assembles a kind of a puzzle. Sometimes a detail does not fit the overall picture, and the puzzle must be completely redone because we act on the field of fiction, false meaning, false traps". (Sáiz Ripoll, 2004, p.102).

All the actions take place around the investigation, which aims to reveal the central puzzle. In the course of the action the "secondary puzzles" are woven into the story which enhances the intrigue, and are associated with the central mystery. Footprints and mysteries flow from one another, there is something, which might be called the effect of Russian nesting dolls (Matryoshka). The action slows down as if artificially, the reader's attention is switched to other characters and new puzzles. Zafón is a wizard «to paralyse the time,» to postpone the answers and give incomplete clues introducing dialogues on topics, not related to the main plot or suddenly changing the scene. It should be emphasized that Zafón's style is distinguished by its being cinematographic, i.e. slow and episodic unfolding of the plot full of intrigue. In some parts of "The Shadow of the Wind," we can find a clear resemblance to the cinematic scenario. The central story in all his novels is mixed with numerous stories, digressions, the author occasionally includes other voices, becoming the main storytellers, highlighting them in different characters. The novels are perfectly developed in the storyline, supported by accidents occurring in time, the story is supported by melodramatic scenes, as if by the intermediate climax. Zafón himself speaks about the effect of the Russian matryoshka as his style, speaking on behalf of his main character, Daniel Sempere, in "The Shadow of the Wind". Daniel describes Carax's novel: "As soon as I went on reading, the novel structure started to remind me of those Russian dolls that contain miniature copies of themselves (the matryoshkas). Step-by-step the narrative was divided into thousands of stories as if the story appeared in a mirror gallery and its identity would be broken up into a dozen different reflections and, at the same time, would be one image". (Zafón, 2001, p.19). The text included in the sections or subsections must begin one line after the section or subsection title. Do not use hard tabs and limit the use of hard returns to one return at the end of a paragraph. Please, do not number manually the sections and subsections; the template will do it automatically (Einstein, 1916, p. 245).

## **2.1 Common Tissue of a Gothic Novel**

The author introduces a huge number of episodic characters, distracting the readers' attention to them, misleading from the main puzzle, repeatedly forcing to circle through the maze. The style element contributing to heighten the mystery is the constant conflict between reality and fiction; stories told by the characters are half-truths, which, of course, is worse than a lie. Zafón is a virtuoso to dose the information and its manipulation so that the reader could only intuitively feel some incompleteness or falsity of the information that the characters hear. For example, in "The Prince of Mist" Victor Kray as if artificially delays the disclosure of the truth which seizes his interest to the last pages of the novel; Aryami Bose does not tell the whole truth to her grandchildren in "The Midnight Palace", as does Nuria Monfort in the "The Shadow of the Wind". If the characters told the truth, then the investigation would come to an immediate end. Therefore, in Zafón's books, the reader himself can feel like a detective. These fragments of half-truths are parts of the puzzle; the puzzle sometimes does not fit, and the reader finds and picks up other parts from the ground, littered with fakes and traps. (Sáiz Ripoll, 2004, p.102).

Another common element is the prototype of the main character in all Zafón's novels, which F. Revilla calls a self-sufficient teenager (Revilla, 1980, p.195). Almost always the main character is a teenager - eager to become an adult, a lonely, misunderstood one (again a reflection of "Gothic"), with no friends, trying to find

the inner harmony, and besides, usually cut off from any family relationships. The narration in the novels most often occurs in the first person –“I”, which is called the main egocentric word by Yu. Stepanov. (Stepanov, 1985, p.225) The narrator or the image of the author appears in the communicative situation as an analogy of the speaker, leading the story in the real-time: the present and the future. Besides, each teenage character by Zafón holds a sort of initiation, arranged by the life. Under the initiation, according to F. Revilla, we understand a ritual or a set of rituals, which means and at the same time contributes “to the transition of an individual from one state to another, mostly from children's status to adulthood” (Revilla, 1980, p.195). As Zafón admits, in his books, even in those that are considered to be novels for adults, the entire burden and responsibility of any action lies on the teens at the time when they make the transition into adulthood: “the characters are faced with the cruelty of the world, which is not the same as they had been told, and it is the first time of withstanding losses and extreme situations”. (Vila-Sanjuán, 2006, 28 de junio).

Thus, in “The Shadow of the Wind” the characters are the heirs of the past in which they did not experience, but they have to suffer because of it, and between the present and the future there come inevitable effects of specular reflection. Daniel faces the world of adults and learns all the tragedy of the world which was hidden before. At the same time, the adult world gives him the happiness of love. In Zafón's novels, the character grows and is shaped. We may call it a kind of “character designing”, which happens through a rigid interaction with the society, and, as Zafón says, bourgeois society - full of differences, contradictions and constant harm, but the character overcomes this fight being spiritually a more mature person despite the fact that this maturity could lead to his destruction (Zafón, 2001, p.106). This painful journey each Zafón's character performs with virtually blind conviction. However, in the course of this journey - initiation the protagonist always faces the worst enemy of his - the past, whether it is his past, or of other main characters' whom he is associated with. Perhaps this is the reason why in all Zafón's books we notice such artefacts as “traces of the past” - albums with photographs or newspaper clippings. The reader opens Kolvenika album in “Marina”: “Marina turned the pages: the book appeared to be an album with photos, common and widespread. However, the images that the album contained had nothing normal and nothing widespread: the phenomena of nature, creatures with deformed bodies that were once outcasts and were exhibited in a circus” (Zafón, 1999, p.46) or appears in the children's room of Lazarus in “The Watcher in the Shadows”: Hannan felt cold, severe cold that was coming from the depths of his guts. His eyes were trying to decipher the vague text that was around the picture. It said: “An eight-year boy was found after he had spent seven days locked up in the basement, abandoned by everybody and in the darkness.” (Zafón, 1995, p.74).

In the “The Prince of Mist” home movies of Jacob-Roland will help the hero to unravel the mystery and in “Shadows” it is the photo that brings Daniel to Carax's favourite Penelope: (Zafón, 2001, p.148). “I was about to place the last copy book to its place, without checking it when something slipped out from its pages and fell at my feet. It was a photograph in which I recognized the very same girl who was shown in the burnt out photo, taken at the foot of that building.”

In “The Angel's Game” the mysterious photo of Christina Sagnier is the key to the whole story: “I continued my journey through poor Manuel's memories until I came across a page where there was a picture that did not fit the whole picture. It showed a girl of eight or nine years old, who was walking on a small wooden pier stretching into the illuminated sea. She was holding an adult man's hand. He was wearing a white suit; the picture frame circumscribed a part of his figure. The girl, who was shown from her back, was Christine.” (Zafón, 2008, p.141).

## **2.2 Present and Past: Deadly War**

Zafón's central characters try to escape from the past that destroys them from the inside: they lock themselves in their home-castles. This eternal parallel between the past and the present, their mutual specular reflection is highlighted in the “The Prince of Mist” when Max hears: “Time, my dear Max, does not exist, it is only an illusion.” (Zafón, 1993, p. 199). The past always comes back for Zafón's heroes. David's father in “The Angel's Game” tells him: “Everything bad that a person does in his life comes back, David. Also, I have made a lot of cruel things. Bulk of. However, I paid the price. And our lives will change. You will see” (Zafón, 2008, p.57). However, these words are tragic irony because David's father dies: he is killed by mistake confusing him with his master Vidal. We can state that the constant return of the characters to their past is one of the common characteristics of Zafón's novels.

Characters are attached to their past: they are its captives and hostages. Kolvenik in “Marina” and Carax in the “The Shadow of the Wind” live in a kind of purgatory: their memory and their past tortured them in such a way, that they turn to Evil for salvation, resort to murder and the worst humiliations, transforming into the embodiment of the Evil itself; an ordinary person, the creation of God, transforms into spawn of Hell. In “The Midnight Palace” Aryami tells Carter about his grandson, Ben: there is something from which neither you nor

I can protect him anymore: the past (Zafón, 1994, p.76).

In the story of Carax in "Shadows" the memory and the past are so merged with his literary work, that they become inseparable: "Julian lived in his books. This body, which was in the morgue, was only part of him. His soul was in his stories. Once I asked him who was the prototype of his character whom he was inspired by, and he replied that nobody. That all his characters were he." (Zafón, 2001, p.206). The concept of time, obsession with the past can be called a sort of "adhering" element of all Zafón's novels. "Max once read in one of his father's books, that some images of childhood remain imprinted in the memory of the album as photographs, as a scene in which a person, no matter how much time has passed, always comes back and remembers. (Zafón, 1993, p.13). As B. Sáez notes, Zafón "tells about something that happened many years ago, and shakes up memories of those who lived them through, and affects the people, strangers to the story, but who will be involved in it." (Beti Sáez, 2004, p.12)

The protagonist in "Marina" Oscar utters words after Marina has left that might become the epigraph to the entire Zafón's works and a kind of key to his writing method: "Fifteen years later, I returned to the city and again walked around those scenes that I thought all had been driven out of my mind .... (..). I sometimes doubt in my mind and ask me the question: will I be able to remember what has never happened" (Zafón, 1999, p.286). I.e., we remember only those things that has never existed, as the reality is unreal.

### **2.3 Escape from Present in the Past**

Zafón on the one hand, reconstructs the chronology of the major events of the material life of his heroes, on the other hand, he is regularly changing the narration time. It seems that it creates the perception of time by the reader as a psychological phenomenon, which, in turn, creates a unique chronotype of the author's text. The idea of escape is closely connected with the concept of time and timelessness. Many Zafón's characters choose flight, whether it is a real escape, as does Oscar Draí in "Marina", when he is found at Barcelona train terminal, at the same time he does not understand where he is and what time it is. This scene is a prologue to the book, being its logical end, and then the author begins the countdown. Or it could be Z. Freud - like flight to the uncharted islands, from which the protagonist expects renovation. It is done by Jann in "The Midnight Palace" and David Martin in the "The Angel's Game", escaping on board a ship in search of lost paradise, when in the epilogue of the novel the villain Corelli detects him on this lost island of dreams.

Here we need to emphasise that the topic of dreams, prophetic dreams so characteristic for the Gothic, are repeated continuously in Zafón's works. In her dreams in "The Prince of Mist" Alicia precedes the appearance of a sinister clown Cain: "Alicia put her hand on Roland's hand, and he looked up at her: I had seen this clown in my dream every summer since I was five." (Zafón, 1993, p. 91). In the "The Angel's Game" the characters regularly see prophetic dreams. David Martin sees the death of his teacher, Vidal, which eventually ends the novel. "In my dream, I saw as if I went to the funeral of Don Pedro. The bloody sky made the silhouettes of the maze of crosses and angels that surrounded the Vidal family huge mausoleum in the Monjuik cemetery even more distinctive. The inarticulate escort swathed in black veils gathered around the amphitheatre of blackened marble. Each figure was holding a tall white candle in his hand." (Zafón, 2008, p.242) Christina Sanya predicts the final of the novel in her sleep: "She began to tell me her dream about a girl who lived in a dark city-maze whose houses and streets were alive and fed on the souls of the characters of their inhabitants. In her dream, as in the story that I had been reading her for many days, the girl managed to escape from the city, and she found herself on a pier, stretching into the endless sea. She was walking hand in hand with a man with no face and no name, who had saved her and was leading her along those wooden scaffolding, stretched over the sea to its edge, where someone was waiting for her, someone who she could not have seen, as her dream, as well as the story that I was reading to her, was left unfinished." (Zafón, 2008, p.543).

### **3 INTERNAL VS EXTERNAL**

For Zafón the external events act parallel to the internal ones. Fantastic phenomena become an intermedium, equally belonging to reality and fiction. We see the author developing the character's inner space of consciousness, and, in fact, we are dealing with a manifestation of a particular Gothic psychology: the hero is taken a hostage by his consciousness: he is either forced to think and reflect, being limited in the space, or turns out to be at various levels of altered psyche states (semi-delirium, drowsiness, narcotic intoxication, madness, etc.), due to all sorts of circumstances of Gothic topos. Here we may recall permanent and delirious visions of Oscar in "Marina" when he was in the cell of a Gothic building of the Jesuits College. The shift to the mental level makes it possible to vary and complicate the plot via the products of mental life: dreams, visions, imaginary events. Gothic space unfolds at this level, in parallel with the "expansion of consciousness", which the author reaches through the use of various altered states of the characters'

psyche. It is a quite common borderline state between sleep and wakefulness, in which neither the reality nor the dream can dispel each other and are present in a collision. "Night consciousness", portrayed by the authors of Gothic school, makes the individual more susceptible, malleable and less capable of analysing: the protective mechanisms of the psyche become less effective. The character left alone with his inner world comes to the understanding of something, which is not always possible to comprehend even in the result of a long journey in the external world.

In this mixture of internal and external space we see the dominant in all Zafón's novels: the idea of the labyrinth, both external and internal. It is interesting to note that the 600-page novel entitled "The Labyrinth of Harlequins" was written by 15-year-old Zafón: three publishers rejected it, and the author was advised to deny writing. The author creates the very structure of the texts based on the maze. The narrative structure of the labyrinth, as we have noted, is manifested in persistent deviations from the main plot, which either takes him forward or carry away backwards. In other cases, the labyrinth structure is formed due to the fragmentation of the narration and artificial violation of its logical sequence, when the narrative skips over certain points in space and time and rolls back again. One can also talk about the integration of fragmented information in the main chorus of voices of characters, as the result of which the puzzle is assembled.

We emphasise that one of the striking features of Zafón's creativity is the incredible number of different incidents, actions, events entangling the storyline when the reader is buried in this maze of confusing information. Zafón has a clear perception of life as a labyrinth, full of difficulties, as the chaos with no escape, as a movement forward and constant regression, a return to the world of the absurd. All the characters inevitably find themselves in situations of the real or imagined, which plunge them into the maze. In his novels, we find ourselves in a classic maze, which is a limited space, where the paths do not cross but lead us to the centre with back-and-forth motions, resembling a ritual dance. "Lazarus led them along the confusing maze of tunnels, which, and, as it seemed, the labyrinth pierced Gravenmur's entrails and was a subtle path parallel to the galleries and corridors. The path was accompanied by endless doors locked from both sides, double entrances to hundreds of rooms and halls of the building." (Zafón, 1995, p.261). In Zafón's novels the hero, falling into the trap of Gothic architecture, is locked in its walls.

#### **4 DISCUSSIONS**

This love of Zafón to the maze makes a kinship with Borges, whose labyrinth structure is also a favourable reception. Barcelona and its descriptions prove Zafón's commitment: "The Labyrinth of corridors and shelves crammed with books, stood on its bottom to its summit, making an intricate honeycomb of tunnels, stairways, platforms and bridges, among which one could imagine a giant library with an incredible geometry" (Zafón, 2001, p.16). At the same time, the end of the labyrinth in Zafón's novels does not mean the solution but is one of the elements of the problem. Thus, in the "The Shadow of the Wind": "When I crossed the Ramblas, I went down Talyers street, where I got lost in the narrow gorge of the dusk." (Zafón, 2001, p. 207). The real, physical Maze is interwoven with the mental labyrinth, in which the protagonist wanders in search of solving the puzzle. Spatial maze overlaps the mental one.

Characters are often mistaken in their guess-work and are at a loss in the city that resonates with the human capability to find the wrong centre of the labyrinth both the physical one and the labyrinth of his own life. Zafón's Labyrinth is a symbol of the universe, a symbol of the chaotic reality, the universe created by God, but Zafón's God is irrational, cruel and defective as the universe itself, where a false semblance of order becomes chaos. Probably, it can be concluded that the labyrinth is a metaphorical concept of Zafón's world, one of the main elements of the backbone of the writer's creativity, motivation and the principle of modelling of the world. Perhaps Zafón continues Borges's concept, where the latter believes that the library, the world of books, is as large as the universe, infinite and eternal. Also, although it is built according to the order, it turns into a labyrinth because one can never fully understand it (Borges, 1984, p.48). Zafón, like Borges, keeps to the view inherent to magical realism. In this world, the truth is stranger than the fiction, and there is a place for the most incredible events. In this world, there is no need to build a labyrinth: the universe itself is a maze. In the understanding of Borges, a book is similar to a maze. The sole purpose of the labyrinth is to reach them, and the centre itself does not mean anything: just the end of the path and the ability to understand the construction of the scheme. Both "The Shadow of the Wind" and *Lux Aeterna*, a magic book in "The Angel's Game", meet this interpretation. There is a clear analogy of a maze and human life, its end, and therefore, "the purpose" of the labyrinth is death. To reach the death (the target) and recognise (understand) the distance travelled means to die. Most of Borges's works has its culmination at this point when the protagonist is aware of the order of his life's events and with its understanding there comes the realisation of his being doomed. Perhaps both Borges and Zafón share the idea of impossibility to know the reality around us, as it is impossible to read and learn all the books, forgotten in the labyrinths of libraries, as

well as the concept that the reality is not objective, and that every attempt of ours to organize and explain the essence of this world does not produce anything but fiction.

If the time, according to Zafón's heroes, is an illusion, then the world itself is an illusion, too. In an interview, Zafón wrote about his source of inspiration: "The key starting point (for the novel "The Shadow of the Wind") for me was the book sheds of old books in California. They suggested me the idea that there are precious things in the world that are somewhere forgotten. I walked around this image of mazes and tunnels: this is my way to visualize things and objects and projected them on Barcelona, where this type of warehouses does not exist, but it gave me a chance to begin to develop the idea of a mysterious city." (Vila-Sanjuán, 2006, 28 de junio). The idea of the labyrinth and the enclosed space, one of the central metaphors of the Gothic narrative style can be seen repetitively in the novels describing cemeteries and crypts. The gloomy and ominous scene of action supports the overall atmosphere of mystery and fear. Fear is cut off from everyday life and lifted to a terrible cloud hanging over the destiny of humanity, and it is difficult to find a false note in the feverish action and tense atmosphere of the very work. Thus, in his early novel "The Prince of Darkness" (1993), republished as *The Prince of Mist* (2010) we may note the description of the mausoleum of Jacob Fleischmann. The description is organised according to the fundamental principles of the Gothic novel, when the decorations build a shade, reflecting the state of the soul. In the description of the mausoleum, we see Zafón's constant interest in funerary symbolism, the place where one meets the evil: "The village cemetery is a classical rectangular space, which towered at the end of a long road flanked by cypress trees. Nothing particularly original. The stone walls got old, and the place had the same usual appearance that all old graveyards of the small town have. The design was a variation of a narrow cubicle made of marble, black with age and covered with moss. It had a portico of wrought iron. Both sides there were figures of two angels, which raised their sad eyes to heaven." (Zafón, 1993, p.142). It is also interesting the description of the Sarria cemetery in «Marina» where we once again feel the recurring motif of conflict between the reality and presence of the past: "The Sarria cemetery is one of the most hidden corners of Barcelona. If anyone looks it for on the map, it is not there (...) Those few people who know the secret about its location, suspect that in reality, this old cemetery is nothing but an island of the past, which appears and disappears whenever it wants." (Zafón, 1999, p.35).

In "The Shadow of the Wind" the author combines the theme of the labyrinth and the cemetery: "The driver left me at the gate of this place. The whole avenue of cypresses was towering away in the mist. So even from there, from the foot of the mountain one could see the endless city of the dead, which was climbing the slope and flowing over the top. Avenues of graves, boulevards of tombstones and alleyways of mausoleums, towers, topped by flame-coloured figures of angels and whole forests of graves, overlapping one another. (...) The City of the Dead was a bed of honour made of palaces, the monumental mausoleum ossuary, which was guarded by armies of angels from decomposed rotten stone sank in the bush of rotten moss. I took a deep breath and stepped into the maze." (Zafón, 2001, p. 416). The author also describes in detail the two cemeteries in the "The Angel's Game": "I went to the gate of San Gervasi cemetery, walking along the path of the yellowish colour, which the tram lights cut through the wall of rain. The walls of the holy place were towering fifty meters from the marble fortress, where there was an amassment of angels of brown colours" (Zafón, 2008, p.433). "We went deeper into the territory of the cemetery in search of shelter from the rain. The owner chose an old mausoleum, which was a dome supported by marble columns and surrounded by angels with long faces and very long fingers" (Zafón, 2008, p. 471). "The dawn could already be seen at Pueblo Nuevo cemetery, and tram lights were unveiling darkness from the silhouettes like a torch through the darkness of a tunnel. In the end, I was able to discern the gate of the cemetery and skylines of crosses and statues, piercing the infinite horizon on the background of factory chimneys, which lit up the cope of heaven with black and red colours. A flock of hungry dogs was wandering at the foot of the huge angels who guarded the cemetery." (Zafón, 2008, p. 578).

With no doubt, the architectural symbolism plays a vital role in Zafón's works. Not the plot but the settings of actions are essential. The architectural structures have an abstract character and are timeless, as in all works of the "Gothic." Stone walls, statues, mausoleums not only watch the fate of the characters and create a specific ambience, but look as if they affect the course of their history, have become a kind of bridge, a portal between the past and the present, the real and the fiction. The architectural structures and space often play a key role, live a separate life, and are personified. J-E. Cirlot calls home - the structure as of one of the main examples of architectural symbolism. The scientist follows the representatives of psychoanalysis considering that a dwelling house is a prime example of the home and the identification of the human person, his body and thoughts (Cirlot, 1995, p. 278). In all of Zafón's novels one can distinguish detailed descriptions, sketches of houses and palaces, penetrating the flesh or the shadow of its inhabitants. Most homes conceal secrets and traps that are inherited by the new tenants. Thus, in the "The Midnight Palace"

the house of a sinister engineer, Chandra, turns into an alter ego of the character, helps the author in his visual purposes: "It was a two-story building, bordered by two towers that loomed on either side. In its design features of different architectural styles were combined, ranging from the era of Eduardo, which was characterised by its chivalrous extravagance, and silhouettes that seemed to have been borrowed from a palace lost in the mountains of Bavaria. (...) The house seemed to outbreathe seductive magic energy. After the first impression, which plunges a person into a state of confusion and shock, it became clear that this mixture of styles and features had been composed to make harmony. (Zafón, 1994, p.193). In the "The Watcher in the Shadows," the character is also described with the help of the house: "the individuality of his personality lurked hidden in all parts of the Baroque design" (Zafón, 1995, p. 165). When David in the "The Angel's Game" decides to buy a house, he gets a warning: "This house has a bad shadow. I have been there when a notary and me went to seal it, and I can assure you that even the old part of Montjuic cemetery has a gayer look. The house has been empty since then. This place hides bad memories. Nobody wants it" (Zafón, 2008, p. 74). Often the buildings serve the author only to depict the internal destruction of the people who used to live in them: "I went out and heard the noise of the blue tram fading in the fog. The Aldayya family residence was located on the other side of the street. The wrought iron gates, ivy-cloaked, guarded its peace. (...) A brook of rust was dripping from the keyhole on the door gate like blood" (Zafón, 2001, p.173). In the "Shadows" the author depicts the house of Aldaya.

Moreover, the idea of the labyrinth is presented in the houses of the characters in the form of a library - labyrinths. In "The Watcher in the Shadows" Lazarus's library is an infinite Universe of books rising spirally of the Tower of Babel « (Zafón, 1995, p. 85), "thousands and thousands of volumes were stocked in the Tower of Babel in the maze of stairways and passages" (Zafón, 1995, p.250). In "The Midnight Palace" the Calcutta Museum library plays a key role in the narrative: it is the librarian that helps the main characters. On the background of the architectural symbolism, we can mention the regularly repeated image of the station. Zafón's stations are the starting point and the end of a journey, whether they are physical or imaginary journeys, real journeys or initiation of the hero, a symbol of illusions and disappointments. The new life of Max, the hero of "The Midnight Palace" begins when: "he looked at the railway tracks fleeing away, standing on the platform of the village station" (Zafón, 1994, p.14); the Sovel family in «The Watcher in the Shadows» also start their new life path on the platform: In mid-June of 1937 monsieur Lecomte said goodbye to the Sovel family on platform number six of Gare d'Austerlitz" (Zafón, 1995, p.16).

In "The Midnight Palace" Jheeter's Station Gate stands as the embodiment of evil and shelter of damned Javal: "Ben and his companions stopped at the foot of the clock with the fallen hands: the clock was towering on the central platform of Jeter Gheit station. All around them there was an infinite and incomprehensible scene of shadows and angular light rays that were penetrating through the roof of steel and glass and allowed to read the signs of what used to be the most magnificent railway station, which could have been imagined, signs of an iron temple, that was elevated to railways' God" (Zafón, 1994, p.278). In the novels of "Marina", "The Shadow of the Wind" and "The Angel's Game" a station with a capital letter, la Estación de Francia de Barcelona which is considered as one of the most beautiful in Europe, appears in front of the reader. The image of the space where despair overcomes the feeling of happiness, and a sense of love is wonderfully depicted in "The Shadow of the Wind". We see: "The Station of France" was deserted; its stations were bent like reflecting sandbanks, flaring at dawn and sinking in the mist. Julian sat on a bench under the vault of the railway station dome and took out a book. (...) He already understood that Penelope would not come to the date" (Zafón, 2001, p.232). In "The Angel's Game" the station is the symbol of escape, attempts to gain a new life. "The lobby of Station of France lay at my feet like a mirror, and it reflects the large clock hanging on the ceiling. (...) Soon I heard the St. Mary Cathedral bell struck two o'clock. The train to Paris had already left the station, but Christina did not return. Then I realised that she had gone forever" (Zafón, 2008, p. 472, 478). In "Marina" the station gives hope for love, the heroes got their first kiss there. It raises the alarm when Marina, immersed in melancholy, returns from a trip to the doctor, and Oscar emerges on the train station at the beginning of the novel (which is the end of the novel as well); when the station is a portal to the past and a link with the dead, but living forever Marina who seems as if she has only left.

Indeed, at Zafón the very image of the city, houses, cemeteries, railway stations and other architectural symbols become full-fledged characters of his works. Thus, the visible area of the city of Barcelona is transformed into a space of an artificially created image. Now the physical characteristics of the architectural object are not as crucial as its emotional ones, i.e. that powerful impression that a newly forming image may have. Zafón's Barcelona is not just a background for developing of an action. The city takes the protagonist, leads him, turns to the partner from the landscape, becomes an ally in activities: the city is described as a living organism, as it is, for example, in "The Shadow of the Wind": "My favourite Barcelona was October city, when its soul goes for a walk, and a man becomes wiser only after drinking from the Kanaletas fountain"



(Zafón, 2001, p. 138), "We wandered through the streets of Barcelona, taken prisoner by ashy-grey skies" (Zafón, 2001, p.188), "the modernist fever already consuming Barcelona" (Zafón, 2001, p.164). The main character and space have a dialogue, they talk.

## 5 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we would like to emphasise that in this article we tried to highlight some features of Carlos Ruiz Zafón's style. We have considered only a few fragments of that synthetic knowledge and the world, which introduces the creative method and cultural space of the Spanish author. As it is known, the whole is always brighter and more extensive than separate parts, making that: it serves as a stimulus for further learning.

The authors suggest that the dominant factor of Zafon's creative method is the concept of the labyrinth, which, of course, is a structural feature for text making, as well as the ideological basis for his works. The narrative structure of the maze is shown in the concept of the text making, which is a permanent deviation from the main plot, accompanying the writer ahead and then throwing him back. The feeling of labyrinth dominates the reader as a method of life perception. The world is chaos; it is an endless labyrinth with no escape. The labyrinth might be a kind of position of Zafon as an author.

Not by chance, but after several years of silence, the author refers to this subject again, coming back to the reader with a new book called "Labyrinth of spirits" (El labirinto de los espíritus), in which the concept of the labyrinth is already included in the title.

As the second principle of the author's creative method, we may state the clearly expressed gothic aesthetics of the novels, entirely corresponding to the characteristics of the Gothic style, and having a sufficient set of gothic stylistic codes. In the novels there is an obligatory negative character - a carrier of absolute evil and the devil incarnate, sinister scenery in the form of an old house, living independently, which plays the role of mystical Gothic topos, and the protagonist of the novels who falls into this architectural trap, and whose freedom is limited by the scope of fate. He experiences psychological violence and mental disorder due to his collision with irrational diabolical forces.

A distinctive characteristic feature of Zafon's creative method can also be called cinematic likeness of his texts. Many scenes in his novels are not only read but instead felt as incredibly large images. The reader breathes the moisture of mist; squints from the sun glare on the sea lanes; almost physically feels how Christine Sagnier passes through the water in the "The Angel's Game." The authors compare this literary technique with 4D technology in cinemas.

The authors would also like to highlight the unique concept of chronos in Zafon's novels, in which time is a kind of psychological phenomenon. There is permanent parallelism and mirroring between the past and the present. They are books emerging from somewhere and disappearing to nowhere in "The Cemetery of Forgotten Books", endlessly growing in number photos and old newspaper clippings along the pages of the novel. Zafon's characters are hostages and prisoners of the past, from which they cannot escape.

Architectural symbolism is one of the characteristic features of the author's style. The architectural structure and space play one of the critical roles in the novels, they are personified and are either on the side of the main character or act as a hostile force.

The authors propose to refer to Zafon's creativity as the so-called magic realism, largely peculiar to Hispanic literature. Literary works created within the framework of this concept may not be realistic, as it questions the reality of reality itself. Zafon's novels erase frames, blur the boundaries between the fiction and the reality, it is hard for the reader to understand where the author tells about real things and where fictions begin. The truth and fiction are almost identical. The interweaving reality and fiction allow us to conclude that Zafon to some extent is the successor of Cervantes, who created this conflict of the reality and the fiction, the struggle between the good and the evil and the protagonist who must confront the reality.

Zafon's style is a sum of motifs, symbols and obsessions, recurring in all novels, a kind of hybrid style. The apparent simplicity of his writing manner conceals a real universe. Zafon calls his works poly-genre novels; they combine different styles and movements: "Una de las muchas cosas que La sombra del viento aspira a ser es una fusión de géneros y técnicas". (Among many things, which the book aims to become "The Shadow of the Wind" is a fusion of genres and techniques) [8].

We face the eclecticism of the style codes: the idea is encoded. In one Gothic novel, a detective story, a philosophical essay, sometimes parody and the picaresque novel may be intertwined.

A kind of declaration of principles of Zafon's works could be the lines from "The Angel's Game", where the author compares literature with demon's favourite trick - selling the soul: "Un escritor nunca olvida la primera

vez que acepta unas monedas o un elogio a cambio de una historia (...) Un escritor está condenado a recordar ese momento, porque para entonces ya está perdido y su alma tiene precio" (A writer will never forget the first time when he gets a few coins or some praise in return for his story (...) (The writer is doomed to remember that moment because from that very moment on he was killed (missing my little head!), he falls head over heels, and his soul now is worth some pence and can be sold." (Zafón, 2008, p.9).

Every researcher will find an eternal source for the further linguistic and literature analysis in the novels.

The authors believe that Carlos Ruiz Zafón's novels are always an incredible journey. The mysterious and bewitching atmosphere of Barcelona, the secret library, which stores all the world's books, puzzles and secrets, love and betrayal. Are they historical novels or thrillers? Detectives or love stories? It is not possible to determine the genre, and one cannot put the book down either. It seems that every reader may find any "objects" in his works, echoes, feelings from their literature and personal "baggage", life and literature experience. Moreover, every researcher will acquire an inexhaustible source for further philological and literary analysis in these novels.

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