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The historical alternative as the metamotif in postmodern texts by Victor Pelevin

Abstract. The research on historical alternatives in Russian literary postmodernism remains relevant and insufficient. The purpose of this paper is to study the motif of the historical alternative and its variations in the prose by Viktor Pelevin and to reveal its specifics. Methodological bases are the scientific results by Russian philologists on the study of “alternative history” genre and the contemporary understanding of the motif as the predicate in artistic communication. Three Pelevin’s postmodernist texts of different periods were selected as research materials – “The Crystal World”, “Generation “P” and “iPhuck 10”. This motif analysis of historical alternatives focuses on the events, which are counterfactually different from the narrative in historiography and archival documents, studies their narratological functions – forming the plot trends and constructing the chronotope of the Pelevin’s fantastic world. In his postmodernist texts variations of the motif of historical alternatives have gained the dystopian characteristic, functioning in the early texts as a tool for deconstructing Soviet

mythologies, and in the later ones as a weapon to parody and simulacryze the totality and absoluteness of any ideology. The historical alternative as the metamotif in Victor Pelevin's postmodern texts serves as semantic carriers of the ever-present themes of loss of freedom, manipulation and simulation.

Keywords: historical alternative, metamotif, dystopia, Victor Pelevin, simulacrum and simulation, time travel.

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