

УДК 821.111

**SHAKESPEAREAN ALLUSIONS AND REMINISCENCES
IN “THE ARISTOS” AND “THE FRENCH LIEUTENANT’S
WOMAN” BY J.R. FOWLES**

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The paper focuses on the strategies to realize the creative potential of Shakespeare’s legacy in “The Aristos” and “The French Lieutenant’s Woman” by John Fowles. The paper deals with John Fowles’s reminiscences and allusions to Shakespeare’s work aiming to trace the creative potential strategies in “The Aristos” and “The French Lieutenant’s Woman”. The author uses the literary hermeneutics and reception-aesthetics methods. The present paper has E.V. Abramovskikh’s theory and typology of creative reception developed by the author of the paper. The major feature of Shakespearean creative reception in Fowles’s works is the fact that Fowles regards Shakespeare as a dramatic poet and uses mainly the playing strategy of postmodernist type creative reception.

Keywords: William Shakespeare, John Fowles, reception, creative reception, creative potential strategies, intertext, allusion, reminiscence.

**ШЕКСПИРОВСКИЕ АЛЛЮЗИИ И РЕМИНИСЦЕНЦИИ
В ПРОИЗВЕДЕНИЯХ ДЖ. ФАУЛЗА «АРИСТОС» И
«ЖЕНЩИНА ФРАНЦУЗСКОГО ЛЕЙТЕНАНТА»**

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Статья посвящена исследованию стратегий реализации творческого потенциала шекспировского наследия в произведениях Дж. Фаулза «Аристос» и «Женщина французского лейтенанта». Анализируются аллюзии и реминисценции на жизнь и творчество Уильяма Шекспира. Целью работы является комплексное исследование шекспировских аллюзий и реминисценций в философской книге Джона Фаулза «Аристос» и романе «Женщина французского лейтенанта» для выявления стратегий реализации творческого

потенциала в указанных произведениях. Для исследования привлекаются методы рецептивной эстетики и литературной герменевтики. При этом теоретической основой данной статьи является теория и типология креативной рецепции Е.В. Абрамовских, доработанная автором статьи. Ключевыми характеристиками креативной рецепции наследия Шекспира являются восприятие его в первую очередь как драматического поэта и преобладание игровой стратегии постмодернистского типа.

Ключевые слова: Уильям Шекспир, Джон Фаулз, рецепция, креативная рецепция, стратегии реализации творческого потенциала, интертекст, аллюзия, реминисценция.

The topicality of the present paper stems from growing interest in Shakespeare among other things due to the anniversaries of the years 2014 and 2016.

William Shakespeare's legacy is especially important for John Fowles's works. However, critical literature on Fowles's creative reception of Shakespeare's legacy is bound by a number of the great bard's works. It consists of monographs, papers, dissertations published from the 1980-s till the present. Foreign research in this direction is represented by the works by M. Srigley (1985), F. Kermode (1989), J. Clayton and E. Rothstein (1991), T. Foster (1994), M. Becker-Leckrone (2005), A. Jodar (2006). All of them focus on the analysis of Fowles's reception of Shakespeare's play *"The Tempest"* in the novel *"The Collector"* [6-8; 11-13].

In Russian and Ukrainian literary studies we should single out the works by T.U. Ternovaya and D.S. Papkina. They analyze Fowles's reception of Shakespeare from the point of view of intertextuality in *"The Collector"* and *"Wormholes"*. D.S. Papkina also reconcludes that all the works by John Fowles are architextually linked to the plays *"The Tempest"*, *"Hamlet"*, *"Romeo and Juliette"* by Shakespeare [4].

The novelty of the present paper is determined by the research of Fowles's reception of primarily Shakespeare's poetry using the material of *"The Aristos"* (1964) and *"The French Lieutenant's Woman"* (1969) which haven't been studied enough from this point of view.

The present paper deals with postmodernism whose primary characteristics such as intertextuality is represented in both works under analysis. Intertextuality is usually introduced by the devices of allusion and reminiscence. Both devices are closely connected to **reception theory**, defined as ‘a branch of modern literary studies concerned with the ways in which literary works are received by readers’ [14, p. 7]. Reception theory forms the basis for the reception-aesthetics method, which is widely used for text analysis in contemporary literary studies. The basic categories of this method are literary experience, its actualization, explicit and implicit reader [3, c. 192]. Within the framework of analyzing text interaction in postmodernist literature I tend to use the classification worked out by G. Genette in 1982. Genette’s classification includes five types of intertext: intertext proper, paratext, metatext, hypertext and architext [2]. I suggest analyzing the primary aspects of “*The Aristos*” and “*The French Lieutenant’s Woman*” in this context.

The *novelty* of the paper also stems from a new approach to Fowles’s reception of Shakespeare’s legacy, i.e. using E.V. Abramovskikh’s typology [1] developed by the author of the present paper according to the aims of the research. **Reception** in literature can be defined as perception of a text by the reader leading to their own ideas, statements, conclusions, etc. According to the type of its object and result, there are two types of reception: cultural-philosophical and artistic (S.E. Trunin’s typology) [5, p. 17].

The result of reception can be either implicit or explicit, expressed in another text. If there is some explicit result or product, this type of reception is called productive (M. Naumann’s term). Productive artistic, or **creative** (E.V. Abramovskikh’s term), reception is under analysis in the present paper.

E.V. Abramovskikh singles out two levels, or types, of creative reception – classic and more complicated [1, c. 37]. I argue that the second type of creative reception should be called **postmodernist** as it involves dealing with different text levels, both the form and the content, which is typical of postmodernist literature. The ways of expressing an artistically received text in one’s own work (I define them as **strategies**) differ according to the type of creative reception. The classic type

strategies (formal, authentic, neutral, antithetical) focus primarily on plot transformation.

The formal strategy of creative reception is borrowing of the plot or its parts, motifs, etc. The authentic strategy is development of the author's idea but not pure borrowing. It usually strengthens the creative potential (V.I. Tupa's term) of the original text. The antithetical strategy also involves creative development but in the opposite direction. The neutral strategy does not contradict the author's idea. Neither does it strengthen it.

As for the postmodernist type of creative reception, it employs development of different levels of the original text. It is characterized by two strategies – congenial and playing. The congenial strategy involves developing the creative potential of the original text according to the author's idea. At the same time, unlike the classic type strategies, the recipient writer develops the implicit sense of the text rather than its plot. The playing strategy parodies the original text. It implies postmodernist irony, intertextual “colliding” of different (or even opposite) in content literary works in one text. Using the above mentioned strategies the recipient author fulfils the creative potential of the original text in their work.

In the texts under analysis (“*The Aristos*” and “*The French Lieutenant's Woman*” by J.R. Fowles) I have singled out three reminiscences of different works by W. Shakespeare and three allusions to his life and historic period.

The first explicit reminiscence to William Shakespeare's poetry and his tragedy “*Hamlet*” is placed in Paragraph 82 (Chapter 10 “*The Importance of Art*”) of “*The Aristos*”:

*“If he had been such a scientist, **Shakespeare** would have begun Hamlet's famous soliloquy with some properly applicable statement, such as ‘The situation in which I find myself is one where I must carefully examine the arguments for and against suicide, never forgetting that the statements I shall make are merely emotional verbal statements about myself and my own present situation and must not be taken to constitute any statement about any other person or situation or to constitute anything more than biographical data’ [9, p. 207].*

I should point out that in Paragraph 82 Fowles speculates on the similarities, differences and interconnection between poetry and science (Par. 79-84). The author argues with the scientists that consider scientific language as a universal means of expression claiming quite the opposite: “...*the word is man’s most precise and inclusive tool; and poetry is the using of this most precise and inclusive tool memorably*” [9, p. 206]. The author underlines that Shakespeare is a poet first of all and regards his drama as high poetry since it is Shakespearean poetic language that matters for Fowles. To the author’s mind, the poetic language is a great deal more expressive than the scientific one. The novelist substantiates his perspective with the example cited above. The reminiscence provided should be regarded as a manifestation of hypertextuality that consists in parodying Shakespeare’s text and thus mocking the claim for the universal meaning of scientific language.

The reminiscence under analysis is a typical case of the playing strategy (the postmodernist type of creative reception). The reminiscence is the most solid argument for the writer’s position stated in the chapter (Par. 80-82). So it is found in its final paragraph.

The second explicit reminiscence in Chapter 5 of “*The French Lieutenant’s Woman*” compares Charles and Ernestina to Romeo and Juliette respectively:

“*So her relation with Aunt Tranter was much more that of a high-spirited child, an English **Juliet** with her flat-footed nurse, than what one would expect of niece and aunt. Indeed, if **Romeo** had not mercifully appeared on the scene that previous winter, and promised to share her penal solitude, she would have mutinied; at least, she was almost sure she would have mutinied*” [10, p. 29].

Within the framework of the reception-aesthetics method the present reminiscence is a classic example of intertext as co-presence of two texts (by Fowles and Shakespeare) in one literary work. Chapter 5 describes Ernestina’s personality and lifestyle, which helps to reveal the features of her character in detail. The plot of the novel bases on Fowles’s ‘eternal triangle’, where the main character Charles Smithson has to make an existential choice between two women – his fiancée Ernestina Freeman and Sarah Woodruff, a bright and independent personality, who

Charles unexpectedly falls in love with. At the same time the character chooses between duty and feeling, conformism and freedom, decent reputation and his real self. The author suggests that the reader should choose one of the three endings of the novel together with the character, which is an interesting postmodernist literature device.

The refined, self-centered and capricious Ernestina represents a typical Victorian girl originating from a rich family. In terms of composition, the reminiscence provided helps to pass from the characteristics of Ernestina's family to the description of her feelings to Charles (she is in love and is looking forward to their wedding). As for the contents and imagery, the comparison is based on the difference in the Smithsons' and the Freemans' social background. Charles comes from an impoverished upper-class clan and Ernestina's father represents a perfect example of the bourgeois class reaching its prime. We should also highlight the irony of the reminiscence pointing to the author's attitude towards Charles and Ernestina's story and, in a broader sense, towards Victorian traditional values. That is also a fine specimen of the playing strategy.

In Chapter 12 Fowles provides an explicit reminiscence of Shakespeare's comedy "*A Midsummer Night's Dream*", which is also a manifestation of intertext:

*"There was an antediluvian tradition (much older than Shakespeare) that on **Midsummer's Night** young people should go with lanterns, and a fiddler, and a keg or two of cider, to a patch of turf known as Donkey's Green in the heart of the woods and there celebrate the solstice with dancing"* [9, p. 81].

Being an intertext, the present reminiscence implies the actualization of the reader's literary experience. Compositionally, the reminiscence is provided in the description of Ware Commons where Charles and Sarah used to meet. Chapter 12 describes such a meeting. A reader with a considerable literary experience observes that the author establishes a link between the characters of Shakespeare's play and his own novel. It's common knowledge that the action in the above mentioned comedy takes place in the magical forest, where the characters change their love due to fairies and their charms. Something of the kind will happen to Charles when he falls in love

with Sarah. Thus the reader (primarily an implicit one) can foresee further plot development. That determines the meaning of the reminiscence under analysis for understanding the content and imagery of Fowles's novel. The recipient author's implicit borrowing of Shakespeare's plot elements illustrates the authentic strategy (classic type of creative reception).

I have also singled out four allusions to Shakespeare's époque, life and poetry in "*The French Lieutenant's Woman*". The first one mentions the Toby jug bought by Sarah for Charles's money (Chapter 36):

"She began with a Staffordshire teapot with a pretty colored transfer of a cottage by a stream and a pair of lovers (she looked closely at the lovers); and then a Toby jug, not one of those garish-colored monstrosities of Victorian manufacture, but a delicate little thing in pale mauve and primrose-yellow, the jolly man's features charmingly lacquered by a soft blue glaze (ceramic experts may recognize a Ralph Wood)" [9, p. 241].

According to Genette's classification, the present allusion belongs to the category of intertext. The Toby jug was named after the merry drunkard Toby Belch, a character of Shakespeare's "*Twelfth Night, or What You Will*". To better analyze the allusion it is useful to involve another contemporary method – the literary hermeneutics method, which implies several levels of text understanding and suggests text analyzing in a circular way, with the help of the so-called 'hermeneutic circle', or circle of understanding [14, p. 111].

At the first circle of understanding the above cited excerpt can be regarded by the reader as an explicit allusion to the famous Toby jug, which is rather popular in Britain. But the reader with a considerable literary experience achieves the second level of understanding, which is deeper, and recollects the plot of Shakespeare's "*Twelfth Night, or What You Will*". It becomes clear, that the author establishes a link between the two female characters – Sarah and Viola. In the play by Shakespeare Viola finds herself in a foreign country after the shipwreck and falls in love with Duke Orsino who wants to marry Olivia. Likewise, Sarah finds herself in Exeter in Chapter 36 of "*The French Lieutenant's Woman*". We know that she has suffered a

similar stress before – she has parted with Charles. Like Viola, Sarah remains alone in a strange town, without home or work. Furthermore, there is a most important feature that the two characters have in common – their love for an engaged man, which later becomes reciprocal. The reminiscence provided shows the playing strategy (postmodernist type of creative reception).

The second allusion, an explicit one, mentions the so-called ‘Shakespeare’s collar’:

*“A kind of magical samovar, whose tap was administered by Mary, dispensed an endless flow of gloves, scarves, stocks, hats, gaiters, Oxonians (a kind of shoe then in vogue) and collars – Piccadilly’s, **Shakespeare’s**, Dog-collar’s, Dux’s – Sam had a fixation on collars, I am not sure it wasn’t a fetish, for he certainly saw Mary putting them round her small white neck before each admiring duke and lord”* [9, p. 182].

The allusion can also be easily recognized as intertext – a kind of specific English cultural code – and an example of the playing strategy as Fowles here is playing with Shakespeare’s legacy interpreting it via mentioning the collar.

The third and the fourth allusions (Chapter 22) refer the reader to the Elizabethan époque:

“There was one such, an Elizabethan manor house in the village of Winsyatt, almost in view of the great house” [9, p. 167].

“I know those old houses. Dozens of wretched little rooms. I think the Elizabethans were all dwarfs” [9, p. 187].

Both allusions are important for the content and imagery of the text as *“The French Lieutenant’s Woman”* deals with the Victorian époque which is compared to the Elizabethan one. The first circle of understanding suggests that the cited excerpts are explicit allusions to a certain period in the history of England. The second level of understanding implies a deeper analysis of the text and makes the allusion an implicit one to the attitude towards Shakespeare’s works as an experienced reader knows that Shakespeare lived and worked in the Elizabethan époque. So the reader pays attention to Ernestina’s shallowness and, on the whole, to the shallowness of Victorian society, which appreciates the size and comfort of a house more than art and beauty. While

analyzing the above mentioned allusions and reminiscences I have singled out two crucial points of Fowles's creative reception of Shakespeare's works.

The first one is regarding Shakespeare as a poet and his legacy as dramatic poetry. The second one is the playful strategy of creative reception as the domineering one in Fowles's works. This fact indicates interpreting Shakespeare's literary works via postmodernist playing and irony in *"The Aristos"* and *"The French Lieutenant's Woman"*.

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