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**PARKS AND GARDENS IN POETIC REMINISCENCES
USED TO DELIVER PHILOSOPHIC IDEAS**

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The paper focuses on analyzing the image of parks and gardens that helps to deliver philosophic ideas in fiction. The research bases on the novel “The French Lieutenant’s Woman” by John Fowles. The literary hermeneutics and reception-aesthetics methods are used. The paper deals with the reminiscences from Alfred Tennyson’s and Thomas Hardy’s poetry. The author draws a conclusion about their meaning for understanding the sense of the novel and John Fowles’s philosophic ideas as a whole.

Keywords: park, garden, nature, landscape, epigraph, intertext, John Fowles, reminiscence, the Victorian period, Thomas Hardy, Alfred Tennyson.

**САДЫ И ПАРКИ СКВОЗЬ ПРИЗМУ ПОЭТИЧЕСКИХ
РЕМИНИСЦЕНЦИЙ НА СЛУЖБЕ ФИЛОСОФСКИХ ИДЕЙ**

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Статья посвящена анализу образа садов и парков, посредством которых автор раскрывает философские идеи в литературном произведении. В статье исследуется роман Джона Фаулза «Женщина французского лейтенанта». В процессе исследования автор прибегает к методам литературной герменевтики и рецептивной эстетики. Рассматриваются реминисценции из поэзии Альфреда Теннисона и Томаса Гарди и делается вывод об их значении для понимания смысла романа и философских идей Джона Фаулза в целом.

Ключевые слова: парк, сад, природа, пейзаж, эпитафия, интертекст, Джон Фаулз, реминисценция, Викторианская эпоха, Томас Гарди, Альфред Теннисон.

Theoretical issues of landscape in literature remain topical for the studies of XX century literary works [6, c. 259]. Nature is known to bear special importance for the outstanding English writer John Robert Fowles. The key to his works is found by the Russian researcher T.L. Selitrina in his communication with nature, especially, with trees [7, c. 240]. The writer spent a great deal of his life in his seaside house in Lime-Regis (the South of England). The town determined the setting of J. Fowles's famous novel "The French Lieutenant's Woman" [10].

At the same time it is not the town itself that provides location for the critical events of the novel but the wilderness near Lime. Nowadays, as well as during J. Fowles's life, there is a national park located there. It is known as "The Undercliff National Nature Reserve". The most important episodes depicted there by the writer are brilliantly supplemented with the image of parks and gardens given in allusions and reminiscences to T. Hardy's and A. Tennyson's works. Poetry is especially important in this context as it gives the brightest and largest development to landscapes and natural images. For example, the Russian researcher M.G. Merkulova finds out a special influence of the traditional English garden on English poetry making it somewhat dreamy and romantic [5, c. 72].

Let's look closer. There are two reminiscences to the famous Victorian poet Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) focusing on manors and gardens. The first one is given as an epigraph to Chapter 34: "And the **rotten rose** is ript from the wall" [10, p. 253].

The line under analysis contains the climax of the above mentioned poem. Rose, poets' favourite flower since Antique times, symbolizes the shortness of youth and happy life (that is emphasized by the epithet "rotten") [9, p. 172-177]. Rose is traditionally destroyed by wind, which is illustrated by means of alliteration. The domineering sound is 'r'.

At first it is clear that the epigraph helps Fowles to predict the future break-up of Charles and Ernestina's would-be family. It emphasizes the inevitability of some tragic final which is clearly seen in the context of Chapter 34 describing Charles parting with Ernestina before leaving for London. Smithson cannot feel at ease while

being together with his fiancée because of his growing feeling towards Sarah and the fact that they have recently kissed. In this case the rotten rose may be regarded as an allegory of Charles's fading love for Ernestina.

However, at a deeper level of analysis the pathetic tragedy of Hardy's poem as contrasted to Fowles's ironical and even mocking attitude to Ernestina ("a sugar Aphrodite", "the ageless attraction of shallow-minded women") [10, p. 255] becomes visible to the reader. Then the rose traditionally symbolizing a young and innocent girl acquires a new quality ("rotten") which proves the author's despise to this female character. Therefore, the reminiscence may be regarded as a sample of hypertext.

As I have already stated in my previous works [2; 8], a most convenient way to analyze postmodernist literature is using G. Genette's classification worked out in 1982. Genette's classification includes five types of intertext: intertext proper, paratext, metatext, hypertext and architext [3]. The reminiscence provided should be regarded as a manifestation of hypertextuality that consists in parodying the original text and thus mocking the character described in such a way.

An experienced reader is aware that the quoted poem "During Wind and Rain" (1917) [11] was written to commemorate Hardy's wife and deals with her late family. The main topics of the poem are irreversibility of time and inevitability of death. The poem depicts a manor with an initially happy family, a prosperous house and a garden in blossom. Garden has a special meaning in this context. First of all, it reminds the reader of the Garden of Eden which makes alike Adam and Eve's serene life before the fall and the poem's characters' happiness in front of the lurking catastrophe. Furthermore, trees also symbolize family which, like all living beings, grows, flourishes, brings its fruits and dies. There appear the images of wind destroying the garden and rain which normally symbolizes suffering in European literature [9, p. 164-165].

The second reminiscence to T. Hardy's poetry is found as an epigraph to Chapter 23:

Portion of this yew

Is a man my grandsire knew... [10, p. 189].

Chapter 23 focuses on Winsyatt, Charles's uncle's manor. Charles comes there after some time and notices the changes that have happened since his previous visit. The analysis of the poem "Transformations" [11] serving as a source for the reminiscence under analysis may shed light upon the meaning of the epigraph.

Hardy claims that the dead do not disappear forever but make part of surrounding nature that gave them life. The first stanza, where the reminiscence was taken from, gives a description of the yew whose part, as the narrator says, is "a man his grandsire knew".

Comparing people to plants, which originates in folklore and the Bible, is typical of European literature [1, c. 17]. Yew is considered to be a traditionally English tree. It can be often seen in British cemeteries. In English culture this poisonous coniferous tree symbolizes death and at the same time eternity. Furthermore, branches of this tree have always substituted palm ones while celebrating the Triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, or Palm Sunday.

The image of yew as a symbol of eternal life sheds light upon Fowles's choice of this epigraph and helps the reader to deeper understand his existential character's spiritual quest. Charles Smithson follows this way through all the "transformations" that lead him to a hope of spiritual revival, as a result.

In this context I would like to draw attention to John Fowles's reception of Alfred Tennyson's (1809-1892) poetry. Like Hardy, he lived and created his poems during the Victorian period (1837-1901). In 1850 Tennyson was appointed to the position of Poet Laureate. A reminiscence to his poem "In Memoriam" (1850, Chapter CXXIII) [12] is found as an epigraph to Chapter 8 in "The French Lieutenant's Woman":

There rolls the deep where grew the tree,

O earth, what changes hast thou seen!

There where the long street roars, hath been

The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow

From form to form, and nothing stands;

They melt like mist, the solid lands,

Like clouds they shape themselves and go [10, p. 49].

To better analyze the above mentioned reminiscence 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 [4, c. 111].

At the first level of understanding the reader links Tennyson’s verse about changing nature to the contents of Chapter 8 dealing with Charles’s paleontological research which takes place in Ware Commons (the national park-to-be). The protagonist of Fowles’s novel is known to be keen on Darwin’s theory, popular in those days, and this kind of research gives him plenty of examples. Therefore, we are moving to the second, deeper, level of understanding the reminiscence.

A properly experienced reader is aware that Tennyson’s “In Memoriam” was created in the form of separate poems for seventeen years after Tennyson had learnt in 1833 that his best friend Arthur Henry Hallam had died. The poem belongs to the genre of elegy. It possesses a deep philosophic sense drawing the reader’s attention to such topics as grief and renewal, losing and finding, death and immortality. Observing nature, its changes and constant revival, the main character and protagonist of “In Memoriam” finds comfort and hope. He understands that, although it is impossible to get your beloved person back in their material form, their soul is alive, which gives hope to meet each other in a better world.

Tennyson tries to find some balance between Christianity and Lyell’s (later Darwin’s) scientific discoveries. The poet draws a conclusion that these discoveries explain the universal organization only partially, keeping his faith in God, love and salvation.

At a deeper level of understanding the reader can obviously observe the author comparing the character of Tennyson's "In Memoriam" to Charles Smithson who also tries to find balance in his life. Moreover, it is known that the initial title for the poem was "The Way of the Soul", the one that can be easily associated with Charles's soul and spiritual quest. The author proves that by saying: "And he had always asked life too many questions" [10, p. 34].

Like Charles, the lyrical hero of "In Memoriam", very close to its author (the poem is a first person narration), is interested in existential issues. The initial title "The Way of the Soul" can be understood in two ways: on the one hand, it is the way that is followed by a person's soul (A. Hallam's, in particular) after death; on the other hand, it is the way of spiritual quest followed by the hero himself. That kind of way is taken by Charles and in the novel he can often be seen on the road (Chapters 3, 23, 39, 40, 42, 43, 44, 45, 49, 50, 54, 55, 58, 59, 60). The lyrical hero's "way of the soul" in Tennyson's poem leads him to gaining faith in salvation, gives him the necessary hope for eternal life. Something of the kind happens to Charles at the end of the final chapter in "The French Lieutenant's Woman" (Chapter 61): "...he has at last found an atom of faith in himself, a true uniqueness, on which to build..." [10, p. 445].

A person's spiritual revival giving hope for the future is the core of Fowles's novel conception which becomes especially obvious due to the image of parks and gardens created in the poetic reminiscences. John Fowles is inclined to identify people with trees, which constantly grow and renew. The special meaning of nature in the novel is emphasized by choosing Ware Commons (the future national park) as the principal location. Thus, with time the attitude to nature is rethought as well as all the events that took place and the Victorian period as a whole.

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