

BIBLICAL PERSONAGES AND J. FOWLES NOVEL CHARACTERS

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Abstract:

Currently intertextuality is one of the most discussable issues concerning modern and postmodern literature, as modern and postmodern writers are characterized by the implementation of intertextual components in their writings. J.Fowles, a postmodern British writer stands among those writers. Despite the fact that there have been numerous investigations on the issue of intertextuality in his works, none of them has been devoted to the study of the philosophical essay "The Aristos" as a background source for his other writings.

The aim of the present article is to define the nature of novel characters departing from his interpretation of biblical personages: Adam and Eve, stated in his philosophical essay "The Aristos". The study becomes especially important as the male and female characters in all his novels allude to this interpretation. The intertextual ties between the author's works are as important as intertextual connections between different authors' works. In fact, "The Aristos" is one of the author's lesser studied works. Nevertheless to understand J.Fowles' novels properly one should refer to "The Aristos". All his female characters impersonify Eve and male characters - Adam - in line with his own interpretation of Adam's temptation. The analysis has shown that J. Fowles considers women as wise, kind, tolerant and progressive. In contrast, men are considered to be static, inactive and not capable of changes. Moreover, women are responsible for changes and progress both in the life of the society and in the life of men. The author also believes that there have been Eve societies, such as Renaissance and the present era, in which the woman, the mother, female gods encourage innovation and experiment, fresh definitions, aims, modes of feeling; and Adam societies, such as Victorian, in which the man, the father, male gods demand strict obedience to established institutions and norms of behaviour.

Key words: J. Fowles, intertextual ties, philosophical essay "The Aristos", Adam society, Eve society, biblical personages.

Introduction

Intertextuality has become one of the most discussable issues about modern and postmodern literature, as the writers of these genres are characterized by the usage of intertextual components. Some linguists such as G. Allen (2000), R. Barthes even criticize modern and postmodern writers for not being original, for repeating the same ideas stated earlier. However, still there are others who argue that despite the fact that postmodern writers do allude to other texts and ideas, they suggest new interpretations for them.

Intertextuality is also characteristic of J. Fowles, an outstanding British postmodern writer. A number of investigations (M. Drozdova 2015, Ju.V. Rudenko, 2017, I.A. Yarigina, 2013, E. Aminaeva, 2011, E. Antipenko, 2003 and others) have been devoted to the study of intertextuality in the author's works. All these investigations are devoted to intertextual connections between the author's novels and other writers' writings, as well as Greek and Roman mythology. However, none of them has done any research on intertextuality between his own writings.

The aim of the present article is to define the nature of his male and female characters departing from his interpretation of biblical personages: Adam and Eve, stated in his philosophical essay "The Aristos"(1981). The study becomes especially important as the female and male characters in all his novels are grounded on this interpretation. The intertextual ties between the same author's works are as important as between different authors' works. In fact, "The Aristos" is one of the author's lesser studied works. Nevertheless to understand J.Fowles' novels properly one should refer to "The Aristos". The latter was written in the early years of his writing career. At first he also wanted to write a subtitle "Self-portrait in ideas", it probably would best express what the book was about (1981:7). Actually, the author's other novels dwell upon the ideas stated in "The Aristos". That is why it becomes essential to find ties between "The Aristos" and his other works. It would also spread light on understanding his male and female novel characters.

In respect to women's role in J. Fowles' novels, an interesting idea has been expressed by E. Antipenko in the article "Intertextual Character of J. Fowles' Novels" (2003). Analyzing the writer's novels "The Collector" (1963), "The Magus" (1981) and "The French

Lieutenant's Woman''(1969), ''Daniel Martin'' (1977) E. Antipenko states that in all of them the female characters play a leading role. Women in these novels guide men in their pursuits to self-recognition, to new experiences. In his novels the woman brings in something mystic into the man's world. The image of a woman is the same in all his novels. She is characterized by such qualities as forward-looking with a bright mind, brave, purposeful and perspective. Such characters as Alison (''the Magus''), Sara (''The French Lieutenant's Woman''), Jane (''Daniel Martin'') served as mystical impetus in the life searches of Nicholas, Charles and Daniel. [Antipenko, 2003].

Another novel, in which one can see that J. Fowles highly estimates the woman's role in society is ''A Maggot''(1985). It is a mystical novel, in which the theme of the second rebirth of the Christ is touched upon but this time Christ will be reborn as a woman.

The deep analysis of J. Fowles' novels and the philosophical essay ''The Aristos'' show that the images of male and female characters in his novels go far back to the Bible, namely to the story of Adam and Eve. The author gives his own interpretation of the story in his philosophical essay ''The Aristos''. So, it becomes obvious that the author's views concerning the woman's role in society and in man's life is clearly expressed in ''The Aristos''. From the perspectives of intertextuality we are speaking about ''double'' intertextuality, as firstly the female and male images go back to '' The Aristos'' and secondly to the Bible.

Thus, in order to understand what is the author's attitude towards male and female and their role in society, let's do conceptual analysis of the concepts ''man'' and ''woman'' with reference to the philosophical essay ''The Aristos''.

In the essay J. Fowles argues that '' The male and female are the two most powerful biological principles; and their smooth inter-action in society is one of the chief signs of social health. In this respect our world shows, in spite of the now general political emancipation of women, considerable sickness; and most of this sickness arises from the selfish tyranny of the male'' (p.157).

From the stated idea it becomes obvious that the author is in favor of women and thinks that the society is “ill” because of men’s selfish tyranny. He finds that the roots of men’s behavior go back to the myth of the temptation of Adam and interprets it the following way: Adam is hatred of change and futile nostalgia for the innocence of animals. Eve is the assumption of human responsibility, of the need for progress and the need to control progress. The Garden of Eden is an impossible dream. The Fall is the essential process of evolution. The God of Genesis is the personification of Adam's resentment (p.157).

In this small paragraph via conceptual metaphor the author gives his own outlook about women in the face of Eve and men in the face of Adam. Adam is characterized via the expressions “hatred of change”, “futile nostalgia for the innocence of animals”, which demonstrate men’s passive state. They do not like changes, even hate changes, as they are satisfied with what they have. Another expression displays men’s willingness to be able to preserve their previous status. If not the serpent, everything would remain unchanged - men and women would live in the Garden of Eden, reproduce and live their calm life happily and undisturbed.

In contrast to Adam, Eve is characterized by the expressions “assumption of human responsibility”, “need for progress”, “need to control progress”. The key words are “progress” and “responsibility”. They show that women assume the responsibility for the human progress and they control progress. J. Fowles interprets the Garden of Eden as a dream, which is unrealizable. It is a dream that every couple can have at the beginning of their coupledness. However, women cannot live in static conditions for a long time as they feel themselves responsible for the human progress. The God of Genesis gets angry at the boldness of Eve not to follow His instructions. The author refers to the God of Genesis as a personification of Adam’s resentment, which means that men get angry at women’s decision to make further steps in their mutual life, dare to disturb men’s calm life.

In another paragraph J. Fowles continues disclosing the concepts of “man” and “woman”. But Eve had the intelligence to trick Adam out of his foolish dream in the Garden of Eden, she had also the kindness to stick by him afterwards; and it is this aspect of the female principle – tolerance, a general skepticism towards the Adam belief that might is right- that is

the most valuable for society. Every mother is an evolutionary system in microcosm; she has no choice but love what is – her child, ugly or arrogant, criminal or selfish, stupid or deformed. Motherhood is the most fundamental of all trainings in tolerance; and tolerance, as we have still learn, is the most fundamental of all human wisdoms(p.158).

Eve is also intelligent. She could trick Adam out of his foolish dream in the Garden of Eden. Another good quality that is characteristic of women is that they are kind and tolerant. Eve stuck by Adam afterwards, did not leave him, being tolerant towards his belief that might is right. Then the author touches upon the notion of ‘‘motherhood’’, arguing that motherhood is the most fundamental of all trainings in tolerance and tolerance in its turn is the most fundamental of all human wisdoms.

In the following paragraph J. Fowles divides the societies into Adam society, i.e. man society and Eve society, i.e. woman society.

Adam is stasis, or conservatism; Eve is kinesis, or progress. Adam societies are ones in which the man and the father, male gods, exact strict obedience to established institutions and norms of behaviour, as during a majority of the periods of history in our era. The Victorian is a typical such period. Eve societies are those in which the woman and the mother, female gods, encourage innovation and experiment, and fresh definitions, aims, modes of feeling. The Renaissance and our own are typical such ages(p.157).

The author analyzes and sees that there have been societies when the man, the father, male gods established strict rule of behavior and strict obedience. Most of the societies have been suchlike and the vivid example is the Victorian period. In these societies there wasn't much progress. In contrast to this there have been societies in which the woman, the mother, female gods have encouraged innovation, fresh definitions. Such kind of society was the Renaissance. As it can be seen the author's favors are for women. He supposes that women do take the responsibility for changes, innovation and progress.

Conclusion:

Thus, the analysis of biblical characters' interpretation suggested in J.Fowles' philosophical essay ‘‘The Aristos’’ has shown, that J. Fowles finds women wise, kind, tolerant and

progressive, whereas to men he refers as static, inactive, not capable of changes. The author's attitude towards male and female are clearly expressed in all his writings. In all of them women play the leading role, are responsible for changes and progress both in the life of the society and in the life of men. The author also believes that there have been Eve societies, such as Renaissance and the present era, in which the woman, the mother, female gods encourage innovation and experiment, fresh definitions, aims, modes of feeling; and Adam societies, such as Victorian, in which the man, the father, male gods demand strict obedience to established institutions and norms of behaviour. So, it is essential to understand the author's interpretation of Adam's temptation as it helps the reader analyze the characters in his novels better.

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