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*The Victorian Novel Revisioning: J. Fowles vs. The Victorians*

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The paper is dedicated to the notion of the Victorian epoch and linguistic means of its representation in J. Fowles' novel "The French Lieutenant's Woman" in comparison to that of the Victorian authors (Ch. Dickens, T. Hardy, G. Eliot, W. Thackeray etc.).

The main linguistic methods used in the research were contextual analysis and complex stylistic analysis based on the principles of foregrounding together with such universal scientific methods as comparison and quantitative analysis.

The research is of great importance because the Victorian epoch is considered to be a precedent phenomenon for the English native speakers, sharing the nation's system of values. Thus it has always attracted attention of the British novelists. However the notion and the perception of the Victorian epoch in the novels of the representatives of the Victorian society and contemporary writers differ considerably.

J. Fowles' novel is a striking example of how a vision of the Victorian England is introduced into the picture of the world of the XX century writer. The novel is considered by all the critics (Conradi, 1982; Foster, 1994; Hammond, 2003; Omega, 1986; Vianu, 2001) to be a postmodernist novel, which makes it particularly interesting for the analysis, as J. Fowles deliberately plays with a classical Victorian novel form and plot. Moreover the author explicitly manifests this play.

In the focus of the author's attention in "The French Lieutenant's Woman" is the existential quest of a young aristocrat Charles Smithson, who lives in the Victorian epoch. A difficult choice between a marriage to a rich heiress and his love to a poor, but mysterious companion Sarah Woodruff helps the main hero to find his true self and establish his personal freedom. The notion of freedom has always attracted J. Fowles' attention and has been the main theme of most of his novels ("The Collector", "The Magus", "Daniel Martin"). In these novels he presented various aspects and images of freedom, like personal freedom, physical freedom (e.g. from captivity), freedom that is gained through the process of creation etc. Here J. Fowles concentrates on the social aspect of the phenomenon of freedom.

Further study of the problem enables to disclose the modern English attitude to the Victorian epoch and illustrate the evolution of the Victorian novel genre. This stipulates for the novelty of the research as the Victorian novel has never been studied within the postmodernist philosophical and literary paradigm. In respect to the above-mentioned the paper distinguishes between the notion of the postmodern Victorian novel and the Neo-Victorian novel, which became very popular in the last decade of the XX century and the beginning of the XXI century. The later variation of the genre usually exists within the mainstream of the popular literature and is characterized by an accurate stylization of the original model and overuse of sensational plots and thus can hardly be considered an evolution of the genre.

The term "Victorian" does not simply indicate a certain historical period, but presents a precedent phenomenon, which awakes a number of emotions and aesthetic and ethical associations for a typical member of the English society. Queen Victoria (1819-1901) governed the country during 64 years (1837-1901) and strictly speaking only this period should be called "Victorian". Nevertheless usually the entire XIX century is associated with the Victorian Age. This can be explained by the importance of this century for the development of the UK and integrity of social and historical

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| Visionaries, Pioneers, Apostles and Healers: The Contribution of Migrants from Trinidad and Tobago to the Development of Black Britain, 1948 to 1986<br>Peter Timothy, University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago | pp 132-144 |
| The Formation and Development of Motivation among Foreign Language Learners<br>Mergul Kulakhmetova, Pavlodar State University, Kazakhstan<br>Merauert Ulakhanova, Pavlodar State University, Kazakhstan                   | pp 145-154 |
| Industrialisation and the Idea of 'suburb': Birmingham, England, 1780-1850<br>Lin Chang, National Hsin-chu University of Education, Taiwan  | pp 155-164 |
| The Victorian Novel Revisioning: J. Fowles vs The Victorians<br>Vera Mensala, National Research University Higher School of Economics, Russia   | pp 165-171 |
| Identity Formation and Alienation of Sisters in Marilynne Robinson's Housekeeping<br>Özlem Atar, Hacettepe University, Turkey   | pp 172-182 |
| Evolving Tradition of Waste-to-Art: The Nigerian Experience<br>Ayo Adewunmi, Institute of Management and Technology (IMT), Nigeria  | pp 183-197 |
| The Child's View of an Adult World: Contemporary Documentary Films Capture Social Conflicts through Children's Perspective<br>Letizia Nicolò, Universidade Estadual de Campinas, Brazil                                   | pp 198-205 |
| The Question of a Stable Identity in Brian Friel's Post-War Play: "Philadelphia Here I Come"<br>Özlem Özmen, Hacettepe University, Turkey   | pp 206-213 |
| Vanguards of the Faith: Women and Religious Agency in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement in Trinidad, 1970 - 2010<br>Charika-marie Alexis, University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago                      | pp 214-224 |
| Greetings from the Rural Paradise: Touristic Images of the Spanish Countryside During the 1950s and 60s<br>Alicia Fuentes Vega, Complutense University Madrid, Spain  | pp 225-238 |
| Remembering My Whiteness / Imagining My Africaness<br>Antoinette D'Amant, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa   | pp 239-249 |
| Language-Crossing: The Sociolinguistic Dynamics of the Language/Discourse of 'Shamasha' Group (Randok) in Sudan<br>Abdelmagid Awadelkarim, Majmaah University, Saudi Arabia   | pp 250-263 |
| Interface Design Analysis for Contemporary Thai Design<br>Pathamawan Chandramiya, Silpakorn University, Thailand  | pp 264-271 |