

JOHN FOWLES. HIS NOVEL "THE COLLECTOR": IMAGES AND PROBLEMS

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In the 20th century there appeared new literary techniques, methods, movements and artistic approaches. The events of those days promoted a great variety of themes for literary works such as the Peace and the War, the environmental protection, relations between the mankind and the Universe, the isolation of an individual, the psychology of the human nature, the life situations and the ways of solving the problems and others. That age gave to the world such talented writers as Somerset Maugham, James Joyce, A. J. Cronin, Greene, Lessing and many others.

One of the most outstanding and popular authors of the 20th century was John Fowles. An allusive writer, Fowles experimented with such traditional prose forms as the mystery novel, the Victorian novel, and the medieval tale, and his writings are characterized by strong narration; vital, resourceful characters confronted with complicated situations; and lavish settings permeated with references to historical events, legends, and art [1].

Other distinguishing features of Fowles's works include his rejection of the omniscient narrator and his use of ambiguous, open endings lacking resolution. Fowles believes his responsibility as an artist demands that his characters have the freedom to choose and to act within their limitations [2]. This practice parallels his conception of "authentic" human beings or people who resist conformity by exercising free will and independent thought.

All these features are important and must be kept in control by the translators and the scholars to reflect the true spirit of the writer's works.

The book *The Collector*, a mixture of thriller and an analysis of class conflict, was taken seriously by literary scholarship and so it became a subject of researches of many British and foreign scholars. In the West *The Collector* was a center of many articles and monographs. In Ukraine Pavlychko S. and Zhluktenko N. were interested in such features of the creativity of John Fowles as self-reflectiveness, intertextuality and pastiche. Others paid attention to the significance of poetics and symbolism.

The Collector is the story of the abduction and imprisonment of Miranda Grey by Frederick Clegg, an orphaned child and a collector of butterflies. After winning a national football lottery he uses his winnings to purchase a secluded Tudor mansion with a fortress like cellar. He kidnaps and imprisons a young woman, Miranda Grey, a lively art student. The strong-willed Miranda keeps a diary, records their conversations, and plans her escape, while Clegg wants to win her "respect." She gains small victories, but never her freedom, and dies of pneumonia. At the finale, the collector plays with the idea of repeating his performance.

Fredrick Clegg has obvious problems both in coming to terms with his own self and developing and maintaining normal human relationships. He holds a common disregard for social rules, norms and cultural codes, as well as an indifference to the rights and feelings of others; all of which are the common characteristics of a person of sociopathic nature. However, the blame for the development of this disorder cannot be placed on him alone, as the major causes include parental neglect and great shocks within childhood; both of which Clegg helplessly had to experience.

Unlike Fred, Miranda grows as a person who is mentally and sexually naive. She comes from a stable home, yet her life becomes out of her control when she is kidnapped and is forced to make choices such as whether or not to give up or fight for her survival.

On one hand, *The Collector* is a study of the minds of two people, and therefore is a study in psychology. It explores the thoughts of a psychotic man and the effects his radical behaviour has on an originally sane mind [3, 58]. By using contrasts for each thought presented, Fowles has effectively presented the two mental extremes of society, showed a keen insight into the psychological problems generated in the modern world.

On the other hand, the book is a criticism of modern civilization for its indifference to the needs of the individual. The author implies that Clegg is in part a product of England's rigid class-structure, and that his ills are to a large extent the corporate ills of British society as a whole. Society is responsible both for creating the kind of the world in which Clegg's ultimately deviant personality can be nurtured while at the same time it destroys the Few who might otherwise find an antidote to the poison of the Many.

In an early interview, Fowles emphasized these philosophical issues his novel explores: "The Collector is a parable; I don't want it taken as a thriller and reviewed in the crime columns. It's symbolic, it's an allegory. The girl represents good humanity, hope for the future, intelligence and love. The young man represents the opposites—the affluent society in a world where children eat earth they are so hungry. The generous versus the mean. I'm trying to show that our world is sick"[1].

1. Warburton Eileen. John Fowles: A life in Two Worlds – The Definite Fowles Biography [Електронний ресурс] / Eileen Warburton // Viking Adult : March 25, 2004. – 528 p. – Режим доступу: <http://www.fowlesbooks.com/biography2.htm>

2. Goosmann Bob. "Collecting John Fowles" [Електронний ресурс] / Bob Goosmann // Firsts Magazine. – January 21, 2004. – 32 p.— Режим доступу : <http://www.fowlesbooks.com/Firsts.htm>

3. Мироненко, Т. П. Роман Дж. Фаулза «Колекціонер»: ідеї, образи, поетика [Текст] / Т. П. Мироненко, А. М. Меншій // Зарубіжна література в школах України. – 2007. – №2. – С. 56 – 60.