

<https://doi.org/10.30853/filnauki.2018-7-2.9>

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Д. Г. ЛОУРЕНС, ЛОРЕНС ДАРРЕЛЛ И ДЖОН ФАУЛЗ: БРИТАНСКАЯ ОСТРОВМАНИЯ

В настоящей статье предпринимается попытка представить предварительные результаты исследования "островомании" (т.е. непреодолимой тяги к островам), нашедшей отражение в творчестве таких писателей, как Д. Г. Лоуренс, Лоренс Даррелл и Джон Фаулз. Так называемые "малые тексты" данных авторов никогда прежде не рассматривались вместе как массив, объединенный конкретной темой в рамках одной литературной традиции. Одновременно с этим данные тексты демонстрируют значимость темы островов в британской прозе и позволяют получить целостное представление об этом поджанре литературы путешествий и "островной" литературе. В статье также дается исторический и культурный контекст рассматриваемого явления, что, в свою очередь, позволяет читателю проследить основные шаги в процессе перехода от более общего взгляда на острова как экзотическое пространство к более личному к ним отношению, когда поездка на остров становится особой формой интроспекции.

Адрес статьи: www.gramota.net/materials/2/2018/7-2/9.html

Источник

Филологические науки. Вопросы теории и практики

Тамбов: Грамота, 2018. № 7(85). Ч. 2. С. 259-262. ISSN 1997-2911.

Адрес журнала: www.gramota.net/editions/2.html

Содержание данного номера журнала: www.gramota.net/materials/2/2018/7-2/

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Информация о возможности публикации статей в журнале размещена на Интернет сайте издательства: www.gramota.net

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**ELEGY “THE LAKE” BY A. DE LAMARTINE
AS AN IMPLEMENTATION OF “NEW LYRICISM”**

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The article provides a brief description of A. de Lamartine’s lyricism as it is interpreted by the poet and analyzes the famous elegy “The Lake” as an example of implementing French romantic’s poetological principles. The paper also tackles the problem, which became relevant in the European romantic poetry – the limits of individual talent’s potentials. The author claims that the poet’s creative work is determined by the specificity of his own lyricism; it explains the monotony (according to critics and readers) of Lamartine’s poetry based on the conflict of ideal feeling and realized impossibility of its ideal existence.

Key words and phrases: A. de Lamartine; collection “Poetical Meditations”; “new lyricism”; rhetorical lyricism of the XVIII century; elegy “The Lake”.

УДК 821.111

Дата поступления рукописи: 11.04.2018

<https://doi.org/10.30853/filnauki.2018-7-2.9>

The article is an attempt to present some preliminary results of the study of ‘islomania’ (i.e. the irresistible crave for islands) which was explored in the oeuvre of such writers as D. H. Lawrence, Lawrence Durrell and John Fowles. The “minor” texts of these authors have not yet been viewed together as body of texts unified by one theme within a particular literary tradition. But in the meantime these texts can show the importance of the island theme in British prose and even form a cohesive viewpoint on travel and islands. The article also gives a historical and cultural context of the phenomenon and allows the reader to trace the major steps in the transition from more generalized view on islands, where the attraction of the exotic and unknown is the strongest, towards more personal attitude, when a trip to an island becomes a certain form of introspection.

Key words and phrases: islomania; islands; residence writing; travel writing; British prose.

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**D. H. LAWRENCE, LAWRENCE DURRELL & JOHN FOWLES:
BRITISH ISLOMANIA**

Generally in literature islands have always been a popular setting for works of various genres. An island is a very special locus. The choice of an island as a setting often implies mystery, test, adventure and, possibly, initiation. Golding’s *The Lord of the Flies*, Stevenson’s *Treasure Island*, Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* are the examples that immediately cross our minds.

In British literature in particular the theme of islands plays if not the major but definitely an important role. Indeed, if we look at the history of English prose narrative, or, to be more precise, at the rise of prose writing on the British Isles, we will see that as early as the Middle Ages we have *St. Brendan’s Voyage* to some miraculous island somewhere in the middle of the North Atlantic. Even in later texts such as Geoffrey Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* we see the theme of shipwreck as a form of arrival to the British soil in *Lawyer’s Tale*. The list can go on and on.

There can be several explanations to this special attitude of the British towards island theme.

One of the most obvious would be that English prose was in a sense born out of or at least deeply rooted in travel writing, since travel narratives were arguably the first lengthy prose accounts with significant fictional element. So, travelling to an island, visiting islands and, possibly, conquering them was something very much in line with the English *modus operandi*. Indeed, if we look at *The Travels of Sir Mandeville* or the lengthy *Cursor Mundi* we will see that islands are often quite popular travel destinations. Even the iconography provides us with conclusive evidence of an island, namely Britain, as a treasure, a cornerstone of identity and power: we can remember the famous Recardian Dyptich from the National Gallery in London, in which Jesus Christ presents baby Richard II with England on a blue banner.

On the more surface level we see the fascination with islands as an offshoot of colonial exploration. An island was very often the home of the indigenous peoples that were not a part of the cultural context of the colonial personae, arriving at this island. This resulted in the visitors’ mixed attitude towards the locals. On the one hand, it is the arrogance of the civilized world which comes to improve their lives with, quoting the Hilary Mantel’s *A Change of Climate* “soup and Christianity”. On the other hand, it is the fascination with the purity of the locals living in the State of Nature. The latter sentiment seems to be predominant, as it is deeply rooted in the literary tradition itself, first emerging in pastoral writing which praised “simple folk” and later, in the Romantics, that developed a fashion for the simple and the exotic.

While in many literary works an island may function predominantly as an unusual setting, in some cases islands may become something more complicated and begin to function as one of the basic notions of the whole piece of writing. The reasons for such a change in views on islands could be found long before the so-called “residence writing” started to flourish in British literature.

The aim of this article is to unravel the common grounds on which the three authors in question, so different in terms of their poetics, structured their philosophy of travel in general and of traveling the islands, in particular. It is thus possible to trace the emerging of a particular literary tradition which was first manifested in their literary oeuvre and then flourished in the second half of the XX century both in high and popular literature, expanding into the domain of visual arts, such *Lost TV* series and the reality show *Survivor*. The roots of this tradition actually go much deeper into the history of English literature.

The tradition of Grand Tour, which started in the late XVIII century and was part and parcel of the Romantic Movement, was probably the first example of English intellectuals turning towards the Mediterranean as the source of cultural identity. The area was often seen as a place where they could reconnect with cultural tradition of Ancient Greece and Rome. However, this return to the cultural roots worked mostly on the surface level and did not take into account the current historical, political and cultural situation. A good example here would be Byron’s activities in Greece in the early XIX century.

For the Romantics the travels to Mediterranean were the quest for the exotic, not a quest to find your own self. Their travels always resulted in a return back to England with new imagery and sources of inspiration but not as a transformed creative self. Consequently, in their writing we see the exotic (i.e. Mediterranean) inspiration, but not the Mediterranean *mindscape*. It changes with the XX century “residence” writers and the culture of literary retreat, which was a new way of thinking about travelling. Now the scheme of moving from one place to another was replaced with the idea of staying in one and the same place, living amongst locals and trying to integrate into their society as much as possible and learn their traditions and mores. Travelling started to be seen as a mindful, introspective practice.

To illustrate the idea let us have a look at some of the remarkable works by such writers as David Herbert Lawrence (1885-1930), Lawrence Durrell (1912-1990) and John Fowles (1926-2005) who expressed their “island” ideas in different genres and different manners. However their island philosophies share a common ground. It is quite a notable fact that each of these writers spent a certain amount of time on islands, finding insular life to be very attractive. At the same time their love for islands is usually accompanied by a quest for an ideal isolated place, where certain personal wishes might be fulfilled. Islands are seen as sacred but insidious places, extremely alluring and often unattainable. The relationship between a man and an island may have a morbid and even painful character. Lawrence Durrell is considered to be the first who identified this condition. In his travel book *Reflections on a Marine Venus* published in 1953 he writes:

“Somewhere among the notebooks of Gideon I once found a list of diseases as yet unclassified by medical science, and among these there occurred the word islomania, which was described as a rare but by no means unknown affliction of spirit. These are people, Gideon used to say, by way of explanation, who find islands somehow irresistible” [3, p. 15].

Approximately thirty years earlier D. H. Lawrence wrote a short story *The Man Who Loved Islands* (1926). The story may serve as a good example of an “anatomy of islomania” – an expression Durrell coined to describe his own travel book.

And then there is a very profound essay *Islands* by John Fowles written in 1978 that is 25 years after Durrell’s *Reflections on a Marine Venus* had been published. Fowles’s essay shows an independent view on islands and their peculiar atmosphere but at the same time it obviously continues the dissection of islomania phenomenon which has been started by D. H. Lawrence and Durrell.

Therefore here we have bright representatives of three generations of the British writers who to an extent formed a certain literary tradition. The analysis of their works on islands shows that despite obvious differences in views and attitudes there are some crucial ideas which the above-mentioned writers share.

Firstly, the most obvious reason to love islands is that they can satisfy a craving for *isolation*. The physical and metaphorical “separateness” of islands creates the feeling of having a whole world of one’s own.

Lawrence’s short story opens with the words about the main character’s quite egocentric wish, “He wanted an island all of his own: not necessarily to be alone on it, but to make it a world of his own” [7, p. 1].

Durrell in his travel book *Prospero’s Cell* remarks, “This is become our unregretted home. A world. Corcyra” [2, p. 3].

Along with the desire for isolation there is always a wish to possess the island and in Lawrence’s words “to fill it with your own personality” [7, p. 1]. Just like Fowles notices that an island lets you feel that it is your but “they will not belong to any legal owner, but will offer to become a part of all who tread and love them” [5, p. 340-341].

In order to “recompose the ego, to give it value and shape”, Durrell needed to escape from the world whose history and morals repelled him and whose literature he found boring and stagnant. Islands, he wrote, represent “visionary intimations of solitude, of loneliness, of introspection... because at heart everyone vaguely feels that the solitude they offer corresponds to his or her inner sense of aloneness” [6, p. 117].

The illusion of possessing an island gives an islomaniac sense of control. “Life in an island is circumscribed” [1, p. 45] and this somehow lets you clear your mind of everything superficial. It frees imagination and also makes you look into yourself. Durrell calls every good journey a “form of introspection” [Ibidem, p. 1]. Fowles says that “islands are secret places, where the imagination never rests” [5, p. 348]. In fact the strictly organized life in an isolated world of an island makes the self-control rather difficult. It may become very tempting to drop “the necessary inhibitions of mainland society” [Ibidem].

The attempt to create a sort of personal world can be compared to the dream of a utopian and ideal society. D. H. Lawrence in his *The Man Who Loved Islands* brilliantly shows us how in vain the protagonist's attempts to create on his island a self-sufficient commune may be. Surrounded by beautiful nature and paradise-like landscapes he falls short in trying to make his "colony", live in harmony both the nature and itself.

It would be interesting to note that in *Bitter Lemons of Cyprus* Durrell very explicitly praises the way people in Greek island villages live. This type of village Durrell considers to be the place, where the traditional way of living characterized by a leisurely approach to everyday life and coexistence with nature, are best preserved. At the same time any interference into this way of living he considers to be a kind of defilement. The way Durrell portrays one of the island cities (Kyrenia) best shows his attitude towards any change:

"Disturbing anomalies met the eye everywhere: a Cypriot version of the small-car owner, for example, smoking a pipe and reverently polishing a Morris Minor; costumed peasants buying tinned food and frozen meat at the local version of the Co-op; ice-cream parlours with none of the elaborate confectionary, the true Levant delicacies, which make the towns of the Middle East as memorable as a tale from the Arabian Nights; an almost total absence of good fish or any fishy delicacy" [1, p. 23].

As a result Durrell moves out of the capital and buys the house in one of the villages which he rebuilds in accordance with his ideas of a perfect house, and, by surrounding himself with his closest friends, creates a symbolic commune very much in the sense of D. H. Lawrence's own ideas of a commune and to an extent very much in the sense of *The Man Who Loved the Islands*.

The concept of creating an ideal society can be traced to the myth of Atlantis, the reference to which Durrell very clearly makes in his *Reflections on a Marine Venus*, "We islomanes, says Gideon, are the direct descendants of the Atlanteans, and it is toward the lost Atlantis that our subconscious is drawn. This means that we find islands irresistible" [3, p. 15].

It should be noted that similar ideas on islands we can trace in Fowles's essay:

"Island communities are the original alternative societies. That is why so many mainlanders envy them. Of their nature they break down the multiple alienations of industrial and suburban man. Some vision of Utopian belonging, of social blessedness, of an independence based on cooperation, haunts them all" [5, p. 341].

The passion for self-isolation is very often the downside of the idea of a communal life. So an island can become the place where these contradicting desires might be fulfilled. Lawrence however shows that it is not possible to find a compromise on this issue. In his short story the protagonist is never at peace with himself on each of the three islands. If on the first and the second islands he becomes disillusioned with the idea of a perfect society and perfect marriage, then on the third and the last island he, having totally isolated himself dies there alone and miserable.

Ironically but a man in the search of solitude depends so much upon the presence of other people. In *The Reflections on a Marine Venus* Durrell depicts a voyage to the island of Patmos where he visits a monastery and meets some locals. Durrell underlines that the island seems very deserted and solitary while the locals show a sharp contrast to this natural solitude by being very friendly and sociable with the visitors whom they perceived not as mere foreigners but guests from another world.

Looking at Durrell's islanders we can't but notice a kind of dialectics inbound in them. On the one hand they are very sociable, open to a lot of new things, interested in the events happening outside of their world. On the other hand they show zero tolerance towards anybody who tries to interfere with their way of life and freedom [9, p. 135]. Durrell himself notices the ambiguous character of life in an island, "Life in a small island would be unbearable for anyone with sensibility were it not enriched from time to time by visitants from other worlds, bringing with them the conversations of the great capitals, refreshing the quotidian life in small places by breaths of air which make one live once more, for a moment, in the airs of Paris or London" [1, p. 93-94].

Following Lawrence Durrell, Fowles in his essay addresses the issue of man-island relations. He poses his question "how deeply islands can haunt and form the personal as well as the public imagination" [5, p. 340]. We can see that Fowles very much follows the line which Durrell elaborated in his writing, particularly in his essay *Landscape and Character* (1960) in which he introduces the concept of the "spirit of place", which can influence and even determine people's culture, their way of living and their character.

The cause of the special impact which an island has on a persona Fowles sees in "a vague yet immediate sense of identity" [Ibidem]. Fowles metaphorically compares any island with a humane body which has a "boundedness of the smaller island, encompassable in a glance, walkable in one day" [Ibidem]. But all we can see is just the surface whereas our inner self is hidden.

Investigating an island a person investigates his own self. Fowles claims that he "like Crusoe, never knew who he really was, what he lacked (what the psychoanalytical theorists of artistic making call the creative gap), until he wandered in the island's solitudes and emptinesses" [Ibidem].

That is also quite true for Durrell. It was an island of Corfu where he suddenly felt "bounding with ideas" [4, p. 159]. There he wrote his first "serious" novel *Black Book* (1938).

This peculiarity of an island is connected with the islomane's perception of a so-called genuine island. Very often the islomane becomes disillusioned as his expectations are quite different from actual reality. Each of the mentioned writers has his own understanding of a genuine island. For Durrell and Fowles it is important to find a living indigenous culture on the island very little effected by the processes of globalization, hence the extremely painful reception of urbanization, mass tourism is clearly perceived in their writings.

A genuine island from Durrell's point of view should remain in a sense restricted area, a kind of vault for eternal values, a link between the past and the present.

It is interesting to note though that the British Isles have never been considered by Durrell as actual islands. In one of his interviews Durrell was asked what the difference between the British Isles and other islands was. In his reply Durrell very firmly defines his position on the question, "I wouldn't say England is an island. England is part of Europe, but she deliberately wants to be superior and insular, and that's what I resent. It's pretentious. It's no more an island... It's one gigantic bolster of Hamburg, really. You mark my words, there'll be no Channel tunnel as long as Montgomery's alive – in case the French attack with a bottle of wine" [6, p. 80].

Durrell's words remind us of D. H. Lawrence's reflections upon the problem of island genuineness, "An island, if it is big enough, is no better than a continent. It has to be really quite small, before it *feels* like an island" [7, p. 1].

Perhaps some of this was mere fashion, but D. H. Lawrence was deliberately seeking a level of being untainted by civilisation, a primitive energy which he felt was the key to the regeneration of western man, now paralysed, corrupted and alienated from his true being. Lawrence travelled restlessly in search of an environment and culture that was uncorrupted, where he could settle or find inspiration. The places he chose were always in the south, always filled with sun and almost always associated with an ancient civilisation: Italy, Sri Lanka, Tahiti, Australia, Mexico. He never found his ideal, and was aware at some level that he never would. 'Travel seems to me a splendid lesson in disillusion', he admitted in a letter to Mary Cannan [10, p. 252]. He wrote four books of explicit travel memoirs, on Italy, Sardinia, Mexico and Etruria, and all four display Lawrence's overwhelmingly subjective approach to travel writing.

Fowles on his behalf illustrates such an idea with a story of the island of Tresco which is "leased and managed by the Smith family, who have generally brought in outsiders to work there" [5, p. 341]. Though that business was good for the island's economy and also for its preservation, it somehow ruined the atmosphere so that one of the locals bitterly remarked, "it's not an island" [Ibidem, p. 342].

Thus taking all these thoughts into account it is possible to rephrase John Donne's famous expression that "no man is an island". The new islomanic variation of it may sound like "not every island is *an island*", and may demonstrate this very personal, extremely individualistic understanding of islands and travelling in general.

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Д. Г. ЛОУРЕНС, ЛОРЕНС ДАРРЕЛЛ И ДЖОН ФАУЛЗ: БРИТАНСКАЯ ОСТРОВОМАНИЯ

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В настоящей статье предпринимается попытка представить предварительные результаты исследования «островомании» (т.е. непреодолимой тяги к островам), нашедшей отражение в творчестве таких писателей, как Д. Г. Лоуренс, Лоренс Даррелл и Джон Фаулз. Так называемые «малые тексты» данных авторов никогда прежде не рассматривались вместе как массив, объединенный конкретной темой в рамках одной литературной традиции. Одновременно с этим данные тексты демонстрируют значимость темы островов в британской прозе и позволяют получить целостное представление об этом поджанре литературы путешествий и «островной» литературе. В статье также дается исторический и культурный контекст рассматриваемого явления, что, в свою очередь, позволяет читателю проследить основные шаги в процессе перехода от более общего взгляда на острова как экзотическое пространство к более личному к ним отношению, когда поездка на остров становится особой формой интроспекции.

Ключевые слова и фразы: островомания; острова; проза пребывания; литература путешествий; британская проза.