

Character's Spirituality and Morality in the novel "The Ebony Tower" by John Fowles

Anna Jioshvili

Doctoral Candidate of Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University, Georgia, 35 Ninoshvili Str., Batumi, Georgia
6010

*annita_hallo@yahoo.com

Abstract

The present work aims to discover characters' inner soul and morality through the quest of their wholeness and individualism. The characters in "The Ebony Tower" try to find themselves and on this way they meet enigmatic events which become a special experience for them. David Williams is a person who fails in his life and at the end understands that he stopped existence as an artist.

Key words: ebony tower, enigmatic, existence, quest, individualism.

Introduction

The main issue of the present work is to show characters' morality and personality towards individuals and society. They try to begin mythic journey and end it by saving their life styles and obligations but unfortunately they feel only failure to the end of their lives. That is why, they are lost in modern waste land.

The fourth collection of John Fowles' work is the "Ebony Tower", which original name was "Variations". The author wanted to connect all the stories with their themes in order to show the general link between the Mediaeval Romance and these stories. But, then the author refused the title "Variations" because it was too vague for the professional readers. The collection reflects a view of John Fowles' work, where the modern man searches the wholeness and individualism. "The Ebony Tower" is special for its characters who permanently try to find themselves. The reason is that they remain in modern waste world. The novel's title describes an adventurer who indifferently collides with the mythic world and try to find a challenge, which he cannot achieve at the end.

There are many criticisms round the novel from different critics such as Barry Olshen, Lorna Seige, Peter Wolfe etc. If any story contains difficult elements, it means that their meanings are clear and distinct. That's why, the novels get specialty in Fowles' fiction. The art is a mystery with its mystic nature. It challenges us to explain the way in which we live. Fowles's work permanently describes enigmatic events which happen outside the society and it becomes an unforgettable experience for protagonists.

According to Fowles, the aim of art is to challenge a surprise – transform reality into enigmatic and indefinite world where we constantly collide with obstacles. Art, in John Fowles's work, plays didactic role. It often discovers the way to person's heart; that's why an artist is perceived not only the creator of art values, but also the life teacher. In the quest of their own wholeness, the characters are supported by the art and nature.

The main character of "The Ebony Tower" David Williams is typical Fowlesian protagonist who is well-grown and self-confident. He is the model representative of the social class in which he lives. While travelling in the Brittany forest, he sees the view of the Celtic Romance and Eliduc's mother land. He cannot imagine what mythic meeting awaits for him in Henry Breasley's manor. David goes to Breasley for an interview, whose criticism is called "mystic and archetypal". Breasley tries to pretend himself as if there is mediaeval influence on his paintings. David says: "Damn' good tale. Read it several times. What's the old Swiss bamboozler's name. Jung, yes? His sort of stuff. Archetypal and all that" (Fowles 1980:78). While analyzing and discussing an important influence on art, Breasley connects mediaeval quest with Jungian archetypes and sees them in his work. Confronting with Breasley, David doesn't know who is he, but he has self-belief and competence. His abstract paintings reflect his persona; they're technically exact. As the life styles of David and Breasley are different from each other, David isn't surprised when he mentions the two naked girls on his first arrival. Annie

– so-called the Freak and Diana – the Mouse – in some aspects correspond to the twins Lilly and July from the novel “The Magus”.

Diana is aboriginal, sexual and mere. It is not surprising when David is fascinated by her, but towards Annie he feels only aggression. The name Annie is included in the name Diana and they represent anime archetype of David. At the beginning, David considers Diana as a positive and Annie as a negative, but later he is charmed by Annie too. In the mythic land, this experience awakes anime in David that is reflected in Diana’s persona. In the mythic land, David feels himself as a guest and wishes to have his wife Beth with him, in order to be protected from any expected temptation. Within Beth, he looks for support which is strengthened by Beth then. “Demystification” is typical for Fowlesian protagonist and emphasizes the necessity of mythic journey. David’s smart attitude towards his life is expressed verbally and uses it to transmit his feelings. On the other hand, Breasley’s feelings and views are paraphrased in his paintings; in everyday speech he speaks fragmentally and laconically whose ideas are translated by Diana for David. But, there are cases when Breasley completely uses a language system in his speech. He attacks David’s art style and life views which he considers as betray in art history: “Triumph of the bloody eunuch” (Fowles 1980:66). The Mouse translates it in this way: “Henry feels that full abstraction represents a flight from human and social responsibility” (Fowles 1980:66). David weakly tries to protect a non-representative art: “there are worse destroyers around”(Fowles 1980:76). But Breasley assaults David’s scientific attitude and says to him: “Science hasn’t got a soul. Can’t help itself. Rat in a maze” (Fowles 1980:67). David does not know how to answer this forcible attack; Breasley softens this fight and explains him something: “Don’t hate, can’t love. Can’t love, can’t paint...Bloody geometry. No good. Won’t work. All tried it. Down the hole..a strange lucidity: Ebony Tower. That’s what I call it” (Fowles 1980:70). Later, the Mouse explains David that any term that is connected with modern art is unimportant for Breasley and the vagueness that is owned by the representatives of this course is only a fear and the opposite of the ivory tower.

Despite Breasley’s insult, David anyway, admits him and his life views. In this way, Breasley in Jungian context, represents very interesting archetype of an old man, which has a special meaning. David, also, admits Breasley’s creative power which he lacks in him. He feels envy towards Breasley’s life style and success: “To someone like David, always inclined to see his own life (like his painting) in terms of logical process, its future advances dependent on intelligent present choices, it seemed not quite fair” (Fowles 1980:77).

The mythic landscape somehow influences on David, who is charmed by being either the two girls in Coetminae, which he calls mythic and eternal. The Mouse proves this mythic feeling and she retells David about her arrival in Coetminae: “Bump. You’re in a different world” (Fowles 1980:85). At the same time, David introduces Annie’s character better; looking into her eyes, he sees straightforwardness and kindness. He feels himself as the member of this alive triangle, which momentarily reminds us the Mandala archetype and it creates this symbol of wholeness. But, later he recalls his career, wife, family, friends and thus breaks the Mandala.

In spite of this fact, David feels Diana’s influence as an anime archetype: “He knew it and concealed it..not only to her, partly also to himself; that is, he analyzed what he had so rapidly begun to find attractive about her-why that precise blend of the physical and the psychological, the reserved and open..called so strongly to something in his own nature. Strange how these things hit you out of the blue, were somehow inside you almost before you could see them approaching. He felt a little bewitched, possessed; and decided it must be mainly the effect of being without Beth” (Fowles 1980:94).

In this paragraph, there are some interesting points. As David recognizes Diana’s anime archetype and its power, he tries to control a situation: anime in him. More he learns from Diana, the more he is drawn into quest. David’s quest aims to save Diana from the forest and bring her into real world. He meets this challenge in the following way: “He felt he had traveled much further than he expected, into the haunted and unpredicted; and yet in some strange way it seemed always immanent. It had had to come, it had had causes, too small, too manifold to have been detected in the past or to be analyzed now” (Fowles 1980:109). As David’s anime evokes in David, the same happens within Diana: David’s animus evokes in her. As David failed ignoring by the existence of anima, so Diana refused to return the real world. Within him, the energy of anime archetype looses and cannot reply to the psyche; it means that it is a failure in the mythic landscape.

The magic dream has ended..and when David finally wakes up, he understands that he had stopped existence as an artist. At the end of the novel, he meets his wife Beth in the airport who was flying from Paris and says the following words to her husband: “I thought for one ghastly moment, you were not my husband”(Fowles 1980:130). David lets himself abstraction and his last words cause feelings; to his wife’s question how he was, David answers: “I survived”(Fowles 1980:130).

Conclusion

The main message of “The Ebony Tower” is art which forgets its real meaning, becomes like a scorpion and deadly sacrifices itself in a debauched company. That’s why, the main moral of the novel is creation full of human warmth and passion which is connected with human self-oblivion and existence.

The title “the ebony tower” is a kind of indicator of the fact that it is too difficult for the unimproved person achieve a perfect purity.

Thus, John Fowles suggested the psychology of his characters that gives the readers a chance to evaluate the current events in the plots. The variety of characters implicates retelling the story in their own ways. Very often Fowles’s characters have ideological and spiritual confrontations and with this reason we evaluate their spiritual world.

References

1. “The Ebony Tower” (1980), John Fowles, Publishing House “Progress”.
2. “Man and his Symbols” (1968), Carl G. Jung, Dell Publishing a division of Random House, Inc.

The IISTE is a pioneer in the Open-Access hosting service and academic event management. The aim of the firm is Accelerating Global Knowledge Sharing.

More information about the firm can be found on the homepage:

<http://www.iiste.org>

CALL FOR JOURNAL PAPERS

There are more than 30 peer-reviewed academic journals hosted under the hosting platform.

Prospective authors of journals can find the submission instruction on the following page: <http://www.iiste.org/journals/> All the journals articles are available online to the readers all over the world without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself. Paper version of the journals is also available upon request of readers and authors.

MORE RESOURCES

Book publication information: <http://www.iiste.org/book/>

Academic conference: <http://www.iiste.org/conference/upcoming-conferences-call-for-paper/>

IISTE Knowledge Sharing Partners

EBSCO, Index Copernicus, Ulrich's Periodicals Directory, JournalTOCS, PKP Open Archives Harvester, Bielefeld Academic Search Engine, Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek EZB, Open J-Gate, OCLC WorldCat, Universe Digital Library, NewJour, Google Scholar

