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THE CULTURALIST BRAND IN THE RECENT BRITISH LITERARY TRADITION : NATIONAL SELF-PORTRAYAL IN VIRGINIA WOOLF'S ORLANDO AND JOHN FOWLES'S THE FRENCH LIEUTENANT'S WOMAN

Keywords: *collective self-portrayal; national and insular culturalism; the culturalist literary brand; the high-modernist self-trusting fiction; anagogy; experiment in imaginative narratives; the post-modernist self-subverting universe; the mirror of art.*

Abstract: *Starting from the observation that the collective self-portrayal of this insular nation has culturalism as a constant mode of communication in whatever age and literary trend, and regardless of the fashions/ strategies embraced, the paper follows the implications of the legitimating and ironical intentions paradoxically placed side by side as a rule, in both modernist and postmodernist British literary texts. The text proposed for the conference will follow the constants and the diverging ways in which the national paradigmatic English culturalism manages to remain present to itself in literary terms, both when the high modernist, self-trusting fiction is deployed in the modernist key, in Woolf's mythomorphic, anagogical novel, and when, on the contrary, Fowles's postmodernism deploys its playful ruse in the fictitious key, in a self-subverting fictional universe. Noticing that, on the other hand, the two texts end up installing the artistic self as supreme, in the paper we try to discover more things about the relationship between, respectively, a didactic and an aesthetic constant in literature, measuring our discoveries against the artistic standard set by Oscar Wilde's maxim, in the Preface to The Picture of Dorian Gray, about the rage of Caliban at seeing/not seeing his face in the mirror.*