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**Маслякова А.**

## ИДЕЯ ПАМЯТИ В КОНТЕКСТЕ «ТАИНСТВЕННОГО САДА»

**ФРЭНСИС ЭЛИЗЫ БЁРНЕТТ**

***Аннотация:** важность памяти трудно переоценить. она не только помогает укрепить нашу культурную идентичность, но также позволяет учиться на собственных ошибках и становиться более успешными в будущем. однако некоторые люди забывают о том, как ценны и важны их воспоминания. я твердо убеждена, что нам давно пора прогуляться по «улице воспоминаний» и попытаться расставить всё на свои места.*

***Ключевые слова:** память, история искусства, путешествия, забывание, культурная идентичность.*

**Masliakova A.**

## THE IDEA OF MEMORY IN THE CONTEXT

**OF «THE SECRET GARDEN» BY FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT**

***Abstract:** the importance of memory is difficult to underestimate. Not only does it help us to reinforce our cultural identity, but it also gives us an opportunity to learn from our mistakes and be more successful in the future. Yet some people tend to forget how precious and significant their memories are. And I do believe that it is high time we walked down memory lane and tried to set things right.*

***Keywords:** memory, forgetting, art history, cultural identity, travelling.*

Not long ago I realized that almost all of my statements begin with the words «I remember...». And, indeed, memories play a significant part in our lives. Yet now, when travel opportunities are limited and one is often confined to one's house and/or garden, the issue of memory seems to be of utmost importance. And thus I have come up with the idea of writing a research exploring the connection between memory, art and travelling. Allow me to touch upon some aspects which I believe to be essential in this regard.

Abbot Suger once said that «recollection of the past is the promise of the future». And many philosophers, scientists and artists (Henri Bergson, Tatiana Chernigovskaya, Ingmar Bergman, etc.) agree that it is absolutely impossible to act consciously in the present unless we appreciate our past. According to Henri Bergson, the body resides in the present reacting to external stimulus, whereas the spirit is the abode of the past, and it is the latter that helps us to make right decisions [1]. Besides, the very act of remembering may be seen as a therapy helping us to cope with the challenges of our times, just like knitting or, for example, planting a garden.

Recently I have come across Frances Hodgson Burnett's book called «The Secret Garden», and I realized that it has very much in common with my research, meaning that various memories are closely intertwined with each other forming some kind of a magical garden which few people know about. And although the garden might not seem real, every once in a while one may walk into it so as to escape reality and gather one's thoughts, following the example of Tove Jansson's Mooninmama who missed her garden so much that one day she painted it on the walls of the lighthouse, where she had moved, and walked inside the painting to be at peace [3].

On the one hand, the «garden of memories» looks nothing like the «pitch-dark» and «suffocating» Mirkwood with «queer noises» and nasty cobwebs stretching «from tree to tree», which Bilbo Baggins and the dwarfs entered on the way to the Lonely Mountain [5]. Yet we should bear in mind that it is not a formal garden, either, for there are no axial and symmetrical arrangement of pathways, trimmed trees and shrubs, like, for example, in the Gardens of Versailles. On the contrary, this «lovely wild place» is not likely to become a «gardener's garden»; it is «a wilderness of growing things» slightly reminding of an English landscape garden, accentuating the beauty of Nature, that no one entered for a very long time for «the door was locked and the key was buried». And it is about time we got inside and had a quick look around.

It is amazing how much one could learn about people by reading or listening to their memoirs. For instance, answering the question about personal memories associated with a work of art one of the participants of the survey carried out as a part of my project named a reproduction of Isaac Levitan's «Autumn Landscape» that used to

hang on the wall of their living room, whereas another person mentioned the first visit to the Old Stage of the Mariinsky Theater where the opera «Sadko» composed by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov was performed on that very day. My mother said that the most memorable event in her childhood was the moment she saw the painting called «The Swan Princess» by Mikhail Vrubel. And if you ask me, one of my earliest memories is my mother sitting at the piano and playing the «Swan Lake» by Pyotr Tchaikovsky. And it was then and there that I decided to become a musician.



Fig. 1. Santa Maria del Fiore, Italy

Yet we should not forget that not only people, but also works of art have their own memories, let alone entire cities and countries [4]. That is to say, the Church of the Savior on Spilled Blood is inextricably linked to the sad fate of the Emperor Alexander II who was assassinated on that very spot on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March, 1888, just like the Duomo of Florence (Santa Maria del Fiore) could never «forget» Giuliano de' Medici who was murdered there on 26<sup>th</sup> of April, 1478. The image of Peter the Great is forever imprinted on the soul of the City on the Neva River, while it is impossible to imagine the history of Germany without the rise and fall of the Berlin Wall. Whenever I visit the Sistine

Chapel, I cannot get rid of the feeling that Michelangelo's shadow is still there observing his masterpiece and judging the results of the recent restoration. The spiral staircase of the Oodi Library in Helsinki, featuring numerous dedications collected through a public campaign, reminds us that libraries genuinely belong to everyone, regardless of their age, origin, color, etc. And when different parts of a painting are reunited after years of separation, one could read memoirs of the whole World by studying the canvases. In this case one should mention an exhibition called «MANTEGNA and BELLINI. Masters of the Renaissance» which was held in Berlin in 2019, or, for example, the famous picture collection of Sir Robert Walpole which was reconstructed at the Houghton Hall in collaboration with the Hermitage Museum in 2013.

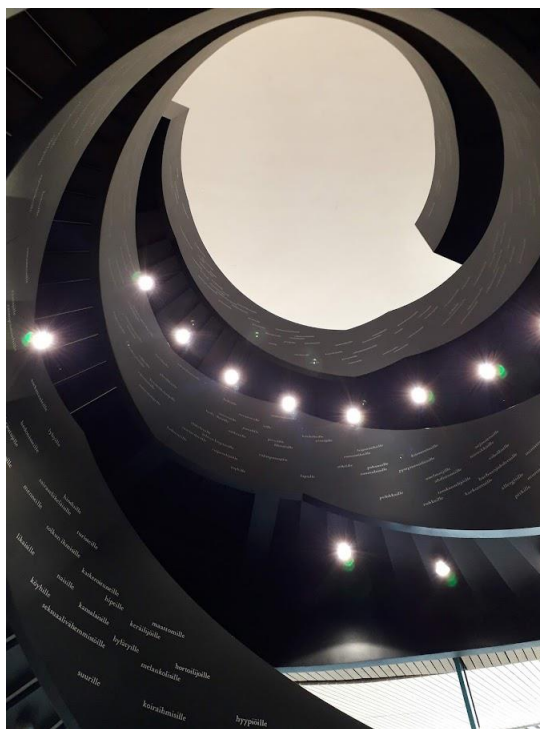


Fig. 2. The staircase of the Oodi Library in Helsinki, Finland

As we move forward, we could not help but notice that the «network of memories» is getting denser and denser. I have recently been trying to remember all the churches I have visited so far, and it seems to me that there is something that, in a way, unites all those temples, starting with the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican City and ending with the Kamppi Chapel, or the Chapel of Silence, in Helsinki, namely, each and every detail of their designs was created to symbolize the unity between divine and human, macrocosm and microcosm. They keep memories of their «predecessors» and are, in

their own turn, incorporated in memory of their «descendants» (the Pantheon in Rome – the Rotunda of Galerius in Thessaloniki – the Pantheon in Paris – the Temple of Canova in Possagno, etc.). People who have seen and admired the beauty of those temples take pieces of memories housed there with them (let alone the elements of their décor), yet it appears that those «centrifugal forces» do not lead to the extinction of memory, but rather multiply it and make the web of memories more intricate and complex. It is amazing, but whenever I think about those churches (and I do not even need to close my eyes), I am already «dwelling» there; i.e. it feels as if I am standing in the center of the Sistine Chapel and admiring Michelangelo's frescoes under the «accompaniment» of the loud voices of the hundreds of tourists moving around, or sitting in a pew of the Kamppi Chapel in Helsinki and enjoying the silence which seems to be deafening after the hustle and bustle of the city center.



Fig. 3. The oculus of the Pantheon in Rome

Last but not least, from time immemorial people have been fighting for their independence defending their right to remember and be remembered. And just like that the images of the French and Russian Revolutions rise before my eyes, the sound of «La Marseillaise» is coming from afar, and suddenly I am not sitting in my parlor, but



«marching» among the people being led by Liberty depicted by Eugène Delacroix and «joining» Bonaparte on the Bridge at Arcole represented by Antoine-Jean Gros. By the way, despite the fact that it might seem that bridges «are buildings but not dwellings», I quite agree with Martin Heidegger who says that «the location is not already there before the bridge is» for «the bridge does not first come to a location to stand in it; rather, a location comes into existence only by virtue of the bridge» [2]. And I must say that although the background of the painting in question is covered with the smoke of the battle and we cannot actually see the bridge, it seems to me that the figure of Napoleon holding the flagstaff and moving decisively towards it, confirms Heidegger's statement.



Fig. 5. Ponte Sant'Angelo in Rome

All in all, concluding our walk down memory lane, I would like to note that it is quite natural for us as humans to experience the whole range of emotions and have different kinds of memories, not only memories of happiness and love. That is to say, everybody has their own «memory gardens» that are constantly growing. And perhaps Frances Hodgson Burnett is quite right when she writes in «The Secret Garden» that if one sees «things growing», one «might not think so much about dying».

#### *Acknowledgement*

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**Маслякова Анна** – канд. искусствоведения, научный сотрудник, Ирландский национальный университет, Голуэй, Ирландия.

**Masliakova Anna** – candidate of art history, researcher, Galway University, Galway, Ireland.

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