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TYPICAL DANDIES LORD REGINALD HASTINGS AND ESMÉ AMARINTH AS OBJECTS FOR SATIRE IN R. HICHENS' NOVEL "THE GREEN CARNATION"

Summary. In recent decades, we have witnessed an inevitable renaissance of profound scholarly and critical interest in the ambiguous figure of a dandy in almost every sphere of research. That interest, in our opinion, is provoked, at least in part, by the dandy as an ideal for the middle and higher-class gentlemen of the 18th–19th century society. Despite being scorned by the wider community, the dandy indeed became a «work of art». As that which is out of the ordinary, it was a ready object of satire right from the start. Thus, it is important to research how and why the dandy was satirized by various critics and authors, and sometimes even by dandies themselves, to achieve a deeper understanding of the nature of that remarkable cultural phenomenon and what traits in particular those authors have selected as targets for their satire.

In our research, we attempted to describe and analyze the images of Lord Reggie and Esmé Amarinth in R. Hichens's novel «The Green Carnation» as the objects of satire.

In his novel «The Green Carnation», R. Hichens criticizes the image of dandy from a behavioristic and moralistic point of view. To him, decadence is simply immoral and is but a form of unconventional, exhibitionist behaviour. This is only natural, since satire rarely takes on its object in all complexity, usually satisfying itself with one or two most notable characteristics. Even so, the novel was (and still is) widely regarded as a case of brilliant and apt satire of both decadence and dandies.

In our article, we have provided a short overview of the research on satire of dandyism in literary criticism; we analyzed the characters of Lord Reggie and Esmé Amarinth in the novel «The Green Carnation» and the satiric elements in their descriptions in this novel. R. Hichens singles out in the image of dandy the following traits: vanity and narcissism, decadence and hedonism, idleness and urbanism, disobedience, artificiality, and absurdity.

Key words: satire, aestheticism, decadence, dandyism, dandy, art.

*«Everything is a pose nowadays, especially genius»
Robert Hichens, «The Green Carnation»*

Introduction. The aesthetic movement appears in English literature and art as early as the beginning of the 19th century, but only reached its peak in the 1880–90ies, with the emergence of a number of talented decadent artists, such as Walter Pater, Algernon Charles Swinburne, Oscar Wilde, and Aubrey Beardsley. It can be said that aestheticism was turned by them into decadence and that a dandy is its ultimate human expression. On the other hand, dandy's peculiar lifestyle and philosophy caused the appearance of their critique and satire in contemporary literature. One of the most successful satirists of decadence was Robert Hichens. In his novel «The Green

Carnation», he chose the exhibitionist side of decadence to parody. His dandy characters, Lord Reginald «Reggie» Hastings and Esmé Amarinth, soon became iconic, and the success of the book itself led to some unforeseen consequences.

Problem statement. The satire of the dandy, his lifestyle, and his beliefs is not a modern phenomenon; it is as old as dandyism itself. The research on dandyism as the object of literary satire is well-presented in English and American critical studies. In contrast, it's not even mentioned in Ukrainian literary research. There are some works that are concerned with the topic of dandy characters in different novels but nothing concerning their satiric treatment in general or in the novel «The Green Carnation» in particular. Thus, there is an obvious necessity to fill that gap in Ukrainian literary research by concentrating our attention on the topic and bringing it under scrutiny to provide an in-depth overview of dandyism as the object of satire in the novel «The Green Carnation» by R. Hichens.

The analysis of recent research and publications on the topic. The research of «The Green Carnation» by R. Hichens [1] as a satire of decadence in general and dandyism in particular has quite a history in foreign literary and critical studies. Among those writers and scholars who made a contribution to this topic were, among many others: K. Beckson [2], M. Beerbohm [3], E. Bernstein [4], S. Godfrey [5], R. Goldfarb [6], H. Jackson [7], T. Schaffer [8], M. Seeney [9] and J. Sutherland [10].

In our previous research on the topic of dandyism, we have already provided a short overview and analysis of the history of aestheticism and dandyism, describing the most notable qualities of a dandy, which are: the dandy's quest for perfect appearance (manifesting in dressing, manners, age, and narcissism), vanity (lack of occupation), provocative genius (the ability to produce the unexpected), dandy's discourse (his usage of paradox, epigram, and irony), and dandyism (as a combination of aestheticism, stoicism, and platonism) [11, p. 568–589]. Thus, we won't stop on the definition of a dandy in detail here. This article will simply provide a basis for our definition of a dandy for further research.

We can quite confidently say that satire of decadence and dandyism in literature began at the end of the 19th century with M. Beerbohm's essay «A Defence of Cosmetics» (first published in 1894). He begins the essay with a remark: «Nay, but it is useless to protest. Artifice must queen it once more in the town» [3, p. 1]. He mocks the main principle of aestheticism: «But personal appearance is art's very basis ... To make beautiful things – is it not an impulse laid upon few? But to make oneself beautiful is a universal instinct» [3, p. 14]. M. Beerbohm's satire of decadence hinges on artifice and insincerity, which, although true to a certain extent, is just but

one side of the decadent movement. Though he talks exclusively about females here, his satire is obviously aimed at Oscar Wilde and the Wildeans, for they were the ones who preached that kind of aesthetic philosophy. To explain Beerbohm's attitude towards decadence, we must divert our attention to T. Schaffer's «Fashioning Aestheticism by Aestheticizing Fashion: Wilde, Beerbohm, and the Male Aesthetes' Sartorial Codes», in which he notes that in dandyism, there appeared two variations, which were started by their founders: O. Wilde and M. Beerbohm. Wildeans were more liberated and flamboyant in their expression of aesthetic values both in their dress and manners, while disciples of M. Beerbohm valued masculinity, reliability, discipline, and conformity to the rules above everything else [8, p. 44–47].

K. Beckson, in his article, provides several versions of the famous green carnation's first introduction by O. Wilde. Wilde himself wore a green carnation, establishing it as a personal symbol of decadence. Beckson also provides a concise analysis of the plot and characters of the novel «The Green Carnation» by R. Hichens. He outlines the obvious connection between the characters of Lord Reggie and Esmé Amaranth and Lord Alfred Douglas and O. Wilde, respectively. He analyzes the origins of those characters' names. In short, in the novel, O. Wilde and his circle are satirized. The novel presents a narrative where the green carnation symbolizes «unnatural sin». The main character, Lord Reggie, admires the abnormal over the traditional, embodying a decadent and narcissistic spirit reflected in Wilde's own life. The novel stirred controversy and speculation regarding its real-life inspiration, with Wilde himself denying any involvement [2, p. 392–394].

E. Bernstein ties in the story and characters of «The Green Carnation» with real decadents Lord Alfred Douglas and Oscar Wilde. He sees Lord Reggie and Esmé Amaranth as their literary embodiments. Later on in the article, he compares the views on art and nature of O. Wilde and Esmé Amaranth and, via this comparison, comes to a condemnation of the writer: «Wilde has countered the testimony of the boys appearing as crown witnesses by calling attention to his aesthetic sensibilities, his artistic feelings, his good taste. It was the same with the cynicisms held up to him from his writings. He asks not what their effect could be upon ill-read people, but only whether they are art, whether they work as literature. But here the word «art» is misused in the same way as «nature». The doctrine of art for art's sake, the release of art from everything which lives and should live in the popular consciousness, the proclamation of art as the preserve of an initiated aristocratic freemasonry – this double think is corrupt: it is far more dangerous to society than the actions of which Wilde was accused» [4]. E. Bernstein claims that O. Wilde misused the terms «art» and «nature», he equates literary content and themes to the content of «popular consciousness», and finally accuses O. Wilde, as an author, of elitism – all of this is very telling for the late Victorian morality, which O. Wilde so mocked and against which so struggled.

S. Godfrey looks at the dandy as an ironic figure. He provides examples, describes, and analyzes the ironic quotations of dandies in literature and singles out a few of their characteristic traits, such as superiority, urbanism, and idleness, which translate into dandies' special brand of irony: «His self-conscious world is closed within the artificial boundaries of a city that becomes «le monde» in a very special sense, a city that itself marks off its inner circles for the» [5, p. 26]. The dandy stands outside and above the urban society, which he simultaneously mocks and can't exist outside of.

R. Goldfarb in his article is mostly concerned with the definition of decadence, but he also provides some insight on how decadence (and, by extension, dandyism) was viewed by its contemporaries. What is especially important for us here is his analysis of the views on decadence of M. Beerbohm and R. Hichens [6, p. 369–370]. The scholar notes M. Beerbohm's «A Defence of Cosmetics» as the first significant contemporary satire on decadence and its followers. R. Goldfarb praises R. Hichens for his mastery of language and style of parody, but at the same time underlines Hichens's one-sided understanding of decadence. He also briefly touches on a number of other satirical works about decadence, such as J. Davidson's «A Full and True Account of the Wonderful Mission of Earl Lavender», J. Quilp's «Baron Verdigris: A Romance of the Reversed Direction», G. Street's «The Autobiography of a Boy», etc. The scholar notes that all those authors of satires didn't reach out for or concern themselves with a complete understanding of decadence, relying on one noticeable aspect of it to achieve their satyric effect: «To Max Beerbohm, decadence was artifice; to Robert Hichens, it was unconventional and exhibitionist behavior; to John Davidson and Jocelyn Quilp, it was immorality; to G. S. Street, the lust for unusual experience» [6, p. 371].

H. Jackson in his book «The Eighteen Nineties» in the chapter on decadence discusses the satiric merits of the novel «The Green Carnation»: «The weakness of The Green Carnation is that satire sails so perilously near reality as, at times, to lose itself in a wave of fact. At times the book reads more like an indiscretion than a satire, but no other writer has realised so well the fatuous side of the «exquisite» and «brilliant» corner in decadence which Oscar Wilde made his own» [7, p. 67].

M. Seeney, in his article, describes the «fictional career» of Oscar Wilde in a number of different literary works, among which «The Green Carnation» is of particular interest for our research. He gives such an evaluation to R. Hichens's book: «Hichens was, of course, forced to use a thin disguise because the targets for his satire were alive. But, by placing his quasi-Wilde in a quasi-Wildean milieu, he gives us a story which manages to convey an essence of Wilde while not having to worry about facts» [9, p. 39].

In a chapter «Flowers of Decadence» in his concise overview of the history of literature, J. Sutherland describes O. Wilde, Ch. Baudelaire, M. Proust, and W. Whitman and their role in the appearance and development of decadence. The scholar suggests that while O. Wilde's literary achievements are not as notable, his role as a «father» of English decadence cannot be overestimated: «In Wilde's frivolity there is always a kernel of what Matthew Arnold ... called «high seriousness». He played the dandy, but never the fool» [10, p. 136]. O. Wilde valued the flashy, theatrical side of his life as stage performance, as art – the fact for which he was condemned and satirized by both M. Beerbohm and R. Hichens.

The research purpose and objectives. The purpose of the article is to explore the ways R. Hichens depicts Lord Reggie and Esmé Amaranth in his novel and how he makes these dandies the object of his satiric wit. To achieve this purpose, we must accomplish the following:

- provide a short overview of the research on satire on dandyism in literary criticism;
- analyze the characters of Lord Reggie and Esmé Amaranth in R. Hichens's novel «The Green Carnation»;
- single out, describe, and analyze the satiric elements in their descriptions in the novel.

The body of the research. The title of the novel refers to one of the major symbols of decadence – the green carnation, which was an invention and a favourite of O. Wilde himself: «The «unnatural» green carnation in the buttonhole, the «effeminate» velvet jackets, the flowing hair, the cosmetics were all justified by Wilde as neo-Hellenism» [10, p. 136]. According to one version of the event, Wilde first wore a green carnation on 20th February 1892 at the opening night of «Lady Windemere's Fan», although K. Beckson states several other possible variants of its first introduction by Wilde. In the novel, Lady Locke thinks the green carnation is some sort of club badge: «I only saw about a dozen in the Opera House to-night, and all the men who wore them looked the same. They had the same walk, or rather wobble, the same coyly conscious expression, the same wavy motion of the head. When they spoke to each other, they called each other by Christian names. Is it a badge of some club or some society, and is Mr. Amaranth their high priest? They all spoke to him, and seemed to revolve round him like satellites around the sun» [1, p. 15]. Esmé is said to be fond of the flower because «it blended so well with the colour of absinthe» [1, p. 18]. Overall, the green carnation symbolizes Amaranth-Wilde's artistic and provocative persona, blending art with nature and challenging traditional norms. Its legacy as a symbol of decadence and Wilde's flamboyant lifestyle endure, emphasizing the complexities of art, sexuality, and identity both in late 19th-century society as well as nowadays. The green carnation is equally important in the novel (hence the title). Lord Reggie tells little Tommy: «Do you love this carnation, Tommy, as I love it? Do you worship its wonderful green? It is like some exquisite painted creature with dyed hair and brilliant eyes. It has the supreme merit of being perfectly unnatural. To be unnatural is often to be great» [1, p. 130]. To be unusual, unnatural, and provocative is the epitome of Esmé's and Reggie's ideal as the decadent dandies.

The two most notable characters in the novel «The Green Carnation» are young Lord Reggie and his older friend and mentor, Esmé Amaranth. The novel was first published anonymously by R. Hichens in 1894, after a year spent in the company of Lord Alfred Douglas and Oscar Wilde. Thus, the relationship between Lord Reggie and Esmé Amaranth can be interpreted as the relationship between Lord Alfred Douglas and Oscar Wilde, as K. Beckson and E. Bernstein had stated, and which was confirmed by the use of the book as evidence of his «crimes» against O. Wilde during his trials. He was accused by the father of his young lover, Lord Alfred, of being a «sodomite». Wilde filed a slander suit, lost it, and was immediately prosecuted for «offences against public decency». He was found guilty and imprisoned for two years of hard labour, becoming a nameless prisoner [10, p. 137]. Although he was released in two years, it was obvious the height of his fame was irretrievably behind him.

In our opinion, the relationship between Lord Reggie and Esmé Amaranth is also akin to that between Dorian Gray and Lord Henry Wotton in «The Picture of Dorian Gray» by O. Wilde himself (which even at first gave rise to rumors that Wilde was the author of «The Green Carnation», which he protested in his letter to the Pall Mall Gazette, dated October 2, 1894 [12]). Indeed, these parallels are obvious because O. Wilde used himself as a prototype for Lord Henry, and Dorian Gray, though not directly inspired by Alfred Douglas (whom he hasn't met yet), was nonetheless an amalgamation of all the dandy and decadent qualities that O. Wilde desired in his perspective partner.

The younger of the two main characters – Reggie Hastings, whose name is a fusion of names Reggie Turner and Alfred Douglas, appears to the reader first in apt comparison to a bored with life angel: «It (the light) caught the gilt of the boy's fair hair and turned it into brightest gold, until, despite the white weariness of his face, the pale fretfulness of his eyes, he looked like some angel in a church window designed by Burne-Jones, some angel a little blasé from the injudicious conduct of its life» [1, p. 2]. This in itself is an unusual description of a young man's appearance. Furthermore, he is dressed like a dandy: he slips a green carnation into his evening buff-coloured coat with a pin, takes up his lavender gloves. He looks at himself in the mirror for a long time, just «as a woman gazes at herself before she starts for a party» [1, p. 1]. Obviously Reggie is a narcissist: «In his own opinion he was very beautiful, and he thought it right to appreciate his own qualities of mind and of body ... Quite frankly he told other people that he was very wonderful, quite frankly he avowed it to himself» [1, p. 2]. During a chance meeting with his father on his way to Belgrave Square, Reggie thinks to himself that it's such a pity that his father is so plain in appearance. His father then tells him, «What a funny little man you are. – Reggie» [1, p. 4]. Here the roles are reversed, but these same words Alfred Douglas wrote to his father, Marquess of Queensberry, in a telegram when the latter threatened to disinherit him because of his relationship with O. Wilde [2, p. 392]. But, just like Dorian, Reggie is a mere echo, an imitator of the real thing – Esmé:

«I want you to tell me which is original, Mr. Amaranth or Lord Reggie?

«Oh! they both are».

«No, they are too much alike. When we meet with the Tweedledum and Tweedledee in mind, one of them is always a copy, an echo of the other».

«Do you think so? Well, of course Mr. Amaranth has been original longer than Lord Reggie, because he is nearly twenty years older».

«Then Lord Reggie is the echo» [1, p. 17–18].

Thus, like Dorian Gray, Reggie is vain and narcissistic. And just like Dorian, he looks up to his older friend and mentor, Esmé Amaranth. Amaranth, whose name is an echo of that mystical flower that never fades, amaranth, has more than a passing resemblance to Lord Henry: he is a decadent dandy and a hedonist. He urges young Reggie to never marry but pursue pleasures and sins: «And I should be delighted to continue not paying for your suppers. Besides, I am afraid that marriage might cause you to develop, and then I should lose you. Marriage is a sort of forcing house. It brings strange sins to fruit, and sometimes strange renunciations. The renunciations of marriage are like white lilies – bloodless, impurely pure, as anaemic as the soul of a virgin, as cold as the face of a corpse. I should be afraid for you to marry, Reggie!» [1, p. 24–25]. Esmé himself is married but claims that «My wife began by trying to influence me, she has ended by trying not to be influenced by me ... No, I am unchanged. That is really the secret of my pre-eminence. I never develop. I was born epigrammatic, and my dying remark will be a paradox. How splendid to die with a paradox upon one's lips!» [1, p. 22–23]. For him, marriage is the end of all hope, which is quite contradictory, since the marriage didn't seem to diminish his ability to be, in his own words, «admirably conceited». When asked how and why he got married, he replies, «I did nothing. My wife proposed to me, and I refused her ... Afterwards she sent me

a white waistcoat in a brown paper parcel, and told me to meet her at a certain church on a certain day. I declined. She came in a hired carriage ... to fetch me. To avoid a scene I went with her, and I understand that we were married» [1, p. 125]. The whole affair was of so little interest to him that he barely noticed it.

As was noted by S. Godfrey, all dandies spend their lives in the city. Lord Reggie and Esmé Amaranth are no different; they live in London. However, there is an episode in the novel when they accompany Mrs. Windsor and Lady Locke to a country retreat in Surrey. It is interesting, however, that Lady Locke could well imagine Lord Reggie in the country, but she is positive that it is no place for a dandy like Amaranth: «He (Reggie) would look delightfully cool and young on the velvet lawn under the great cedar ... As to Mr. Amaranth, she could not imagine him in the country at all. He smacked essentially of cities. What he would do in this *galère* she knew not» [1, p. 46]. So, she considers Lord Reggie to be Amaranth's follower rather than a real dandy. For the latter, going to the country is a novelty, an opportunity to change the atmosphere, «go into the wild» and show himself off in front of the new, admiring audience. From Mrs. Windsor, we learn that it's not his first time for both Reggie and Esmé: «They are both coming down to stay with me in Surrey next week ... I always spend a week in the country in June, a week of perfect rusticity. It is like a dear little desert in the oasis, you know. We do nothing, and we eat a great deal. Nobody calls upon us, and we call upon no one. We go to a country church on Sunday once, just for the novelty of it; and this year Mr. Amaranth and Lord Reggie are going to have a school treat. Last year they got up a mothers' meeting instead, and Mr. Amaranth read his last essay on «The Wickedness of Virtue» aloud to the mothers. They so enjoyed it» [1, p. 18]. And this year Esmé is going to deliver a speech called «The Art of Folly» (both speech titles are obvious allusions to O. Wilde's lectures and speeches) before the schoolchildren. In this speech he preaches folly, which he breaks down to several aspects: disobedience («To know how to be disobedient is to know how to live»), artificiality («All that is normal is to be sedulously avoided»), and absurdity («I am an artist, because I am consciously absurd») [1, p. 168–172]. He describes himself in the following way in this speech: «I have been an aesthete. I have lain upon hearth-rugs and eaten passion-flowers. I have clothed myself in breeches of white samite, and offered my friends yellow jonquils instead of afternoon tea. But when aestheticism became popular in Bayswater ... I felt that it was absurd no longer, and I turned to other things. It was then, one golden summer day, among the flowering woods of Richmond, that I invented a new art, the art of preposterous conversation» [1, p. 170]. This «art of preposterous conversation» was decadence. To R. Hichens, decadence is also amoral: «There is nothing good and nothing evil. There is only art ... Forget your Catechism, and remember the words of Flaubert and of Walter Pater» [1, p. 173]. This speech contains convictions and beliefs of O. Wilde himself; even the speech's title resembles that of his dialogue – «The Decay of Lying». The idea of that dialogue can be summed up as follows: Nature is always behind the age, and it and Life are not worth being depicted in Art. Realism as an artistic method is a failure. Art is above everything else and must be used to create a new kind of beautiful reality that has nothing in common with realism and morality [13, p. 16–17]. In this way, Esmé Amaranth acts as a literary double of Wilde in the novel, although he even mentions Wilde several times,

and Madame Valtesi says she likes to read «The Decay of Lying» because it always sends her to sleep [1, p. 102].

To sum up, R. Hichens singles out in the image of dandy in his novel «The Green Carnation» the following traits: vanity and narcissism (in Reggie Hastings, especially), decadence and hedonism (most vividly in the image of Esmé Amaranth), idleness and urbanism (in both of the characters), disobedience, artificiality, and absurdity (in both of them as well, but most vividly in Esmé Amaranth, because he preaches it in his speeches).

Conclusions. The reputation of a dandy has survived through the ages. Despite being scorned by the wider community, the dandy indeed became a work of art. As that which is out of the ordinary, it was a ready object of satire right from the start. Thus, it is important to research how and why the dandy was satirized by various critics and authors, and sometimes even by dandies themselves, to achieve a deeper understanding of the nature of that remarkable cultural phenomenon.

In his novel «The Green Carnation», R. Hichens criticizes the image of dandy from a behavioristic and moralistic point of view. To him, decadence is simply immoral and is but a form of unconventional, exhibitionist behaviour. This is only natural, since satire rarely takes on its object in all complexity, usually satisfying itself with one or two most notable characteristics. Even so, the novel was (and is) widely regarded as a case of brilliant and apt satire of both decadence and dandies.

In our research, we have accomplished all our goals. We have provided a short overview of the research on satire of dandyism in literary criticism; we analyzed the characters of Lord Reggie and Esmé Amaranth in the novel «The Green Carnation» and the satiric elements in their descriptions in this novel. R. Hichens singles out in the image of dandy in his novel «The Green Carnation» the following traits: vanity and narcissism, decadence and hedonism, idleness and urbanism, disobedience, artificiality, and absurdity.

In conclusion, we suggest that further research of dandy characters and their satiric treatment on a larger selection of literary works is necessary.

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Ігошев К. Типові денді Лорд Реджинальд Гастінгс та Есме Амарінт як об'єкти сатири у романі Р. Хіченса «Зелена гвоздика»

Анотація. В останні десятиріччя ми стали свідками неминучого ренесансу глибокого наукового та критичного інтересу до неоднозначної постаті денді майже в кожній сфері критичних досліджень. Такий інтерес, на нашу думку, спровокований, принаймні частково, денді як ідеалом джентльменів середнього та вищого прошарку суспільства

XVIII–XIX ст. Незважаючи на зневагу широкого загалу, денді насправді став «витвором мистецтва». Як все незвичне, він з самого початку став зручним об'єктом для сатири. Тому для глибокого розуміння природи цього дивовижного культурного явища важливо дослідити, як і чому денді став об'єктом сатири для різних критиків та авторів, а іноді й самих денді і які саме риси денді обирали ці автори для своєї сатири.

У нашому дослідженні ми спробували описати та проаналізувати образи денді лорда Реджі та Есме Амарінта у романі Р. Гіченса «Зелена гвоздика» як об'єктів сатири.

У своєму романі «Зелена гвоздика» Р. Гіченс критикує образ денді з біхевіористсько-моралістичних позицій. Для нього декаданс просто аморальний і є лише формою нетрадиційної, ексгібіціоністської поведінки. Це цілком природно, оскільки сатира рідко розглядає свій об'єкт у всій його повноті, зазвичай задовольняючись лише однією чи двома найбільш помітними характеристиками. Незважаючи на це, роман широко визнавався (й досі визнаний) зразком блискучої та влучної сатири як на декаданс вцілому, так і на денді.

У нашій статті ми провели короткий огляд досліджень сатири дендизму в літературознавстві; ми проаналізували образи лорда Реджі та Есме Амарінта у романі «Зелена гвоздика» та сатиричні елементи в їхніх описах у цьому романі. Р. Гіченс виділяє в образі денді такі риси: марнославство і самозакоханість, декадентство і гедонізм, неробство і урбанізм, нонконформізм, штучність та абсурдність.

Ключові слова: сатира, естетизм, декаданс, дендизм, денді, мистецтво.