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**ESCAPISM IN THE NOVELS OF ELIZABETH VON ARNIM “THE
ADVENTURES OF ELIZABETH IN RÜGEN” AND “THE ENCHANTED
APRIL”**

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Introduction

The novels of Elizabeth von Arnim (1866-1941) highly appreciated in her lifetime are today the focus of critics' attention. Critical essays and books by Erica Brown (2013), Isobel Maddison (2013), Jennifer Walker, (2013), Iwona Eberle (2001) note that the research focus has shifted to include various aspects of E. von Arnim's life and works. The aforementioned researchers all emphasize the importance of her contribution to the development of the novel as a genre, as well as her innovative approach to well-known themes and problems addressed in her books. Russian literary criticism has never afforded the works of E. von Arnim the attention they deserve. They have never been translated into Russian and have never been published in their original form in Russia. After more than seventy years since the writer's death, her works have been re-published in several European languages. Before a discussion of the works of von Arnim, it is important to note a chronology of her books, here divided into their three distinct periods.

Early Period (1898-1908): the novels “Elizabeth and her German Garden” (1898), “The Solitary Summer” (1899), “The April Baby's Book of Tunes” (1900), “The Benefactress” (1901), “The Pious Pilgrimage” (1901), “The Ordeal of Elizabeth” (1901), “The Adventures of Elizabeth in Rügen” (1904), “The Princess Priscilla's Fortnight” (1905), the epistolary novel, “Fräulein Schmidt and Mr. Anstruther” (1907).

Second Period (1909-1922): the novels, “The Caravaners” (1909), “The Pastor’s Wife” (1914), “Christine” (1917), “Cristopher and Columbus” (1919), “In the Mountains” (1920), “Vera” (1921), “The Enchanted April” (1922).

Late Period (1925-1940): the novels, “Love” (1925), “Introduction to Sally” (1926), “Expiation” (1929), “Father” (1931), “The Jasmine Farm” (1934), an autobiography, “All the Dogs of my Life” (1936), and her last novel, “Mr. Skeffington” (1940).

It is important to note that the novels of Elizabeth von Arnim exhibit a display of different genres, such as, **novels-journals** “Elizabeth and her German Garden”, “The Solitary Summer”, “In the Mountains”; **a travelogue** “The Adventures of Elizabeth in Rügen”; **epistolary novels** Fräulein Schmidt and Mr Anstruther”, “Christine”. “The April Baby’s Book of Tunes” takes a special place among her other works, for it is a children’s book which closely resembles fairy tales in its genre characteristics.

Foreign critics remark that several main themes that can be found in E. von Arnim’s works: escapism, interpersonal relationships and family relationships, the opposition of the English and the German national characters and hedonism [1].

1. Escapism in the novel-travelogue “The Adventures of Elizabeth in Rügen”

Travel notes, which later developed into notes of a journey have been popular in Europe for many centuries, but only in the first half of the XVII century did they become a literary genre. Having achieved that distinction, their publication began in the XVIII century. This period in history is characterized by a growing interest in traveling and discovering new and exotic countries. Thus, travelogues (French: *récit de voyage*) were widely employed as a means to contrast and compare civilizations, while at the same time describing the chronology of a particular journey. In the XIX century this new genre flourished and the travelogue was regarded not as a result of a journey, but as its primary goal [2]. The researcher, E. P. Grechanaya concludes that travelogues gave authors an opportunity to create lasting memories, while their description can be seen as a collection of snapshots [3].

Foreign researchers and observers, R. Le Huenen, A. Pasquali, G. Tverdota, and their Russian counterparts, N.M. Maslova, M.G. Shadrina remark that as literary genre the term “travelogue” is hard to define. The majority of them are convinced that the travelogue is a complex genre with flexible boundaries, as well as being rich with similarities to other genres, such as, the adventure story, a geography novel, the epistolary novel and *journal intime*. In a travelogue the story develops with the help of narration and description. A typical text of this genre has its own structural patterns and peculiarities. Travelogues were thoroughly investigated and described by N.M. Maslova and M.G. Shadrina. To examine the travelogue it is essential to single out the most relevant aspects, such as: the notion of the itinerary as a planned route and the presence of recurring motifs connected with “the events that happen in the space of the road and in the city space” [4]. I shall proceed to show how these themes and motifs are addressed by using one of the novels by Elizabeth von Arnim, “The Adventures of Elizabeth in Rügen”.

The novel-travelogue “The Adventures of Elizabeth in Rügen” was published in 1904 and was the sixth in the series of books depicting the life and adventures of *Graffin* Elizabeth. All these novels about Elizabeth are first-person or third-person narratives relating the events of Elizabeth’s life, her youth and marriage. The novels that describe Elizabeth and her family life were created in the early period of von Arnim’s work. There was also an epistolary narrative, “*The Visits of Elizabeth*”. To date this narrative precisely, presents difficulties because it was published by “A. L. Burt Company” in New York only once and that at the end of XIX – beginning XX century. It appeared together with the novel “Elizabeth and Her German Garden”. The study of the available editions, however, enables us to date it back to 1898-1900.

What makes this novel unique and classified as a travelogue is that it is written explicitly to share a travel adventure with the reader. In the work, Elizabeth, our main character, occasionally offers information about the sights, the hotels and the surrounding nature of the cities and towns she passes. Elizabeth’s ongoing descriptions show the connection that can be made to travelogue genre: at the very

beginning of the novel the readers find a map of Rügen with the itinerary, and all the chapters are marked in the following manner: The First Day, The Second Day, etc. This format enables, “The Adventures of Elizabeth in Rügen” to be regarded as a travelogue, though it was not marked as such by E. von Arnim herself. Despite the fact that the purpose of writing these travel notes is stated at the very beginning of the novel, the main heroine gradually shifts slightly from her initial focus. The information essential for the future traveler is supplanted by narration about Elizabeth’s adventures. For example, she notes an encounter with a long-lost cousin, Charlotte, in a bath-hut, expounds on their relationships and arguments, and shares the unsuccessful efforts to reconcile Charlotte and her husband. The reader sees the plot of the novel initially as the geography of roads and cities. As the story proceeds, the focus shifts to the meeting with the cousin and that initiates the story of the Nieberleins and their relationships.

The first pages of the novel reveal the reflections of the protagonist about the best means of transport, and the necessity of being accompanied by a fellow traveler. The themes of conventionality, norms and traditions, the place of a woman in society are important issues addressed in the novels of E. von Arnim. Elizabeth doesn’t have a right to travel alone, and the necessity to conform to the norms forces her to take a servant to keep her company: “Walking, then, was out of the question, for I could not walk alone. The grim monster Conventionality whose iron claws are for ever on my shoulder, for ever pulling me back from the harmless and the wholesome, put a stop to that even if I had not been afraid of tramps, which I was. The carriage was a light one of the Victoria genus with a hood; the horses were a pair esteemed at home for their meekness; the coachman, August, was a youth who had never yet driven straight on for an indefinite period without turning round once, and he looked as though he thought he were going to enjoy himself. I was sure I was going to enjoy myself. Gertrud, I fancy, was without these illusions; but she is old, and has got out of the habit of being anything but resigned. She was the sop on this occasion thrown to the Grim One of the iron claws, for I would far rather have gone alone. But Gertrud is very silent; to go with her would be as nearly like being alone as it is possible to be

when you are not. She could, I knew be trusted to sit by my side knitting, however bumpy the road, and not opening her lips unless asked a question” [5].

The themes of abandonment and escapism are inherent in the novels of E. von Arnim, and in each she dwells on the reasons that make her heroines set off in various directions. They may be longing for changes, or getting away from the realities of everyday life; or striving to be in harmony with nature. In “The Adventures of Elizabeth in Rügen” the description of the island of Rügen, which was found in a library book is the motive to embark on a trip around the island: “So I drove, and it was round Rugen that I drove because one hot afternoon when I was idling in the library, not reading but fingering the books, taking out first one and then another, dipping into them, deciding which I would read next, I came across Marianne North’s Recollections of a Happy Life, and hit upon the page where she begins to talk of Rugen. Immediately interested – for is not Rugen nearer to me than any other island? – I became absorbed in her description of the bathing near a place called Putbus, of the deliciousness of it in a sandy cove where the water was always calm and of how you floated about it on its crystal surface, and beautiful jelly-fish, stars of purest colours, floated with you. I threw down the book to ransack the shelves for a guide to Rugen” [5].

The library book Elizabeth found was “Recollections of a Happy Life” written by Marianne North (1830-1890) and published in 1894. North was an English biologist, painter and traveler renowned for her unique paintings that she made on her expeditions. Volume I of her book contained her memories of tours around the island of Rügen and detailed descriptions of its sights [6].

The uplifting and poetic style of a guide-book which Elizabeth finds spurs her to make a decision: “This seemed to me very irresistible, surely a place that inspired such a mingling of the lofty and the homely in its guide-books must be well-worth seeing? There was a drought just then going on at home. My eyes were hot with watching a garden parch browner day by day beneath a sky of brass. I felt that it only

needed a little energy, and in a few hours I too might be floating among those jelly-fish, in the shadow of the cliffs of the legend-surrounded island” [5].

Gradually, we observe that in the course of her journey Elizabeth keeps to the itinerary she had planned, sees the sights recommended by the guide-book and, as a result, she is neither fascinated by them nor disappointed in them. In each case, she takes careful notes of all her impressions and shares them with the readers. The real intention of these notes however is stated in the middle of the narration (Chapter “The Sixth Day”): “My intention when I began this book was to write a useful Guide to Rügen, one that should point out its best parts and least uncomfortable inns to any English or American traveler whose energy lands him on its shores. With every page I write it grows more plain that I shall not fulfill that intention. What, for instance, have Charlotte and the bishop's wife of illuminating for the tourist who wants to be shown the way? As I cannot conscientiously praise the inns I will not give their names, and what is the use of that to a tourist who wishes to know where to sleep and dine? I meant to describe the Jagdschloss, and find I only repeated a ghost story. It is true I said the rolls at the inn there were hard, but the information was so deeply embedded in superfluities that no tourist will discover it in time to save him from ordering one” [5].

It should be noted that Elizabeth’s original intent was to write a guide. However, as she progresses on her journey she realizes that she cannot fulfill her goal and criticizes the drawbacks of her book, and remarks humorously that she deviates from her initial intention. Throughout the novel the narrator is immersed in her own emotional experience and relationships with her cousin, and her notes to a potential reader (traveler) are more and more rare: “As Vitt even in rain was perfectly charming I can confidently recommend it to the traveller; for on a sunny day it must be quite one of the prettiest spots in Rügen. If I had been alone I would certainly have stayed there at least one night, though the inn looked as if its beds were feather and its butter bad; but I now had a mission, and he who has a mission spends most of his time passing the best things by” [5].

The theme of escapism is treated in the travelogue in a paradoxical and unexpected manner. Elizabeth, the heroine of the novel loves solitude and nature. The taciturnity of Gertrude is stressed as one of the most essential characteristics for a fellow traveler because it gives Elizabeth a chance to revel in romantic solitude undisturbed. Walking on foot for Elizabeth is synonymous with being independent and free: “It is the perfect way of moving if you want to see into the life of things. It is the only way of freedom” [5]. The protagonist follows the principle “to roam, to see, and to recount” (A.A. Maiga [2]), and her main goal is to be alone. She shuns the crowds of tourists, which leads to comical situations: overcrowded hotels, meeting with tourists in the most popular destinations and places of interest, etc., but she enjoys every moment of being *far from the madding crowd* (Th. Hardy): “As for me, I was absolutely happy. The wide plain, the wide sea, the wide sky were so gloriously full of light and life. The very turf beneath my feet had an eager spring in it; the very daisies covering it looked sprightlier than anywhere else; and up among the great piled clouds the blessed little larks were fairly drunk with delight. I walked some way ahead of the carriage so as to feel alone. I could have walked for ever in that radiance and freshness” [5].

The measured narration that is filled with descriptions of landscapes, then and there impressions, observations of the traditions and customs of the locals results from the narrator’s reflection about the characteristics of the places she visits. These peaceful scenes of Rügen alternate with the comic descriptions of chasing and escaping: Charlotte insists on accompanying Elizabeth and tries to get away from her husband; Professor Nieberlein exerts himself to catch up with his wife. The true Englishmen, the Harvey-Brownes are fond of Professor Nieberlein and strive to catch up with Elizabeth and talk to the eminent Professor. As Leslie de Charms metaphorically puts it, “The Adventures of Elizabeth in Rügen” is “a story of frantic pursuits and escapes, with Elizabeth herself benevolently hindering or abetting from the side-lines” [7].

Elizabeth looks for ways of escaping from the people whose presence is burdensome and conceives a plan which will help her reconcile Professor Nieberlein and Charlotte, thereby making her an independent traveler once again: “This plan came into my head during the evening while sitting sadly listening to something extremely like a scolding from the Professor. It seemed to me that I had done all in my power short of inhumanity to the horses to help him, and it was surely not my fault that Charlotte had not happened to stay anywhere long enough for us to catch her up. My intentions were so good. Far preferring to drive alone and stop where and when I pleased—at Vitt for instance, among the walnut trees—I had yet given up all my preferences so that I might help bring man and wife together. If anything, did not this conduct incline towards the noble?” [5]

At the end of the novel we find some structural framing elements, which turn our attention back to the initial intention of the protagonist, to write a good guide. Moreover, the narrator argues with the reader, rebuffs all the possible reproaches as whims and ends her narration in a laconic, but also abrupt form: “The traveler in whose interests I began this book and who has so frequently been forgotten during the writing of it, might very well protest here that I have not yet been all round Rügen, and should not, therefore, talk of closes to my journey. But nothing that the traveler can say will keep me from going home in this chapter. I did go home on the morning of the eleventh day, driving from Wiek to Bergen, and taking the train from there; and the red line on the map will show that, except for one dull corner in the south-east, I had practically carried out my original plan and really had driven all round the island” [5].

Stylistic elements of this passage allow us to come to the following conclusion: the initial intention of the protagonist has changed dramatically and the style and the genre of a travel guide transforms into a travel novel. All these features support the explanatory notes added at the end of the story: “But before I part from the traveler, who ought by this time to be very tired, I will present him with the following condensed experiences:

The nicest bathing was at Lauterbach,
The best inn was at Wiek.
I was happiest at Lauterbach and Wiek.
I was most wretched at Göhren.
The cheapest place was Thiessow.
The dearest place was Stubbenkammer.
The most beautiful place was Hiddensee” [5].

The main heroine of this novel regards her escape as a necessary step at a definite moment of her life, but ultimately her journey is homebound. The description of the last evening is poetic, filled with images of light and color. In fact, the color scheme of the space and mythopoetic reconsideration of images of nature play a very significant role: “The sun set gloriously, the moon came up, the sea was a deep violet, the clouds in the eastern sky about the moon shone with a pearly whiteness, the clouds in the west were gorgeous past belief, flaming across in marvelous colours even to us, the light reflected from them transfiguring our sails, our men, our whole boat into a spirit ship of an unearthly radiance, bound for Elysium, manned by immortal gods. <...> It was a solemn and magnificent close to my journey” [5]. Escapism, abandonment and pursuits do not imply any changes in the inner world of the characters, the changes are limited only to their position in space, their trips and the awaited and predictable coming back home.

2. *Escapism as finding harmony in the novel “The Enchanted April”*

Elizabeth von Arnim did not conceal her preferences and called “The Enchanted April” (1922) her favorite novel [8]. In her letter to Mark Rainley (September, 7, 1922) she compared it to “a thin flute playing all by itself on an empty afternoon” [7]. Escapism and abandonment that can be justifiably defined as prevailing motifs in her many works are dealt with in a different way in this novel. Four women of different social background leave wet and misty London for a month in Italy, a month spent on the island that is to transform their lives.

J. Walker concludes that “this beguiling story is so modern in outlook that the reader might imagine that it could have been written quite recently, rather than in the 1920s” [8]. The life stories of Mrs. Wilkins, Mrs. Arbuthnot, Mrs. Fisher and Lady Caroline Dester are stories of women of different ages and experiences, who are united by the common wish to escape the cold and rain of Great Britain for a month.

The writer states quite clearly the incentives for leaving London, the plans that these women have and what they expect from their sojourn on the island. In persuading Mrs. Arbuthnot to set off for Italy, Mrs. Wilkins expounds on her ideas about the urgency of this journey: “Why, it would really be being unselfish to go away and be happy for a little, because we would come back so much nicer. <...> and you look so – you look exactly as if you wanted it just as much as I do – as if you ought to have a rest – have something happy happen to you” [9]. Mrs. Wilkins gets acquainted with Mrs. Arbuthnot in a café, and this spontaneous decision to spend a month on an island together has a mysterious flavor for them. The episode in the novel is close stylistically to conspiracy scenes in detective or spy novels because it is written as if these two women were about to commit a crime. It is worth pointing out that Mrs. Wilkins finds and invites Mrs. Fisher and Lady Caroline Dexter to take part in the voyage, and that Mrs. Fisher sees this future trip (or escape) as a reality. E. von Arnim resorts to the literary device of a vision, and it is the ironic treatment of Mrs. Wilkins’s visions that enables her to reveal the necessity and feasibility of their plans: ‘It’s so funny’, said Mrs. Wilkins, just as if she had not heard her, ‘but I see us both – you and me – this April in the mediaeval castle’ [9]. <...> “But Mrs. Arbuthnot, as usual, held on to Mrs. Wilkins; and presently, having cooled down in the train, Mrs. Wilkins announced that at San Salvatore Mrs. Fisher would find her level. ‘I see her finding her level there’, she said, her eyes very bright” [9].

As earlier noted in this paper, the journey for the protagonist of the novel, “The Adventures of Elizabeth in Rügen” did not imply any financial problems or hindrances, and the opinion of relatives were not even mentioned or taken into consideration by Elizabeth. For Mrs. Wilkins and Mrs. Arbuthnot this journey is

synonymous with an escape, a secret plan, a conspiracy against their husbands. The description of the women's behavior on the eve of the departure accentuates their feeling of guilt: "The remainder of March was a confused bad dream. Both Mrs. Arbuthnot and Mrs. Wilkins were shattered; try as they would not to, both felt extraordinary guilty; and when on the morning of the 30th they did finally get off there was no exhilaration about the departure, no holiday feeling at all" [9].

D. S. Likhachyov points out that any action in a literary piece can be easy or difficult for a character. He introduces the notion of low and high potential barriers [10]. It is remarkable, in my opinion, that Mrs. Wilkins and Mrs. Arbuthnot may be described as characters with high potential barriers, whereas Lady Caroline and Mrs. Fisher are characters with low potential barriers. E. von Arnim writes in great detail about what these barriers are and how the characters overcome them. The absence of barriers in the lives of the latter two is stated in a very curt description of their way to the island: "<...> and Lady Caroline and Mrs Fisher, as yet unacquainted and therefore under no obligations to bore each other on the journey <...>, were to arrive on the morning of April 2nd" [9].

In the first weeks on the island Lady Caroline and Mrs. Fisher begin their moves to isolationism. Mrs. Fisher remains in her room and does not allow anyone enter it, Lady Caroline considers the garden around the castle to be her territory and tries to hide in it.

The garden in the novel is a dynamic component of the artistic world. Traditionally a garden is perceived as an ideal model of relationships between a person and nature; as a garden of Paradise on Earth that can reveal the best traits of the character of a person. E. von Arnim endows a garden with opposite qualities as well. On the one hand, the garden becomes a neutral place, and the moment when each of the four women go into the garden shows the readiness of a heroine for transformation. Various images of a garden may be found in the text of the novel: the garden is often depicted as a paradise, created for walks; it is also a thought-provoking place which makes a person dwell on her past life [11].

On the other hand, Lady Caroline believes that her move into the garden should be interpreted by others as a sign that she wants to be left alone. In her opinion, the garden belongs exclusively to her. However, the garden does not fulfill its role as a place of concealment, a chance to be alone, to meditate: “There was no way of getting into or out of the top garden at San Salvatore except through the two glass doors, unfortunately side by side, of the dining-room and the hall. A person in the garden who wished to escape unseen could not, for the person to be escaped from would be met on the way. It was a small oblong garden, and concealment was impossible” [9]. The garden does lead Lady Caroline to her emotional and spiritual transformation, and the intrusion of the other tenants, combined with the beauty of the garden provokes changes in her attitude toward life and people: “There had been wonderful stars the evening before, and she had gone out into the top garden after dinner, leaving Mrs. Fisher alone over her nuts and wine, and sitting on the wall at the place where the lilies crowded their ghost heads, she had looked out into the gulf of the night, and it had suddenly seemed as if her life had been a noise all about nothing” [9].

For Lady Caroline escape to the garden promises to be a means of finding oneself. The author’s vividly drawn images enable the reader to experience Lady Caroline’s shy and tentative entrance into the garden: “With great caution and on the tips of her toes, balancing herself carefully lest the pebbles should scrunch, she stole out when she was dressed to her corner; but the garden was empty. <...> She had it entirely to herself. <...> Well, but how delightful, and how very new. Now she would really be able to think uninterruptedly” [9]. At first the solitude brings her happiness. Yet some days later she is no longer satisfied with the “delicious to be forgotten” idea and she is looking forward to being discovered, disturbed in the garden.

It follows logically from what has been said that nature and garden are capable of changing and transforming a person. They help to restore composure through solitude, however, as soon as composure and transformation has occurred, a person feels the need to get back to the world to share this beauty of the nature so that other

people might benefit from it as well: “They stood looking at this crowd of loveliness, this happy jumble, in silence. No, it didn’t matter what Mrs. Fisher did; not here; not in such beauty. Mrs. Arbuthnot’s discomposure melted out of her. In the warmth and light of what she was looking at, of what to her was a manifestation, an entirely new side, of God, how could one be discomposed? If only Frederick were with her, seeing it too, seeing as he would have seen when first they were lovers, in the days when he saw what she saw and loved what she loved...”[9]. The garden in blossom is regarded as a creation of God, a sign of divine love that reconciles the heroines with the shortcomings of their relatives.

As the cravings for escapism become less important, the women start to break down the boundaries. Mrs. Wilkins is the first to establish contacts with Lady Caroline and Mrs. Fisher when she intrudes upon their privacy. She is convinced that the beneficial influence of the island which she had already experienced is bound to transform the others, especially Mrs. Fisher: “Well, she would get over that presently; she would get over it inevitably, Mrs. Wilkins was sure, after a day or two in the extraordinary atmosphere of peace in that place” [9].

The transformations of the inner world of the heroines are reflected in their wish to share this beauty and *joie de vivre* with other people: Mrs. Wilkins and Mrs. Arbuthnot invite their spouses to join them and Lady Caroline (nicknamed Scrap) longs for Mrs. Wilkins’ company. Mrs. Fisher, who may be metaphorically described as a guard protecting her territory – her room, leaves her personal space and intrudes upon Lady Caroline’s privacy in the garden: “Increasingly restless and no longer able to confine herself to her battlements, she wandered more and more frequently, and also aimlessly, in and out of the top garden, to the growing surprise of Scrap, especially when she found that all Mrs. Fisher did was to stare for a few minutes at the view, pick a few dead leaves off the rose-bushes, and go away again” [9].

Escapism in the novel, “The Enchanted April” is a synonymous with the transformation and revival of a person. Mrs. Wilkins, the initiator of this journey is the first to undergo dramatic changes during the early hours spent at San Salvatore.

This process is revealed on a stylistic level with the help of fixed metaphors linking paradise and being in heaven: “The disappointment of not going to be able to prepare a welcome for Mrs. Fisher had evaporated at once, for it was impossible to go on being disappointed in heaven. Nor did she mind her behaving as hostess. What did it matter? You did not mind things in heaven” [9]). Mrs. Arbuthnot cannot grasp the reasons for changes that take place in her friend’s mind and soul: “Mrs. Arbuthnot was astonished. The extraordinary quickness with which, hour by hour, under her very eyes, Lotty became more selfless, disconcerted her. She was turning into something surprisingly like a saint” [9]. By describing Mrs. Wilkins as a saint, Mrs. Arbuthnot does not mock her, but rather she admires the transformation and becomes aware that her own life lacks unselfish love for everyone, although she was a believer and tried to realize righteousness.

The next point to be noted is that the transformation of the heroines, Mrs. Wilkins and Mrs. Fisher is accompanied by changes in their speech characteristics. Their newly reformed inner state needs another means of expression and some new vocabulary to represent their awakening to life. Mrs. Arbuthnot is puzzled when her friend Lotty resorts to bookish words such as, aridity, to describe the atmosphere in her house: “She was bewildered by Lotty. One odd effect of San Salvatore on her rapidly developing friend was her sudden free use of robust words. She had not used them in Hampstead. <...> In words, too, Lotty had come unchained” [9]. Mrs. Wilkins (Lotty) is aware of her previous mistakes, and while staying on the island she comes to the conclusion that it was her coldness and indifference that created an arid atmosphere in her home and with her spouse, and this made her husband unhappy.

Mrs. Fisher re-evaluates her secluded life, the house she lives in, and comes to see the objects and maids as antiquated. Unexpectedly she uses a colloquial phrase and immediately she rates it as a slang expression, an extremely rude one and inappropriate for her age and social status: “Dusty old things. Mrs. Fisher paused in her thoughts, arrested by the strange expression. Where had it come from? How was it possible for it to come at all? It might have been ones of Mrs. Wilkins’s, in its

levity, its almost slang. Perhaps it was one of hers, and she had heard her say it and unconsciously caught it from her” [9]. Using the colloquial phrase baffles her and she attributes this phenomenon as symptomatic of a contagious disease. The narrator however, suggests otherwise and interprets it as a signal that the transformation has already begun: “She had heard of dried staffs, pieces of mere dead wood, suddenly putting forth fresh leaves, but only in legend. She was not in legend. She knew perfectly what was due to herself. Dignity demanded that she should have nothing to do with fresh leaves at her age; and yet there it was – the feeling that presently, that at any moment now, she might crop out all green” [9]. The process of transformation is an arduous task for Mrs. Fisher, but this metaphorical and emotional flourishing of the elderly lady is one of the most crucial events in the structure of the novel.

The climax of the novel is when the owner of the castle arrives, along with Mrs. Wilkins and Mrs. Arbuthnot’s husbands. The island of San Salvatore, regarded as a human being throughout the novel meddles with the lives of every person who spends time on its territory. Its unique quality to purify one’s mind is mentioned more than once by the characters of the book: “Lotty’s belief in the irresistible influence of the heavenly atmosphere of San Salvatore being thus obviously justified, and Mr. Wilkins, whom Rose knew as alarming and Scrap had pictured as icily unkind, being so evidently a changed man, both Rose and Scrap began to think there might after all be something in what Lotty insisted on, and that San Salvatore did work purgingly on the character” [9].

Conclusion

The theme of road – travelling – escapism is a recurring one in the works of E. von Arnim. The daughter of the writer, L. de Charms, remarks that “‘to be out of doors and alive’ and travelling, moreover, from one lovely place to another was perfect bliss for Elizabeth too” [7]. It is not by chance that heroines of practically every novel travel using different modes of transport, choosing various destinations, pursuing their own goals.

There is a strong autobiographical element in the novel “The Adventures of Elizabeth in Rügen” because it was based on the impressions of the trip to Rügen made by Elizabeth von Arnim with her friend. Enriching the novel with situations and characters typical of a travelogue, E. von Arnim depicts details through the itinerary and adventures of Elizabeth. Hers is a classic novel-travelogue built on tradition: the beginning of the journey is formed by the description of the island of Rügen found in the book by M. North; the protagonist of the novel craves spending some days at the seaside. The author writes her travel notes obsessed with the idea of “truth-preservation” (A.A. Maiga) and regards her notes as an important and reliable source of information for travelers and readers. She stops writing her notes when she fails to reconcile the Nieberleins. Finally, her escape leads her home again and having documented her journey, she arrives at conclusions about her trip.

In the novel “The Enchanted April” escapism is synonymous with finding harmony, and may be defined other than a process of traveling to far-flung places in order to flee from the burden of everyday problems. In this novel escapism implies constructive changes in the inner world of the characters, even though the incentives of this flight might be fundamentally different. A journey has a metaphorical and literal meaning in this context and changing the characters’ positions in space leads them to renewal and to a re-examination of their priorities.

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Elizabeth von Arnim was a British author and Countess best known for writing semi-autobiographical works that served as satirical commentaries of European society during her time. This edition of *The Adventures of Elizabeth in Rugen* includes a table of contents. Action & Adventure Fiction. Classics. Cultural Heritage. All categories. Publisher: Charles River Editors. Author(s): Elizabeth Von Arnim. GENRES: Adventure. STATUS : completed. Source: Come visit Novelonlinefull.com sometime to read the latest chapter of *The Adventures of Elizabeth in Rugen*. If you have any question about this novel, Please don't hesitate to contact us or translate team. Hope you enjoy it. *The Adventures of Elizabeth in Rugen* Chapters. Elizabeth von Arnim's descriptions of Rugen are wonderful, and I am now keen to follow in the footsteps of Elizabeth one day and take a trip around Rugen myself. "Round this island I wished to walk this summer, but no one would walk with me. It is the perfect way of moving if you want to see into the life of things. It is the one way of freedom. If you go into a place on anything but your own feet you are taken there too fast and miss a thousand delicate joys that were waiting for you by the wayside." Enchanted April was my first Elizabeth von Arnim novel and I think I will have to re-read it at some point. I'm not sure it is my favourite of hers though. on December 5, 2016 at 8:54 am | Reply Lady Fancifull. Elizabeth von Arnim. It began in a Woman's Club in London on a February afternoon--an uncomfortable club, and a miserable afternoon--when Mrs. Wilkins, who had come down from Hampstead to shop and had lunched at her club, took up *The Times* from the table in the smoking-room, and running her listless eye down the Agony Column saw this: "Necessary servants remain. Z, Box 1000, *The Times*." That was its conception yet, as in the case of many another, the conceiver was unaware of it at the moment. So entirely unaware was Mrs. Wilkins that her April for that year had then and there been settled for her that she dropped the newspaper with a gesture that was both irritated and resigned, and went over to the window and stared drearily out at the dripping street.

The Enchanted April by Elizabeth Von Arnim. Rating: 4 out of 5 stars(4/5). The Solitary Summer by Elizabeth Von Arnim. Rating: 0 out of 5 stars(0/5). Vera by Elizabeth Von Arnim. Rating: 0 out of 5 stars(0/5). Elizabeth and Her German Garden by Elizabeth Von Arnim. Rating: 3 out of 5 stars(3/5). Elizabeth Von Arnim. The Adventures of Elizabeth in Rügen. Published by Good Press, 2019. goodpress@okpublishing.info. Every one who has been to school and still remembers what he was taught there, knows that Rügen is the biggest island Germany possesses, and that it lies in the Baltic Sea off the coast of Pomerania. Round this island I wished to walk this summer, but no one would walk with me. It is the perfect way of moving if you want to see into the life of things. As the title suggests, The Enchanted April is a lovely, enchanting story! After enjoying this one so much, I'll definitely be reading more of Elizabeth von Arnim's books - any suggestions as to which one I should read next? Share this: Email. The Adventures Of Elizabeth In Rugen also appeals. Has anyone read any of the others available? Thank you for a great review. Helen says Elizabeth von Arnim. It began in a Woman's Club in London on a February afternoon--an uncomfortable club, and a miserable afternoon--when Mrs. Wilkins, who had come down from Hampstead to shop and had lunched at her club, took up The Times from the table in the smoking-room, and running her listless eye down the Agony Column saw this: Necessary servants remain. Z, Box 1000, The Times. That was its conception yet, as in the case of many another, the conceiver was unaware of it at the moment. So entirely unaware was Mrs. Wilkins that her April for that year had then and there been settled for her that she dropped the newspaper with a gesture that was both irritated and resigned, and went over to the window and stared drearily out at the dripping street. "The Adventures of Elizabeth in Rügen" by Elizabeth Von Arnim. Published by Good Press. Good Press publishes a wide range of titles that encompasses every genre. From well-known classics & literary fiction and non-fiction to forgotten - or yet undiscovered gems - of world literature, we issue the books that need to be read. Each Good Press edition has been meticulously edited and formatted to boost readability for all e-readers and devices. Our goal is to produce eBooks that are user-friendly and accessible to everyone in a high-quality digital format. Leslie de Charms, daughter of Elizabeth von Arnim, states that Elizabeth was well versed in H. D. Thoreau's works and frequently read them in different periods of her life: Probably Pepys, Montaigne, Lamb, Gibbon - to mention but a few permanently kept on the pillar. Further on, we can see that her own ideas resonate with the ideas expressed by H. D. Thoreau, in her books we may follow the key motif that is the necessity of unity with nature. For Elizabeth von Arnim, watching the surrounding nature, being in the midst of it, admiring the beauty of forests, fields and flowers, helps any keen observer feel the presence of God: My garden is surrounded by cornfields and meadows, and beyond are great stretches of sandy heath.