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**Postmoderní vyprávěcí techniky v románech Johna
Fowlese**

**Narrative Techniques in John Fowles's Novels in the
Context of English Postmodernism**

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Děkuji paní PhDr. Alici Sukdolové, Ph.D., vedoucí mé diplomové práce, za odborné vedení, vstřícnost a poskytnutí užitečných rad v průběhu tvorby mé práce.

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Anotace

Práce se v úvodní části bude věnovat definici a charakteristice postmodernismu v kontextu anglické literatury 2. poloviny 20. století. V tomto smyslu zmíní teoretické postuláty postmoderní literatury (Eco, Barthes, dekonstrukce textu) a zaměří se na pojetí intertextuality a vyprávěcích postupů ve vybraných románech Johna Fowlese (*The French Lieutenant's Woman*, *Mantissa*, *The Magus*). Jádrem práce bude literárněvědná analýza těchto románů s důrazem na funkci a důležitost přítomnosti/nepřítomnosti autora, prvků intertextuality, nespolehlivého vypravěče, fragmentarizace vyprávění, funkce paradoxu ve vyprávění, úloha metafikce a metarománu. V závěru práce zmíní přínos autora pro kontext anglické postmoderní literatury.

Klíčová slova:

dekonstrukce textu, intertextualita, metaromán, postmoderna

Abstract

The beginning of the paper deals with the definition of postmodernism in the context of English literature of the 2nd half of the 20th century. It mentions theoretical postulates of postmodern literature (Eco, Barthes, deconstruction of the text). The paper focuses on the concept of intertextuality and narrative techniques in selected novels of John Fowles (*The French Lieutenant's Woman*, *Mantissa*, and *The Magus*). The essence of the paper involves a literary analysis of these novels with the focus on the function and an importance of presence/ absence of the author, elements of intertextuality, an unreliable narrator, a fragmentation of narrative, a function of narration in the story, a role of metafiction and metanovel. In conclusion, the paper mentions the contribution of John Fowles to the context of English postmodern literature.

Keywords:

deconstruction of the text, intertextuality, metanovel, postmodernism

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1 Introduction

The theoretical part presents the social and the cultural situation as well as the technological development in post-war Britain. It comprises the consequences for establishing postmodernism. The paper indicates examples of particular occasions that happened in the post-war period. It describes the evolvement of English literature after World War II. For example, English authors follow the realistic tendency or their literary works become experimental. English fiction of the 2nd half of the 20th century uses various topics. This period terminates with the contradictory notion of fantasy and fiction. The thesis defines the concept of postmodernism in terms of the comparison of Connor's and Hutcheon's approach.

The thesis is based on theoretical postulates of Umberto Eco, Roland Barthes, and deconstruction of the text. The paper discusses the sources that inspire Fowles to write his novels. *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and *The Magus* are explored within the theoretical monographs. These sources discuss their stylistic combination, characters or essence of the story. The practical part analyses specific narrative techniques of all selected novels (*The French Lieutenant's Woman*, *Mantissa* and *The Magus*). Every subchapter depicts briefly the gist of three analysed novels. They explore how postmodern novels are narrated. Finally, the paper mentions Fowles's benefits for English postmodern literature.

2 The evolvement of English literature within the post-war situation

Postmodern literature manifested considerably after World War II. It is often described as a contrast to modernism, the preceding literary movement. The disastrous occasions of the second half of the 20th century caused a feeling of paranoia.¹ Technology is changing rapidly and the world expresses ideological doubts. Literature answers by establishing postmodernism. (Lewis 2001: 121)

The prefix post- realised itself through “-ism” movements which had been established before World War II. The war destroyed all philosophies or authorities to associate with. People felt its aftermaths. John Fowles’s *The Magus* and Iris Murdoch’s *The Sea, the Sea* were published in the 1970s. Although this period was no longer influenced by World War II, it was oppressed by terrorism. The new scientific achievements were discovered. Minorities were demonstrating for better rights. People could afford luxurious items such as television and contraceptive pills on daily basis.² (Ikonomakis 2008: 12-14)

As a mass audience was expanding, the counter-cultures were defining themselves against it. This process was happening in the meantime of the two world wars. It was caused by urban growth and current technological discoveries. Counter-cultures were opposing consumer society that was outgrowing individuals. Allan Sillitoe and John Osborne were following the realistic tendency by retelling changes in the society and the opinions of its members. Muriel Spark, Iris Murdoch, William Golding and Samuel Beckett tend to identify themselves with the avant-garde stream that occurred before World War II. David Lodge indicates the term problematic novel, in which the works of John Fowles can be included. By stating Lodge, Ikonomakis (2008) expresses that these authors were “wavering between nonfiction and fabulation, and building his or her hesitation into the novel itself”. (Ikonomakis 2008: 15-16)

¹ John F. Kennedy was assassinated. The Berlin Wall was raised and destroyed. (Lewis 2001: 121)

² Ikonomakis refers to Malcolm’s Bradbury *The Modern British Novel* (2001) which analyses the historical reflection in details. (Ikonomakis 2008: 12)

Ikonomakis (2008) joints the description of Bradbury's and Lodge's post-war fiction³ with the usage of the term which was mentioned by Theo D'haen. He claims that the post-war fiction is postmodern. (Ikonomakis 2008: 16-17)

English fiction of the 1950s-1960s made reflections upon the existence of God and restored moral standards which were destroyed by the consequences of World War II. The characters of the 1960s novel were stuck in uncertainty. Their morality was corrupted. Gender, environment, irony, and pop-art represented leading topics of the late 1960s' English fiction. The combination of fantasy and realism dominated it in the 1970s and 1980s. These novels combined facts with fiction. They coped with the contradictions such as form-content or truth-lies. (Ikonomakis 2008: 17-18)

³ They see post-war fiction as controversial and figurative. (Ikonomakis 2008: 16-17)

3 The comparison of Connor's and Hutcheon's approach to postmodernism

Postmodern principles evolved with the requirement for modernism to rebuild itself. Literary studies characterise the beginning of postmodernism as the linguistic turn. The specificity of postmodernism is represented by the profusion of words. Modernist works keep the world in a condensed form even if they oppose it. A vast number of stylistic and verbal figures in *Ulysses* provide the diversity of the world and therefore the language diversity. *Ulysses* precedes postmodernist novels with the way of capturing the world and converting it into a form. The diversity of language was perceived as a consideration of language. Therefore, it does not affect the novel itself. (Connor 2004: 69)

The most illustrious examples of postmodern novels include works of Thomas Pynchon, Gabriel García Márquez, Carlos Fuentes, John Fowles, John Barth, Salman Rushdie, and A. S. Byatt. The shorter genres are represented by works of Angela Carter. (Connor 2004: 71)

The relation between the recipient of the story and the reading time starts fading away with the development of technological resources. There are postmodern novels which display themselves highly experimental like B. S. Johnson's *The Unfortunates*. This work contains a number of sections that could be read in random order. Michael Joyce's *Afternoon: A Story* represents hypertext computer novels. Readers are allowed to choose from several characters and divergent ways of story development. (Connor 2004: 77-79)

Hutcheon (2002) describes the meaning of postmodernism as a contradictory phenomenon. “I would like to begin by arguing that, for me, postmodernism is a contradictory phenomenon, one that uses and abuses, installs and then subverts, the very concepts it challenges – be it in architecture, literature, painting, sculpture, film, video, dance, TV, music, philosophy, aesthetic theory, psychoanalysis, linguistics, or historiography.” (Hutcheon 2002: 301) The movement functions mainly in Europe, North and South America. It cannot be limited to culture as analogies of postmodernism may be spotted in literature of other countries, such as Nouveau roman in French literature and neo-baroque in Spanish culture. (Hutcheon 2002: 301-303, 305-308)

The historical narrative of fiction and poetry is approached in a critical way, not as an idealistic restoration. This attitude established an ironic tuning of postmodern art-forms. *A Poetics of Postmodernism* chooses the novel genre as the first matter for its examination. The second matter is represented by, what Hutcheon (2002) calls, historiographic metafiction. The character of postmodernism appears contrasting. It formulates questions rather than answers. The recipients of postmodern art construct the meaning. Hutcheon agrees with a statement of Leslie Fiedler (1975) that postmodernism destroys boundaries between high and low art-forms. Both art-forms are ironised. Postmodernism plays a role both in the academic field and among regular readers. The postmodern fiction is involved with a contrast between parody–metafiction and conventions of realism. *The French Lieutenant’s Woman* is told by a narrator. The reader cannot ignore social and aesthetic contexts of both periods which are used in the novel. The link between these two periods is expressed in a critical view. The concept of historical knowledge is indicated as a problem by postmodernism. We should approach our sense of history, the meaning of history and reference critically. (Hutcheon 2002: 301-303, 305-308)

Hutcheon (2002) indicates that human existence is not disclaimed by the movement. The individual is situated within historicized context. Postmodernism tend to express as the historical and modernist avant-garde. The conflicts in postmodernism are emphasized through irony. These contrasts are situated between history and fiction. They cannot be resolved. (Hutcheon 2002: 309-312)

The novel holds two kinds of truth. The first truth is believed by the reader and the absolute truth that cannot be denied. The author keeps himself away from the historicized plot. The contrasts are indicated even by the main characters. “The myths and conventions exist for a reason, and postmodernism investigates that reason.” (Hutcheon 2002: 309-312)

4 Theoretical postulates of postmodernism

4.1 The approach of Umberto Eco

The complex strategy of cooperation expresses a literary work. It involves the readers. They possess capability of language that is represented by the society. When we read a particular text, the ability of the reader and the ability of the text interact. Eco (1992) interprets an eligible approach to a text with the example of the line from the poem of Wordsworth. When we interpret such a text we have to recognize the lexical system of the language at that time. Eco (1992) marks this action as an interaction with a cultural and social treasury. A text may be taken as inspiration for creating a different literary work or genre. When we interpret a text, we should honour linguistic and cultural context of the author. The reader and the author are tricked into a game of language which is represented by examples of rhythmic words or anagrams. We can decompose the text to search whether the feature repeats itself. The obsession with a certain image or name dominates over practical intentions of the author. (Eco 1992: 67-71)

The contradictions between the intentions of the author and the intentions of the text may be revealed by interpreting the text. It is necessary to identify what the author intends. The intention of the text does not allow unlimited interpretation. The object of the author is uncertain whereas the existence of the text is undeniable. Eco (1992) highlights insignificance of an empirical author. The rights of the text are confirmed. However, the empirical author helps the reader to comprehend the formation of the text. (Eco 1992: 73, 78, 81, 84-85)

4.2 The approach of Roland Barthes

At the beginning, Barthes (1977) quotes a speech from the story of Balzac which is entitled Sarrasine. He expresses doubts about who makes the speech. Barthes (1977) thinks that the process of writing breaks all roles. This compound phenomenon is not connected with a role of the narrator. There is no identification in literature and everything is initiated by the narrator. On the contrary, role of the author is suppressed. The writer still manages several fields like the biography of writers, histories of literature, interviews, and magazines. These literary genres are joined by the author himself. (Barthes 1977: 142, 143)

Stéphane Mallarmé wanted to replace the narrator with the element of language. The language is much more important than the character who speaks. The importance of the author fades away. One can say that a story contains a fabricated character who speaks, however it does not represent an actual person. It is only a voice who pronounces the speech. The literary works of Mallarmé comprise an inhibition of the author. Therefore, it results in the renewal of a role of the reader. Marcel Proust took a distinct position to the attitude of Mallarmé. He creates a link between the writer and his characters. We know that the writer prepares himself for the process of writing. However, we are not acquainted with the details of his personality. (Barthes 1977: 143, 144)

The relevance of the author is presented only by the act of writing. The modern text is approached from a specific angle from which the author is absent. A book and his author stand on the same stage. He surrenders his life for it and he flourishes its content. Barthes (1977) compares this work of the author to a relationship of a father and his child. Nor an element or an action proceeds the actual moment of writing. The literary text provides a rare verbal form. (Barthes 1977: 145, 146)

A literary text means a stratified place in which several pieces of writing are included. They mutually combine and collide. The only former motion could be stated by the author. He combines various layers of writings without a specific selection of any of them. When the author generates a literary work, he constructs a fictional dictionary for interpreting the text. His personal matters are not contained in the script anymore. The book represents only a fictional dictionary. (Barthes 1977: 145-147)

The absence of the author brings a need to unriddle the script. The presence of the author restricts the text and it also terminates the story. Only the reader is able to understand two possible meanings of a word. "Thus is revealed the total existence of writing: a text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation, but there is one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader, not, as was hitherto said, the author." (Barthes 1977: 148) The unique feature of the text lies in the fact that it represents its recipient. A reader is just an unspecific person without any personal links. Barthes (1977) encourages burying the author for the restoration of the reader. (Barthes 1977: 147, 148)

On the other hand, the attitude of Fowles (1977) towards the author opposes the approach of Barthes (1977). The author does not enter the story by disturbing it because he is a part of it. He joins the story in a particular moment and comments it occasionally. The person represents the narrator, not the author himself. This character does not belong to the rest of the characters of the story. The real author is represented by a figure who is writing the story. Fowles (1977) tends to express solitude. There is no escaping from here. We can distinguish a difference between a written and a writing world. When the novel is finished, its characters die. (Fowles 1977: 142, 148)

4.3 The theory of deconstruction

Deconstruction represents a technique of reading a text. It is based on works of Jacques Derrida. It exposes conflicts and discrepancies of a text. Deconstruction involves both a practical and a theoretical principle. We use it during the process of reading a text. Despite a resemblance with poststructuralism, this movement is described more like a philosophy. The usage of deconstruction is not limited. It can be used within any discipline whereas poststructuralism is restricted only to linguistics. The most important representatives, who refer to the link between postmodernism and deconstruction, are Jacques Derrida and Paul de Man. Derrida thinks that the text is influenced by an interpreter who is situated outside of the text. He interrupts its random structures. Whereas de Man attributes to the inner wisdom of the text, therefore the text is aware of its disadvantages. The process of deconstruction is accomplished by the text. The most important representatives of postmodernism were united under the Yale School. The Yale School states that a literary text represents more than just a single meaning. The space of the interpretation is not limited. It is formulated by the reader and the text. (Taylor, Winqvist, ed. 2001: 84-85)

5 Inspirational sources for Fowles's postmodern novels

Fowles is inspired by *The Tempest*, a play that was written by William Shakespeare. The inspiration shows itself in *The Magus*. Both titles manifest the link between art and magic. Conchis could be compared to Prospero, the enchanter of *The Tempest*. Urfe (in *The Tempest* as Ferdinand) represents an important figure of his tasks. Lily mystifies Urfe so their interaction is like playing chess. Alison does the same when Urfe realises that her suicide has been fictional. The image of educational death appears also in Shakespeare's *Winter's Tale* and *Much Ado About Nothing*. (Connor 1996: 186-187; Conradi 1982: 46-51)

Fowles (1977) describes a postmodern novel as a free form. It is not restricted by anything else except the language. The novel constitutes itself and it is responsible for its own purpose. It constitutes both its advantage and disadvantage. The characters of his novels behave like independent people. (Fowles 1977: 144, 147)

Conchis teaches Urfe about his specific sense of freedom. "Imprisonment and liberation, seduction and betrayal, are both thematic and formal obsessions for Fowles." (Conradi 1982: 15) Fowles's novels differ in an elaboration of these themes. All of them manifest features of low sub-genres of fiction which could be summarised under romance. The aim of fiction is to contradict anticipation that was prompted by the genre. A different demonstration of realistic and romantic conventions makes up a difference between *The Magus* and *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. "The Fowlesian novel is always a new quest for personal authenticity, a place in which the self of the protagonist is to be tested, tried, stripped, and subjected to the ordeal." (Conradi 1982: 18) The authentic self of Urfe in *The Magus* is examined and uncovered, while he is undergoing an ordeal. (Conradi 1982: 15-18)

Both *The Magus* and *The French Lieutenant's Woman* denounce realism and romance. *The Magus* contains an open ending, whereas *The French Lieutenant's Woman* shows actually four endings. They manifest the same significance. Fowles revises *The Magus* and he publishes it again in 1977. Conradi (1982) explains that Fowles exhibits provisionality in his above-mentioned novels. He uses the idea of David Lodge to describe the form of contemporary British fiction.⁴ Realism comprises of the uncertain compound of history, romance, and allegory. It is represented by Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook* (1962), by Angus Wilson's *No Laughing Matter* (1967), by Iris Murdoch's *The Black Prince* (1973) and by *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1969). Lodge states that they make the reader hesitate about the link between art and life. "His fiction deals in both these types of enclosure, the prison-house of restrictive convention and the green playground for the self..." (Conradi 1982: 22) It is represented by Conchis's domains in *The Magus*. *The French Lieutenant's Woman* contrasts the figures suffering by conventions but contains a sinful place represented by Ware Commons. Bourani makes Urfe attain disillusion. On the contrary, it is a place where illusions are produced. (Conradi 1982: 20-23)

French existentialism is one of Fowles's concerns. He became familiar with it during his studies at Oxford University. He is inspired by Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus. Fowles uses existential vocabulary, such as the notion of freedom and hazard. He deals with authenticity and personal freedom in his literary works. Characters are encouraged to forget about their limitations and discover their genuine self. The Many and the Few are two groups that often appear in the novels of Fowles. The Few are elected as they are confronting the Many. One of Fowles's aims is to shape a world where these groups would understand each other. However, the barrier is caused by the language. (Acheson 1998: 6-7; Conradi 1982: 26-27)

⁴ British fiction of the 20th century specifically (Conradi 1982: 20-21)

The Magus contains a situation in which a mentor guides a representative from the Many to find the essence of his existence. Alison represents the most genuine character from the novel. She affects the existence of the leading character Nicholas Urfe. She possesses those abilities, even if she does not belong to the Few. The story is told by a first-person narrator who is represented by Urfe. The reader is not familiar with what is happening in the mind of Alison. The same concept is reciprocated in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. The world which surrounds us represents an issue of difficulty. The readers will never truly comprehend it. The writings of Fowles lack the actual evidence of existentialism. Fowles did not want to oppress his readers with too much philosophy. Existentialism was gradually fading away from his novels around the 1970s. Fowles encourages his readers to find answers involved with not only his personal identity but also about the exposition of the external world. Acheson (1998) points out that no one has the ability to answer these questions exactly. (Acheson 1998: 8-9)

6 The theoretical background of Fowles's postmodern novels

6.1 The French Lieutenant's Woman

The plot of this novel takes place about a hundred years back but it does not exemplify a typical example of the historical novel. Connor (1996) claims that *The French Lieutenant's Woman* creates a parody of the nineteenth-century novel and of the eighteenth-century formal writing. Conradi (1982) addresses the novel also as a stylistic combination. "Here the contest and transaction are between a pastiche nineteenth-century text and the epoch of its composition a century later..." (Conradi 1982: 59) It produces reflections upon past against present. It ridicules Victorian narrative forms. (Connor 1996: 141-142, 167)

Conradi claims that *The French Lieutenant's Woman* represents a parody of the 1860s sensation novel⁵. The reader observes the conventions of mid-Victorian society. Charles Smithson is described like a conventional character. He aims to become a baronet thanks to the legacy of his uncle. Then he wants to marry his fiancé Ernestina Freeman whose father is a wealthy businessman. The plot reminds the reader of the analysis of British social and political evolution than the marriage between Charles and Ernestina. Sarah resembles the prostitute whom Charles meets in London as well as the figure of Virgin Mary. She is similar to Conchis, a character from *The Magus*, despite being a woman. Charles is not allowed to analyse her existence. Sarah wants to educate him like Conchis does to Urfe. (Conradi 1982: 62-64)

Sarah Woodruff, the leading female character, gazes at the sea regularly while she is standing at an ancient quay. This particular image arises suddenly in Fowles's mind several months before the writing process. He used to collect evidence of past lives from previous centuries. The image of a strange woman might originate from that. As the notion returns to Fowles, he links the image to the particular quay near his home. The woman does not have a concrete identity. She approaches the author in the same way all the time. He can only see her from behind as a static figure. She seems to him as an outlaw with her image as opposed to Victorian Age. The reader can see that in Acheson's reference (1998) as well. "It was the image of a woman standing at the end of a long quay, her back turned as if in reproach to Victorian society." (Acheson 1998: 33; Fowles 1977: 136)

⁵ Sensation novels irritate the reader's nerves and the senses. (Sweet. Sensation novel.)

Conradi (1982) describes Sarah in the same way. “She represented a reproach to the Victorian age – she declined to belong to another epoch – and is an outcast.” (Conradi 1982: 59) The Victorian age is disobeyed by her because it refuses to adapt to her. Fowles aims to utilize deliberately the reader’s image of the Victorian period by using the archaic speech. Conradi (1982) uses Michel Foucault’s description to show the uniqueness of the mid-nineteenth century space. He signifies it as the golden age of repression. (Conradi 1982: 58-60)

The settings of Lyme Regis and Undercliff contradict itself. The town follows the strict conventions of mid-Victorian society whereas Undercliff represents a sinful place. Exeter symbolises the moment of Charles’s moral crisis. Charles is losing everything as he is escaping from the bourgeois society. Conradi claims that *The French Lieutenant’s Woman* demonstrates existential awareness. The existential tendencies were occurring from the 19th century further. Conradi (1982) develops the term the author-as-stage-manager who plays a major role in Fowles’s novels as well as in Thackeray’s works. (Conradi 1982: 64-71)

The connection between a novel and the present time of the author exists. The story is presented to the reader as fabulous. The above-mentioned novel takes place in the year 1867. Fowles uses much older language if he wants to show existential inauthenticity of the characters. This feature represents an element of conventional mid-Victorian values. (Acheson 1998: 34)

There are a number of distinctions between a fictional speech and the speech produced in real life. The language of the novel pushes the development of the story. It constitutes also each character of the story. Fowles (1977) identifies himself with the statements of a new movement in French literature that is called The Nouveau Roman (or The New Novel). If we want the novel to survive, we ought to find a new form for that. The purpose of the novel is being reduced only to the foundation of a new form, though the novel holds also its other purposes. They are equally important. (Fowles 1977: 137-140)

The novel manifests different levels of freedom which are restricted by conventions of mid-Victorian society. Freedom is offered to Charles as he encounters Sarah. Conradi (1982) compares him to a man struggling to overcome history. His task is to face the wiles of the plot. Charles experiences the evolutionary aspects of the novel as well as the existentialist. He is gradually moving towards the state of freedom. The characters search for genuineness and fullness even if the society does not demonstrate these characteristics. (Conradi 1982: 72-77)

Existential awareness represents the cornerstone of his novels. Fowles (1977) thinks that this philosophy and the one of the Victorian Age are linked. Existentialism is held inside of the private issues of the Victorian Age especially from the year 1850. More similarities could be found between the time of the plot of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1860s) and the present time of the author (1960s). The Victorians used to live in a limited space. The Evolution Theory pushed them into the universe, so it made them feel secluded. People who were bright found that distinct philosophies, religions and social stratifications were gradually breaking up. Fowles (1977) indicates the main characters of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* as existentialists. "Just such a man, an existentialist before his time, walks down the quay and sees that mysterious back, feminine, silent, also existentialist, turned to the horizon." (Fowles 1977: 140-142)

The plot contains several references to well-known events of the 19th century.⁶ *On the origin of species*, the book of Charles Darwin, was a breakthrough in the Victorian era. The reader might spot a possible relation between the ideas of Marx and the theory of Darwin. "Marx wanted to dedicate that volume to Darwin, perhaps for the sake of acknowledging that his own theory, about a strong and numerous proletariats eventually overthrowing a weaker smaller middle class, was influenced by Darwin's concept of the survival of the fittest." (Acheson 1998: 33) The 20th century thought was influenced by mid-Victorian attitudes about social class, feminism, and evolution. These attitudes are involved in the novel. The reader can indicate *The French Lieutenant's Woman* as a historical novel because it revives the features which are typical of mid-Victorian England.⁷ (Acheson 1998: 33-34)

⁶ John Stuart Mill made an attempt to persuade the British Parliament that women should have a right to vote. The first volume of *Das Kapital* was published by Karl Marx. (Acheson 1998: 33)

⁷ In particular dress, manners, and speech. (Acheson 1998: 34)

The novel is narrated by an omniscient narrator. He intrudes into the life of the characters. When the narrator joins the story, he becomes a secondary character. Fowles knows that a modern writer cannot hold the same position as God. Acheson states that the authority of God plays no longer its own role. The characters should be able to behave on their own. The narrator arranges the plot and the characters. (Acheson 1998: 33-35)

6.2 The Magus

The description of post-war London begins and terminates the plot. *The Magus* was published in 1965. It was reviewed and released in 1977. It coincides with Fowles' tendency to leave his novels open-ended, especially his postmodern novels. He was inspired by a number of literary works as Henri Alain-Fournier's *Le Grand Meaulnes* (1913) (*The Lost Domain*), Henry James' novella *The Turn of the Screw* (1898) and Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* (1868). (Conradi 1982: 42-43)

The total number of pages of this novel coincides with the seventy-eight cards of the Tarot deck. The structure of the novel is really complex as a result it gives space for many interpretations. Urfe, the main character of the novel, is not sure about his true identity. He performs several roles in his life. This type of behaviour prevents him from getting in contact with the outer world. While he is dropping these masks, he is recognizing his real personality. He does not try to understand himself better during his studies at a university. He occupies himself only with seducing women. When he terminates a liaison, he regains his existential freedom. Urfe misinterprets self-deception for freedom. Conchis, whose identity is uncertain, guides him through the self-improvement process. Conchis guides Urfe on the way to better self-knowledge by telling four stories. Those stories contain hidden meanings. (Acheson 1998: 20-22)

Fowles's interest in the Jungian theory reflects in the novel. He tells us about the interaction between conscious and unconscious. Urfe expresses existential inauthenticity. He considers women as sex objects. He must construct the world according to himself to become existentially authentic. There are two women who seem to be significant for Urfe, these are Alison and Julie. Both characters are described in a unique way. Even if Urfe is strongly related to both of them, he does not love any one of them. Therefore, he behaves still as existentially inauthentic. (Acheson 1998: 23-27)

Conradi (1982) also deals with the matter of authentication. Conchis shows Urfe his art collection which verifies his story. "Art authenticates Conchis for Urfe and disturbs his own sense of mastery." (Conradi 1982: 46) Later the reader gets to know that all objects are inauthentic. Conchis's stories conclude with the human history.⁸ They are based on the combination of myth and history, private and public. Urfe falls in love with Lily, so the relationship with Alison is terminated. He glorifies Lily despite not knowing her true self. Conchis destroys his illusions and he mystifies him. The characters of his theatre possess multiple identities. Urfe commits sexual treachery with Lily so Alison kills herself. The Second World War constitutes a significant inspiring source for Sartre's existential philosophy. (Conradi 1982: 46-49)

Conradi describes *The Magus* as a meta-novel in which the novelist is a part of the plot. "Conchis is omnipresent by the end as well as dead, has used "pre-hauntings" and echoes which are narrative prefigurations and recurrences, and tries to establish interpretative levels of narration which he authenticates by skilful use of "local colour" and "period detail"." (Conradi 1982: 53) The act of wearing masques makes the character predetermined in the god-game. Postmodernism dislikes the bourgeois society, to which the old self of Urfe used to belong. He develops himself into a better human being. (Conradi 1982: 53, 56)

⁸ It can be explained with the image of collective Id that was previously described by Carl Gustav Jung. (Conradi 1982: 47)

He expresses inauthenticity and immaturity at the beginning of the plot. Those two characteristics prevent him from maintaining relationships. When Conchis tells the fourth story, he prefers moral imperative than existential freedom. Urfe expresses an epiphany of his deeds. He was fulfilling the personal desire and then he was looking for freedom. The self-improvement process has been a godgame of Conchis. The anguish of freedom represents an issue which Urfe struggles. The novel does not contain a definite conclusion but it contains a hope for a happy ending. It is represented by a subtle anagram of the name of Alison. Both the original and the revised version of the novel contain a citation by a Roman poet Catullus. Love as the main image is understood as a virtue which is praised. We may see a progression of the character of Urfe. The godgame has taught him all the difficulties about human relationships. (Acheson 1998: 28, 31, 32)

7 The textual analysis of Fowles's postmodern novels

7.1 The French Lieutenant's Woman

Every chapter of the novel starts with a quotation from a literary or scientific work written by various authors (e.g. Thomas Hardy or Charles Darwin). These references are interlaced with the story. The plot unfolds itself in 1867 in an English town which is called Lyme Regis. The narrator addresses the reader. He uses the first person singular to refer to himself. The postmodern narrator behaves as a direct spectator who observes his characters. He states that he is present in the plot. "The local spy-and there was one-might thus have deduced that these two were strangers, people of some taste, and not to be denied their enjoyment of the Cobb by a mere harsh wind." (Fowles 1969: 9-10)

Charles Smithson and Ernestina Freeman spot a figure standing at the Cobb staring at the sea. Fowles wants the characters to appear mysterious. The narrator expresses the uncertain identity of the figure by using the pronoun it. The figure appears almost like a blurred vision. "Its clothes were black. The wind moved them, but the figure stood motionless, staring, staring out to sea, more like a living memorial to the drowned, a figure from myth, than any proper fragment of the petty provincial day." (Fowles 1969: 11) The figure represents a leading female character of the novel whose name is Sarah Woodruff. She is dressed in black colour which highlights her mysterious identity. It is a frequent feature in Fowles's postmodern novels. Charles and Ernestina discuss Sarah's identity. However, their descriptions are based on the storytelling of the inhabitants. She possesses several nicknames, e.g. Tragedy⁹. (Fowles 1969: 10-11)

Charles is a defender of the theory of Charles Darwin which is called *The Origin of Species*. He works as a scientist whose main field is paleontology. He is intrigued to discover the essence of life, and thus he asks questions. He and Ernestina belong to the upper class of Victorian society, unlike Sarah. She is a member of the class of servants who do not possess any wealth. Charles belongs to the class in which the wealth is inherited. He spends his time thinking because he has a lot of spare time as a wealthy man. (Fowles 1969: 11-16)

⁹ Postmodernism is highly inspired by Ancient Greece and its mythology. Tragedy represents a genre which constituted itself in Ancient Greece. (Oxford Dictionaries. Tragedy.)

The matter of contrasting two periods is frequent in Fowles's postmodern novels. Fowles destroys the linearity of time by contrasting the time of the plot (1867) and his present time (1967). He points out that people lack time in 1967. The approach towards wealth is also different. Wealth makes people neurotic nowadays. Charles differs from Ernestina whose parents are wealthy. She is supported by them and she seems to behave like a spoiled child. He sets himself against the Victorian society. "There was outwardly a certain cynicism about him, a sure symptom of an inherent moral decay; but he never entered society without being ogled by the mamas, clapped on the back by the papas and simpered at by the girls." Mrs. Poulteney, a lady and an employer of Sarah, respects and follows the class society. She treats her servants with contempt but she is generous among her own class. (Fowles 1969: 16-23)

Sam was an Afro-American servant of Charles. He comes from London and he speaks Cockney¹⁰. He belongs to the working class. Fowles compares him to Sam Weller, the character of *Pickwick Papers*. The narrator calls Sam a snob."He had a very sharp sense of clothes style – quite as sharp as a "mod" of the 1960s, and he spent most of his wages on keeping in fashion. And he showed another mark of this new class in his struggle to command the language." The reader can spot a clear distinction between the upper class of Charles and the working class of Sam. They differ from each other in their language and in their behaviour. Fowles depicts the Victorian class society in detail. He shows the already existing ones as well as emerging ones (as "the snobs"). (Fowles 1969: 23-40)

Fowles uses the first person plural as he addresses himself and the reader. He describes the appearance of Charles when he goes to the Cobb to look for a kind of fossils. The author expresses that the Victorians are influenced by convention, faith, and the social rank. He describes that the Victorian man is seeking for discovery whereas the man of the present time does not have anything to find. The plot is interlaced with scientific principles of Charles Darwin which are called *The Origin of Species*. "A new species cannot enter the world." (Fowles 1969: 45) This represents the essence of the theory. It means that the world of species evolves constantly. (Fowles 1969: 40-45)

¹⁰ Cockney represents a dialect of English which is spoken mainly in London. (Oxford Dictionaries. Cockney.)

Sarah is described as intelligent and this quality appears enigmatic. She does not mingle with other people. Therefore, she is unable to assess their value. Despite this fact she is able to judge their morals. Poor education represents another restriction in her life. She obtains her attitudes towards life from literary works of Walter Scott or Jane Austen. She is addressed as an outcast. "Her father had forced her out of her own class, but could not raise her to the next. To the young men of the one she had left she had become too select to marry; to those of the one she aspired to, she remained too banal." (Fowles 1969: 48) Sarah has caused a significant shift of the conditions in the Marlborough House, the house of Mrs. Poulteney. She shows empathy towards an employee who is given a dismissal. She respects and she follows the Victorian conventions. Her employer has learned how to forgive thanks to Sarah's influence. The two women form a strange connection among themselves. Mrs. Poulteney enjoys Sarah's powerful voice when she reads aloud to her. There is a distinction in their values, e.g. the existence of God. Sarah understands the events around her. She does not hide her emotions. Those characteristics make her unique among the Victorians. (Fowles 1969: 45-52)

Her frequent melancholic conditions require her to spend more time in the fresh air. Mrs. Poulteney entrusts one of her maids, Mrs. Fairley, to follow every step of Sarah and report her about Sarah's behaviour. Sarah follows the request of her mistress by not walking by the sea. When she obeys the conventions, she is no longer addressed as a sinner. One day Charles goes for his usual walk in nature. He goes to the Undercliff. This natural part of Lyme Regis is related to the Garden of Eden. Fowles's postmodern novels are inspired by existentialism. The leading characters represent existentialists in the way how they approach life. This quote depicts Sarah's life. "I cannot possess this forever and therefore am sad." (Fowles 1969: 52-60)

Charles encounters Sarah for the second time while she is sleeping in nature. He is intrigued by her, even if he does not know her true identity. As he is observing her, he feels pity and protective towards her. She wakes up accidentally, so they end up facing each other for the first time. (Fowles 1969: 60-62)

Mary represents another member of the working class. She works as a maid at the house of Mrs. Tranter who is Ernestina's aunt. Mary is related to Mrs. Fairley from the Marlborough House. She expresses hidden jealousy towards Ernestina because she possesses everything what the maid cannot afford. Mary's speech is modified like the speech of Sam, Charles's servant. The working class uses a vernacular language. Charles has partly fallen in love with Ernestina because of her wealth. Her parents have got several possessions unlike Charles who disposes only of a suitable origin. His uncle possesses a number of properties but he is still alive. The man had to be either born into a rich family, inherit the estates or marry a wealthy person. (Fowles 1969: 62-71)

Sarah changes the direction of her walk to Ware Commons. The place is situated away from the town. The group of gypsies used to live there. Lovers, who used to meet there, received a deterrent label from the local people. Therefore, Mrs. Poulteney opposes Sarah's idea of going there. She compares the place to Sodom and Gomorrah. Sarah is forced to behave in the right way. Following the Victorian conventions makes her suffer. (Fowles 1969: 71-79)

Suddenly, the narrator denies the plot and he states that the whole story is fabricated. The narrator is declared to be at the same level as God. He describes him further and denies the form itself. "He may not know all, yet he tries to pretend that he does. But I live in the age of Allan Robbe-Grillet and Roland Barthes; if this is a novel, it cannot be a novel in the modern sense of the word." (Fowles 1969: 80)

Fowles claims that everything is possible in the postmodern novel. *The French Lieutenant's Woman* includes a number of passages. They are dedicated to the reflections upon the plot and the form. The fabricated world of the novel should be detached from the author. The characters show themselves as existing human beings when they oppose narrator's orders. The narrator must respect the decisions of his characters because he wants them to appear authentic. Fowles acknowledges a depiction of God which is based on the matter of freedom. "There is only one definition of God: the freedom that allows other freedoms to exist." (Fowles 1969: 80-82)

The postmodern narrator is not superior to his characters. His role relies on the matter of freedom. Mrs. Poulteney acquires a role of the common enemy of Sarah and Charles. They realise it during the official meeting of him, Ernestina and Mrs. Tranter at Marlborough House. Sarah is ordered to be present during the meeting. The servant of Charles falls in love with the maid of Mrs. Tranter. Love can strike anytime and anywhere unlike the origin of the participants. However, Sam and Mary rely on the approval of their masters to pursue their relationship. The plot contains real events which relate to the story. It is demonstrated by an attempt among the members of the Westminster parliament to manifest female emancipation. Metatextuality is a typical sign of postmodern novel. *The French Lieutenant's Woman* comprises fragments of the literary work which was written by Caroline Norton. It is called *The Lady of La Garaye*. Ernestina reads aloud to Charles from this book. She seems to be more interested in their upcoming married life than in her fiancé. (Fowles 1969: 82-97)

Charles interferes in Sarah's personal affairs because he wants to help her. He discusses her matter with Ernestina and Mrs. Tranter. Sarah refuses his help because the figure of the French Lieutenant is the only thing to which she can stick. Charles feels empathy towards her and he is drawn by her sight. The novel contains recurring references to other literary works like *Madame Bovary*, the novel written by Gustav Flaubert. He compares Sarah to the main character of the novel. "And as he looked down at the face beside him, it was suddenly, out of nowhere, that Emma Bovary's name sprang into his mind. Such illusions are comprehensions; and temptations." (Fowles 1969: 100) As Charles is getting more obsessed with the idea of Sarah, he is discovering the true self of Ernestina. She behaves in an artificial way and is highly egoistic. (Fowles 1969: 97-107)

He is not able to address the real reason for his sudden feelings. The designated future scares him. However, the image of having her and her dowry consoles him. Sam is getting on really well with Mary. He shares with her his dream about becoming a haberdasher but his rank does not allow him to realise it. Education and money are the benefits of which he does not dispose. The feeling that someone truly cares about her makes Sarah confess to Charles. She can see that he differs from the inhabitants of Lyme in many ways and describes the reasons further. "Because ... I do not know, I live among people the world tells me are kind, pious, Christian people. And they seem to me crueller than the cruelest heathens, stupider than the stupidest animals." (Fowles 1969: 116) He compares her to a siren that lures him. Sarah is both expelled out of the society and she is emotionally frustrated. (Fowles 1969: 107-120)

Dr. Grogan takes care of health of the local people. He represents an exception to the other inhabitants because he does not judge a man according to his origin. "I don't give a fig for birth. A duke, heaven knows a king, can be as stupid as the next man." (Fowles 1969: 124) Charles discusses Sarah's case with him during their encounter. They share the antipathy towards Mrs. Poulteney. Grogan was trying to help her as well but without success. The only possible solution for her misery is to leave Lyme. However, she insists on staying in the house of Mrs. Poulteney and serves her. The doctor describes Sarah's state of mind by using a similar example. "It was as if the woman had become addicted to melancholia as one becomes addicted to opium. Now, do you see how it is? Her sadness becomes her happiness. She wants to be a sacrificial victim, Smithson." (Fowles 1969: 127) Sarah and other characters of Fowles's postmodern novels are stuck in a mist. She is divided from the society by her different attitude towards reality. (Fowles 1969: 120-127)

The novel comprises references to real events and existing scientific works from the Victorian era, e.g. *Principles of Geology* written by Charles Lyell. However, postmodern authors oppose these theories because they explain the outer world. The reader can see that in the following quote. "Genesis is a great lie, but it is also a great poem; and a six-thousand-year-old womb is much warmer than one that stretches for two thousand million." (Fowles 1969: 130-131) Fowles uses the vocabulary of other languages such as Italian, Greek or French. He describes meanings of unknown words, e.g. Omphalos. This kind of vocabulary is pronounced only by people of the higher rank as Dr. Grogan. Charles converses with him during one encounter. They understand each other because they are both interested in the theory of Darwin. The significant work of evolution is called *The Origin of Species*¹¹. (Fowles 1969: 127-134)

¹¹ Evolution is conditional upon the survival of the fittest. (Rogers, Joshi, Green. Biology.)

Charles wants to keep a distance between them, so he reminds Sarah of their differences. "I am rich by chance, you are poor by chance. I think we are not to stand on such ceremony." (Fowles 1969: 134) They meet several times in private, during that Sarah reveals her story to him. The narrator depicts the Victorian period in details, such as female fashion. It happens when Charles perceive Sarah's appearance. Sarah explains to Charles why he cannot understand her feelings. Even if she is educated, books are not allowed to her. As a governess, she has been observing real happiness which she is not allowed to experience. No man wants to marry her. (Fowles 1969: 134-144)

Sarah lives for her shame so she refuses Charles's solution to her situation. She wants him to forgive her, while she is describing her story. However, he refuses to do so. "Heaven forbid I should pronounce on what only Our Maker can decide." (Fowles 1969: 147) Our Maker indicates the figure of the postmodern author. She slept with a French Lieutenant who was called Varguennes, though she knew about his corrupting personality and false intentions with her. Sarah struggles to exist in the Victorian society. "But I am like this thorn tree, Mr. Smithson. No one reproaches it for growing here in this solitude. It is when it walks down Broad Street that it offends society." (Fowles 1969: 147) Charles discovers Sarah's uniqueness which has been formed by intelligence and language. She is sentenced to be an outcast because of prejudices and conventions. Finally, she is willing to rely on Mrs. Tranter's help and leave Lyme. (Fowles 1969: 144-151)

Charles relies on free will during his actions. A sudden change in his situation occurs within his requested invitation to Winsyatt. Charles assumes that he will inherit his uncle's possessions as Robert does not have an heir. His uncle is going to get married instead. Ernestina is angry that Uncle Robert has disinherited Charles. Wealth is an essential quality for her. (Fowles 1969: 151-156)

Their marriage is like a business contract for her. This moment has altered Charles's understanding of her. The Sarah's dismissal from the service of Mrs. Poulteney has twisted the progression of the plot. The mistress suffers a major breakdown owing to her argument with Sarah. Sarah does not hide the true attitude about Mrs. Poulteney's behaviour and Marlborough House anymore. She tells her directly what she really thinks about her. (Fowles 1969: 156-162)

Sarah wants to see Charles for the last time before she leaves Lyme. She sends him a note which is written in French. They meet in the Undercliff and declare love to each other. Charles suggests her that she should go to Exeter temporarily. The postmodern author gives genuine evidence to the reader to make the plot believable. He uses passages from the scientific work which is called *the Observations Médico-psychologiques*. It was written by Dr. Karl Matthaei. The doctor describes a similar case that may be compared to the behaviour of Sarah. He talks about basic characteristics of mental illness which is called hysteria. Charles meets with Sarah in the Undercliff after her disappearance. While they are staying in a barn, he compares himself to Catullus¹². "But there came on him a fleeting memory of Catullus: Whenever I see you, sound fails, my tongue falters, thin fire steals through my limbs, an inner roar, and darkness shrouds my ears and eyes." (Fowles 1969: 199) A strong feeling has sprung between them but they hesitate to express it. It is forbidden for them to do it. (Fowles 1969: 162-199)

Sarah claims to Charles that she made herself visible for Mrs. Poulteney to see her at the cliff. She knew that her mistress would have her dismissed immediately. Fowles interlaces chapters of the novel with the depiction of the Victorian era. This description seems to be objective and raw. Fowles often compiles ideas which contradict themselves. "What are we faced with in the nineteenth century? An age where a woman was sacred; and where you could be a thirteen-year-old girl for a few pounds – a few shillings if you wanted her for only an hour or two." (Fowles 1969: 199-212)

¹² Catullus was a lyrical poet in ancient Rome. He expressed both love and hatred in his poetry. An unknown woman, who is called Lesbia, is an addressee of his poems. (Havelock. Catullus.)

Sarah arrives in Exeter according to the advice of Charles. Charles considers himself a gentleman, so he refuses an offer from Mr. Freeman to enter his business. The novel comprises several links to Bible. "Charles felt himself, under the first impact of this attractive comparison, like Jesus of Nazareth tempted by Satan. He too had had his days in the wilderness to make the proposition more tempting." (Fowles 1969: 227) The ideas of Charles and Mr. Freeman contradict. Ernestina's father does not believe in evolution. Charles compares Victorian London with Lyme. He feels oppressed by the current circumstances and prefers London for its anonymity. Members of higher rank and lower rank are compared. "An astounding theory crossed Charles's mind: the lower orders were secretly happier than the upper." (Fowles 1969: 212-231)

Marriage used to be a matter of love as well as money. A Victorian was born wealthy. He inherited some possessions or he got married into a rich family. The future marriage would represent the only way how to gain wealth. Therefore, he could not refuse Mr. Freeman's offer directly. Fowles judges Charles's decision from the perspective of the external observer. "To be sure there was something base in his rejection – a mere snobbism, a letting himself be judged and swayed by an audience of ancestors. There was something lazy in it; a fear of work, of routine, of concentration on detail." (Fowles 1969: 233) Pursuing money does not seem to be sufficient for him. He is able to deal with the fact that he shares nothing with the society. Characters of Fowles's postmodern novels often feel nothingness. This represents the only thing which has been left to them. (Fowles 1969: 231-233)

Fowles emphasises the inevitability of having an elite in a society. These people question the reality. Their production is based on the death of the form. The postmodern narrator frequently compares a number of identities of a single character. He describes the Charles of 1267, of 1867 and the one of today. They differ in their pursuits of life but they possess their common connection. "But there is a link: they all rejected or reject the notion of possession as the purpose of life, whether it is of a woman's body, or of high profit at all costs; or of the right to dictate the speed of progress." (Fowles 1969: 234) Charles realises that he has been following the purpose of life despite being unable to express it to other people. Self-analysis means a particular instrument for transformation. It is inevitable if an individual wants to survive. (Fowles 1969: 233-234)

Language is an instrument of the postmodern game as it is demonstrated in the following citation. Charles gets drunk with his friends during his stay in London. They want to visit a brothel despite his hesitation. “We’re going to old Ma Terpsichore’s, Charles. Worship at the muses’ shrine, don’t y’know? Shrine? So to speak, Charles. Metonymia. Venus for puella, put in the bishop’s son.” (Fowles 1969: 234-238)

He wants to do anything that is connected with the world of Mr. Freeman. The inside of the brothel contains sexually explicit decorations. Latin citation is written above the stage. It is connected with the god Priapus. It involves the act of copulation which is highly obscene. The novel involves passages which might be understood as the comments of the author. However, they tend to be far from the present content. For example, the author describes the foundation of the title *The History of the Human Heart*. They meet the Nymphs of the brothel in a following scene. Suddenly, Fowles calls Charles with a distinct name which is Camillo. The scene seems to look more like an imagination than an actual situation. (Fowles 1969: 238-241)

The image of Sarah returns to Charles repeatedly. He exploits an offer of a prostitute whose name is also Sarah. Charles realises that the prostitute is an embodiment of Sarah’s possible future. He knows that it’s necessary for him not to see her again. He must do what is expected from him. Sam behaves as a dishonest man. Charles refuses to give him money for the establishment of his own shop. Sam knows that the only way how he could gain his money is through the marriage of Charles and Ernestina. He reads Charles’s post to uncover his true intentions in time. Sam aims at preventing Sarah from any contact with his master. (Fowles 1969: 241-263)

The plot results in four different ways. At first, Charles and Ernestina fulfil their engagement. They live together until death parts them and they have approximately seven children. Sarah does not get in touch with him ever again. Charles enters the business despite his previous distaste. The rest of the characters live peacefully until their death. (Fowles 1969: 263-266)

Mrs. Poulteney dies with all of her servants. There is a scene which takes place in heaven in which she speaks with the representative of heaven. At last, she ends up in hell. Religion is ridiculed through human actions. The first ending seems to be traditional because it follows the conventions of Victorian society. The multiplicity of endings is a common narrative feature of the postmodern novel. Postmodernism states that there is not a definite truth, therefore, the definite ending does not exist as well. (Fowles 1969: 265-266)

Fowles refuses the first ending right after its description. The reader should not believe what the narrator says. He is unpredictable and everything is only an invention of his mind. "Charles was no exception; and the last few pages you have read are not what happened, but what he spent the hours between London and Exeter imagining might happen." (Fowles 1969: 266) Fowles distance himself from the plot and from potential feelings of the reader. The characters possess the freedom of choice as they are capable of making their own decisions. Sarah sends Charles her address at which she is staying in Exeter. "It was perfectly in key with all her other behaviour, and to be described only by oxymoron; luring-receding, subtle-simple, proud-begging, defending-accusing." (Fowles 1969: 267) Sarah's behaviour is full of contrasts. Charles is close to being an existentialist because he suffers the anxiety of freedom. (Fowles 1969: 266-271)

Charles returns to Sarah on his stop in Exeter according to the second ending and they have a sexual encounter. When a red stain appears on his shirt, he realises that Sarah has been a virgin the whole time. The encounter with Varguennes was based on a lie. He feels himself being blackmailed. Charles asks himself for reasons why she has done it but does not discover any. Postmodernism claims that reality cannot be described by reasoning. He has given her hope to believe in their potential alliance which helped her to carry on with her present life. When he leaves Sarah's room, he visits a church by accident. (Fowles 1969: 271-280)

He thinks over what has just happened. His better and his worse self are having a conversation with each other. A Victorian would rather question God than his own self. The real reason for their separation is their different ranks. He reflects upon the true purpose of Christianity. The society has become his greatest opponent. It has also caused his current state. (Fowles 1969: 280-285)

The Victorians are not familiar with this issue. Therefore, they cannot judge him. Fowles explains Charles's current state of mind on a poem *In Memoriam* written by Alfred Tennyson. It contains a repetitive image of the dead. Charles does not deny Christ but makes God come closer to him. Metatextuality represents a common feature in postmodern novels. Every character has been invented by Fowles's mind. Charles claims that during his conversation with the warden of the church. "You stay long in Exeter? Alas, no. I am simply *en passage*.¹³ I had hoped to see you again. I can be of no further assistance?" (Fowles 1969: 287-288) The expression in italics is also evidence that postmodern authors play with words. The true meaning cannot be understood at the first sight. The characters in postmodern novels are constituted by words. Every postmodern character expresses various roles, so they tend to behave like schizophrenics. The narrator claims the existence of the feature in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. "This, the fact that every Victorian had two minds, is the one piece of equipment we must always take with us on our travels back to the nineteenth century." (Fowles 1969: 288) Charles is writing Sarah an affectionate letter during his stay at the hotel in Exeter. He explains that he is going to contact Sarah right after dealing with his obligations. Sam is supposed to deliver a package and a letter to Sarah's whereabouts. He is not going to do it as he wants to gain his money. (Fowles 1969: 285-292)

¹³ En passage is a French expression. It possesses multiple meanings. It could mean that Charles is only passing through Exeter. The second meaning is that he considers himself being only a passage of this novel. (Collins dictionary. Passage.)

Charles suffers existential crisis. He wants to tell Ernestina about the termination of their engagement. When Charles and Ernestina discuss the matter, Ernestina blames Charles for deceiving her. The reality could be approached in a number of ways. On the one hand, Ernestina and an outside observer would call Charles an imposter. On the other hand, the nearby mirror reflects his true self. Charles wants to go abroad with Sarah to escape the reality of society. The image of staying in an exile and the state of loneliness recur in Fowles's postmodern novels. (Fowles 1969: 292-314)

Fowles enters the plot in a specific scene as a minor character. He accompanies Charles incidentally on the train during his way to London. While Charles is sleeping, the man is observing him. Fowles links his alleged character with the role of an omnipotent god, in other words, omnipotent author. Postmodernism agrees with the theoretical approach of the Nouveau Roman. "Not at all what we think of as a divine look; but one of a distinctly mean and dubious (as the theoreticians of the nouveau roman have pointed out) moral quality." (Fowles 1969: 317) The postmodern author wants the characters to be mysterious to him. Charles and Sarah can apply their own willpower. Postmodernism criticizes a typical approach of the writer of fiction. He prefers the victory of one side. However, postmodernism contradicts that. "But the chief argument for fight-fixing is to show one's readers what one thinks of the world around one-whether one is a pessimist, an optimist, what you will." (Fowles 1969: 314-317)

The narrator gives up his role in the plot so he could create two more endings. The reader knows that no ending is the real one. He flicks a coin to make a twist in the plot and he disappears right after that. Charles and his lawyer attend a trial which is formed by Mr. Freeman. He wants to take vengeance for destroying the life of his daughter. Charles starts searching for Sarah with the assistance of his lawyer. The novel resembles a detective story from this moment. (Fowles 1969: 317-326)

Sam has improved his social position by indicating his master's liaison. Their rank has been gradually improving with the assistance of Aunt Tranter. The reader approaches them when they possess their own house and employ servants. Sam's tactics have provided him better future despite destroying Charles's reputation. Charles has been travelling around European cities for twenty months. He visits a number of cities but they are meaningless to him. While Charles is travelling, he is writing poems. He also admires great Victorian poets like Matthew Arnold and Alfred Lord Tennyson. Fowles quotes a poem *To Marguerite* which was written by Matthew Arnold. Charles relocates to South America. He finds the country more liberal despite their unique way of approaching the law. America has turned him into a free man. He prefers South American anarchy from rigid and superficial rules of his country. The discovery of Sarah makes him to come back to England. (Fowles 1969: 326-342)

Sarah is living in a house of an honourable family now. Her name is changed to Mrs. Roughwood. The form of her new surname implied her unmarried status. Charles knew that he wants to talk to her again, even if the reason for his action is no longer valid. Sarah is playing a role of a muse in the life of a painter and she assists him. She realised that their liaison was bad and wicked. Sarah's personality and behaviour mystify Charles many times. "I meant that I am not to be understood even by myself. And I can't tell you why, but I believe my happiness depends on my not understanding." (Fowles 1969: 354) Charles realises that he is only an active participant of a complex game. Sarah is still hiding her unhappiness from him. (Fowles 1969: 342-357)

Charles is asked to stay a little longer because a woman who understands Sarah the most should appear. The maid brings a baby girl Lalage¹⁴ instead. The reader gets to know that she is his daughter. The religious principle, which dominates the Victorians, supports the explanation. The postmodern author enters the plot for the second time. The narrator justifies his actions throughout the novel. For example, he explains presenting Lalage as a minor character. He compares his supposed character to a manager who is observing his own theatre. "In this he has not changed: he very evidently regards the world as his to possess and use as he likes." (Fowles 1969: 362) He goes away by coach. (Fowles 1969: 357-362)

Charles has been Sarah's object of manipulation from the start of their connection. She does not want to let him go despite her inability to enter a marriage with him. While they are discussing their situation, the problem is staying unresolved. They would never understand each other. The reader might think that Sarah wanted to manage her own life without an intrusion of any man. Charles leaves Sarah indifferently. He is passing by the maid who is holding a baby, his daughter Lalage. He will never meet her again. Finally, Fowles distances himself from the acts which create the plot. He claims that a divine character does not exist but it is a matter of life. He explains it further in the quote of Karl Marx. "... life as Marx defined it – *the actions of men (and of women) in pursuit of their ends.*" (Fowles 1969: 365) Our behaviour is formed by our abilities which we have been creating within our lives. The plot concludes with the repetitive image of alienating sea. (Fowles 1969: 362-366)

¹⁴ Lalage is a female name that originates from Greek. Lalageo means to babble. This name appears in one ode which was written by the Roman poet Horace. (Behind the Name. Lalage.)

7.2 Mantissa

The postmodern novel combines various literary styles of low art and high art. The examples of high art are the references to other literary works which were written by Descartes, Marivaux, Lemprière and Flann O'Brien. The low art is represented by explicit sexual scenes which are involved in the plot. The story unfolds with a description of a metaphysical atmosphere. The abstract description changes gradually. The author refers to an unknown subject and he marks it with the pronoun *it*. The reader does not know whether it is a physical entity or inanimate entity. Fowles's postmodern novels contain a blurred line between genders of the characters. (Fowles 1982: 9-10)

Miles, the leading male character, is taken care of by Dr. Delfie¹⁵. Her name contains a symbolic meaning. The novel shows several references to ancient tradition, Greek and Roman. The author uses links to Greek mythology, Greek alphabet, Roman poets (e.g. Publius Ovidius Naso and Horace) and names of ancient goddesses. There is also a minor character who is Miles's wife. He does not remember anything from his existing life, neither his wife nor his children. Miles is not able to remember the details from his life. Therefore, he does not have the strength to face the outer world. He prefers going back to the limbo in which he has been before. The colour grey has a symbolic meaning in the plot. The walls in Miles's room are also grey. It might mean that the actions are only going on inside his brain. His room looks very formal despite an extravagant cuckoo-clock, which hangs on the wall. It demonstrates the symbolic meaning of nothingness. (Fowles 1982: 14-19)

New branches of science were on the rise at that time and people were fascinated by them. Mnemonology, a specialization of Dr. Delfie, is not an actual field of neurology. Miles is a defenceless patient who is forced into a sexual practice for the sake of curing his amnesia. Dr. Delfie and Nurse Cory exercise different kinds of sexual practices in order to improve his memory. He is tricked to believe that it is the proper treatment. The actual reason for performing those activities on him is completely opposite so the whole process is absurd. (Fowles 1982: 19-24)

¹⁵ Delfie comes from the name of a religious sanctuary which was called Delphi. It was situated in Greece during ancient times. (Cartwright. Delphi.)

Miles declines the doctor's idea when she suggests Nurse Cory to undress for him. She says that he might be a racist because the nurse is of West Indian origin. He is broken down by the bureaucratic apparatus of the clinic. The doctor and the nurse do not care about him. They do their job in a rigid and monotonous way. The doctor uses the basic terminology of psychoanalysis which was established by Sigmund Freud. "Memory is strongly attached to ego. Your ego has lost in a conflict with your super-ego, which has decided to repress it – to censor it. All Nurse and I wish to do is to enlist the aid of the third component in your psyche, the id." (Fowles 1982: 31) Psychoanalysis was an important source for modernism but postmodernism contradicts it. (Fowles 1982: 24-31)

He recalls facts about his life thanks to the treatment. At first, he thinks that he is a member of the Parliament. Miles believes that he has been appointed to his role. "Albeit unconsciously, he had, in not leaving this room, chosen the right, the responsible thing, and was doing what he began to feel sure he was elected to do." (Fowles 1982: 39) The postmodern author arranges individual roles of the characters in the plot. Postmodernism defies modern branches of science such as sociology. The doctor and the nurse are successful with their treatment. Postmodernism warns that people are driven by low values such as sex and pornography. The characters in postmodern novels seemed to behave like puppets in the carousel of events. Miles believes that his life is meant to be this way. Neither Nurse Cory nor Dr. Delfie explains to him what is happening. The first chapter closes up when Nurse Cory reads Miles a passage from his manuscript. It coincides with the beginning of the chapter. The readers get to know that his real profession is a novelist. The scene is being cut suddenly. It is usually done by a sudden action, e.g. a finger flicking. (Fowles 1982: 31-48)

The beginning of the second chapter is disrupted by a twin of Dr. Delfie. She behaves in a furious and vulgar way to Miles. Miles Green is the author of the novel. "God, if you were only a character too. If I could just rub you out along with your piddlin', pansy, paper, puppets." (Fowles 1982: 55) The author of postmodern novels plays with his readers by affecting the destiny of his characters. However, his destiny is fixed. (Fowles 1982: 48-55)

Philosophy of the sub-cultures and their members were highly influenced by postmodernism. The twin of Dr. Delfie is trying to imitate a member of different subcultures by her clothes and behaviour. “For a start, you’ve completely confused the uniform of three quite different sub-cultures, to wit, the Skinheads, The Hell’s Angels and Punk. They’re three rather different things you know.” (Fowles 1982: 55-56)

After that she transforms herself into a Greek muse who is called Erato¹⁶. She came to Miles to converse with him. Postmodernism criticises the current state of society. The readers can spot it in the following passage. “I’m perfectly well aware it’s too much to expect from anyone in a crassly materialist age like this.” (Fowles 1982: 60) Erato does not represent an actual character because she exists only in Miles’s mind. She reflects his thoughts. “All I ask for is some minimal recognition of my metaphysical status vis-à-vis yours.” (Fowles 1982: 60) Modernists use the stream of consciousness for getting into the depth of human psyche whereas postmodernists criticise that. (Fowles 1982: 56-65)

Postmodernists want their readers to focus on the outside of things rather than going in the depth of a human psyche like modernists. “I was asking you to appreciate external form. From a purely artistic standpoint.” (Fowles 1982: 77) She describes Miles her relationships with men. There was one who raped her and from that moment on, she has started to provoke and torment them. The reader might assume that Miles will have the same destiny as any other man who has crossed her path so far. Erato is only an ordinary character of Miles fiction. The postmodern author is completely in charge of his characters. He creates them or destroys them straight away. Characters of postmodern fiction cannot choose their own destiny within the plot because the author does that. They do not actually exist. “In fact a real me in this situation would avoid all reference to the matter, especially as she would never have got herself into the situation in the first place. If she had any choice. Which she doesn’t. As she isn’t real.” (Fowles 1982: 65-86)

¹⁶ Erato was a muse and a Greek goddess of lyric poetry and hymns. (Oxford Dictionaries. Erato.)

Erato emphasizes that everything is only an outgrowth of Miles's mind. The characters of postmodern novels might be compared to marionettes. They are conducted by the author, who leads them. "It's not my fault that I'm equally the programmed slave of whatever stupid mood you've created. Whatever clumsy set of supposed female emotions you've bodged up for me. To say of *your* character. I notice there's not been a single word about his exceedingly dubious status. I wonder who's pulling *his* strings?" Erato reflects that there might be another figure who leads Miles. (Fowles 1982: 86-87)

Postmodernists identify themselves against totalitarianism, e.g. nazism and racism. Those theories manifest themselves in the sense of universal truth which is not acceptable. "You damn well exist for me, anyway. Just as you are. Heil Hitler. Okay. For the sake of argument: Hitler says you exist. As you are. He can't. You have to have certain elementary freedoms to exist." The significant source for postmodernists was philosophical theories of the 20th century. One of them was a theory of Martin Heidegger. The author points out a difference between two well-known concepts of Heidegger, existence and being. "I am perfectly capable of making the kind of comparison I might have made, had I existed as I actually am. If I was. You can't not exist and actually be. They're mutually contradictory." (Fowles 1982: 87-89)

The writer and Erato keep pointing out that their conversation is fictional and that even Erato herself has never existed. The postmodern writer influence appearance, behaviour, and destiny of his characters. The narrative strategies allow the author to use *deus ex machina* to reverse the plot. "I could always drag in a *deus ex machina*. Let me think. We leave here together, we drive away, we have a terrible car crash, you are crippled and hideously disfigured for life, once more I suffer a major amnesia, ten years later we meet again by chance and I fall in love with you in your wheelchair." (Fowles 1982: 89-97)

The author seems to look like a magician who conjures up things that his characters wish for. He invents a robe, cigarettes, a lighter, an ashtray and glasses because Erato wishes for that. The writer and the muse carry out a number of various plots and also endings for their relationship. Those scripts are completely fictional. The multiplicity of endings is a major feature of postmodern novels. The reader might also spot a difference between female and male mind, as well as a difference between their behaviour. Postmodernists state that nothing could be explained because no actions could be supported by reasons. Postmodernism disproves rationality that was one of the central aspects of modernism. Erato is making up literary ideas for Miles. Even if he tries to explain himself what is going on but he cannot escape the current reality. The first option is that Miles really has suffered amnesia and every other action is real. The second and reasonable option is that everything is situated only inside of his brain. He is searching for inspiration because he does not know what to write. (Fowles 1982: 97-116)

Postmodernism is reflexive kind of art, on the contrary to the reflective novel which has been already dead. "The reflective novel is 60 years dead, Erato. What do you think modernism was about? Let alone post-modernism. Even the dumbest students know it's a reflexive medium now, not a reflective one." (Fowles 1982: 116-117)

Miles describes major steps of creating modern fiction. When the postmodern writer is creating fiction, it is not connected with reality. Its content is mainly connected with writing about fiction than producing the fiction itself. The author and the text are not linked which has been proved by deconstructivism. It ridicules current trends in the society, e.g. women's fiction. (Fowles 1982: 116-122)

Miles is impatient and wants to leave the room. When he opens the door, he observes the same room as a spectator. The end of the second chapter is unexpectedly cut when Erato punches Miles in the face. The scene is situated back at the clinic and Erato becomes Dr. Delfie again. Erato is not satisfied with her unstable destiny so she disappears. Miles is only able to hear her voice. She exercises authority over Miles because she is a Greek goddess. The muse explains to Miles that his excessive need to produce literature is only a substitute activity for his mental illness. She states that he expresses oedipal syndrome. Therefore, he seeks for revenge. (Fowles 1982: 122-152)

The novel contains a scene when Dr. Delfie and Miles are lying close to each other on a bed. Grey walls, which surround them, disappear suddenly. They are being observed by all the staff and patients of the clinic behind transparent glass walls. “If their eyes had only been open, they would have seen that the treacherous walls, in what seems a crescendo timed to their actions, have changed even further, into a now quite transparent plate glass, which bars nothing but sound.” (Fowles 1982: 152-153)

Postmodernists wanted their work to exist on its own without a real connection to its creator. They wanted to create text which behaves like an evolving creature. “If we could only find some absolutely impossible... Unwritable... Unfinishable... Unimaginable... Endlessly revisable... Text without words... We could both be our real selves at last.” (Fowles 1982: 159) Erato used to be the Dark Lady, Lesbia, and Calypso when she was inspiring old ancient authors. She is not willing to transform herself into West Indian Nurse Cory even if Miles requires that. When postmodern author finds one of his characters not suitable anymore, he creates a different character that suits him more. “When Erato is made jealous enough over Nurse Cory, he will spontaneously and lightly suggest she should be dropped – and then propose a new alternative. This new and far better candidate he has – not without a detailed review of all the possibilities, as already hinted – chosen.” (Fowles 1982: 153-185)

Miles wanted to replace Erato with a different character. Therefore she turned him into a satyr¹⁷. The Greek alphabet is used as an incantation when she puts a spell on him. Postmodern novel manifests deconstruction of the text. Even single words are disintegrated into smaller units. It contains a cyclic composition because it concludes with the same passage with which it begins. At the end, Miles is lying on a bed. He is not able to talk but he releases an interjection of cuckoo. (Fowles 1982: 185-192)

¹⁷ Satyr was a woodland god who lived during ancient Greece. His physical characteristics differed. His description in Greek mythology was opposite from the Roman description. (Oxford Dictionaries. Satyr.)

7.3 The Magus

The beginning of the plot starts with an introduction of the main character that is called Nicholas Urfe. The reader might assume that Fowles was inspired by his own life when he was writing the novel. He attends Oxford University as Urfe does. The participation in the Second World War is common for both of them. While Fowles is teaching, he is living on the same Greek island.¹⁸ Urfe does not have parents or any close relatives. He does not know how to cope with his life. "I acquired expensive habits and affected manners. I got a third-class degree and a first-class illusion: that I was a poet." (Fowles 1977: 17) He has established together with his fellows a club. They call themselves *Les Hommes Révoltés* and they converse about existentialism. (Fowles 1977: 15-17)

"We formed a small club called *Les Hommes Révoltés*, drank very dry sherry, and (as a protest against those shabby duffel-coated last years of the 'forties) wore dark grey suits and black ties for our meeting. There we argued about being and nothingness and called a certain kind of behaviour "existentialist"." (Fowles 1977: 17) Their behaviour is a reflection of the actions during World War II. The above-mentioned movement is a significant matter of Fowles's postmodern novels. The Oxford graduate is having short-time liaisons when he encounters Alison. She protests against capitalism by stealing products at the shops. Alison describes it by saying that she does not like "pommy capitalists"¹⁹. Postmodernism criticises the theory of Marx and capitalism. (Fowles 1977: 17-32)

When they are together, Alison makes a reflection about life after death. "That film made me feel what I feel about everything. There isn't any meaning. You try and try to be happy and then something chance happens and it's all gone. It's because we don't believe in a life after death." (Fowles 1977: 34) Fowles's postmodern novels deal with the absence of meaning very often. She contemplates about her existence. Alison knows Urfe's true self despite him trying to cover it. "When I was going on one day in the car about not having any close friends - using my favourite metaphor: the cage of glass between me and the rest of the world - she just laughed. You like it, she said. You say you're isolated, boyo, but you really think you are different." (Fowles 1977: 35) The metaphor of the cage of glass reappears.²⁰ The characters feel secluded from the outer world. Alison and Urfe share the same worldview because they both feel restless about their existence. (Fowles 1977: 32-43)

¹⁸ The setting of the novel is situated on the fictional island of Phraxos. (Fowles 1977: 50)

¹⁹ Pommy is a slang word for a British immigrant. (Oxford Dictionaries. Pommy.)

²⁰ The metaphor of glass walls appears in Fowles's postmodern novel *Mantissa*. (Fowles 1982: 153)

Urfe is not happy in a relationship with Alison, neither he has been with other girls before her. He expresses need to search for the existential freedom. “But it’s mad. It’s like putting a girl in a convent till you’re ready to marry her. And then deciding you don’t want to marry her. We have to be free. We haven’t got a choice.” (Fowles 1977: 43-47)

Urfe is going to become a teacher of English at a small Greek island called Phraxos²¹. Alison is planning to work as an air hostess. They split up because they do not share a common future. When the relationship ends, he feels a relief which he compares to an emotional victory. “The thing I felt most clearly when the first corner was turned, was that I had escaped; and hardly less clearly, but much more odiously, that she loved me more than I loved her, and that consequently I had in some indefinable way won.” (Fowles 1977: 47-48)

When Urfe arrives on the island, he makes a comparison of England and Greece. He perceives their difference from the first sight. The untamed Greek landscape contrasts with the English landscape. The reader might discover his personal connection to Phraxos. He is adapting to the life on the island. Urfe’s immoral behaviour is manifested by frequent visits of the brothel in Athens. Urfe tries writing poetry. Unfortunately, its quality is at a really low level as his previous works. He has been mistaken so his whole world is ruined. “Poetry had always seemed something I could turn to in need – an emergency exit, a lifebuoy, as well as a justification. Now I was in the sea in the sea, and the lifebuoy had sunk, like lead.” Poetry used to define Urfe’s existence but he feels nothingness now. The existence in Fowles’s postmodern novels goes into the metaphysics. “For days after I felt myself filled with nothingness; with something more than the old physical and social loneliness – a metaphysical sense of being marooned.” (Fowles 1977: 48-58)

²¹ The island was originated from an existing Greek island which is called Spetsai. (Campbell. Greek myths.)

One day, he ascertains himself that he is presumably infected with syphilis. He retains a medical treatment and the disease seems to be cured. When Urfe reaches the state of nothingness, committing a suicide is the only way out of it. Urfe evaluates his character and the act of committing a suicide. "It would validate all my cynicism, it would prove all my solitary selfishness; it would stand, and be remembered, as a final dark victory." (Fowles 1977: 60) Unfortunately, his attempt is not successful. When he is exploring the island one day, he discovers a secluded house. Curiosity about the house and its owner gives his life new hope. He is investigating the whole mystery about the house when he meets Conchis, the owner of the house. Their first encounter is oddly strange. Urfe makes assumptions about Conchis because he bans him from asking questions. The characters of postmodern novels are chosen by the author. Even Urfe participates in the creation of the plot. Conchis describes to him by whom they have been chosen. "Hazard makes you elect. You cannot elect yourself. And what chooses me? Chance wears many faces." (Fowles 1977: 87) The motif of being watched repeats frequently. (Fowles 1977: 58-88)

Urfe fulfils the request of Conchis and visits him for the second time. While he is entering his holding, he discovers a woman's glove accidentally. He starts to speculate to whom the glove belongs. He thinks that there is a mysterious woman who is hidden by Conchis. "She might be a mistress, but she might equally well be a daughter, a wife, a sister – perhaps someone weak-minded, perhaps someone elderly." (Fowles 1977: 89) Urfe is trying to give every strange thing, which is linked to Conchis, a reasonable explanation. Postmodernism doubts rationalism because nothing could be explained by giving reasons. Fowles unfolds the plot by using hints which are supposed to confuse both Urfe and the reader. The glove represents one of them. (Fowles 1977: 88-89)

Urfe and Conchis are discussing a literary matter during the second encounter. They think that the novel no longer functions as an art form. Conchis describes his personal experience about burning all novels which he used to possess. “Why should I struggle through hundreds of pages of fabrication to reach half a dozen very little truths?” (Fowles 1977: 96) Fowles acknowledges the main general principle of postmodern novels. The majority of their content is fictionalised. Urfe suspects the existence of a hidden reason for his second invitation. Conchis is a psychic who travels to other worlds. The postmodern author teaches the reader to approach the reality through senses. Fowles’s postmodern novels, such as *Mantissa* or *The Magus*, contain a warning against verbalization. “As we put our glasses on the tray he said, “There are things that words cannot explain.” I looked down. “At Oxford, we were taught to assume that if words can’t explain, nothing else is likely to.” (Fowles 1977: 89-107)

Conchis describes to Urfe what he meant by hazard and being chosen this way. A point of fulcrum²² represents a moment in the life of every person. It might be called a turning point. The person is supposed to accept herself/himself for what he/she is. He/she will never be anything else. Conchis describes why Urfe cannot know the feeling. “You are too young to know this. You are still becoming. Not being.” (Fowles 1977: 109) He also describes the difference between the Few and the Many in this case. Only those people, who sense the moment and deal with it, belong to the Few. Urfe has been elected by hazard as a central character of the fictional play of masks. (Fowles 1977: 107-109)

²² Fulcrum represents a thing that plays a central or essential role in an activity, event or situation. (Oxford Dictionaries. Fulcrum.)

Urfe visits Conchis regularly and he listens to four of his life stories. They are accompanied by single acts which are performed by actors. The whole story appears to be mysterious so it draws the attention of Urfe. The mysteriousness may be represented by Urfe's glimpse of a young woman. She is a fictional character from one of the stories and her name is Lily Montgomery. Urfe is supposed to undergo various tests throughout the plot. One of them is throwing a dice when one number represents painless death. The player takes a suicide pill. It means an alternative for war. Conchis wants to teach Urfe that war is objectionable. "I am going to explain to you why we went to war. Why mankind always goes to war. It is not social or political. It is not countries that go to war, but men. It is like salt. Once one has been to war, one has salt for the rest of one's life." (Fowles 1977: 124) He wants Urfe to learn how to be brave. After rolling a dice, Urfe refuses to take the pill. Conchis does the same thing but he takes the pill. He wants to demonstrate Urfe that there is nothing to be afraid of. Nothing happens because the pills are not genuine. Conchis teaches Urfe that he should not believe in appearances as well. (Fowles 1977: 109-127)

Conchis wants Urfe to live in a passionate way that means seeing the reality thanks to the sixth sense. The reality represents even the simplest things. The other significant advice is not to betray your own self. It is demonstrated on the reference from WWII. The stories, which are told by Conchis, are supposed to mean a lesson for Urfe. They are created as Conchis's autobiography, however only the last one is actually true. The relationship between Conchis and Urfe resembles the one between a novelist and a character. Urfe is also taught to approach the reality through various senses like hearing and smell within a particular situation. It evokes the hallucination than something factual. The main aim of Conchis is to confuse Urfe and his senses. (Fowles 1977: 127-134)

Conchis gives Urfe several literary works for reading within the whole plot. The authors and characters of those titles become suddenly alive (e.g. Robert Foulkes). The link between current reality and fictional world is damaged. Postmodern fiction does not rely on words. Urfe should learn that as well. "Words are for facts. Not fiction." (Fowles 1977: 141) He has to undergo an unspecific ordeal. It would be easier for him to pretend to believe the occasions which are happening around him. Urfe has been chosen to be the main character of Conchis's acts. They talk about Alison and their relationship. Urfe comments on it in a pessimistic way. Conchis encourages him to reach out to her. In his opinion, hazard does not have to dominate everything. We should learn how to be active. They discuss the difference between being and existence. (Fowles 1977: 134-153)

One night Urfe encounters the fictional character of Lily. The scenery starts with sounds which are coming from downstairs into Urfe's room. Conchis is playing harpsichord and Lily is playing a recorder. They are situated in a music-room. Urfe goes down to find out what the sounds represent. He is observing the scene with curiosity, even if he knows that the whole thing is a charade. Lily sends him away because he is not allowed to disturb them. The impersonation of Lily seems so believable that it captures his attention completely. Urfe finds out that Lily's gentle face attracts him more than the connection with Alison. The occasions around Urfe are compared to a myth. There are a number of references to figures from the mythology of Ancient Greek, e.g. Ulysses, Theseus, and Oedipus. Postmodernism is inspired by them frequently. He is excited about upcoming situations in his own fictional world. (Fowles 1977: 153-158)

Urfe has realised that he understands his self better thanks to Conchis's storytelling. The ups and downs of his life make up his personality. The current state of his personality is going to involve his future self. Urfe realises that the acts which are happening at Bourani are disguised behind a masque. He should enjoy it rather than investigating the purpose of it. When Urfe meets Lily Montgomery officially, he knows that the meeting is not natural. Both behave like actors who are playing their roles. Conchis is the director who manages the game. He makes up almost every fact as well as denies the truth. He is a novelist who produces both a narrative and the characters. Mystical figures (e.g. Apollo, a nymph, a satyr and a goddess) from Ancient Greece appear in one act. (Fowles 1977: 158-188)

While Conchis was studying Faculty of Medicine in France, he made up a group which was called The Society of Reason. One of their statements was the use of reason. It meant an important sign in the age of Enlightenment²³. On the contrary, postmodernism doubts reasoning. Words are no longer able to describe reality. They cover up the reality and they mislead. Fowles admits the existence of other worlds. It implies the existence and communication with another reality. Fowles could be understood as Conchis. "He believes that the Muses are not a poetic fiction, but a classical insight into a scientific reality we moderns should do well to investigate." (Fowles 1977: 191) These passages of the two pamphlets show that the content of these novels is much more about postmodernism than the plot itself. (Fowles 1977: 188-191)

²³ Enlightenment means an intellectual movement which was inspiring art during 17th and 18th century. The important signs which constituted the movement were God, reason, nature, and humanity. (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. Enlightenment.)

The novel contrasts various timelines, so the boundary between the past and the present fades away. The reader can spot it in the following passage. “And that was perfect; a mischievous girl of 1915 poking fun at a feeble Victorian joke; a lovely double remove; and she looked absurd and lovely as she did it.” (Fowles 1977: 198) The twins’ character is a frequent figure in a postmodern novel. It disconcerts Urfe as well as the reader. The plot contains the twins who are called Julie and June. They may be identical twins and even their names look alike. Julie plays a fictional role of Lily Montgomery. She could be distinguished from her sister thanks to a scar on her wrist. She is attracted to him, even if Urfe does not know why. The reader determines that everything can happen in the Conchis’ s metaphysical world. The boundaries do not exist in the world of masques. (Fowles 1977: 191-203)

Each character shows a number of roles and changes them repeatedly. Metatextuality²⁴ constitutes a sign of postmodernism. The acts could be described as a charade because the characters wear actual masks very often. Julie recites Shakespeare in one act. The part is located in the play that is called *The Tempest*. The reader can spot more analogies between this play and *The Magus*. The minor characters are dressed in the black colour. It may be a reference to subcultures. Christianity represents another reference. Julie teaches Urfe that it is more a matter of having faith than practising religion. The characters are being watched by Conchis during their acts. It could be compared to the children’s game hide – and – seek. “It is like hide-and-seek, Nicholas. One has to be sure the seeker wants to play. One also has to stay in hiding. Or there is no game.” (Fowles 1977: 204-208)

²⁴ Metatextuality is a literary feature when one text contains a passage of another text. The involved text comments the original one. (English Wiktionary. Metatextuality.)

Urfe realises that Julie and June are daughters of Lily Montgomery. Conchis and the cast of his play have been teaching him lessons about life. His character evolves throughout the whole plot thanks to them. Urfe is getting to know Julie better. He knows that he should fall in love with her because it is written in the Conchis's script. Their relationship is evolving within his play. Julie's twin sister appears in a number of situations only to disconcert Urfe. The characters of Conchis's play are captured in his web. Fowles as a postmodern author can do whatever he wants with his characters. Despite this fact, the characters of his play are allowed to act independently. Conchis as well as the other characters describe something to Urfe and deny those facts right after that. Nothing is certain and the ultimate truth does not exist. Urfe is asking questions himself and the other characters. He does not receive definite answers so he feels perplexed about the reality around him. He does not succeed with reasoning because postmodernism opposes rationalism. (Fowles 1977: 209-218)

Conchis is highly qualified at altering reality. He claims to Urfe that Lily suffers from schizophrenia. She possesses a split personality as she has a twin sister. The novel contains the general multiplicity of characters. Each person from the play may represent more than one role. The identities of the play are being deliberately misled. Urfe's identity is the only one about which the reader is certain. All identities are exposed at the end of the plot, even if there is some mystery left. The whole play could be compared to playing chess or hide-and-seek. Urfe might be rewarded for his participation in it. Conchis claims to him that he studied medicine and his main field is psychiatry, schizophrenia in particular. He is interested in the Jungian theory. (Fowles 1977: 219-232)

All facts that Conchis tells Urfe about himself are actually lies. However, the existing proofs make Urfe believe his story. They are represented by papers which he has published. Later those papers show are proved to be forged. Urfe undergoes hypnosis which could be described as an experience of metaphysical reality. "I had no desire to state or define or analyse this interaction, I simply wished to constitute it – not even 'wished to' - I constituted it. I was volitionless. There was no meaning. Only being." (Fowles 1977: 239) He has found out his actual existence. The language principle is derived from objects that actually exist, therefore it cannot describe it. Words were weighing him down. This reality cannot be understood either as good or bad. It is constituted of cooperation. Urfe becomes aware of the existence of all things which surround him. He has entered other universe. (Fowles 1977: 233-239)

While Urfe is getting to know Julie, he realises that he requires love not sex. Urfe has started to sense reality in a different way and therefore he sees the difference between Alison and Julie. Alison is striking out sexually, whereas Julie behaves innocently. He meets with Alison again. They go on a trip to a mountain which is called Parnassus. They encounter a place which is described as Eden. This feature represents the explicit reference to Bible. Alison is compared to Eve. Urfe blames her that she interchanges passion for love. They could be described as existentialists. They deal with their existential crisis and they do not possess any home. Urfe realises that he wants to keep both girls. Love has made him confess to Alison about Conchis and Bourani. He is honest for the first time in his life. Urfe and Alison are not able to be together until they find their actual identity. The plot contains the repetitive situation in which they discuss their love in an angry way. Love consists of both negative as well as positive feelings. (Fowles 1977: 240-278)

The characters of Conchis's play are not genuine. They play parts and serve a particular purpose. Conchis wants the characters to lose their masques. Urfe, Conchis and Julie are having a discussion about whether God exists. Conchis, as well as the postmodern author, could be marked as God. Sudden twists of the plot are usually implemented by simple gestures (e.g. slapping a person in the face or tolling a bell). The characters are aware of the fact that they are being watched. The identity of the characters is not evident to the postmodern author himself. Conchis, as well as the characters of his play, wants Urfe to be mistaken. This is the main reason why they claim a fact and then deny it. The postmodern novels are more about the movement and its principals than the plot. (Fowles 1977: 279-318)

Julie and June take part in the play on purpose because they should accompany him, lure him and mislead him completely. The twin sisters vary in their characteristics. Julie stands for poetry, whereas June represents prose. "I just mean that she's always looking for poetry and passion and sensitivity, the whole Romantic kitchen. I live on a rather simpler diet. Prose and pudding? I don't expect attractive men necessarily to have attractive souls." (Fowles 1977: 319) Conchis discusses with Urfe the Jungian theory. It could be defined in the sense of hypnosis and the exploration of human unconsciousness. The novel contains a description of what Conchis does within his play. "One thing's obvious. He wants us to think he's putting all sorts of obstacles between us. Then gives us all the opportunities to destroy them." (Fowles 1977: 319-340)

The novel refers to several already existing literary works, e.g. *The Tempest* from William Shakespeare; the story called *Three Hearts*. Julie reveals all the circumstances about her and June's identity. Everything is like a fictional play, for which the script has been made up by Conchis. He uses the third person narrative when he talks about the slightly fictional facts of his life. The sudden appearance of the fleet of warships marks the future. The name of one of the sailors is Arethusa. Conchis is suddenly getting rid of the inspiration of *Three Hearts'* story. There is a major shift in the plot, in which Conchis distances from what is going on. (Fowles 1977: 341-361)

Urfe and Julia are compared to Hamlet and Ophelia, another fictional couple. They play leading roles of the tragedy *Hamlet* which was written by William Shakespeare. The next fictional couple to whom they are referred is Ferdinand and Miranda. They belong in another Shakespeare's play that is called *The Tempest*. Urfe sees the two girls as nymphs. They have a minor sexual encounter. Urfe thinks that it has boosted Julie's latent sexuality. Conchis behaves on the basis of putting masques to the characters. However, Julie is losing them around this time. The nationality foretells the people's characteristics. Urfe, Julie, and June show the English mentality and Conchis demonstrates the European mentality. "He thought the girls and I were green, innocents; but we could outperfidy his perfidy, and precisely because we were English: born with masks and bred to lie." (Fowles 1977: 372) Urfe is trying to explain that he and the twins were able to disturb Conchis's script because they are English. The appearance of German soldiers is the other action which is pulled by Conchis. Urfe is surprised that they are real Germans. It is meant to be a new trap for him. Urfe is caught in it and he is forced to watch the scene. This trap is linked to the last and the only true story of Conchis's life. (Fowles 1977: 362-377)

This is a rehearsed scene of the actual occasion of 1943. Urfe realizes that understanding the play of masques makes it to continue. He compares the death of his parents to the death of Alison and he feels responsible for it. The past is pulling him back, despite the fact that his character has altered. The postmodern character feels the lack of certainty. The plot is going on but he is still stuck at the beginning. Conchis has produced a new kind of drama, in which there is no distinction between the actors and the audience. Features like stage or auditorium are dismissed. The continuity of performance does not exist. The narrative is flowing and the only certainty takes place at the end. The drama is invented by the participants. The main purpose of pulling the tricks is to show Urfe his true self. The magic of Conchis is like a metaphysical meta-theatre. It is inspired by classical comedy or tragedy of Ancient Greece. They are discussing whether it could be declared as art or science. "All good science is art. And all good art is science." (Fowles 1977: 378-409)

Conchis reveals that the majority of his stories has been made up. He describes to Urfe the meaning of war. It helps men to become masculine in the eyes of women. “War is a psychosis caused by an inability to see relationships. Our relationship with our fellowmen. Our relationship with our economic and historical situation. And above all our relationship to nothingness. To death.” (Fowles 1977: 413) Conchis tells Urfe a true story about the occupation of Phraxos during WWII. This time Conchis demonstrates the genuineness of the story by showing footages of real participators. Conchis explains to Urfe the main principle of freedom. Freedom implies the existence of the smile. Urfe is pushed to decide about the resolution of the last wartime story. He should choose either Colonel Wimmel’s side and commit physical suicide. He could choose Anton’s side and commit moral suicide. (Fowles 1977: 410-439)

Conchis wants to change Urfe but he fails. Urfe is unable to understand the meaning of freedom. “You are someone who does not understand what freedom is. And above all that the better you understand it, the less you possess of it.” (Fowles 1977: 439) The postmodern author disposes of similar status as God. Conchis’s way of freedom is the one through which the person takes his own actions seriously. Urfe behaves rather as a self-centred person because he sees freedom as satisfying his own needs. Fowles inspires himself in the old English poetry. He quotes sentences from the poetry of Blake, Browne, Hervey, and Donne. The acts of the play of masques interlace within each other and they do not end. Conchis has already admitted that the mask is only a metaphor. He lures Urfe in his play by leaving clues (e.g. a female glove which smells by a perfume, a doll and a human skull which are hanging on a tree) (Fowles 1977: 440-470)

Julie and June are played by actresses who call themselves Rose and Lily. The whole plot is mysterious and nothing is certain. The other characters used to experience the same feelings like Urfe. “We’ve all been through it. In the past. Joe. Me. Everyone else. We do know what it’s like. The being lost. The rejection. The anger. And we all know it’s finally worth it.” (Fowles 1977: 476) One of the made-up scripts is that Conchis is a professor of psychiatry at Sorbonne. June, Joe (the Negro) and the other characters study a postgraduate degree under his guidance. Sane people helping the insane could be a warning based on the real war-time experience of Conchis. (Fowles 1977: 471-477)

Urfe undergoes humiliation at the mock trial. The cast of Conchis's play might want him to go mad. He experiences metaphysical death. Urfe is drugged because they want to explore his unconsciousness. Their practice is inspired by the Jungian theory. The role of the judge is given to Urfe. He is subjected to an experiment which is managed by international psychologists. Fowles warns against the threat of nuclear war. He claims that evil is created by men. Urfe is being faced a dilemma whether to punish the fictional Julie. His freedom is involved in not punishing her. Finally, he is forced to forgive her by undergoing literal humiliation. The video, through which Urfe realises that he has been under constant observation, is an essential part of the process. It is obscene and sexually explicit. Therefore, it could be understood as the criticism of pornography. Urfe is bound to a metal construction during one act of the mock trial. He feels like crucified Iago. The mock trial contains a scene from *Othello*, Shakespeare's play. Conchis reminds Urfe of learning to smile because life is tough. He should learn how to survive. (Fowles 1977: 478-531)

The situations that Urfe experiences under the influence of drugs are partly blurred. The reader does not know whether it is illusion or the reality. The metaphysical world of Conchis and his experiment is in contrast to the reality which is going on outside the island. After the mock trial, Urfe is searching for evidence at Bourani. He finds a copy of *The Punch* from the year 1914 and the copy of *The Tempest*. The end of the mock trial means the conclusion of Conchis's play. The plot unwinds further as a detective story, in which Urfe seeks the truth about Conchis and his magic tricks. Various genres of fiction interlace in Fowles's postmodern novels (e.g. poetry, fiction or drama etc.). (Fowles 1977: 532-555)

Urfe quits the job and he moves to Athens. One evening he is having a dinner with employees from the British Council and an Embassy secretary. He no longer feels like an Englishman. He realises that British people hide their feelings and their actual thoughts. On the contrary, Urfe has become a European. They are the representatives of the bourgeois society which postmodernism opposes. Urfe is staying in the hotel in Athens, while he is managing an investigation about Conchis and his life. He is stuck in an exile because he is not able to return home. One day, he catches a glimpse of Alison's figure from the hotel's window. She is alive and she has been on Conchis's side the whole time. He starts searching for her desperately. Urfe goes to Rome to see John Leverrier, his predecessor at Bourani, but he does not reveal anything to him. Urfe is a pagan. He is interested in Greek tradition and Latin language, unlike Leverrier who is a Christian. (Fowles 1977: 556-573)

Alison felt like an existentialist when she was with Urfe. He is undergoing the same right now. "It was the unneeded confirmation of my loss of Englishness; and it occurred to me that I must be feeling as Alison had so often felt: a mixture, before the English, of irritation and bafflement, of having this same language, same past, so many same things and yet not belonging to them anymore. Being worse than rootless ... speciesless." (Fowles 1977: 574) Urfe discovers Mrs. Lily de Seitas and realises the truth about Conchis and his magic tricks. The play of masks could be described as a complex experiment. Urfe had been captured by girls so he could approach his own heart thanks to them. The current plot is interlaced with Urfe's memories from his childhood. They are mainly connected with his father. Rose and Lily are actually the godchildren of Conchis. The twins, their mother Lily de Seitas and Conchis belongs to the high class of society. (Fowles 1977: 574-623)

Urfe receives a Chinese ornamented plate from Mrs de Seitas. She tells him that Alison has the same one. The plate pictures a family, so the reader could understand it as a symbol of their joint future. Urfe encounters Mrs de Seitas for several times. She behaves in a maternal way towards him. She represents the last character in the plot who knows more than Urfe. Finally, she denies the godgame completely. The purpose of pulling tricks on Urfe was for showing him that he behaves in an immoral way. Urfe is discussing the principals of evolution with Mrs de Seitas during one encounter. She refuses evolution. Urfe has realised that he feels more towards Alison. The strange relationship with Jojo notes that. She accompanies him everywhere and she prevents the other girls to feel attracted to him. He has decided to become an adult and to share a common future with Alison. While he is expecting to see Alison someday, he feels like being stuck in the waiting room. "Freedom was making some abrupt choice and acting on it; was as it had been at Oxford, allowing one's instinct-cum-will to fling one off at a tangent, solitary into a new situation. I had to have the hazard. I had to break out of this waiting room I was in." (Fowles 1977: 643) Therefore Urfe decides to start independent future even without Alison. (Fowles 1977: 624-643)

The plot contains several abrupt twists which are demonstrated by simple gestures. One of them is breaking the plate. It symbolises a damaged past, present, and future of Urfe. Fowles is entering the plot suddenly. He compares Urfe's life to the actual life. We are waiting for something in every part of our lives without having any certainties to hold on to. The reader is not supposed to assume an exact ending because even the real life does not demonstrate it. (Fowles 1977: 644-645)

"But the maze has no centre. An ending is no more than a point in a sequence, a snip of the cutting shears. Benedick kissed Beatrice at last; but ten years later? And Elsinore, that following spring? So ten more days. But what happened in the following years shall be silence; another mystery." (Fowles 1977: 645) At the end of the plot, Urfe encounters Alison at a café. She has undergone a change as well. Her dress marks that. They discuss their relationship, as well as what has happened so far. They are not able to come up with a positive conclusion. Anyway, they are not meant to experience a happy ending. The end of the godgame is announced by a bonfire. Urfe slaps Alison in the face. It is supposed to make a twist in the outcome of the plot but nothing happens. The novel concludes with a still ending which is neither happy nor tragic. They are standing there like human statues forever. (Fowles 1977: 645-656)

8 Conclusion

The thesis discusses the social and cultural situation in post-war Britain. It describes the consequences which result to the establishment of postmodernism. The origin of the word comes from the period before WWII. The “-ism” movements are established back then. The post-war results and the technological development make people question about ideological trends. Literature reacts to the occasions in the society by establishing new literary genres, such as the reportage novel. Authors start shifting the direction of English literature gradually. Sillitoe and Osborne carry on with the realistic note whereas Spark, Murdoch, Golding, and Beckett follow the avant-garde tendency.

The term postmodernism is defined in the comparison of Steven Connor’s and Linda Hutcheon’s approach. Connor highlights that postmodernism does not come out of the denial of modernism. It manifests itself through the linguistic turn. The relationship between the recipient and the story is removed. The literary works are influenced by the reader’s attitude towards them which forms the meaning of the story. Postmodernism does not deny history. It approaches both history and modernism in an ironic way.

The thesis refers to the theoretical postulates of Umberto Eco, Roland Barthes and the deconstruction of the text. Eco (1992) highlights the interaction between the reader and the text. The recipient is able to perceive the language of the text at that time. The game of language is manifested through anagrams and rhythmic words. Barthes (1977) increases the role of the language to the level of characters. Eco (1992) highlights the role of the author for the purpose of analysing the text, whereas Barthes (1977) talks about the death of the author. We know nothing about the author’s life only his literary work stands out. An absence of the author pushes the reader to decipher the text but a presence of the author limits the text. Deconstruction could be understood as a way how to read the text. The paper defines the term by using three kinds of approaches. Derrida and de Man talk about the relationship of postmodernism and deconstruction. Derrida claims that the text is interrupted by the interpreter. De Man states that the deconstruction is processed by the text. The Yale school says that the interpretation is not restricted. It is developed by the reader and the text.

Next chapter introduces the inspirational sources for Fowles's postmodern novels. The literary works of William Shakespeare inspire Fowles greatly. There are various parallels between Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Fowles's *The Magus*. The paper produces the theoretical background of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and *The Magus*. Both Conradi (1982) and Connor (1996) address *The French Lieutenant's Woman* as a stylistic combination, also called a pastiche. Fowles (1969) exploits the reader's image of the Victorian age by using archaic speech. He researches every single feature of the Victorian era. Fowles reshapes the form of the novel as he identifies himself with The Nouveau Roman, a new movement in the French literature. *The French Lieutenant's Woman* shows both the evolutionary and existentialist aspect. The text is detached by author's reflections upon his present time (the 1960s) and the time of the novel (the 1860s). The main parallel of the theory of Darwin and Marx is the survival of the strongest individuals. The narrator of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* is unpredictable. He enters the story suddenly and he shifts its direction. The novels appear paradoxical. Urfe, a character from *The Magus*, should achieve authenticity despite the inauthentic world around him. Urfe gradually distances from the bourgeois society as postmodernism opposes it.

The characters of Fowles's postmodern novels balance between existence and nothingness. When they are situated in the state of nothingness, they are closer to commit a suicide. The characters get stuck either in a glass box or they are surrounded by glass walls which separate them from the society. They suffer an existential crisis. For example, Miles of *Mantissa* is not able to discover his inspiration and not even handle his current situation. While the characters are playing their roles, they feel like being watched. *Mantissa* and *The Magus* warns against verbalization because not everything could be explained by words. The figures from Greek mythology appear both in *Mantissa* and *The Magus*, such as satyrs and Greek gods. The change of roles, that each character demonstrates, happens repeatedly. The *Magus* emphasised the act of wearing a mask.

Both the character of Lily/Julie in *The Magus* and the writer in *Mantissa* suffer amnesia. This disease might be connected with the questioning of rationalism. The postmodern author plays a game with the reader as well as the character of the novel. The characters are manipulated like chess pieces despite having their own willpower. The author wants them to behave in a mysterious way. Hypnosis helps the characters to reach the unconscious state of mind. This act is inspired by The Jungian Theory. It helps Urfe of *The Magus* to approach the reality in a better way. None of the analysed novels have a definite ending as they look mysterious and frozen. *Mantissa* shows a cyclic composition, in which the focus returns back to the beginning of the story. *The French Lieutenant's Woman* suggests four different endings that depict possible progressions of the relationship of Sarah and Charles. The storyline does not flow smoothly because it shows sudden reverses. The continuity of time does not exist. The plot of *The Magus* is interlaced with flashbacks of Urfe's childhood.

Fowles benefits to the context of English postmodern literature with his specific style of narration. The plot of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* comprises of historiographic metafiction. It produces reflections upon its own content and includes real historical occasions and figures. He is able to maintain the reader's attention throughout the whole storyline. The usage of existentialist philosophy, The Jungian Theory and other inspirational sources insert layers for interpretation. The reader is allowed to use his own imagination in any possible way. The recurring motifs of Fowles's postmodern novels form the matter for further analysis.

9 Resumé

V teoretické části diplomová práce popisuje společenskou a kulturní situaci v Británii po druhé světové válce. Ta měla vliv na vznik postmoderny. Podoba anglické literatury se začala postupně přetvářet, např. vznikaly nové literární žánry. Termín postmoderna je vymezen v rámci porovnání přístupů Stevena Connora a Lindy Hutcheonové. Stěžejní pasáží teoretické části jsou postuláty Umberta Eca, Rolanda Bartha a dekonstrukce textu. Eco (1992) zdůrazňuje interakci mezi čtenářem a textem. Podle Eca se postmoderna projevuje tzv. jazykovou hrou, která má různou podobu. Naopak Barthes (1977) povyšuje jazyk na úroveň postav. Pro Eca je úloha autora zapotřebí pro interpretování samotného textu, zatímco Barthes hovoří o smrti autora, respektive jeho absenci. Dekonstrakci textu lze chápat jako způsob, jakým lze text číst a interpretovat. Další kapitola se věnuje teoretickému rámci dvou analyzovaných románů Johna Fowlese, v nichž nejvíce vynikají postmoderní vyprávěcí prvky.

Praktická část se pokouší analyzovat jednotlivé postmoderní narativní techniky v románech *Francouzova milenka*, *Mantissa* a *Mág*. Interpretuje jednotlivá díla a použité prvky charakterizuje. Inspiračními zdroji byly pro Fowlese nejen již existující díla, ale i vědecké směry jako např. existencialismus, přístup Carla Gustava Junga atd. V závěru práce zmiňuje Fowlesův přínos pro kontext anglické postmoderní literatury. Jeho vyprávěcí styl vyniká kombinací fikce a skutečných odkazů z historie. Vyprávěcí techniky a prvky, které používá, vytvářejí z jeho postmoderních románů mnohvrstevné útvary, které zaujmou čtenářovu pozornost a zapojují jeho fantazii. Témata, která se ve Fowlesových postmoderních románech opakují, mohou být vhodným předmětem dalších zkoumání.

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