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Postmoderní poetika v díle Johna Fowlese
Postmodern poetics in the writings of John
Fowles

Diplomová práce

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Práce se soustředí na prvky postmoderní poetiky v prozaickém díle Johna Fowlese. S využitím doporučené primární a sekundární literatury z tohoto hlediska analyzuje jeho nejvýznamnější díla, tj. jejich témata, motivy aj., ve vztahu k postmodernismu v literatuře.

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Prohlášení

Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto diplomovou práci vypracoval (pod vedením vedoucího diplomové práce) samostatně a uvedl jsem všechny použité prameny a literaturu.

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The thesis is to find the elements of postmodern poetics in the prose writings of John Fowles. Using the recommended primary and secondary literature, it will analyze his most important writings, i.e. their themes, motifs, etc., from the standpoint of literary modernism.

Keywords: Allusions to Other Works of Art; Alternate Endings; Feminism; Intertextuality; Irony; John Fowles; Literary Theory; Metafiction; Parody; Pastiche; Philosophy; Postmodernism; Quotations; Theology; Victorian Novel

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Introduction

This diploma thesis focuses on the analysis of the poetics of postmodernism in the novel *The French Lieutenant's Woman* by English novelist John Fowles, who is one of the most important English novelists of 2nd half of 20th century.

This thesis is divided into two parts. The first, theoretical part briefly presents the author John Fowles and his work, and generally describes the features of the poetics of postmodernism, which are metafiction, parody and irony, intertextuality, and incorporation of academic themes into narrative. Each of the features of the poetics of postmodernism is generally explained with all of its essential features, which are to be analysed in the second part of the thesis.

The second part of this thesis analyses various passages of the novel *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. The analysed passages are assorted and analysed with the objective of finding previously presented features of the poetics of postmodernism. The analysis explains which features of the poetics of postmodernism the analysed passages contain, how they work, why John Fowles used them, and what is their relation to the rest of the novel, to the reality, and to readers.

As the result, the objective of the thesis should confirm whether the analysed passages of the novel contain the poetics of postmodernism or not, which of the presented poetics of postmodernism John Fowles used, and what is the relation between them.

POSTMODERN POETICS IN WORKS OF JOHN FOWLES

1 John Fowles – Postmodernist

The English novelist John Fowles was born in 1926 in Leigh-on-Sea in Essex. He attended Oxford University where he studied German and English. Fowles worked as an English teacher in several places; including a school in Greece (this experience influenced his novel *The Magus*) and St. Godric's College in London. Fowles spent a long period of his life in the town Lyme Regis, where is *The French Lieutenant's Woman* set. He lived there since 1968 until his death in 2005. As the novelist, Fowles experimented with the form of the narrative of the novel, and incorporated the poetics of postmodernism in all of his novels and stories whilst the plots of his novels and stories remain comprehensible and consistent. Thereby, Fowles created a body of works which is attractive for both, common readers who enjoy the stories, and literary theorists who analyse Fowles's works.

His first published novel *The Collector*, which brought him fame and due to which he became a famous novelist, was one of two novels Fowles was writing at the same time, but he decided it would be acclaimed better therefore he finished it first. *The Collector* (1963) is an experimental work in the terms of the form. The plot is about a man, who is a butterfly collector kidnapping a girl he loves and keeping her in his basement as one of his specimen. The novel has two separate parts, one written from the perspective of the collector, and the second written as the diary of the kidnapped girl. After the positive acclaim of *The Collector*, Fowles rewrote the latter of the above-mentioned drafts and released his second novel *The Magus* (1965). The novel is strongly autobiographical, the main character Nicolas Urfe escapes England and finds a work as a English teacher on a small Greek island, which reflects Fowles's own expiring of teaching English in Greece. *The Magus* is more experimental than *The Collector*, for Fowles moved in style and used more features of postmodernist poetics such as metafiction, intertextuality, loosening borders between reality and fantasy. The plot of the novel concerns Nicolas Urfe being drawn into a twisted psychological game of manipulation by a millionaire Maurice Conchis who seems to possess supernatural abilities (thus the novel being called *The Magus*). The most outstanding feature of the novel is the reality is broadened, and Nicolas (and so the reader) loses view on what is reality and what is a hallucination or a game.

The success of the novel was followed by a movie adaptation of it for which Fowles wrote the script. The next novel Fowles published was *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1969). It is a pastiche Victorian novel bearing major features of postmodernist poetics which are analysed in this thesis. The next Fowles's published work is *The Ebony Tower* (1974) which is a collection of short stories which are "variations both on certain themes in previous books of mine and in methods of narrative presentation..." (Acheson, 1998: 48). The next novel *Daniel Martin* (1977) was influenced by existentialism and puts the philosophy in question, using frequent flashbacks in narrative. The next novel *Mantissa* (1982) is an experimental work in the similar way as *The Magus*, in which the most prominent feature of postmodern poetics is loosening of borders between the reality and fantasy. Fowles's last novel *A Maggot* (1985) is in the terms of postmodern poetics the closest to *The French Lieutenant's Woman* for its usage of metafictionality and for it is written as a historical novel. The experiment of this novel is in the minimum of information readers are given in the text on the preceding events for Fowles wrote "a novel in which we hear the characters rather than see them" (Acheson, 1998: 77).

Being able to combine literary experiments with attractive and well narrated stories, Fowles created a body of works which are diverse yet compact and attractive for scholars who analyze the works for its complexity, and for common readers who praise Fowles's works for fine stories and catching narrative.

2 Poetics of Postmodernism

Postmodernism as a literary movement appears in 2nd half of 20th century. It results from modernism, from which it takes the approach to the experiments with the form of narrative. Postmodernist fiction spreads the experimentation with the narrative and adds more elements to it. It brings various elements to fiction; elements which are typical of postmodern fiction thus can be called features of postmodern poetics. The features of poetics of postmodernism are metafiction, parody and irony, intertextuality, and incorporation of academic themes into narrative. Authors use the features of the poetics of postmodernism to experiment with narrative, to experiment with the relation of their work and the reality, to experiment with the form of narrative, and to incorporate various academic themes into narrative. By these features, a work of postmodernist fiction can be recognized among other works of fiction.

2.1 Metafiction and Historiographic Metafiction

Metafiction and Historiographic metafiction is one of the most widely used postmodernist techniques in literature. Since the beginnings of fictional writing, authors tried to describe reality in their novels as if everything really happened, or could happen in future (speaking of sci-fi and utopian/dystopian novels). The voice of the narrator in these works tries to convince the reader that the works are, could have been, or could be truth. These works try to be as much credible as possible, even when there are supernatural events or beings, or other unreal features.

“From the start the writers of novels seemed determined to pretend that their work is not made, but that it simply exists” (Josipovici 1971, 148); in fact, it was safer, in legal and ethical terms. Defoe’s works made claims to veracity and actually convinced some readers that they were factual...”

(Hutcheon, 1988, 107)

Classic fiction does not, nor does admit it is a work of art. It simply does not concern itself with it. A reader approaches it as a story which is being narrated to him or her as truly as possible.

Metafiction does not want to create the illusion of reality, or possible reality. It makes clear that the work which is being read is just a piece work artificially created by author. Metafictional novel makes the reader well aware of he or she is reading a work which was created by an author and reminds him or her about it. This is often reached through author's remarks (see 3.5) throughout the work, where is being consciously admitted and repeatedly pointed out the work is actually not trying to reflect reality or make the reader believe the story, but that it was written as a work of art. This technique serves as a means for reader to explore more depth of this type of novels. It makes the reader think about relationships between reality, fiction, author's attitude and even the reader's attitude towards the work. Authors consciously admit they write fiction, and also admit the work in readers' hands is just a work of art and nothing more, therefore they admit their stories are absolutely made up. This technique basically allows authors to play a kind of godlike role, because when there is consciously admitted the work of art is a work of art, authors can do whatever they want in it and reader must accept it.

“Metafiction is a term given to fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality.”

(Waugh, 1984: 2)

Metafiction also makes readers think about relations between author and the work and even between the work and the reality – whether it is a work of fiction and how much can be the reality modified.

Historiographic metafiction goes even further. Using the above-mentioned technique, authors combine metafiction and historiography to create works of art. This connection allows authors of historiographic metafiction to consciously alter history in their works, to bring further questions about relations of reality and the work. Therefore, authors of historiographic metafiction consciously admit the work is actually fictional but moreover, they admit they modify historical features to serve their purpose. But this alteration is not often based on change of the past events; it is more based on different explanations and approaches to past events. The basic idea for this is that history can be approached and explained from many various points of view, and that there is no general truth. For example, Linda Hutcheon mentions Susan Deitch's novel “*L.C.*” as an example

of this approach, in which two translations of a fictional diary are being compared, and the result is very surprising. The biography is consciously admitted as metafictional text, but it is approached from two different points of view which give it different meanings. (Hutcheon, 1988: 110).

Metafiction is one of the most outstanding features of postmodernist fiction. It works as a means of broadening readers' perception of reality and makes readers perceive fiction as a way writers express themselves and as a means of presenting opinions in stories, not as an attempt to depict a realistic story.

2.2 Parody, Irony

Parody and Irony in postmodern works is used in various forms as a means of poetics of postmodernism. The major element of parody in postmodernism consists in the overly exaggerated observance of the formal structure of a work. By following the tradition of the formal structure and by exaggeration of following the tradition, postmodern authors create pastiche of the genres they imitate. Often, authors exaggerate thus parody the literary form by constant reminders of the age the novel's plot takes place. By overly precise depiction of the historical background, political or religious situation of the era their novel is situated in. "...these art works share one major contradictory characteristic: they are all overtly historical and unavoidably political, precisely because they are formally parodic." (Hutcheon, 1988: 23). But authors do not only imitate the styles and exaggerate the forms of it, they often consciously breach the form they in other cases consciously observe, moreover, they consciously admit the breach of the form. Hutcheon states

"What I mean by "parody" here—as elsewhere in this study—is not the ridiculing imitation of the standard theories ... parodic practice suggests a redefinition of parody as repetition with critical distance that allows ironic signalling of difference ... In historiographic metafiction, in film, in painting, in music, and in architecture, this parody paradoxically enacts both change and cultural continuity."

(Hutcheon, 1988: 26)

Therefore, parody in the postmodern context does not consist in ridiculing of the features of a particular topic or style, but the essence of it is in creating a pastiche of it with some

of the important features exaggerated. This exaggeration in connection with breaching of the literary form leads to unusual features postmodern novels often have, such as multiple endings, loosening of borders between reality and fantasy, multiple parallel plot lines, or multiple endings. The element of multiple endings is a result of the previous developments in writing techniques. Postmodern authors result from modernist open endings and exaggerate it adding one or more alternate endings or end with an open ending in which their work lacks closure.

“Fowles’s A Maggot, Thomas’s The White Hotel, Atwood’s The Handmaid’s Tale. Banville’s Doctor Copernicus ends with “DC”—both the protagonist’s initials and the (initiating/reiterating) da capo which refuses closure. Similarly, the modernist tradition of the more “open” ending is both used and abused by postmodern self-consciously multiple endings”

(Hutcheon, 1988: 59)

Irony in postmodernist novels is another important element connected with the element of parody. Important feature of irony is that it is not being used to mock the work, or the literary form the postmodern work parodies, but to keep readers aware and to make them think about the work they are reading. The element of irony does not make postmodernist works satirical and non-serious, but the exact opposite. Irony hereby works as a cause which makes readers use critical thinking, broader perception of reality and usage of the knowledge from ‘the outside’ of the novel.

“As Umberto Eco has said, about both his own historiographic metafiction and his semiotic theorizing, the “game of irony” is intricately involved in seriousness of purpose and theme. In fact, irony may be the only way we can be serious today.”

(Hutcheon, 1988: 39)

Both of the elements can be used together to accent themselves mutually. Authors creating a pastiche of a certain style or form exaggerate the form of their work, but alongside it they breach the rules they obey and consciously admit it, but on this account, when consciously admitting the remark on it is often done as an ironical remark in which

authors do not mock the form or genre they write a pastiche of, but they ironize themselves in account of reminding readers of doing so.

2.3 Intertextuality

Intertextuality is an element of postmodern poetics which connects postmodern fiction with other works of art, especially literary work, but also with fine arts, theatre or cinematography. It is an important means of poetics of postmodernism which can put postmodernist fiction in context, or put already existing work in a different context.

Intertextuality may exist in various forms in postmodernist fiction. The boldest of them are direct quotations of other works of art. Authors of postmodern fiction in intent of further illustration of the topic of the novel, or in need of putting their work in context, often to accent the era in which the plot of their fiction takes place (see 3.2) or to broaden the meaning of their fiction. It is also often used to put another work of art into a new context to illustrate how the meaning of a text can be changed when it is put in a different context or interpreted differently.

“A literary work can actually no longer be considered original; if it were, it could have no meaning for its reader. It is only as part of prior discourses that any text derives meaning and significance.”

(Hutcheon, 1988: 126)

These allusions to another works of art, in connection with the element of parody often express metafictionality of a postmodern work. Another means of intertextuality are brief allusions in the text of a work done by the author or by the characters of the work. In these allusions, the other works of art or various authors are mentioned in dialogues, monologues or by the narrative voice of a work. This element puts postmodern works in context of other works of art and in the context of the world, for it does admit the work is an artefact, which alludes to a different existing artefact. Moreover, this type of allusions gives writers the ability to illustrate their work better and easily put it into context without the need of complicated explanations. According to McHale, the works both a postmodernist work and the works which are being alluded to in the work are put in the

same space. *“That is, they all belong to the projected space of the fictional universe, the space concretized by readers in the process of reading the text”* (McHale, 1987: 56).

The element of intertextuality creates a space, a web of works to which a postmodernist work alludes, and which in contrary put the postmodernist work in context of them and broaden the meaning of the content. McHale concludes this stating:

“By this account, an intertextual space is constituted whenever we recognize the relations among two or more texts, or between specific texts and larger categories such as genre, school, period.”

(McHale, 1987: 57)

Therefore, any allusion to another work of art creates an intertextual space. And as a feature typical of postmodern fiction, works are put in context consciously, therefore authors intentionally create these intertextual spaces as a means of poetics of postmodernism

“...these other art forms parodically cite the intertexts of both the “world” and art and, in so doing, contest the boundaries that many would unquestioningly use to separate the two.”

(Hutcheon, 1988: 127)

This makes postmodern fiction different from other types of fiction, for its intertextuality is conscious, has a purpose, facilitates metafiction, and works as one of the major means of poetics of postmodernism.

2.4 Incorporation of academic themes into narrative

In postmodernist fiction, academic themes are often incorporated into the narrative. This element of poetics of postmodernism enables to perceive a postmodern work not only as a work of fiction, but as a set of essays incorporated into narrative. It divides a work of postmodern fiction into a set of layers which can be perceived separately, which are focused to one specific topic. These passages incorporating academic themes also further illustrate the plot of narrative and are connected to it, moreover they often help in development of the plot of a postmodern work. This connection of popular and academic writing creates a paradox for the postmodern fiction

may be inaccessible for non-academic readers but for academic readers may be postmodern fiction too popular. *“A further postmodern paradox that this particular kind of fiction enacts is to be found in its bridging of the gap between elite and popular art.”* (Hutcheon, 1988: 20). But it does not implicate postmodern works cannot be successful, for there are many works which can be both, successful at both, readers and academics, as Hutcheon states

“But what has not been dealt with is the paradox of novels like The French Lieutenant’s Woman or The Name of the Rose themselves being at once popular bestsellers and objects of intense academic study.”

(Hutcheon, 1988: 20)

The most common themes in postmodernist fiction are theology, philosophy or sociology. Theological themes often unveil paradoxes of religion, hypocrisy of religious people, or a conflict between believers and non-believers. Philosophical themes explain behaviour of characters and apply philosophical theories, or inspire authors to create characters which behave according to a specific philosophy. Sociology is an outstanding theme in historiographic metafiction, for it draws attention to the lifestyle of people from various historical periods and makes a comparison to the lifestyle of the modern age. Via these comparisons, authors are able to criticise or adore the societies of the past, meditate on their way of thinking and on their behaviour, or on their cultural customs. Hutcheon concludes this means of postmodern poetics by her statement

“Historiographic metafiction clearly acknowledges that it is a complex institutional and discursive network of elite, official, mass, popular cultures that postmodernism operates in.”

(Hutcheon, 1988: 21)

The connection of popular and academic topics in postmodern fiction makes these works appealing for both, academic and non-academic readers and makes them outstanding amongst other works of fiction.

3 The French Lieutenant's Woman – Analysis

The French Lieutenant's Woman bears a variety of the poetics of postmodernism. The most characteristic is the metafictional narrative of the novel. The metafictional features are mostly expressed by technique of the active narrative voice. Fowles himself even enters the novel as a minor character, as an impersonation of the narrator in the last third of the novel. In connection to metafictionality, the novel is consciously written as the Victorian novel but Fowles exaggerates the features of the Victorian novel, moreover, he consciously admits it, therefore the novel is a pastiche of the Victorian novel. Knowing this, readers realise Fowles parodies the genre by using and exaggerating the features of it. Next feature of postmodern poetics in the novel are allusions to other works of art. Both, the quotes at the beginning of each chapter, and the allusions in the body of the text itself. Another theme and a postmodern feature of the novel is the topic of feminism. The character of Sarah Woodruff represents strong solitary independent women, but the topic was unknown to writers of Victorian novels. Alongside feminism, the topics of Christianity and Philosophy are in question in the novel, especially the conflict between Christianity and Darwinism. The last postmodern feature of the poetics of postmodernism in the novel to be analysed is its multiple endings as it is, alongside metafictionality, the most distinctive feature of postmodern poetics in the novel connected to the feature of parody and irony.

3.1 Metafictional Features

The metafictional features in the novel are introduced even before the beginning of the text of the novel itself. In the Acknowledgments, Fowles thanks for permissions to quote various works, both fictional and non-fictional. Alongside the fictional works, he thanks for permission to “steal” from *Human Documents of the Victorian Golden Age*. He recommends the book to any reader who would like to know more about the reality behind the novel (Fowles, 2004: Acknowledgments). Hereby Fowles consciously admits

that *The French Lieutenant's Woman* is on the one hand a fictional work of art, and on the other hand it is a pastiche of the Victorian novel (see 3.2). Both of this information inform readers about metafictionality of the novel.

3.1.1 **Role of the Narrator, and John Fowles himself as a character**

The first remarkable means of the poetics of postmodernism and a device which makes the novel metafictional is the role of the narrator. The novel is written in the third person narrative, which is the most common narrative point of view in fiction generally used. But in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, the role of the narrator is different from the traditional concept. The narrator in the novel acts as an active commentator of the plot. He remarks on the plot, brings his own ideas, and even directly addresses and asks readers. It is not mentioned, whether the narrator is Fowles himself, or a fictional writer impersonating the narrator, but as it will be explained further, there are many clues the narrator is John Fowles himself.

Via his remarks and commentaries, the narrator makes readers aware the story is just a work of fiction made up by the writer. In this case it can be said that Fowles himself consciously admits the novel is his work of fiction, his attempt to create the Victorian novel, or a pastiche of the Victorian novel. He does it by mentioning in which time period and in which year the plot takes place. Fowles almost exaggerates this information. Furthermore, Fowles makes comparisons of the Victorian age and of the “present” time (time when the novel was written). These remarks and comparisons are to be analysed further in this work (see 3.1.2). By these constant remarks, readers are continually and constantly reminded they are reading a fictional work of art, not a real story, hereby they realize metafictionality of the novel.

A remarkable example of the work with the role of the narrator can be found in Chapter 13. The chapter does not tell anything about the story but it is a commentary on the plot and a message for readers. A few of the passages in the chapter are almost essayistic. All the ideas are written in the first-person singular as Fowles meditates on previous and on further development of the plot, and about the whole work. In this chapter, he consciously and clearly admits the novel is purely fictional as he remarks: “*This story I am telling is all imagination. These characters I create never existed outside my own mind.*” (Fowles, 2004: 95). These sentences clearly show the novel is a metafictional work. Fowles compares his role to the role of God in his omnipotent

possibilities to do whatever he likes with the characters of the novel. In connection to this, he admits he is working accordingly to the conventions of the Victorian novelists and thereby again admits metafictionality of the work. In the next topic of this chapter Fowles meditates on his role as an author and generally about the purpose of his writing. He meditates on whether the novel is his ‘transposed autobiography’ or a collection of essays put in the form of prose (95). Later, he meditates on reasons for which authors write their works and comes to the conclusion “...we wish to create worlds as real as, but other than the world that is.” (96). Fowles explains that authors, in spite of their omniscience cannot plan everything they write in advance, for the world they create may start working its own way. He admits he lets himself to be carried away by the world he creates. In his imagination, he lets his characters to act independently despite his plans and intentions, and on this account, the characters are more believable and “they begin to live” (96). Further, he comments on how the situation in the previous chapter developed according to his theory of the characters getting independent on the intended plot. He remarks he is the only and the most reliable witness to their actions and it is needed to give the characters freedom in their behaviour despite they are made up and live only in his imagination. Further in the chapter, Fowles meditates on fictionality of the characters. Although he admits the novel is a work of fiction, he remarks the characters are inspired by real people that any reader can meet in their lives and compares it with an individual’s past, which is also being fictionalized and changed in people’s memories. In the last part of the chapter, Fowles explains the reasons behind his characters’ behaviour, how did they “disobeyed” his intentions and why. This information would never be included in the other parts of the novel, if there was not this chapter. In Chapter 13 Fowles consciously admits metafictionality of the novel in all techniques he can. Fowles remarks on the story, he meditates on his role of the writer and of the narrator, and on his omniscient abilities. He admits the characters could behave in a different way if he wanted them to, and finally he queries the relations between the novel and the reality.

A similar type of remark can be found in Chapter 35, which is also not a chapter focused on the plot, but comments on the culture (see 3.1.2.2), and on the plot. It is again, almost an essayistic type of chapter. Fowles acts as the active narrator here, presenting his ideas and opinions. Commenting in the first person singular acts again as a character of the novel. Further, he admits his conscious attempt to write the Victorian novel, but remarks he came through a topic of which the Victorian authors did not write, and the

topic is sex. He mentions Tom Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* (see 3.3.2) and meditates on it. After presenting his ideas, he gets back to commenting on the story, introducing the paragraph by "*So let us descend to our own sheep.*" (Fowles, 2004: 275). And explains why his characters act the way they act. Again, this active commentary makes readers aware they are reading a work of fiction – about the metafictionality of the novel, and the expression 'own sheep' acts as a reminder of Fowles' omnipotence. Using the word '*sheep*', Fowles puts himself in the role of a metaphorical shepherd, of a god who takes care of the '*sheep*' he created and whose destiny lays in his hands only.

A few pages further, Sarah unpacks her baggage in Exeter. She unpacks a Toby jug which she bought earlier. Fowles comments on this action in two remarks. One remark is in brackets "... (*ceramic experts may recognize a Ralph Wood*) ..." (Fowles, 2004: 280). This remark is almost an exaggerated commentary, an attempt to describe the "reality" in the novel. It acts as a contrast to the metafictional features and commentaries throughout the novel reminding of the fictionality of the novel, but simultaneously it acts as a metafictional device due to the remark about the ceramic experts, for the commentary is made by the narrator. A few lines further, Fowles mentions he himself bought the same Toby jug and mentions Sarah's reasons for buying it and compares it to his reasons. "...*I fell for the Ralph Wood part of it. She fell for the smile.*" (280). By this commentary, he expresses metafictionality of the novel and proves his theory of the characters' own lives in his imagination, for he shows Sarah's reasons for buying the mug.

In Chapter 44, Fowles starts to play games with readers. In this chapter, he introduces the first (but not the definite) ending (see 3.5). By bringing the ending, Fowles again proves the metafictionality of the novel, because in the following chapter, he consciously admits the ending was only a formal feature to fit his novel to the Victorian novel traditions.

*"...AND now, having brought this **fiction** to a thoroughly traditional ending...all I have described in the last two chapters, it did not happen quite in the way you may have been led to believe."*

(Fowles, 2004: 342)

Alongside this, after the fake ending Fowles comments on the future of side characters, such as the servants Sam and Mary who got in a romantic relationship. He asks readers

“...who could be bothered with the biography of servants?” (340). With this ironical remark, Fowles breaks traditions of the Victorian novel which is often widely branched due to following storylines of minor characters. Metafictionality of this chapter also consists in questioning the relation between the reality and the novel. It makes readers think about this simple “happy” endings of novels in general, for it is clear the fake ending is a parody of happy conclusions because of Fowles’ remarks.

In Chapter 55, Fowles goes even further in his role of an additional character in the novel. He does not stay “outside” of the novel as a narrator (although active, but without any ‘physical’ appearance in the novel), but he enters the plot as an actual character – an impersonation of himself. In the chapter Charles Smithson takes a train from Exeter to London. Whilst waiting in the train to start, a man enters his compartment. For a few paragraphs, the narrator (Fowles) describes the man from Charles’ point of view, thinking about the fashion of his clothing, his manners, meditating about his possible occupation deduced from previous ideas. After while Charles falls asleep and the attitude of Fowles the Narrator gradually changes until he reveals the man is actually a writer because of the way he looks at Charles the way he does. After a few commentaries and remarks, Fowles the Narrator confesses the man is himself – Fowles the Character, a man on the train. After the confession, the narrative voice changes from the third person singular to the first-person singular. Despite entering the novel as a character, Fowles does not interact with Charles whatsoever, but starts to think how the plot should develop further. Thinking as the writer, but also as the character, he meditates on how the future of Charles Smithson should develop after the train stops in London. Furthermore, Fowles meditates on his omnipotent powers as the writer – the ability to do whatever he wants with fates of his characters. Fowles also meditates on Charles’s intentions and propriety of the actions he is about to take in London. He compares these abilities with fixing the box fight “*the writer puts the conflicting wants in the ring and then describes the fight – but in fact fixes the fight letting that want he himself favours win.*” (Fowles, 2004: 409). These passages again question the relations between the reality and the novel, between the writer and his work, and moreover, consciously admit the reader is still reading a fictional work where the writer has omnipotent abilities and is able to do whatever he wants. Again, this chapter proves metafictionality of the novel by showing readers these ideas. When Fowles finishes presenting his ideas, he only mentions Charles is waking up,

the narrative voice changes back to third person, and he makes himself to get off the train in Paddington.

John Fowles the Character appears in the novel once more in the alternate ending (see 3.5). He is introduced by John Fowles the Narrator similarly as in the previous case – by the description of the appearance and of the actions of a man, who is very similar to the man on the train in Chapter 55. In this passage, the narrative voice does not change and Fowles the Narrator does not amalgamate with Fowles the Character, but in spite of this, he performs one important action and does not remain as a passive observer. “*He makes a small adjustment to the time.*” (Fowles, 2004: 465). This action of John Fowles the Character is explained that he is just fixing his watch to have an excuse to be late for his appointment, but it is clear, he makes an excuse to get back in time to create an alternate ending. Alongside the ending (see 3.5), metafictionality of this event lies in giving readers a clue and showing them the omnipotence of the author, showing possible relations between the novel and the reality.

The role of the narrator in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* is very important. The narrator is, in fact, John Fowles himself, and more than a narrator, he is one of novel's characters. Via his commentaries and remarks, he makes readers aware of they are reading a fictional work, he himself expresses metafictionality of the novel. Moreover, he creates a character of himself and in two passages he even enters the plot to show readers his omniscience as the narrator and as the author. As an active narrator, he often directly addresses and asks the reader, and in the essayistic chapters he also asks questions about relations between his fiction and the reality outside of it. Also, he meditates on possibilities of writers to do whatever they want with their characters, moreover he meditates on righteousness of writers' decisions about their works' development.

3.1.1.1 Footnote remarks and commentaries

Besides the commentaries and remarks done by the narrator, Fowles added explanatory footnotes throughout the whole novel. These footnotes concern various information to illustrate presented ideas, or to inform readers about historical context of the Victorian Age. In most cases, they are allusions to other works of art, which is one of the means of the poetics of postmodernism (see 3.3), or explanation of historical, political, and cultural background of the Victorian age, which is a means of historiographic metafiction. Most of these allusive and explanatory footnotes are accompanied by

Fowles's remarks which connect them to the plot of the novel. These remarks in the footnotes express metafictionality of the novel in a similar way as it was described above (see 3.1.1) – by conscious reminding the novel is a work of fiction, and by a comparison of cultural traditions of the Victorian age to Fowles' age.

Besides shorter and more explanatory footnotes, there are few longer and more important footnotes expressing Fowles' ideas which did not fit in the primary text. The first important footnote is in Chapter 14. The footnote explains and ironizes traditional conversation topics which would Mrs Tranter and Mrs Poultney lead. The footnote explains the political events in connection to Mr Disraeli and Mr Gladstone, and Mrs Poultney's attitude towards their beliefs. Moreover, it uses Marx's remark on British Whigs. In this footnote, Fowles puts his character's opinion in the context of the age to explain their beliefs. This commentary is a means of metafiction, for the active narrator gives readers additional information about his characters. Besides, it works as an ironic remark to illustrate the narrow-mindedness of Victorian conservative Christians.

Next important footnote is in Chapter 28. In this chapter, Charles is given a medical report by Dr Grogan to read it, because Grogan suspects Sarah to fit the diagnosis of hysterical woman. It concerns the story of La Roncière, who had been unjustly sued for being unfaithful to his mistress (which was later diagnosed with hysteria). The footnote brings the rest of the story of La Roncière's life showing he actually was not sued unjustly, for he really had been unfaithful. The footnote refers to a document called *Les Erreurs Judiciares* (Judicial Errors) released in Paris, 1968 (Fowles, 2004: 236). This footnote works as a means of metafiction; it brings the described events to the context of the age when the novel was written. By the time Fowles was writing the novel, it was proven the case of La Roncière had been a judicial error. This commentary would never appear in a classical Victorian novel nor in a pastiche following all the customs and traditions of the Victorian novel.

Another two important footnotes are in Chapter 35. In the chapter, Fowles meditates on and explains the role of sex in the Victorian era, and compares it to his age (see 3.1.2). The former footnote brings readers history of sheath and mentions alternative ways of birth control used in the 19th century. Fowles hereby quotes a work of Dr Drysdale which describes it. As a means of metafiction, this footnote brings information from a trustworthy source and informs readers about the culture of the Victorian era and partly explains the role of sex in it. Two pages further, Fowles explains pre-marriage sex

customs of Dorset peasants from 19th century, on the one hand he quotes “...*a lady still living. She was born in 1883. Her father was Tom Hardy’s doctor.*” (Fowles, 2004: 272) (He does not mention whether she is fictional or real), and on the other hand, he adds a footnote to this quote, which explains the topic further. Again, in the footnote Fowles brings almost an encyclopaedic explanation and facts about the matter explaining it precisely and illustrating the society of 19th century. But this exaggerated explanation works as a means of metafiction, for it alerts readers they are reading a fictional story.

The last remarkable footnote is found in Chapter 48. The footnote concerns commentary on religion and on the religious situation in Britain of 19th century. The commentary is rather critical and relates to the index in the text. The footnote is preceded by information about British atheists and agnostics who “...*made fun of follies of the Church ... of its luxurious bishops...its absentee rectors.*” (Fowles, 2004: 362). The footnote explains the reasons for why the atheists made fun of the Anglican Church. It is an ironic remark to illustrate those follies and present readers circumstances of the age. For its ironical tone and for bringing information from other sources, furthermore for providing the exact information the footnote works as a means of metafiction.

The footnotes work as an extension of the narrator’s (Fowles’s) remarks on the plot, as a device which allows him to present more personal opinions on the plot as well as factual information illustrating the Victorian era, or as a device providing information about quoted literature, or literature on which are allusions in the text. The footnotes concern various means of the poetics of postmodernism ranging from allusion to parody, but mainly, they are a device of metafiction, and of historiographic metafiction, because they provide extra information from the “outside” of the novel. Moreover, the literary function of the footnotes (it can exist in literary works of art only, not in the reality) consciously alerts readers they read a work of fiction.

3.1.2 Remarks on the time periods, cultural and social differences, and their comparison to the modern age

Alongside the role, and the character of the narrator is metafictionality of the novel expressed by constant remarks on the time period in which the novel takes place. Fowles often remarks on the Victorian age and compares it to his age (2nd half of 20th century) highlighting the cultural, political, and social differences. These remarks work as means of metafiction in two ways – in one way as commentaries of the narrator (see 3.1.1), in

the second way the remarks remind readers the novel was written in 20th century as a pastiche of the Victorian novel, and that the plot is purely fictional. Through these remarks and commentaries Fowles makes readers aware of fictionality of the novel.

3.1.2.1 Remarks on the time periods, and its comparisons to the modern age

An important device of metafictionality in the novel is the narrator's constant remarking about the time period in which the plot takes place. Via these remarks, Fowles makes readers alert of metafictionality of the novel. Frequently, Fowles remarks on differences between the "modern age" in which the novel was written, and the Victorian era. But some of the comments concern the Victorian stereotypes seen from 20th century man's point of view (particularly Fowles') and in the connection with the active narrator technique create an atmosphere of distance and remind of fictionality of the novel, thus work as a means of metafiction.

The very first remark concerning comparison of the era John Fowles wrote the novel in and of the Victorian era in which the novel's plot takes place appears in the first paragraph of the first chapter. It is March of 1867. This accent on precise time specification and almost exaggeration of reminding in which time period the plot takes place works as a means of metafiction. Supposing, readers know when John Fowles lived (20th century) they are thus forced to realize the story is fictional, as he is trying not to create a story to believe that happened in the Victorian age, but the story which is completely fictional, and furthermore, he consciously admits it. There are two more remarks about the age of the story in the first chapter, through which Fowles makes readers aware that the novel is a work of fiction. The former remark comments on the Cobb (famous harbour wall) and the landscape around Lyme Regis. Fowles comments on how did the Cobb look like "*then*" and that it did not change since the year 1867 until the day the novel was written "*...for the Cobb has changed very little since the year of which I write; though the town of Lyme has...*" (Fowles, 2004: 4) (Fowles lived in Lyme Regis since 1968 until his death). The latter remark comments on the clothes of the lady standing on the end of the Cobb (Sarah Woodruff). Fowles says that "*another wind was blowing in 1867*" (4–5) and that different colours and shapes of clothes were used in the Victorian age. These remarks assure readers the novel is purely fictional because Fowles tries to

describe the landscape, the weather, and the lady's clothes as accurately as possible but still consciously admits it is a matter of past, but the novel was written in Fowles' present. The first chapter acts both, as an introduction to the novel's plot, and as an introduction to metafictional narrative of the novel which readers must be well aware of.

A similar remark, on the town's setting is found in Chapter 36. It describes Exeter of 1867, particularly one quarter of it where Sarah Woodruff goes to find an apartment. Fowles remarks

“Exeter, a hundred years ago, was a great deal farther from the capital ... it therefore provided some of the wicked amenities ... It would be an exaggeration to say that the city had a red light quarter in 1867...”

(Fowles, 2004: 276)

In this remark Fowles expresses the novel was written a hundred years later the plot thus admits fictionality of it.

In Chapter 4, Fowles describes the house of Mrs Poulteney's, particularly the basement kitchen. He remarks that according to today's norms; the kitchen would be absolutely inappropriate but for people of 1867 the kitchen was adequate. Again, he puts stress on differences between the age in which the plot takes place and the age in which the novel was written. In the following chapter, Fowles describes looks of Ernestina, commenting *“An orthodox Victorian would perhaps have mistrusted that imperceptible hint of Becky Sharp; ...”* (Fowles, 2004: 26). On one hand, this sentence is an allusion to *Vanity Fair* (see 3.3), on the other hand, it is a commentary on the Victorian stereotype reminding readers of the Victorian era in which the plot takes place thus it reminds readers the novel is a fictional work thus works as a device of metafiction.

In Chapters 12 and 16, Fowles makes a similar remark comparing the modern age to the Victorian age by mentioning modern inventions, which today are common but in the Victorian period were not invented yet. Both remarks concern electricity (electric lights were introduced in 1881 in the United Kingdom as the first public electric appliance) and television. The former remark is included in the description of a house in the night. *“The house was silent, and the town as well, for people went to bed by nine in those days before electricity and television.”* (Fowles, 2004: 93). This sentence, particularly the phrase *“in those days”* is reminder of fictionality of the novel, for it reminds readers the Victorian

age is past, and for the novel was written in the age of electricity and television. The latter remark on this topic is mentioned in the connection with Charles' thoughts on his relationship with Ernestina and his doubts about the Victorian customs. He does not want to lose his freedom, he meditates on the bounds which the marriage would bring and on the duties given by customs and society of the age. "*And the evenings! Those gaslit hours that had to be filled, and without benefit of cinema or television!*" (113). On the one hand, this whole passage is an ironic commentary on the Victorian stereotypes (see 3.2), but the remark on television and cinema brings the same reminder as the former one – the novel was written in the age of electricity, television, and cinema and is a work of fiction.

Next comparison of the ages is made in Chapter 17. Charles, Ernestina, and Mrs Tranter go to see a concert. An archaic expression 'gooseberry' is introduced and used to describe Ernestina's attitude, and later commented on. "... *in the 1860s 'gooseberry' meant 'all this is dreary and old-fashioned'; today Ernestina would have called those worthy concert-goers square...*" (Fowles, 2004: 128). Metafictionality of this remark lies, as of the above-mentioned remarks, in explanation of the meaning of the expression and in its comparison to the modern equivalent of it. Fowles consciously admits the difference between vocabulary of the Victorian period and of the modern age, thus reminds readers of fictionality of his work. A similar remark is found in Chapter 18 where Charles meets Sarah. When he is leaving, Sarah's expression is described. "*Very few Victorians chose to question the virtues of such cryptic coloration; ... it as a timid look. Yet behind it lay a very modern phrase: Come clean...*" (Fowles, 2004: 146). Hereby, Fowles again presents readers a comparison to a modern phrase instead of complicated periphrastic description, which would have been used in the Victorian age (if the novel was written then). The explanation again expresses the novel is a fictional work written in 20th century.

In Chapter 19 is described and explained Sarah's relationship with Millie, another female servant of Mrs Poulteney's (see 3.5). Fowles briefly explains Millie's background. She lived in a cottage in country as a child. Fowles mentions the cottage now belongs to a young architect from London who goes there on weekends and loves it. Thereon mentions it "*exorcizes the Victorian horrors that took place there.*" (Fowles, 2004: 159). He mentions the stories about those 'horrors' and compares them to "...*pernicious a sentimentalization, therefore a suppression of reality, as that in our own Hollywood films of 'real life'.*" (159). In this passage metafictionality is being expressed by putting accent on the reminder of the Victorian era, by providing the information about current owner

of the cottage, by comparison of the stories with Hollywood movies, and by using the expression 'real life'.

In Chapter 31, Fowles brings almost sociological description of the Victorians. He describes the Victorians from a modern man's point of view and presents differences between the modern and the Victorian way of thinking and existing. He brings this remark to illustrate Charles' decision and actions he takes in the chapter during his meeting with Sarah. Fowles introduces the remark by "*In spite of Hegel, the Victorians were not a dialectically minded age;*" (Fowles, 2004: 250). Alongside the sentence is the narrator's commentary, this sentence is written in past tense, which shows readers the novel is written later than in the Victorian era. The remark goes on in describing the way of thinking of the Victorians "*...they did not think naturally in opposites, of positives and negatives as aspects of the same whole.*" (250). Although it is not mentioned, these remarks are comparison to the modern way of thinking, making readers realize differences between the Victorian age and the modern age. It works as a document showing these differences and works as a metafictional device.

In Chapter 38, Fowles brings two remarks on the ages' comparison. In the first remark, he compares the Victorian and the modern age's traffic-jams stating "*Mid-Victorian traffic-jams were quite as bad as modern ones – and a good deal noisier, since every carriage-wheel had an iron tyre...*" (Fowles, 2004: 292). By this remark are the readers reminded the novel is a work of art written in the modern age. In the following paragraph, Fowles comments on the types of people Charles can see walking on the street. As one of these types, Fowles lists street-sweepers adding in a bracket "*a much commoner profession when the horse reigned*" (293). Alongside the funny aspect of the remark, it makes the readers aware the novel is a work of art written much later than the Victorian era, when the street-sweepers and horses were more commonly to be seen on the streets.

These comparisons of the ages' differences, remarks, commentaries and reminders of the aspects of the Victorian era by Fowles work as means of metafiction, for it constantly and consciously remind readers they are reading a fictional story which is meant to be approached and read as fictional.

3.1.2.2 **Remarks on the Victorian culture and society, and their comparison to the modern age**

Similarly, to the above-mentioned technique of the time periods comparison, Fowles compares the culture, and the society of the Victorian age to the modern age, and comments on it via his narrator persona. Metafictionality is expressed in the similar way as in the comparison of the time periods – by reminding the novel was written a century later than the plot takes place.

The first comparison of the cultures is in Chapter 7. Fowles comments on the ‘new’ attitudes in behaviour, which emerged after the mid-century. He mentions Charles’ servant Sam to be an example of those ‘snobs’, although he is a servant and a quite not intelligent man. Fowles compares him to a group of people from 20th century in the sense of clothing. “*He had a very sharp sense of clothes style – quite as sharp as a ‘mod’ of the 1960s...*” (Fowles, 2004: 43). Mods was a social subculture, which emerged in 1960s in London. Mods had a distinctive style of clothing and hairstyle. This comparison of the cultures comments on the historical development of English society, but from the modern age’s point of view, comparing a Victorian servant’s style of clothing to the subculture of 20th century. By this remark the readers are reminded Fowles wrote the novel in 20th century as a work of fiction.

In Chapter 16, Charles meets Sarah unexpectedly in the Undercliff. It is the first time he meets her privately and when he sees her face closely. Fowles describes features and lines of her face and Charles’ opinions on it, and Charles’ thoughts why does he feel attracted to her. Thereto he comments on her face himself as the narrator mentioning, she has not got the Edwardian age type of face nor the Victorian age type of face (according to taste of the Victorian Age). He describes the face as beautiful, but unusual for the Victorian Era “*I do not mean that she had one of those masculine ... faces popular in the Edwardian Age ... and once again did not (Sarah’s face) correspond with current taste...*” (Fowles, 2004: 119). Further in this passage, Fowles compares Sarah’s face with the taste in beauty of the Victorian Age. Mentioning this Fowles admits the novel is a fictional work written in 20th century, on the one hand by comparing the features of Sarah’s face with the taste in beauty of the Edwardian Age, which begun in 1901 – a long time after the novel’s plot takes place, and on the other hand by comparing Sarah with the taste in beauty of the Victorian age, mentioning retrospectively as the active narrator she did not correspond with the taste.

In Chapter 17, Fowles remarks on the Victorian society. Charles, Ernestina and Mrs Tranter go to see a concert.

“Our broader-minded three had come early, like most of the rest of the audience; for these concerts were really enjoyed – in true eighteenth century style – as much for the company as for the music.”

(Fowles, 2004: 127)

The remark again alerts readers the novel’s plot takes place in past and the novel is written as a purely fictional work.

The next remark concerning the culture of the Victorian age is found in Chapter 20. Preceded by Sarah narrating Charles the reason why she is called ‘The French Lieutenant’s Woman’, Fowles as the narrator meditates on differences between the Victorian Age and the modern age in the topic of sex. Fowles, here, meditates on differences between the Victorian age’s and the modern age’s thinking in the terms of physical attraction. He mentions nowadays, it is natural to feel attracted to the other sex both, physically and mentally. One realises and admits it to oneself and thinks about it, but in the Victorian age, this way of thinking was not allowed by the society. Fowles comments *“We consider such frankness ... healthy, but in Charles’s time private minds did not admit the desires banned by the public mind...”* (Fowles, 2004: 177). In the next paragraph, Fowles goes further on this topic of ‘prudery’ of the Victorian age, commenting on clothes and architecture of the era and mentioning its asexuality. Again, the comparison of the cultures and the accent on the time period reminds readers about fictionality of the novel and work as means of metafiction.

In Chapter 26, an important remark on the society of the Victorian age is found. Fowles focuses on the relationship between masters and their servants, illustrating it on the relationship between Sam and Charles. Fowles mentions Sam is an observer of everything what is happening around his master and that he is well aware of all those affairs. Particularly, Fowles comments on Sam’s knowledge about the event of Charles being disinherited of his inheritance from his uncle, for the uncle decided to get married in fairly high age. Fowles mentions

“Servants in those days were regarded as little more than furniture, and their masters often forgot they had both ears and intelligences; certain abrasive exchanges ... had not gone unnoticed.”

(Fowles, 2004: 213)

This remark again puts an accent on the era in which the plot takes place and reminds readers of it, it also documents the relationships between social groups and thus works as a means of metafiction.

A remarkable passage commenting on the society of the Victorian Age is found in Chapter 35. Similarly, to the chapters which are the narrator's (Fowles's) entries to comment on the plot, this chapter is a commentary on the Victorian society. The first part of the chapter comments on hypocrisy of the Victorian culture, asking *“What are we faced in the nineteenth century?”* (Fowles, 2004: 268). The paradox of the ‘prudery’ of the Victorian society on the one hand, but the number of brothels and prostitutes and their cheapness on the other.

“Where the female body had never been so hidden from the view; ... Where not a single novel, play or poem of literary distinction that ever goes beyond the sensuality of a kiss ... Where in was universally maintained that women do not have orgasms; and yet every prostitute was taught to simulate them.”

(Fowles, 2004: 269)

And then Fowles meditates on reasons for why these paradoxes existed in the Victorian age. Fowles continues the Victorians acted this way, because they chose so *“the way they expressed their seriousness was not to talk openly about sex...”* (270) and compares it to the modern attitude to sex. He concludes that the Victorians did not have less sex than the people in the modern age, but they chose not to talk nor show it publicly. He illustrates it with the description of pre-marriage sex customs of Devon peasants of 19th century and the testimony of a woman born in 1883 (who is said to be a daughter of Tom Hardy's doctor). Then Fowles meditates on Tom Hardy's visits to Dorset and analyses features of his work which concern sex. This chapter is an essay-like style passage in which Fowles meditates on paradoxes of sex in the Victorian culture and thus it works as a metafictional

device reminding readers about fictionality of the novel, moreover, it illustrates the history of the Victorian society and for it, it also works as means of metafiction.

The last two remarks on the Victorian culture to be mentioned are found in Chapter 49. The former remark is when Charles and Sarah finally reveal their feelings, and therefore Charles sets to deal with his personal issues to make the relationship between him and Sarah. Fowles directly addresses readers (see 3.1.1) saying they would suppose Charles to go straight back to meet Sarah and remarks “*A modern man would no doubt have gone straight back there.*” (Fowles, 2004: 370 – 371). Further, Fowles describes what Charles does to “*cleanse himself of past obligations*” (371) according to the Victorian Age’s morals and customs. The latter remark further explains the way of Charles’ thinking and generalises it on the whole Victorian society. Fowles mentions people from the Victorian Age had “*two minds*” (371). This passage partly follows up with Chapter 35 (see above) commenting on the paradox, and on the plurality of the Victorian way of thinking. “*...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.*” (371). Further, Fowles mentions various examples of this ‘schizophrenia’ and analyses it, but the utterance itself is a metafictional device. Alongside the accent on the age (using the expression ‘every Victorian’), the metafictionality of the sentence lies in Fowles’ usage of the expression ‘our travels back’. By this expression Fowles consciously admits the novel was written later.

The technique of commenting on the Victorian age and its society, and comparing it to the modern age works as a means of metafiction, and as a means of historiographic metafiction. Fowles draws readers’ attention to the era of the novel and by the comparisons to the modern age reminds readers the novel was written in 20th century as a work of fiction.

The essence of metafictionality in the remarks and commentaries, either on the age in which the plot takes place or on the comparison of the ages lie in providing information the novel was not written in the Victorian Age, but in 20th century as a pastiche of the Victorian novel. By comparing the societies and commenting on them, accenting the fact the plot takes place in the Victorian Age and conscious exaggeration of it, and providing readers the information from ‘outside’ of the plot make readers aware of the fictionality of the novel and makes them realize they are not reading a real story, but a fictional work of art.

3.2 Parody and Irony in the Novel

Parody in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* occurs in various forms, and is expressed by different methods. Parody in the novel implicates sarcastic commentaries of the narrator (Fowles) on the plot, and on the Victorian society; in the narrator's usage of words which would not appear in the classical Victorian novel; in exaggeration of the Victorian stereotypes; in comparison of the Victorian age and the modern age (see 3.1.2.2); in quotations of Karl Marx's works; and in transcriptions of accents in which the lower-class characters speak (the servants Sam and Mary). The form of the novel itself also closely trenches on parody of the form of the Victorian novel but more than a parody, it is a pastiche of the Victorian novel.

The first narrator's (Fowles's) ironical remark is found in Chapter 3. Fowles remarks on the relationship between Charles and Ernestina – the difference in their wits and in their approach to life. Ernestina is pictured as a selfish careless young woman, heir of a fortune; as long as Charles is pictured as an intelligent young scientist always meditating on the purpose of everything what happens to him. Fowles remarks

“Ernestina would never really understand him as well as he understood her.” and further *“...it was only 1867. He was only thirty-two years old. And he had always asked life too many questions.”*

(Fowles, 2004: 12)

The parody in the former remark lies in ironizing of the relationship and in direct mentioning of the reasons of Charles' and Ernestina's problems without long periphrastic descriptions. The latter remark ironically comments on how Charles complicates his life by 'thinking too much' almost in the way of man from 20th century. Fowles breaches the boundaries of a classical Victorian male character by giving him opinions of a modern man. In Chapter 4, Fowles ironically comments on the name of Mrs Poultney's housekeeper – Mrs Fairley. Fowles depicts her as a mean, embittered woman and further adds *“...how the ill-named Mrs Fairley...”* (Fowles, 2004: 20). Moreover, Fowles amplifies and extends the description of Mrs. Fairley by the remark *“There would be a place in the Gestapo for the lady...”* (21). Irony of the remark lies in the antinomy of Mrs Fairley's name and her attitude. Another ironical remark concerning Mrs Poultney and

Mrs Fairley is found in Chapter 12. Fowles ironizes the character of Mrs Poultney and mentions why she never goes outside and why does she hate Ware Commons¹ so much. As a reason, Fowles mentions she is an opium addict but remarks: “... *let me quickly add that she did not know it. What we call opium she called laudanum.*” (92). Irony of this remark lies in the fact the respectable woman Mrs Poultney, who despises with every sinful person in Lyme Regis, is in fact a drug addict although she is persuaded she is using a medical treatment to help her sleep. Moreover, this remark ironizes the whole Victorian era and the attitude the Victorians held towards opium. The next ironical remark is found in Chapter 16. The remark follows-up the remark on television (see 3.1.2.1). Fowles mentions, the ‘ordinary’ people who normally worked twelve hours a day had no problem going to bed early and had no need to enjoy themselves in the evening. Further, he remarks: “*But the unfortunate rich ... convention demanded that they must be bored in company.*” (Fowles, 2004: 113). By this remark, Fowles ironizes lives of rich people from the Victorian age. By putting them in the contrast to ‘ordinary’ people, he shows the social difference between social groups and ironizes the constant boredom of the rich who did not need to work for living – especially heirs of a fortune. Moreover, Fowles ironizes the way of life the rich people from the Victorian age led – instead of working throughout the day and going to bed in the evening, their boredom continued during evening meetings with other bored rich Victorians (in the novel it is a concert). In Chapter 17, Fowles shows parody via his role of the narrator by using words, which would never be used in the classical Victorian novel. The passage describes Sam’s thoughts on women and on communication with them. To describe it, Fowles remarks “...*as if he had been an Eskimo and she, a Zulu.*” (Fowles, 2004: 131). The words ‘Eskimo’ and ‘Zulu’ illustrate and exaggerate difference between sexes for they are from different parts of the World and have completely different languages. The parody of this remark is in the usage of the words. It was not common that authors of the Victorian age used names of ethnic groups, moreover, most of the people in the Victorian age did not even have knowledge about these ethnic groups.

Another remarkable usage of irony is found in Chapter 26. In this chapter, Charles visits his uncle to find out information about his uncle’s wedding and about the situation

¹ *Ware Commons* are famous cliffs near Lyme Regis. On the location, there is *The Undercliff* which is one of Britain’s natural reserves and where Charles goes to search for fossils and accidentally meets Sarah Woodruff. (Lyme Regis: Lyme Regis Town Council ©)

of his heritage. Charles finds out his uncle really getting married and he will be disinherited. He also, finds the house of the uncle's redecorated after a long period of time without any changes in decoration. Further, his uncle talks about the woman he is going to marry and explains "*there are things only a woman can bring...*" (Fowles, 2004: 216). The uncle mentions his future wife redecorated the house, because the hangings were gloomy, but he did not see it and says

"Now that's what a woman does. Makes you see what's in front of your nose."
and on this the narrator remarks "*Charles felt tempted to suggest that spectacles performed the same function a great deal more cheaply...*"

(Fowles, 2004: 216)

This ironical remark comments on Charles' loss of heritage on which he counted for the most of his life and expresses his rage with the uncle. Irony of this remark also lies in the narrator's mentioning of Charles' thoughts but not saying them. The narrator presents readers with Charles' rage, but does not let him, according to the Victorian customs, say it loud. This creates the inner tension in Charles and ironizes the ambiguity of one's opinions and the ambiguity of the Victorian manners.

In Chapter 17, Fowles parodies the manners of the Victorian society, especially the prejudice of the Victorian men, in Dr. Grogan's thoughts. Charles visits the doctor initiating the meeting with words "*I have something private and very personal to discuss. I need your advice.*" (Fowles, 2004: 221). Hearing this, the doctor immediately meditates on possible topics which are needed to be discussed by the young gentleman, but he thinks about it in the professional way and so the narrator describes Grogan's thoughts "*...well-bred young men come to him shortly before their marriage. Sometimes it was gonorrhoea, less often syphilis...*" (221). Only mentioning these ideas break the customs of the way the Victorian novel was written, because the sexual issues, furthermore the topic of venereal diseases was a taboo. Mentioning this in the text, Fowles clearly and consciously breaks these unwritten rules and parodies the way the Victorian novel was written. But Grogan's thoughts go on "*...sometimes it was mere fear, a masturbation phobia; a widespread theory of the time maintained that the wages of self-abuse was impotence...*" (216). This idea, alongside the breaking of above-mentioned sexual topic taboo clearly parodies the prejudice and narrow-mindedness of men of the Victorian era.

After this, the narrator mentions the doctor's experience with a man who came a year before and had to be explained a new life is not begotten through the navel (216) which only dramatizes the parody element.

In Chapter 32 Ernestina writes an entry in her diary. After the reader is presented the entry, the narrator comments on it. He remarks "*She wrote it partly for his eyes – as, like every other Victorian woman, she wrote partly for his eyes.*" (Fowles, 2004: 256). The parody in this remark is created by the paradox of the diary entry and by the narrator's remark and accent on the custom of the Victorian women. The narrator's almost exaggerated accent on the reminder of the Victorian women's custom to write diary entries for the eyes of their fiancés, husbands, or lovers mocks the custom and the ambiguity of it, for the *eyes* will never see the entry which was written for them to see. In Chapter 37, Charles visits Ernestina's father in their family mansion. In the chapter, Fowles presents closer information about Mr. Freeman. The reader is told Mr. Freeman "*...had become excessively earnest and Christian in his private life.*" (Fowles, 2004: 284) despite he is an ambitious, working man enjoying the benefits of the great socio-economical changes of 19th century. In an ironical manner, Fowles compares Mr. Freeman to the modern-day tycoons who, to improve their public image cover themselves in "*a nice patina of philanthropy*" (284), because Mr. Freeman "*...contributed handsomely to the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge and similar militant charities.*" (284). The ironical commentary carries on with "*When he went to heaven, he would have a happy labour force behind him...*" (284). The parody and irony in these remarks on Mr. Freeman is in the comparison with nowadays' rich men who do the same, but not in the Christian way. Fowles clearly states that these ways were necessary for the rich man in 19th century as well as they are nowadays. This concept clearly breaks and parodies the presumption that the Victorian gentlemen were honest Christians performing philanthropy selflessly as a service to public and to God.

In Chapter 43 Charles decides not to cancel his engagement with Ernestina on spite of his previous entanglement with Sarah and his growing feelings for her. In this chapter, Fowles starts with an ironical remark on "*a rational human behaviour*" (Fowles, 2004: 334) using the modern-day view on the Victorian age stating: "*Perhaps one can find more colour for the myth of a rational human behaviour in an iron age like the Victorian than in most others.*" (334). In this remark, Fowles combines two postmodern features which are irony and metafictionality. The metafictionality of the remark is in

reminding of the reader the novel was written in the modern age. The irony is in the usage of expression “*iron age like the Victorian*” for which the modern-day reader finds the Victorian age as an ancient, historical period of the United Kingdom which is long gone as well as the iron age which took place thousands of years before. But the period does not matter because both, the Victorian age and the iron age are history and both of the ages were unadvanced in the eyes of modern-day readers, for this there is no need to distinguish them eventhough there is a thousand years’ gap between them.

In Chapter 44 Charles comes back to Ernestina to make everything up with her and besides coming up with the first of the three novel’s endings (see 3.5) Fowles explains the irony of being Charles Smithson - the Victorian gentleman. Fowles shows readers the situation of Charles announcing Ernestina he finally decided to marry her by giving her a brooch and whispering a song’s lyrics “*...I wish tomorrow were our wedding day.*” (Fowles, 2004: 339). Then Fowles explains the irony of what had to be done in the Victorian age stating, “*It was simple: one lived by irony and sentiment, one observed convention ... one learnt to be what one was.*” (339). The irony of this passage is in the commentary on how gentlemen of the Victorian age had to “*learn what one was*” which means they had to restrain their real feelings or needs due to their social status and commitments. It draws comparison of the era the novel was written in and of the Victorian age, thereon Fowles as the narrator uses the expression “*one lived by irony*” seeing the life of the Victorian gentleman through the eyes of a man from the modern age in which nobody has to restrain feelings or act to his social status, at least not as much as it had to be done in the Victorian age, therefore this Fowles’s point of view ironizes the Victorian age in the novel.

In Chapter 47 Fowles uses modern-day technology expressions as the means of irony to describe the atmosphere of a moment. In this passage, Charles finally gives up on the struggle against his feelings to Sarah and has sex with her, thus cheating on Ernestina with her. When the act is done, Fowles describes Charles’ feelings and the atmosphere in the room as “*...no gentle postcoital sadness for him, but an immediate and universal horror – was like a city struck by an atom bomb.but the radio-activity of guilt crept...*” (Fowles, 2004: 354). The irony of this passage lies in the fact this type of vocabulary would never be used in the Victorian novel written in the age, for the nuclear power was discovered much later and so was the technical vocabulary describing it. Besides, the whole passage is written in a cold, ironical tone which in the combination

with the technical vocabulary breaches the language used in the Victorian novel thereby ironizing it.

Using irony and parody, on one hand the author brings a lighter tone to the novel, making the narrative less serious in contrast to the classical Victorian novel narrative style, presenting modern-day insight on the way people in the Victorian age were thinking, acting and reacting by putting it in the contrast with his opinions and values. On the other hand, the irony works as a medium of criticism of the Victorian era, especially of the way the Victorians thought and behaved. What may be on the first sight a seen as a parodical and humorous remark, is be on the second sight seen as a biting, ironical and criticising remark on hypocrisy of Victorians. By conscious acknowledgement the novel is written as the Victorian novel, and thereon by conscious and constant breaches of the style of the Victorian novel, Fowles creates a pastiche of the Victorian novel. The fact itself is also a parody, for the Victorian novel has been written in a specific manner, plots of the Victorian novel are more or less focused on the society and relationships between the Victorians, but the characters are created and act in the same way as the Victorians did. By not following these traditions in writing, Fowles parodies the literary form itself.

3.3 Allusions to Another Works of Art

Allusions to other works of art are one of the important features of postmodernism in the novel. Fowles himself mentions it even before the text itself in the acknowledgments, thanking for the chance to use various literary works to quote in the novel as introductions to all chapters. He also thanks for the chance of being inspired by the texts to write the novel. In the body of the novel there are two types of allusions. The first type of allusions is the above-mentioned introductory quotations at the beginning of each chapter. These quotations more or less correspond with the plot and topic of the chapter they introduce, as well as they illustrate the background of the Victorian society described in it. The second type of allusions is allusions in the text itself. These allusions are often made in dialogues or monologues of characters, or in remarks of the narrator (Fowles; see 3.1.1) which are in the body of the text or in the footnotes, providing further information to the text (see 3.1.1.1).

3.3.1 Introductory Quotations

Each chapter of the novel is introduced by a quote from a literary work. In the Acknowledgements, Fowles thanks for the opportunity to quote several works at the beginning of each chapter. The quotations work as a brief illustration of what the chapter is about and of the chapter's atmosphere. Fowles tries to illustrate the content or the atmosphere of each chapter by one or two quotations. The genres of the quoted works vary. Fowles quotes poems, novels, academic works, philosophical works, works on political studies, natural scientific works, folksongs and letters. Majority of the quoted works are related to the novel's plot not only for their contents, but also for the era in which they were published. The works were published around the time the novel's plot takes place in and were up to date for the society of the day. Fowles also quotes works which were published earlier (Jane Austin) but were still actual by the time of the plot, or works which were later but still by the time of the novel's plot (Karl Marx). Among the introductory quotations there is one exception in which Fowles quotes a modern author from 20th century; it is found in Chapter 61. Fowles often quotes one author multiple times and he often uses one work multiple times e.g. Alfred Tennyson's *Maud* or *In Memoriam*.

The most frequently quoted author is Robert Tennyson. Fowles quotes his poems *Maud* which is also the most frequently quoted work among the introductory quotations, and *In Memoriam*. The second most frequently quoted author is Matthew Arnold and his various poems. After Arnold, poems of Thomas Hardy and Arthur Hugh Clough are also frequently quoted. From authors who are quoted more than twice remain Karl Marx and Charles Darwin. The repetition of the quoted authors could foreshadow a presence of leitmotifs for chapters, which are introduced by the same author, furthermore, by the same work, but the quotations are not used this way. The quotations could be divided into two categories – works of art, and academic works. But it is not a rule that the quoted works of art introduce lyrical chapters of the novel. There is no pattern in the quotations; none of the quoted authors or works are linked to certain characters from the novel. For example, Chapters 5 and 8 are introduced by Tennyson's *In Memoriam* but while in Chapter 5 the quotation concerns the topic of love and Fowles describes Ernestina, her background, manners and her relationship to Charles, Chapter 8's quotation concerns the topic of how the nature changes the shape of world's landscape and the chapter describes Charles's decision to go to the Undercliff to find some petrified sea urchins, his

preparations and Fowles's opinions on it, and on Darwinism. On the other hand, Chapter 3 is introduced by a quotation from Darwin's *The Origin of Species*. The chapter is introduced by a quotation explaining that although many creatures are well fitted for their place (in the nature) due to inheritance, not many of their inherited structures have relations to their present habits of life. Despite of it, the chapter does not concern any references to Darwin's theories but describes Charles's background, his studies, and his relationship with Ernestina and with her family with no reference to Darwinism in the body of the text whatsoever.

Fowles uses the introductory quotations only to evoke the atmosphere of chapters which follow these quotations. The quotations do not foreshadow which characters will be concerned in the chapters of the novel nor foreshadow the way the plot will develop.

3.3.2 Allusions in the Text

Alongside the introductory quotations, Fowles integrates quotations of various literary works, and allusions to other literary works as well as to another works of art such as paintings or sculptures in the body of the text. The works Fowles alludes to are of various genres and they are from various time periods including the legend of King Arthur, Shakespeare, or Karl Marx's *Kapital*. The allusions are not done by the characters of the novel (except for debates on Darwinism; see 3.4.2) but they are included in remarks by Fowles the Narrator, therefore they are not only means of the feature of intertextuality, but work as metafictional features via which Fowles presents his opinions and comparisons (see 3.1), and as broader illustration of some scenes to bring readers further information and to help reader's imagination when reading the novel, similarly as the introductory quotations (see 3.3.1). The allusions are done briefly, often as short remarks to strengthen Fowles's remarks. In Chapter 35 is a different type of allusion, to illustrate the issue of sex in the Victorian literature and in the Victorian culture, Fowles comes with an analysis of work of Thomas Hardy.

The first allusion in the body of novel's text is found in Chapter 3. Fowles comments on Charles's self, on his opinions and what information about the contemporary world would upset him. By the criticism of the modern day's lack of time Fowles compares the modern age to the Victorian age in which describes as "...in his century, it was tranquil boredom." (Fowles, 2004: 13). Fowles continues by commenting

on 19th century revolutions and how the working class in Great Britain was upset by the situation. On this account, Fowles states

“Charles knew nothing of the beavered German Jew quietly working ... whose work in those sombre walls to bear such bright red fruit ... in only six months from this March of 1867, the first volume of Kapital was to appear in Hamburg.”

(Fowles, 2004: 13)

The remark is done on the account of that Charles would never believe that the work of the ‘*German Jew*’ would ever have the effect it had and that it could affect the historical events of the whole world. In Chapter 9, Sarah is employed by Mrs Poulteney to work as her companion and to read her the Bible. Fowles describes the way Sarah reads that she does not create “*an unconscious alienation effect of the Brechtian kind*” (Fowles, 2004: 58) but she reads the Bible with deep emotional enthusiasm. By this remark Fowles alludes to Bertolt Brecht’s method of unconscious alienation through which Brecht reached for alienation of the audience from his plays’ plots. Fowles compares this method with the way preachers normally read the Bible. By this remark, Fowles reminds readers of metafictionality of the novel, for Bertolt Brecht was 20th century author. In Chapter 16, Charles is officially introduced to Sarah Woodruff and Fowles describes his ideas and feelings of the moment. Fowles explains Charles’s thoughts describing he “*had the advantage of having read – very much in private, for the book has been prosecuted for obscenity ... the celebrated Madame Bovary.*” (120). In the moment Sarah and Charles are introduced, and when Charles sees Sarah in person, he has immediately an association of Emma Bovary. The novel *Madame Bovary* was banned in the Great Britain for its obscenity, for the main protagonist Emma Bovary is an independent woman who experiences adultery affairs. Charles, having read the novel perceives Sarah to be alike to Emma Bovary in her strength and independence. On this account, Charles is fascinated by Sarah and after the introduction he “*did not bow and withdraw*” (120) but tries to initiate a dialogue instead. This allusion does not work as a metafictional feature but to illustrate the personality of Sarah Woodruff and to explain Charles’s fascination with her. In Chapter 29 Charles wanders in woods and observes various animals there. Fowles remarks on this scene saying, “*There is a painting by Pisanello ... St Hubert in an early*

Renaissance forest, confronted by birds and beasts...” (241). This remark alludes to a renaissance and works as an illustration of the scene to help readers imagine it better.

Chapter 35 is an outstanding passage of the novel concerning allusions in the body of the text. In the chapter, Fowles comments on the Victorian society and its attitude towards sex. The topic is opened by several remarks on hypocrisy of the Victorian era in the attitude towards women and sexuality. The first of the important allusions is done by a footnote. Fowles explains the Victorians actually performed sex no less than people today and “*Nor can Malthus and the lack of birth-control appliances quite account for the fact they (the Victorians) bred like rabbits...*” (Fowles, 2004: 269-270). On this account Fowles accompanies the body of the text by a large footnote explaining the history of birth-control appliances used in the Victorian era. He quotes a book “*a ‘sex manual’*” (270) written by Dr George Drysdale, which described advice on how the Victorians should practise sex and how they could reach the birth-control using common things and objects found in their homes such as water or a piece of sponge. Fowles further comments on the customs of the folk from the country who led much simpler and less hypocritical life. To illustrate it, a statement by a woman who experienced the era is quoted. The woman is a daughter of Thomas Hardy’s doctor and the quotation concerns description of how contraception was used by common folk from the country in the Victorian era, for the pre-marriage sex was common. This quotation leads Fowles to the analysis of Thomas Hardy’s work and of what influenced it. Fowles states

“When we remember Hardy was the first to try to break the Victorian middle-class seal over the supposed Pandora’s box of sex, not the least interesting thing about him is his fanatical protection of the seal of his own and his immediate ancestors’ sex life.”

(Fowles, 2004: 273)

Fowles further describes Hardy’s love life which was unknown to public until 1950s’. Hardy fell in love with his cousin Tryphena, after he came back to Dorset from his studies in London. They got engaged but after five years, the engagement was broken for they found out she was “*...his illegitimate half-sister’s illegitimate daughter.*” (Fowles, 2004: 274). According to Fowles, this unfortunate consecution of events affected Hardy in his

writing style. The forced breach of his relationship made him to write some of his best works “*This tension, then – between lust and renunciation ... between the sordid facts and their noble use – energizes and explains one of the age’s greatest writers...*” (275) Tryphena inspired Hardy’s female characters in his novels *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*, and *Jude the Obscure*. But Fowles does not see Hardy’s story as the explanation of his inspiration to create his ingenious works, Fowles perceives the story as an explanation for the whole Victorian era. He perceives it as a permanent conflict of two contrary forces which affected the Victorians and caused the hypocrisy of the society “*...explains one of the age’s greatest writers; and beyond him, structures of the whole age itself.*” (275). Using the allusion to Tom Hardy and the analysis of his work, Fowles illustrates the situation which dominated the Victorian era. By digressing from the novel’s plot to the explanation of the Victorians’ attitude towards sex and to analysis of Thomas Hardy’s work and life, Fowles helps readers to better understand the background of his novel, illustrating the situation on the story of a famous writer, and how the sequence of events caused by misfortune and the society inspired him to create important female characters. The chapter also works as means of metafiction for Fowles steps off his role of the narrator and explains readers the background of the Victorian age and sources of his inspiration.

In Chapter 39 Fowles describes the scene in a brothel, but instead of his own words, he quotes the work *History of Human Heart* published originally in 1749. The quotation is preceded by explanation that the act which is usually performed in brothels has not changed throughout the history of mankind.

“Such scenes as that which followed have probably changed less in the course of history ... Charles that night was done in the same way before Heliogabalus – and no doubt before Agamemnon as well...”

(Fowles, 2004: 305 – 306).

Fowles states he is pleased by the fact the activity hasn’t changed, therefore it “*allows one to borrow from someone else’s imagination.*” (Fowles, 2004: 306). On this account Fowles directly quotes a passage from the work, in which is the sexual act very well depicted with usage of many expressive metaphors and euphemisms. By this quotation Fowles illustrates the scene perfectly, but what he does in the passage is to show the

difference between ages. As he mentions in Chapter 35, the literature of the Victorian age does not contain sexual scenes, but Fowles shows how a work written a hundred years earlier than the novel's plot takes place openly depicts human sexuality. Alongside this, the passage works as means of metafiction for Fowles consciously admits he quotes somebody else's work which fits better to depict the scene of his novel, therefore accents fictionality of his novel's plot.

3.4 The Topics of Feminism, Philosophy, Theology and Psychology

An important feature of the poetics of postmodernism is mixing of genres in postmodern novels. The feature is based on mixing of the high and low culture, and in its connection and incorporation into a novel. In *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, Fowles incorporates the topics of feminism, philosophy, economy, psychology and theology in the novel and uses them as an extension for his narrative, which is basically the Victorian stylized love story. Amongst others, one of the topics is more outstanding and important, for it brings the role of a woman in the 19th century in question and shows how controversial and unacceptable by the society were strong women who disrespected the role given them by the era and by the society of it. The other topics concern the conflict between Darwinism and faith, hysteria and how it used to be cured in 19th century, economy and philosophy concern chiefly Karl Marx's *Kapital* (see 3.3). The topics are illustrated both, by the narrative voice of John Fowles and by dialogues of the characters in the novel.

3.4.1 Feminism in the Novel

Feminism is an outstanding topic in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. The topic is connected to the feature of Remarks on the time periods, cultural and social differences, and their comparison to the modern age (see 3.1.2) for Fowles as the author and as the narrator perceives the role of woman from the modern-day point of view and therefore remarks on the role of a woman in the Victorian age in comparison with it. The remarks concerning the topic of feminism focus chiefly on the character Sarah Woodruff and her life attitude which is not of the traditional Victorian kind. Fowles also remarks on other female characters of the novel and their behaviour comparing it to modern society and the role women have in it. John Fowles himself did consciously admit multiple times, he

is a supporter of women rights and named himself a feminist. In *John Fowles Visionary and Voyeur*, Brooke Lenz quotes an interview with Fowles in which Fowles says “*I am very much a feminist and ... yes, I think the world would be a happier place if women had more power and consideration*” (Lenz, 2008: 5). Knowing this, the novel may be taken as a study of a woman with the modern-day attitude put into the Victorian society, and as a criticism of the role of a woman in the Victorian era. Alongside Sarah Woodruff, Fowles points at other female characters and comments on their actions in a critical tone, when he finds it as an absurd situation in which women need advocacy.

3.4.1.1 **Feminism and the character of Sarah Woodruff**

Sarah Woodruff is one of the major characters in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. It is the nickname of hers what the novel is named after (the nickname is also one of the topics of feminism in the novel, see below). Sarah is a strong, independent woman (which is variously mentioned multiple times throughout the novel) who, against the all Victorian customs, lives as a spinster. This life attitude of hers puts her in various situations which question the role of a woman in the Victorian era. Sarah, more than a Victorian woman is a woman from the modern age put by Fowles into the Victorian society, and the novel may be perceived as a study on the role of a woman in the Victorian age. Sarah is not a woman who searches for her life fulfilment in marriage, which contrasts with female characters from mid-Victorian novels that are “*...typically vivacious and independent-minded but still ready to find fulfilment in marriage.*” (Adams, 2009: 194). Needless to mention, in Chapter 13 (see 3.1.1) Fowles the Narrator consciously admits Sarah is not a woman of the traditional Victorian manners, for she is a woman with the modern-day attitude, which is totally different from the attitude women in the Victorian age had. “*Modern women like Sarah exist, and I have never understood them.*” (Fowles, 2004: 95). Stating this, Fowles puts Sarah in the contrast with the Victorian society and traditions to criticize it.

Sarah is employed by Mrs Poulteney as her companion on recommendation of the vicar of Lyme Regis. Besides her employment, she regularly goes to the top of the Cobb²

² The famous harbour in Lyme Regis (Lyme Regis: Lyme Regis Town Council ©)

to watch the sea where Charles Smithson spots her for the first time and it sparks his fascination with her and initiates the novel's plot.

Sarah's nickname '*The French Lieutenant's Woman*' is a product of long time spread rumour about her love affair with a French sailor- a lieutenant, who had survived a shipwreck and was taken care of in the house of Captain Talbot where Sarah Woodruff served as a governess. The story is narrated in Chapter 5 by the Lyme Regis vicar to Mrs. Poulteney as an intercession to hire Sarah as a companion. According to the rumour, the French lieutenant made Sarah believe after his wound are healed, he will go to France to do the preparations and when he comes back to England he will marry her and bring her back to France with him. He also made her quit her employment and told her to wait until he comes back for her, but he never came. Since then, Sarah have been going to the top of the Cobb and waiting for the Frenchman to come back for her. The nickname itself is very disgraceful and shows how a personal story could have spread as a rumour throughout the town and put a woman into shame, despite most of the people, who use the nickname do not know the facts behind Sarah's story.

In Chapter 9, Sarah is described as an intelligent woman, moreover, she is described to have a special kind of intelligence "*...but her intelligence belonged to a rare kind; one that would certainly pass undetected in any of our modern tests of the faculty.*" (Fowles, 2004: 53). Her intelligence is described as the ability of being capable to anticipate the true essence of people she met, even for the first time and interact with them accordingly, for which Fowles compares her skill to "*the experienced horse-dealer skill ... to know almost at the first glance the good horse from the bad one*" (53). Therewith Fowles comments on this ability, although it would be very useful in the modern age, Sarah is "*doomed to the one fate nature had so clearly spent many millions of years in evolving her to avoid: spinsterhood.*" (55), for she refused many suitors because of her intelligence. She was able to realize they are pretentious. For this reason, Sarah is considered to be strange, for she is not yet married in her age. This passage concerns the fact Sarah does not search her life fulfilment in marriage, which is the opposite attitude Victorian heroines in novels have. She even chooses her spinsterhood consciously by refusing her suitors. Her attitude fortifies the opinion of people from Lyme Regis about her being different, and makes them look on her even more contemptuously. This fact shows how the absurdity of life of the Victorian women, for who was the only life

fulfilment a successful marriage with a well-suited man, even the woman would not be happy in it.

The next passage concerning the topic of feminism is found in Chapter 19. In this chapter Fowles describes the relationship Sarah has with a servant from Mrs Poulteney's house. Fowles describes the scene, in the night Sarah lies in bed sleeping, but there is someone else in the bed with her "*Not a man. A girl of nineteen or so...*" (Fowles, 2004: 158). In the described scene, there is no action, only Fowles meditates on propriety of two young women sleeping together in one bed. Fowles starts with addressing readers assuming they await a scene of Mrs Poulteney storming into the room, seeing the women sleeping in each other's arms bursting into rage and dismissing both of the women. Instead of this, Fowles boldly states by that time, Mrs Poulteney is sleeping after usage of laudanum and meditates on the scene and on its background. First, he mentions something such as 'lesbianism' did not exist in the Victorian age, for it could have existed secretly but no one ever spoke about it whatsoever. He adds a commentary "*I doubt Mrs Poulteney had ever heard of the word 'lesbian' ... it was to her a fact that women did not feel carnal pleasure.*" (158) and follows Mrs Poulteney considered women, who felt this kind of pleasure a lower sort and the pleasures "*...the result of feminine vanity and feminine weakness.*" (158). This passage criticizes the prudishness of the Victorian society and the narrow-mindedness of it for a relationship of two women would be considered as something unnatural, disgusting and despicable whilst in the age Fowles wrote the novel, and nowadays even more the topic of same-sex relationship is nothing extraordinary. Simultaneously, the passage emphasizes how women of the 'higher sort' considered sex and its pleasures as something low and worthy only of lower sorts of women such as prostitutes or servants.

Sarah Woodruff, even though she is not herself a feminist, she is a representative of the feminist principal in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. She is not a character of the traditional Victorian manner, for, as was mentioned above, does not see her life fulfilled in a successful marriage. She stands for all strong and independent women not just from the Victorian age, but from all ages, even for women today. For this, she is a victim of the narrow-mindedness of the other Victorians who do not understand her attitude. Moreover, they despise her for not being a submissive woman waiting for her marriage to come and for spending the rest of her life in the role of a wife. More than a Victorian woman, Sarah is a type of modern independent strong woman, whom Fowles

put in the Victorian society to show how narrow-minded, shallow, hypocritical and disgraceful it was towards women.

3.4.1.2 Remarks on feminism not concerning Sarah Woodruff

Feminism in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* does not only concern the character of Sarah Woodruff. Fowles comments on other female characters which are being under the pressure of the Victorian society and points out the absurdity of the situations the female characters are put in from the point of view of a modern man. When done so, the commentaries are in a strong ironical tone which mocks the Victorian society and the role of a woman in it.

In Chapter 8, Fowles describes a shop in Lyme Regis run by a woman named Mary Anning, in which Charles bought his equipment for his geological and palaeontological discoveries in The Undercliff. The shop owner is described as

“...a woman without formal education but with a genius for discovering good – and on many occasions then unclassified specimens ... and one of the meanest disgraces of British palaeontology is that although many scientists of the day gratefully used her finds to establish their own reputation, not one native type bears the specific anningii.”

(Fowles, 2004: 46)

In this passage Fowles describes how hypocritical and condescending were men, and especially men from academe towards women. Although Mary Anning discovered many of previously undiscovered specimens of animals, none of them was named after her (the *anningii* in the Latin name), moreover, palaeontologists claimed her discoveries themselves. The passage accents how women were perceived in the Victorian age, even though she made important discoveries, men did not acknowledge her as an important discoverer.

Many of the ironical commentaries are done in connection with Ernestina Freeman, Charles's fiancé, who is, as the contrast to Sarah Woodruff a typical Victorian young lady waiting for her marriage with a well-situated gentleman to come. She sees the successful marriage as her life fulfilment. In Chapter 17 Charles and Ernestina attend a concert and Charles starts to think about his life and about Ernestina. At one point, his thoughts shift to the age of Ernestina. Charles meditates on her

“...she was only a woman. There were so many things she must never understand: the richness of male life, the enormous difficulty of being one to whom the world was rather more than dress and home and children.”

(Fowles, 2004: 130)

This passage depicts the way men were thinking about women in the Victorian age. It illustrates how supercilious the Victorian men were in their attitude towards women for they considered them no more than maids, even Charles Smithson, who is a well-educated gentleman, thought of his fiancé as if she were a different and inferior species.

An important passage connected with feminism is found in Chapters 27 and 28. In these chapters Charles talks with Dr Grogan about Sarah, about his fascination with her and about her unusual behaviour (for the Victorian woman), both, in general and towards him. What Dr Grogan suggests Sarah may suffer from hysteria – a psychological condition with symptoms of *“...in order to gain the attention and sympathy of others: a neurosis or psychosis almost invariably caused, as we know, by sexual repression.”* (Fowles, 2004: 233). In Chapter 27 Grogan hints his assumption in debate with Charles. The following chapter starts with a letter with a description of the trial of La Roncière, a Frenchman who was accused of being unfaithful to his mistress, which was later diagnosed with hysteria. The letter is followed by a report written by a German doctor who diagnosed the woman by which was La Roncière accused, with the symptoms of hysteria. The report concerns several cases of hysteria the doctor encountered. The presented letter and report are read by Charles, who immediately identifies himself with La Roncière and finds Dr Grogan’s assumptions plausible. This passage is straightforwardly critical to the attitude towards women in the Victorian era. In these two Chapters, Dr Grogan and Charles agree Sarah suffers from hysteria without a closer study of her behaviour and without knowledge of the reasons of her behaviour- they base their assumptions on the rumour of *The French Lieutenant’s Woman* and on their several short meetings. Nevertheless, the passages of La Roncière’s trial and the letter from the German doctor read by Charles in Chapter 28 illustrate how easy it used to be to diagnose a woman with hysteria. The passages depict that if a woman in the Victorian age acted differently than she was expected to, if her attitude was not socially acceptable, she was likely to be

diagnosed with a case of hysteria even though she was not mentally ill. Seen from Fowles's (and modern reader's) point of view, women were diagnosed with hysteria for behaviour which is considered normal in the modern age. Fowles shows how disrespectful the Victorian society was towards women and how easily could a woman be diagnosed mentally ill just for not acting the way the Victorian society expected, moreover, it shows how a doctor (Dr Grogan) could have been influenced by a rumour and could have based his diagnose on it without a closer check-up of Sarah's condition.

In *The French Lieutenant's Woman* John Fowles advocates women not only by showing the unusual behaviour of Sarah Woodruff (for the Victorian age), but showing examples of how women acted and were treated in the Victorian age normally. Showing it and remarking on these passages Fowles accents how absurd the situation was and how unequal women to men were in the Victorian age. Hereby Fowles advocates women's rights and the need of equality of men and women. He does so by depicting the social status of women in the Victorian age, moreover, he remarks on the status of women from the point of view of a modern man for whom is the equality of genders something natural. His remarks are in a strongly ironical tone and thus accenting the absurdity of the role of a woman and the way men apprehended women in the Victorian age.

3.4.2 **Philosophical, Theological, and Psychological themes in the Novel**

In *The French Lieutenant's Woman* Fowles presents various philosophical, theological and psychological themes. This feature of the poetics of postmodernism moves the novel from a pastiche-Victorian novel towards higher genres of literature. Fowles mixes the genre of romantic novel with theological debates, philosophical ideas, and psychological analyses. One of the major philosophical-theological themes in the novel is a quarrel on plausibility of Darwin's *The Origin of Species* and the conflict between Christians and those who agree with Darwin's theory. Psychological themes are represented by the medical report on hysteria read by Charles (see 3.4.1.2).

The most outstanding topic of philosophy and theology in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* is the quarrel between Darwinism and religion. The first issue of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* was released in 1859 (van Wyhe ©2002) - ten years before the novel's plot. Fowles hereby puts in question the topic, which was very actual and controversial in the Victorian age. The characters who stand for Darwin's theory are Charles, Dr Grogan and Fowles the Narrator who comments on conflicts between

Darwinists and Christians. Characters who are often on the side of religion are Ernestina and Mrs Poulteney. In Chapter 8 Charles visits a local shop with equipment for geologists and fossils Mary Anning has found (see 3.4.1.2) and finds among the examples a fossil of a sea urchin. Fowles comments on what a sea urchin looks like and adds that “*one of the first practical confirmations of the theory of evolution*” (Fowles, 2004: 47) was done by observing sea urchins. In the very chapter, Charles sets off to the Undercliff to search for examples of fossilized sea urchins. During his preparations, Fowles the Narrator comments on his hobby and explains why is Charles so interested in Darwinism and why it is so important

“*...natural history had not then the pejorative sense it has today ... if scientific progress is what we are talking about ... The Origin of Species is a triumph of generalization, not specialization*”

(Fowles, 2004: 50)

Hereby Fowles accents the revolution Darwin brought to the Victorian society and what a breakthrough it was. Few lines below it is mentioned that “*Charles called himself a Darwinist and yet he had not understood Darwin. But then, nor had Darwin himself.*” (Fowles, 2004: 50) This passage is followed by the comparison of Darwin’s theory to the divinity of Christ concerning how essential the Darwin’s theory for biology is. In Chapter 18 Fowles explains Sam’s behaviour using Darwin’s terminology, for Sam acts differently towards different characters “*...he was almost three different men ... We may explain it biologically by Darwin’s phrase: cryptic coloration...*” (145). Sam needs to modify his behaviour to survive in various surroundings, in this case various people ordering him what to do. In Chapter 19 Charles visits Dr Grogan and after a few drinks they find a mutual topic – Darwinism. In the passage Charles finds an affirmative man who shares the same beliefs presented by Charles Darwin. Fowles then mentions Charles is “*the naturally selected*” (163) and that he feels superior to the rest of the Lyme Regis for a moment. The passage shows how difficult it was, even almost ten years after the first release of Darwin’s major work, to find a man who would accept the Darwinism as well as Charles does. A similar situation appears in Chapter 27 in which Charles visits Dr Grogan to discuss Sarah’s behaviour (see 3.4.1.2). To be sure Charles will not tell anyone anything about Sarah, the doctor makes Charles swear on *The Origin of Species* “*...as if*

swearing on a bible..." (223). In this situation, Fowles depicts how precious and remarkable Darwin's work was for Charles and Dr Grogan, as well as for the other Darwinists. Moreover, by using *The Origin of Species* instead of *The Bible* for an oath, Fowles compares Darwinism to religion for it was for the Victorian age total revolution which brought 'a new religion' to people who believed in it. In Chapter 48, after Charles leaves Sarah after a night spent together, he wanders around Exeter in desperation until he comes to a church and desperately tries to pray to ease his mind. On this, Fowles presents how the unbelievers made fun of church, but more importantly, he illustrates Charles's thoughts on religion. In the moment of desperation, Charles wishes not to be an agnostic, wishes to believe in God. But Charles "*had never needed faith ... he had quite happily learnt to do without it...*" (362) and the reason for this is that he had found his 'faith' in science and in Darwinism and "*his reason ... had told him he was right to do without its (Religion's) dogma.*" (362). In this passage, again, Fowles compares religion to Darwinism as if it were not only a phylogenetical theory but a religion which can help him to cope with his life difficulties.

Not concerning Darwinism, but in a similar sense also concerning the quarrel between biologists and Christians and presenting Charles's and Fowles the Narrator's opinions on it, is a passage in Chapter 19. Instead of Darwin, Lyell's theory is the one referred to. "*Lyell, let me interpose, was the father of modern geology...*" (Fowles, 2004: 161) Fowles explains. Similarly, as Darwin, Lyell estimated the age of the world on more than 75000 years, which is, similarly to Darwin's theory against the Christian dogmas. "*Lyell's Principles of Geology, published in 1830 and 1833...*" (161) although the work was published earlier than Darwin's *The Origin of Species* it was not as massively known and controversial, even though it bears the same message as Darwin's work. On this account, Fowles remarks "*...at the time of which I write few had even heard of Lyell's masterwork, fewer believed its theories, and fewer still accepted all their implications.*" (161) and this remark is followed by another, which is almost atheistic, which denies the religion but at the same time explains why religion is more acceptable for masses than a scientific theory based on facts. He does so using a metaphor. "*Genesis is a great lie; but it is also a great poem; and six-thousand-year-old womb is much warmer than one that stretches for two thousand million.*" (161) The word 'womb' is a metaphor for the Earth, and by the statement Fowles means it is easier to believe a great written and

understandable poem, the plot of which is easier to imagine, than a scientific work which is incomprehensible for uneducated and inexperienced readers.

Religion is also commented on without connection to scientific theories such as Darwinism or geology. Fowles the Narrator remarks on religion several times throughout the novel. Irony and parody are often used in these remarks; thus, the features of postmodernism are being combined. In Chapter 8 when Charles goes to the Undercliff to find sea urchin fossils, he slightly overdresses himself because of his inexperience. Fowles remarks on this fact and pleads for Charles not to be derided. He compares Charles's reasons for being overdressed to 'the duty' believers have towards God. Charles feels his 'duty' to be overdressed for his observation because he believes in the necessity of knowledge. Fowles, in a footnote, quotes George Eliot's epigram and comments ironically on it that the existence of 'the duty' towards something else than towards God shows "*a terrible dual lapse of faith*" (Fowles, 2004: 48). In Chapter 48, after Charles leaves Sarah and goes to a church to ease his desperation of what he has done. After a meditation on how he wishes not to be an agnostic (see above) he starts a self-dialogue which leads to a sequence of thoughts in which he compares himself to Jesus Christ. In his desperation, he observes the altar and the crucifix in the church and realizes he sees himself as Jesus Christ being crucified on Sarah who is the Cross. And after this idea, he realizes "*the right purpose of Christianity; it was not to celebrate this barbarous image ... but to bring about the world in which the hanging man could be descended...*" (366) This passage is one of the turning points of the novel, Charles realizes how shallow his life has been and that "*He had become, while still alive, as if dead.*" (366). In this passage, the irony is not used, but through Charles's thoughts Fowles illustrates his opinion of religion. According to him, religion should not be a mindless and uncritical admiration of symbols but a way to make the World a better place in which "*the hanging man could be descended, could be seen not with the rictus of agony on his face, but the smiling peace of victory...*" (366). In this Charles sees the true purpose of religion which is not contrary to science in which he believes. This passage is totally different from all the previous ones concerning religion, because it does not criticize or mock religion but contrariwise it presents religion as something meaningful and something what could actually make the World a better place to live, if people followed this, true purpose of religion and not the shallow and uncritical admiration of symbols with the vision of eternal redemption after one's demise.

A remark directly mentioning philosophy is found in Chapter 31. The remark also accents metafictionality of the novel (see 3.1.2) but it also concerns Hegelian³ philosophy. Fowles states that “*In spite of Hegel, the Victorians were not a dialectically minded age; ...*” (Fowles, 2004: 250). By this statement, Fowles means the Victorians did not actually fit the Hegelian philosophy, they would not perceive the world as Hegel did and presented. Fowles explains the Victorians did not perceive “*...positives and negatives as aspect of the same whole...*” (250) but as the effect of a cause. He mentions the Victorians lived in the exact opposite way of Hegel’s philosophy; they perceived the world in discrete parts, not as a continuous whole. This theory Fowles presents in the part of the novel where Charles meets Sarah for the first time after his discussion with Dr Grogan on her suffering from hysteria (see 3.4.1.1). Seeing Sarah Charles is confused for he cannot see “*...the wilderness of lunacy or hysteria...*” (249 – 250), he perceives Sarah as an innocent, independent, and beautiful, yet he remembers what Dr Grogan has told him. And for he is a Victorian man, he cannot perceive the situation and all the information as a whole, which would accord to Hegel’s philosophy, but he perceives all the information he has and all he sees as separate pieces. Therefore, it brings him in confusion of what Dr Grogan told him and what he feels and sees, and as a reaction to all these mixed and confused emotions, Fowles depicts Charles “*...managed a very unconvincing smile.*” (250). In this passage Fowles shows what brought confusion into the Victorian culture. The Victorians were unable to perceive the world as a whole, but as a set of discrete parts and had difficulties to perceive relations between these parts.

3.5 Multiple Endings

The feature of multiple endings in the novel is one of the most distinctive features of postmodern literature and one of the most striking postmodern features in *The French Lieutenant’s Woman*. In the novel, Fowles presents readers not one, but three possible

³ Hegelian philosophy concerns with the unity of everything in the World. He perceived the world and everything that had ever happened as a continuous whole. His ideas are that everything in the world is interrelated and continuous, and he believed it is wrong to separate the reality into discrete parts. (Mastin, ©2008)

different endings of the story from which readers can choose to believe the story has ended. The feature of multiple endings is connected to previous features of postmodern poetics- the Role of the Narrator, and John Fowles as a Character (see 3.1.1), and of the Parody in the Novel (see 3.2).

3.5.1 Connection of features of Metafiction and John Fowles as a character, and the feature of Multiple endings

The connection between the features of multiple endings and of the narrator as a character are in the way readers are announced they have come to an ending (one of the three possible endings of the novel) of the novel. In Chapter 44, where readers are presented the first of the endings, Fowles just baldly mentions “*And so ends the story.*” (Fowles, 2004: 340) leaving many questions unanswered and clearly admitting there is no way of answering them, stating “*What happened to Sarah, I do not know...*” (340). In following paragraphs, Fowles shortly sums up the rest of lives of the novel’s characters. In the following chapter, Fowles admits he misled readers to an ending of the traditional Victorian kind, but what he intends is to bring more real but less happy ending of the novel. “*...having brought this fiction to a thoroughly traditional ending ... it did not happen quite in the way you may have been led to believe.*” (342). To follow up with the story, Fowles meditates on the way people tend to imagine hypothetical scenarios of their lives, and to follow up with the story he states,

“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, 2004: 342)

Stating this, he admits he played a little game with readers presenting them Charles’ imagination and consciously misleading readers to believe it whilst showing his godlike abilities of letting the characters do whatever he wants to do. Fowles continues stating Charles’ thoughts were not as detailed as he depicted. All these features emphasize the metafictionality of the novel and make readers aware the novel is a work of art, not a real story and serves as a proof the writer has omnipotent abilities in development of

characters' fate. After being presented this information, readers observe the rest of the story which leads to the second ending of the story in Chapter 60.

The next connection of the features of alternate endings, metafictionality, and the narrator as a character is how readers are presented the beginning of the third ending in Chapter 61. Fowles introduces the chapter by conscious admittance of breaching the rules of *"the novelist's craft"* (Fowles, 2004: 464) by introducing a new character – himself (see 3.1.1). In spite of the character is described differently than in Chapter 55 and the name is not mentioned, it is clear the character is Fowles himself. Since Chapter 55, the appearance of the character and Fowles's attitude toward the character has changed. The character is described as *"the extremely important looking person ... a sort of man who can man who can not bear to be left out of the limelight..."* (464). He wears fine clothes and is a little overdecorated, for he is a little ironically described as *"He looks very much as if he has given up preaching and gone in for grand opera ..."* (465). Thereon, Fowles addresses readers stating he did not want to introduce the new character and excuses himself the character made his way into the story against Fowles' will, for Fowles *"refuses to intervene in nature"* (464). Mentioning this, Fowles describes how his alter-ego, the newly introduced character, convinced him to put himself in the novel and affect the events, thus to create the third alternate ending. Having presented this information, Fowles starts to describe what his newly introduced alter-ego performs in the novel. Fowles the character looks back at Mr. Rosetti's house (the place where the second ending of the novel takes place) and performs time changing action (see 3.5.3) This description of the new character's action is followed by a follow-up to the previous chapter which starts in the same words as a paragraph from the previous chapter but finishes the story differently (see 3.5.3). Fowles's meditation on how his alter-ego made his way into the story, addressing readers with the explanation of it, admittance of breaking the rules of writing, and making the character do the time change which is followed by the same passage from previous chapter which escalates in a different ending are features of metafictionality, for it proves Fowles is able and allowed to do whatever he wants to do with the story, nevertheless it proves the novel is a work of fiction, not a real story.

3.5.2 Parody in multiple endings

The feature of multiple endings is connected to the feature of parody in the novel. By creation of three possible endings instead of one, Fowles breaches the tradition of the Victorian novel, which normally has only one, clear ending.

The fact of the breach of traditions is itself an element of parody, for it is clear Fowles' work is not the Victorian novel, but a pastiche of the Victorian novel. Fowles himself clearly admits he plays games with readers. When presented the first ending, in the beginning of the following chapter are readers announced it is not the real ending. Stating "...*having brought this fiction to a thoroughly traditional ending...*" (Fowles, 2004: 342) he accents the ending was written to follow the traditional way of the Victorian novel ending- although Charles had the opportunity and tendency to leave Ernestina for Sarah, he chose to stay with his fiancé for she has better social status and the society would not accept the cancellation of the long-awaited marriage. Nevertheless, readers can see the first ending is followed by approximately one hundred pages of text, therefore it can be assumed, even before Chapter 45, the first ending is not meant to be the definite. In the next chapter, Fowles admits the ending, in fact, is not the real ending but Charles's imagination of hypothetical fates of people from Lyme Regis he knows. Using this, Fowles parodies the Victorian novel as such creating a pastiche of a "...*thoroughly traditional ending...*" (Fowles, 2004: 342) which is not a definite and after Fowles admits it, the novel continues until the first of the two alternate endings comes.)

Although the first ending (which in fact is not an ending) is written in the way of the traditional Victorian literature, the way Fowles depicts the rest of characters' lives does not correspond with traditional the Victorian style of writing. Fowles shortly and apparently slapdash, sums up lives of Charles and Ernestina, servants Sam and Mary, Dr. Grogan, Aunt Tranter, and Mrs Poulteney on two pages, using ironical remarks on most of them. Beginning with Charles and Ernestina, Fowles does not use any ironical remarks, but as he goes on, the irony strengthens. On Sam and Mary, Fowles remarks "*who can be bothered with the biography of servants?*" (Fowles, 2004: 340) in a short paragraph he lets the couple die in "*the monotonous fashion of their kind*" (Fowles, 2004: 340). This remark reminds of the manner how the upper-class people of the Victorian age looked on their servants, consciously exaggerates the tone in its arrogant and bald tone thus ironizing it. The next remark concerns the high age Dr. Grogan and Aunt Tranter died in. Fowles briefly mentions "*He (Dr. Grogan) died in his ninety-first year. Since Aunt Tranter also*

lived into her nineties....” (340). This fact is immediately commented on how good the air in Lyme Regis is, clearly in the ironic tone. The remark is a mixture of features of metafiction (Fowles’s commentary) and irony through which Fowles ironizes the style of modern-day lifestyle on one hand, but praises the region of Lyme Regis on the other. The last one to be mentioned in the chapter is Sarah’s well hated employer – Mrs. Poulteney. The ironical remarks in the paragraphs which describe her fate are the most striking of all in the chapter. Fowles begins informing Mrs. Poulteney died soon after the first of the endings. The first ironical remark *“It cannot be all-effective, though, since Mrs. Poulteney died within two months of Charles’s last return to Lyme.”* (340) partly denies the proposition on how good the air in Lyme Regis is (from the previous paragraph on high age). Mentioning this, Fowles ironizes himself and accenting it by using the ironical tone of the remark. The actual story of Mrs. Poulteney’s demise is introduced by the words *“I am happy to say, I can summon up enough interest to look into the future – that is, into her afterlife.”* (340). This remark demonstrates Fowles’s own need to summon enough interest to write about Mrs. Poulteney, whom even he, as her creator despises. By this remark Fowles ironizes himself for being able to create a character, which is so revolting even him the author needs to force himself to write about it. In the following lines, the arrival of Mrs. Poulteney in Heaven is described. Even in Heaven, she acts haughty and tends to feel superior to others and thinks she will be allowed to give advice to God himself *“...after making a mental note to inform the Creator (when she knew Him better) that His domestics should be more on the alert for the important callers...”* (341) and after a short conversation with a butler, she is not allowed to enter Heaven but is sent to *“a much more tropical abode”* (341) what actually means she is immediately sent to the depths of Hell *“...all had vanished ... Mrs. Poulteney stood on nothing ... and then she fell ... down to where her real master waited.”* (341). The irony of this passage is in the tone it is written and in the pleased tone of Fowles’s voice as he depicts the process of Mrs. Poulteney being thrown to Hell. Another ironical element of this passage is that Mrs. Poulteney is depicted as a good Christian who has the Bible read every day by a servant, who tries to live as humble and modest life as the Bible says and who consults most of her decisions with a preacher. But she does all of this because of her selfishness and of her need to feel superior to the others. Moreover, in connection with the fact Fowles compares himself to God in the ability to do whatever he likes with the development characters’s fate in his novel several times, and with Fowles’s remark on the need of

summoning up his interest to finish Mrs. Poulteney's story, the God who destines Mrs. Poulteney for the eternal damnation in the depths of hell may be allegory of John Fowles himself.

The next element of irony is in the descriptions and comparison of John Fowles the Character in Chapters 55 and 61. In Chapter 55, when he enters the train in hurry, the character is described as

“a massively bearded face appeared ... perhaps not quite a gentleman...an ambitious butler or a successful lay preacher ... a would-be Spurgeon⁴... a decidedly unpleasant man.”

(Fowles, 2004: 407)

Following paragraphs describe Fowles's thoughts on the role of the writer and his possibilities and compares writers with the God (see 3.1.1). The theological ideas presented in the chapter correspond with the comparison of Fowles the Character to a preacher and to Ch. Spurgeon. Fowles the Character does not perform any plot affecting actions in Chapter 55; despite this he presents important ideas which explain existence of multiple endings and existence of himself (Fowles the Character). When Fowles the Character appears again in Chapter 61, he is again described as a bearded man, but the rest of the description differs from the description in Chapter 55. The description begins with his beard, stating *“once full, patriarchal beard has been trimmed down to something rather foppish and Frenchified”* (465). Description goes on mentioning Fowles the Character's clothes and jewellery, for in Chapter 61, he is a fine dressed man described *“He looks very much as if he has given up preaching and gone in for grand opera; and done much better at the latter than the former. There is, in short, more than a touch of the successful impresario about him.”* (Fowles, 2004: 465). The change in the looks of Fowles the Character corresponds with his role in the novel. For in Chapter 61 Fowles performs a plot changing action which gives Fowles the Writer possibility of creating an alternate ending. Fowles the Character changes from a preacher-like man, who only meditates on, and presents readers possibilities of what could be done with novel's

⁴ Charles Spurgeon (1834 – 1892) a famous English Baptist preacher who preached, amongst other places, in Exeter (Christianity today ©)

characters and why he writes the novel the way he writes it, to an active participant of the plot. Although he does not interact with any of the major characters, his action gives Fowles the Writer an option to bring the alternate development of the plot leading to a different ending. Fowles the Character influences the plot the same way as impresarios influence composers, and writers in their work on operas, and plays. The irony in these passages is in the development of Fowles the Character and in the comparisons made to him. When he appears for the first time, he is described as an unpleasant man and is compared to a preacher and Ch. Spurgeon, for he only presents his ideas to readers and the same way as the preacher does, he persuades readers about his intentions and ideas and convinces them it is the right way the novel should develop. When he comes for the second time, he is described as a fine dressed man. He does not present any ideas; he intervenes by performing the time changing action and provides Fowles the Writer possibility to bring the alternate ending of the novel. Because of the active intervention, Fowles the Writer's attitude towards his alter-ego changes thus the way he perceives himself changes. The remark that the change of Fowles the Character's looks seem to cohere with the change of his profession from a preacher to an impresario, and the remark he does the work of impresario better than work of a preacher reflect that Fowles perceives himself better as an active participant of the events, as the impresario, who affects the development of the plot by his light touch than someone who persuades readers that his intentions and the way he writes is right and just observes the situation. By the end of the description, Fowles the writer remarks one important feature about Fowles the Character: "*In this he has not changed: he very evidently regards the world as his to possess and use as he likes.*" (Fowles, 2004: 465). By this remark Fowles concludes the change of his alter ego's attitude, which in fact has not changed rapidly. He only changed from a preacher, who presents ideas to those, who listen into an impresario, who acts to affect the reality himself.

A similar usage of irony is also found in Chapter 61 in the introduction to the alternate ending. Fowles the Writer describes Fowles the Character as "*in spite of appearances, a very minor figure, in fact as a gamma-ray particle.*" (Fowles, 2004: 464). From the global point of view, he is, in fact, a minor figure who does not affect the plot whatsoever, but speaking of the form of the novel, he is very important for he performs an action which gives Fowles the Writer an opportunity to bring the alternate ending which concludes the novel in the very chapter. The element of irony is in the way Fowles

the Character is presented. Although he is not a character who interacts with other characters from the novel, and he does not affect the plot, he gives Fowles the Writer the opportunity of presenting the alternate ending and the possibility to connect the alternate ending to the novel smoothly (see 3.5.3). This makes him very important character of the novel, not a figure as small as a gamma-ray particle.

3.5.3 Coherence of Multiple Endings

To create coherence of both, the text and the plot to bring the third (or the second, see 3.5.2) parallel ending, Fowles uses his alter ego. The character is introduced by description of his looks and then the action he performs to enable Fowles the Writer present the alternate ending of the novel and connect it to previous development of the plot smoothly.

Fowles gives himself the opportunity to bring the alternate ending after a new character- Fowles the Character is presented and when is explained why is he brought to the story (see 3.5.1; 3.5.2). Fowles the Character observes the whole scene of the first ending (real ending) from distance, but for he is, in fact, John Fowles, he knows everything what happened in the residence of Gabriel Rosetti. Described as “*Staring back towards Mr. Rosetti’s house*” (Fowles, 2004: 465) Fowles the Writer follows his description up on the looks of an impresario he gave to his alter ego (see 3.5.2) stating “*...as if it is some new theatre he has just bought and is pretty confident he can fill.*” (465). This means Fowles the Character finds the scene he just witnessed potentially interesting for an audience (readers) and as the impresario he wants to use the potential of the scene for the maximum profit. For he comes to perform the important action which enables Fowles the Writer bring the alternate ending of the novel.

“He takes out his watch – a Breuget – and selects a small key from a vast number on a second gold chain. He makes a small adjustment to the time. ... It is doubly strange, for there is no visible clock by which he could have discovered the error in his own timepiece.”

(Fowles, 2004: 465)

The need for the time adjustment is explained afterwards as “*He is meanly providing himself an excuse for being late at his next appointment...*” (Fowles, 2004: 465), but the

way of how his observation of the scene in Mr. Rosetti's house and the following comments on his attitude towards it clearly coincide with the act of time adjustment, nevertheless he is, in fact, an impersonation of John Fowles the Writer, therefore the time adjustment which is followed by the alternate ending is not only a coincidence of events but a connected sequence of events resulting in the alternate ending.

The passage in which Fowles the Character adjusts time thus providing Fowles the Writer the opportunity to present the alternate ending is followed by a "follow-up" from the previous chapter, which results in the first ending of the novel. The "follow-up" is done by depicting the same scene, even by using the very same sentences and paragraphs in Chapter 61 as in Chapter 60 in which is the first ending brought, which is Charles and Sarah being in a fight about their past. "*No. It is as I say. You have not only planted the dagger in my breast, you have delighted twisting it. '...*" (Fowles, 2004: 456; 466). The concordance lasts for two paragraphs until Charles storms towards the door. In the next paragraph, the sections differ in Sarah's reaction to Charles's behaviour which results in two alternate endings. In the former of the endings, Sarah makes Charles to be "introduced" to her daughter, whom father is actually Charles. In the latter, Charles argues with Sarah, storms out from the house and decides to go back to America where he spent some time before the meeting.

The feature of multiple endings is, amongst others, a very important and very outstanding one in the novel. At the first sight, the novel may seem to have three different endings: one ending of the traditional Victorian kind, and two endings which are nonconventional for the Victorian novel but more attractive for modern day readers. As it is explained in the novel, what seems to be the first ending of the traditional Victorian kind is actually not an ending of the novel whatsoever, it is a means of parody to create a pastiche of the Victorian novel. Moreover, Fowles admits the first ending is just a sequence of Charles's thoughts during his way back to Lyme Regis. The two following endings in chapters 60 and 61 both finish the novel's plot and are equivalent to each other giving readers an opportunity to choose to believe which ending could more likely have happened. Nevertheless, the addition of the alternate ending provided Fowles an opportunity to present a new character - his alter ego for the second time and actively participate on the events of the novel and to use another features of postmodern poetics such as parody and irony, and remarks reminding of metafictionality of the novel.

4 Conclusion

This thesis analysed various passages from the novel *The French Lieutenant's Woman* by English novelist John Fowles with the objective of finding the poetics of postmodernism, which are presented in the first, theoretical part of it. The result of this thesis is whether the analysed passages contain the poetics of postmodernism or not, which features of the poetics of postmodernism John Fowles used and what is the relation between them.

By elaborate analysis of the novel *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, the conclusion is the novel contains all of the features of the poetics of postmodernism. The novel is a metafictional work, for it is being consciously admitted it is an artefact and a work of art throughout the whole novel. John Fowles attains the effect by various means such as the active narrative voice addressing readers, or by putting the plot, which is set in the Victorian era, in the context of the modern age. The novel also contains the feature of parody and irony, for it is written as a pastiche of Victorian novel. It exaggerates the features of the Victorian novel and the author often consciously breaches these features, moreover, he accents the breaching by mentioning it in the text. The accent on the era in which is the plot set is also exaggerated. These two features create the parody in the postmodern sense. Irony is also often used throughout the novel, in the author's ironical remarks on the differences between the Victorian society and the modern-day society, and in the author's self-ironical remarks. The most distinctive feature of parody and irony is the presence of three alternate endings of the novel, from which one is not meant to be definite, but works as a means of parody of the traditional Victorian endings, but the two remaining endings are concluding the novel's plot, either in a different way. The novel also contains the feature of intertextuality for throughout the whole novel, another works of art, especially literary works are being quoted and alluded to. The novel also contains the academic themes, especially the social theme of feminism and of the role of women in 19th century. It also reflects the conflict between Darwinism and Christianity as well as various themes of philosophy.

The features of the poetics of postmodernism do not appear solely in the novel. Fowles often combines the features of the poetics of postmodernism to amplify the effect of it, such as the combination of metafiction and parody in the presence of two alternate

endings, or the combination of academic themes with metafiction in the remarks of the narrative voice of John Fowles.

The novel *The French Lieutenant's Woman* is a work of postmodern fiction, for it contains all of the poetics of postmodernism and incorporates them into the narrative. It is a metafictional work in the form of a pastiche of Victorian novel containing strong parody and irony, intertextuality with allusions to other works of art, and it incorporates academic themes into its narrative.

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