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Autorka se ve své kvalifikační práci zaměří na vybranou krátkou prózu britského postmoderního autora Johna Fowlese. Ten byl již od dob svých studií ovlivněn hlavně filosofy francouzského existencialismu (např. Albert Camus). Cílem práce bude prozkoumat Fowlesovo pojetí svobody jedince ve zvolených povídkách, a to v kontextu Fowlesových dalších románů (např. *The Collector*), ale hlavně ve spojitosti s filosofií Alberta Camuse. Autorka bude primárně sledovat vztah jedince a prostředí, ve kterém žije, jeho individuální vůli, svobodu rozhodování, resignaci či naplnění ambicí a odhodlání čelit překážkám. Práci završí kapitola, která z dílčích zjištění vyvodí obecnější závěry.

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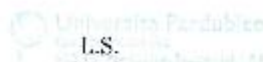
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ANNOTATION

The thesis deals with concept of freedom in John Fowles' work. Specifically, in his collection of short stories *The Ebony Tower* and his novel *The Collector*. The thesis examines in detail different points of view on freedom, individuality and humanism from variety of philosophers. The thesis will also try to compare these theories with situations in which the characters from Fowles' books find themselves in within the society they live in.

KEY WORDS

Collector, ebony tower, freedom, individuality, humanism, society

ANOTACE

Tato práce se zabývá pojetím svobody v díle Johna Fowlese, konkrétně v jeho sbírce povídek *Ebenová věž* a románu *Sběratel*. Práce se detailně zabývá různými náhledy na svobodu, individualitu a humanismus různých filosofů. Práce se dále pokusí porovnat tyto teorie se situacemi ve kterých se postavy Fowlesových knih ocitají v rámci společnosti ve které žijí.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

sběratel, ebenová věž, svoboda, individualita, humanismus, společnost

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INTRODUCTION

John Robert Fowles (1926-2005) was a British writer who was ranked among modernists and postmodernists. His work has been greatly influenced by Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus, who were important existentialist philosophers. Therefore, themes of freedom, free will and individuality are present throughout his work. In *The Ebony Tower*, there is a variety of situations in which people deal with anxiety, lack of freedom, or individuality. Similar situations are included in Fowles' novel *The Collector*.

The aim of this thesis is to examine Fowles' conception of freedom and individuality in his short stories from *The Ebony Tower* in the context of his novel – *The Collector*. Fowles was influenced by Camus, therefore his conception of freedom and individuality will be compared with his opinions, thus this thesis will try to find continuity among these two authors. However, topics of freedom, individuality and humanism are very extensive, and therefore the thesis will also use points of view of other philosophers throughout history.

Because the topic of this thesis is very extensive, there are many academic sources available. To understand Camus' philosophy, segments of *The Myth of Sisyphus* will be used. To describe opinions of other philosophers who could bring new perspective, academic sources such as *Malé dějiny filosofie*, or articles from journals will be used as well.

This thesis consists of two chapters one of which is theoretical and the other is practical. The first chapter consists of theoretical concepts of freedom, individuality and humanity from the perspective of philosophers from antiquity to the present day. The first part of this chapter deals with freedom and existentialism. The chapter begins with antique philosophy, specifically with Aristotle and his view on free will from the ethical perspective. Further on, the thesis examines Christian theology and St. Thomas Aquinas with his thoughts about achieving eternal bliss. Next person mentioned is René Descartes who belongs among baroque philosophers. According to him, free will can be used for creating good and evil.

The following topic is categorical imperative, described by German philosopher Immanuel Kant, which is closely linked to freedom. Another topic mentioned is Arthur Schopenhauer's view on freedom in his book *On the Will in Nature*. The thesis also deals with Alan Brian Carter who writes about morality and freedom and also discusses human's need to justify their actions.

The last topic discussed in this part is existentialism. The crucial person for this thesis is Albert Camus, who is an important representative of existentialists. In his work he describes three crucial aspects of absurd life – revolt, freedom and passion. His work is further described

in detail. The thesis also examines work of Jean-Paul Sartre who was a close friend of Camus. However, their opinions about the abovementioned topics are different which is also described.

The next part of the first chapter is focused on individualism which is divided into several branches such as ethical egoism and individualist anarchism. Individualists' representative Ann Caldwell Butler describes Josiah Warren's view on ideal society. Such society should follow laws of human nature.

Humanism is the last part of the first chapter which deals with its main characteristics. The key aspect of humanism is to achieve harmony in life. This part also describes its branches – hedonism and libertinism.

The abovementioned views will be practically used in the second chapter of this thesis. The second chapter examines individuals in their environment and how they deal with difficult life situations and challenges. The chapter is further divided into five subchapters based on their similarity and continuity.

The first section is focused on human's possibility of choices and decisions. People face different circumstances which influence their choices. For example, one of the characters makes a decision which has a negative impact on other people.

The second part deals with obstacles and permissions. The characters sometimes find themselves in situations which violate their physical freedom. Their free will is also limited by other people's permissions.

The third part of the thesis describes human's willingness to keep promises they gave to someone. It also focuses on general expectations which are believed to be fulfilled.

The fourth section examines people's disappointment and dissatisfaction with demands of their society. Such people tend to revolt against these requirements.

The fifth part is focused on setting goals and achieving them during people's life. The unfulfilled goals lead to disappointment and thoughts about absurdity of life. The only solution for dealing with absurdity often seems to be suicide.

The situations are outlined, further explored and compared to the concepts from the first chapter. The situations are compared to each other, because they have a common base, or are at least a little bit similar.

1. FREEDOM, INDIVIDUALITY AND HUMANITY

1.1. Freedom and Existentialism

Freedom, individuality and humanity are often discussed topics not only among worldwide known philosophers, but also among society itself. However, to find valid and professional explanations it is necessary to search in philosophical sources in which there are many opinions and definitions concerning these terms. To define these terms, compare different opinions and points of view is the main concern of this chapter.

Freedom is a term that has been studied by philosophers since ancient times to the present, which means that it has been a very important issue for humans for hundreds of years. In addition, views on freedom has changed over time which following paragraphs will illustrate. These terms are also closely related as they all deal with individuals and how they shape their personality in society over time.

In modern European thinking, freedom is considered to be the basis of humanity. Humans can only become themselves thanks to free will. Majority of people consider free will as the basis of moral behavior. When somebody disrupts someone else's freedom, their acting is immoral.¹

In the past, however, no such emphasis was put on free will. To understand how the view on freedom has changed over time let us start from the beginning – in Ancient Greece. For example, Aristotle (384-322 BC) deals with free will from the ethical perspective. He claims that rational will together with an intellect open space for ethical behavior. But if one only follows the rational will (request), he would try to achieve enjoyment. He describes request as an immediate achievement without the distinction of good and evil. Such behavior does not give rise to moral behavior to which one needs the intellect. Using only rational will could bring a person to good or bad behavior because the rational part – intellect – is not contained. When an intellect is added to the rational will, the basis for moral behavior is created. This makes a person control reason and instincts in order to behave in virtuous and moral way.² The terms rational will and intellect used to be called faculties of mind. "A faculty is nothing more or less

¹ Nejeschleba, Tomáš. "Diskuse O Svobodě v Pozdní Antice." In *Pojetí Svobody v Dějinách a Současnosti Filosofie*, 13-23. 1st ed. Brno: Centrum Pro Studium Demokracie a Kultury, 2013.

² Tomáš Nejeschleba, *Pojetí Svobody v Dějinách a Současnosti Filosofie* (Centrum Pro Studium Demokracie a Kultury, 2013), 14.

than a set of conceptually interrelated powers or capacities all related, in case of rational will, to the exercise of reason on its practical mode.”³

More recently, at the end of the 5th century, medieval philosophers continued in thinking about freedom, while being mostly interested in Christian theology. Among the important representatives of medieval philosophers were St. Thomas Aquinas, Dante Alighieri, or Roger Bacon. Catholic philosophy is based on the image of man. It claims that: “the soul is naturally Christian, and every human being owns an inextinguishable “violently indestructible” religious feeling, which calls it for participation in eternal bliss.”⁴ St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) explains that man in essence seeks to achieve bliss, as the ultimate goal of God. Achieving this goal is not voluntary, it is the duty of every person. Catholic philosophy considers free will as dependence on God, which leads man to become freer.⁵ Although this statement may seem contradictory, Catholic philosophers argue that dependence on God does not lack freedom because God is the initiator of human wishes that are fulfilled by human will. Therefore, there is no choice but God.

The topic of freedom also appeared during the 17th century among baroque philosophers, who were particularly excellent mathematicians and it was also significantly imprinted into their philosophy. Since mathematics is an exact science, their philosophy could not lack logic. Hence, René Descartes, Blaise Pascal, or Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz sought regular order.

René Descartes (1596-1650) argued that free will is a gift from God, linking to the ideas of St. Thomas Aquinas. Free will can be used as a tool for creating good, but also evil if used incorrectly:

Free will allows one to accept one idea and refuse the other. Only in this activity of will, not in imagination, is the source of error. It depends on ourselves, whether we think and learn correctly or incorrectly. If we only stick to the standards that we have on hand in the incomparable certainty and clarity of our first principle, if we were to accept the truth only with what is known with the same certainty and with the rest of the others, we could not be wrong, but we could get the right picture of the world from our thinking.⁶

³ Robert Kane, *The Significance of Free Will* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 22.

⁴ Eduard Radvan, *Pojetí svobody v katolické filozofii* (Brno: Filozofická Fakulta Brněnské univerzity, 1985), 13.

⁵ Radvan, *Pojetí svobody v katolické filozofii*, 13–15.

⁶ Hans J. Störig, *Malé dějiny filosofie* (Kostelní Vydří: Karmelitánské nakladatelství, s.r.o, 2000), 241.

Another intellectual age of philosophy was The Enlightenment, which spread from England and Holland to Germany and Russia during the 17th and 18th centuries. Thanks to well-known personalities such as Jean Jack Rousseau, François Marie Arouet, known as Voltaire, or Immanuel Kant, the foundations of previous philosophical theories were almost broken. The men of The Enlightenment supported reason and belief in progress while rejecting religion for unsubstantiated dogmas. They also supported the right for free thinking and free life.⁷

German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) found that there were many principles determining people's will in their minds. He divides them into two groups – a theoretical law (maxima) and a practical law. Maxima applies to an individual's behavior which means that one's decision will not affect anybody else in any way. The practical law determines the will of all. It can be again divided into two terms, the first one is called "hypothetical imperative". It is based on some condition that one either wants to or does not want to follow. The other term is known as "categorical imperative", which is not conditioned by anything, but it is generally assumed that it will be followed. With this imperative, Kant deals further, as he created a form of a general law. This principle is not formal and it is not dependent on empire. Kant thus came to the principal of practical reason, which simply says to do to other as you would have them do to you. This was not meant to be a way of creating a moral principle, but it is rather exploration of the way the human brain works.

Categorical imperative is closely linked to freedom. The imperative tells one that he can follow it, just as he does not have to. It follows that it makes sense only if man is free and can follow the rule. A form of the law is not a matter of senses; thus, it does not belong among causal phenomena. If the will is determined by this form, it is independent of the laws of the phenomena and causality, which means that the will is free.

In the 19th century science was already carefully divided into individual branches. This era led some scientists to abandon philosophy and began to pursue other scientific fields. At the same time, this period selected some professional philosophers, whose writing began to emerge at that time. The philosophy of the 19th century and its representative Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) brought a completely new view on free will.

In his essay "On the Will in Nature" Schopenhauer distinguishes three types of freedom. The first one is physical freedom. By a physical freedom he means that, for example, there are no handcuffs, prison, paralysis or any other obstacles preventing humans or animals from acting according to their will. Schopenhauer's second type of freedom is intellectual freedom. Moral

⁷Störig, *Malé dějiny filosofie*, 271-274.

freedom of a human can only be violated by motives of danger or promises. The difference is that it is difficult and sometimes impossible to overcome a physical obstacle, while motives can be easily overstated by stronger motives, which allow one to act according to their will. As the last type of freedom, Schopenhauer introduces the so-called empiric freedom. His explanation for this theory is that a human is free only when he has a chance to choose what he wants to do.⁸ He asks whether human may want what he desires to have and concludes that there is no answer to this question, thus defines the term freedom as an absence of all necessity.

Alan Brian Carter (1952), who is an Emeritus Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of Glasgow, deals with morality and freedom in his article *Morality and Freedom*. Carter claims: “Unless one’s actions are free, it appears that they are not subject to moral appraisal.”⁹ To claim that there is morality, freedom must have some value. Values of each person are different and that is why it is so difficult to define how far the freedom of someone else extends. One has no right to deny or destroy one’s freedom. The problem arises when a person needs to ask someone to do him a favor. It is natural to make demand on others and it is also natural that one finds others making demands on him. “But none of us wants the demands made by others to be excessive, because we all value our freedom.”¹⁰ Since it is difficult to find out what might limit someone else’s freedom, one usually resolves such situation by evaluating whether he would agree to accomplish such request and if it could be expected that majority of people would accept it.

Another problem Carter deals with is one’s need to justify his actions to other people, although he behaves according to his own will. One is born into a world in which others put their demands on him. It begins with parents prohibiting one certain actions and also expecting them to accomplish some actions according to their ideas. As soon as one does not fulfill the task or does it wrong he is criticized. With such experience a person has a need to justify and his actions and life decisions. This explains why people have been influenced by parents who have let them or have forbidden them to do something. And if they did not fulfill some task as their parents had expected, they tried to justify it.

A very fruitful movement dealing with freedom and individuality is existentialism. It is a philosophical and artistic direction that evolved at the beginning of the 20th century as a response to a series of events under the influence of war, when one became a mere element of

⁸ Arthur Schopenhauer, *Two Essays by Arthur Schopenhauer* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1889), 55.

⁹ Alan Carter, “Morality and Freedom,” *The Philosophical Quarterly* 53, no. 211 (April 2003): 161.

¹⁰ Carter, “Morality,” 166.

political thought aspects.¹¹ It spread through Europe, even to the USA during the post-war era. Among the most important authors belong Albert Camus, Samuel Beckett, Franz Kafka, or Jean-Paul Sartre.

Existentialism is mainly associated with the period of the 20th century. However, Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1850), who was born a little bit earlier is considered to be the founder of this philosophical stream. He focused on individuals and a doctrine of anxiety and loneliness which are often discussed topics among existentialists. The only difference between him and majority of other existentialist, is that Kierkegaard finds answers in religion. He claims that religious experience helps to understand some thoughts and leads to belief which is an area beyond all reason. This area may be also attributed as absurd and paradoxical.¹²

Existentialism is sometimes not considered a philosophy because philosophy is based on logical and rational argument, whereas existentialism is mostly irrational. Also, the majority of existentialist works was written as verse novels. This led many philosophers to think it is a movement rather than a philosophical branch. Jana Novozámská expresses herself about existentialism in her book as follows:

Existentialism is not a distinct philosophical direction or a school, but rather a philosophical stream that specifically interprets the situation of its time. It can be said that it is a tone of statements about human's problems, about the status of man in the world, about the meaning of life, about the freedom of man and the value of his choice.¹³

There are many life situations existentialists deal with. Even though their theories and beliefs differ, the common ground was individuality, freedom and responsibility for actions. Existentialists generally perceive life as absurd, meaningless and pointless. These thoughts usually make them feel anxious or alienated and that they consider themselves as strangers in their own life or in this world.

They also write about individuality and how important it is for developing an authentic and satisfying life. Existence is always an existence of a person, it is a way of being one individual person. Individuality is very individual as the term suggests, which makes it very difficult to categorize or understand people in general. Man must be perceived as an individual in a community, not as an isolated person. Because it is important to see man's interactions with

¹¹ Jan Otokar Fisher, *Dějiny francouzské literatury 19. a 20. století* (Prague: Academia, 1976), 217

¹² Störig, *Malé dějiny filosofie*, 444

¹³ Jana Novozámská, *Existoval Existencialismus?* (Prague: Filosofía, 1988), 27.

others. It is also closely bound with own subjectivity and free existence in which man creates himself. Existentialists in general also agree on the fact that existence is dynamic and time-related.

Finally, the topic of death is often repeated among existentialist works. When one is born, their life inevitably leads to death, that is why our lives are so absurd.¹⁴ Knowing that life is absurd, death or suicide seem to be a logical solution. Nevertheless, not all philosophers support this idea.

One of the most significant personalities of existentialism was a French novelist, essayist and playwright, Albert Camus (1913 – 1960), who was born in Algeria. He was not primarily a philosopher and he did not want to be categorized among them, but he wrote two significant existentialist essays – *The Myth of Sisyphus* and *The Rebel*.

In his work Camus deals with three characteristics of the absurd life – revolt, freedom and passion, which will be examined below. He also takes into consideration real value of life. When thinking about the value of life, Camus expresses his opinion on death and suicide in his essay *The Myth of Sisyphus*. “What is called a reason for living is also an excellent reason for dying.”, Camus once said.¹⁵

Is life worth living? If the answer is no, because life is not worth trying, Camus says it is not true, because people usually commit suicide for some meaning of life. Camus does not accept absurdity of life as a reason for committing suicide and claims that life is actually better when it has no meaning. Committing suicide for this reason only proves that the person is not capable of living his life and wants to escape from suffering and absurdity.¹⁶

Another topic common with existentialists and discussed by Albert Camus is absurdity. Camus writes about absurdity of life and explains that human lives are spinning in cycles and do not lead anywhere. People live their days according to schedules and it usually does not even concern them. Adults usually follow their daily routine which repeats without any noticeable changes. People also tend to postpone things to the future and when they reach some milestone in their lives, they feel surprised and see the wasted years. Camus also points out human destiny. Sisyphus as well as humans are doomed to futile effort. Why are we here, when we die anyway?

¹⁴ “Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,” Existentialism, last modified March 9, 2015, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/existentialism/>.

¹⁵ Störig, *Malé dějiny filosofie*, 444

¹⁶ Albert Camus, “Absurdity and Suicide.” in *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*, ed. Justin O’Brian (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 3-10.

If one realizes that he cannot change his destiny – death, he can reach absurd freedom. Absurd freedom is limited by inevitable death, but it does not mean one cannot reach happiness in life.¹⁷

The only possible way to fight absurdity is revolt. In Camus's view it is important to say 'No!' to absurdity. He claims that a person who can deny absurdity is an absurd hero. Such a person does not rely on God, such a person is independent. Revolting man is the opposite of a reconciled man. Camus thinks about how far a person can go while revolting and whether a murder could be an acceptable act. In case it is not considered too sensitively but logically, Camus admits the possibility of murder. When one does not believe in anything, trusts nobody, does not stand for any value then everything is possible and does not have any value.¹⁸

Another important term for existentialists is free will. Camus' friend Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980), who was a French philosopher, playwright and politician, agreed with him on the fact that people struggle with anguish, despair and anxiety as a reaction to different situations, such as death of someone close, wars or personal crisis. These events cause such feelings and the question is whether free will really exists as people are not capable of controlling and preventing it. They claim that free will serves as an instrument for interpreting and dealing with the situations. However, their opinion on free will was not completely the same. While Sartre claimed that the opportunity to choose is a big burden for human, Camus believed that free will gives a man opportunity to live a life according to his ideas and desires.¹⁹

The last term that Camus specifies is passion which he describes as a conscious effort to exhaust life. He claims that "Thus I draw from the absurd three consequences, which are my revolt, my freedom, and my passion."²⁰

Whereas Camus and Sartre were good friends and dealt with similar topics, it is worth mentioning Sartre's philosophy, too. Like most existentialists, Sartre does not believe in God which makes him so-called existential atheist. He perceives the existence of God as incompatible with existence of free, self-creating man. Sartre argues that if there was God, freedom could not go through with anything, since God would be the creator. Most importantly, Sartre views a man as an existing man, who creates himself according to choices he makes. A man is what he wants to be and will be what he determined to be.²¹

¹⁷ Albert Camus, "Absurd Freedom," in the *Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*, ed. Justin O'Brian (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 38–51.

¹⁸ Camus, "Absurd Freedom," 38–51.

¹⁹ "The Alexandrian Papers," Burden of Freedom: Sartre & Camus, Choice & Free Will, last modified May 8, 2014, <https://www.thealexandriapapers.com/burden-or-freedom-sartre-camus-choice-free-will/>.

²⁰ Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, 63.

²¹ Nejeschleba, *Pojetí svobody*, 101-103.

Sartre claims that it is important to accept freedom even though it is not easy, because with freedom comes responsibility. He says that a man is “sentenced to freedom”, because he did not choose to be born and at the moment of birth, the weight of the whole world falls on the man’s shoulders.²² This burden might make a man feel nothingness and anxiousness, because he cannot rely on religion or any other organizations, only on himself. However, these feelings are absolutely justified, as anxiety is a response to responsibility that comes along with free choices. And responsibility confirms consciousness of man’s own freedom.

In his book *The Roads to Freedom (Les Chemins de la Liberté)* consisting of four novels, Sartre deals with the way people assert or deny their freedom for the purpose of reaching stable fullness of being or self-coincidence, which he considers to be the characteristics of human consciousness. Three main types are pictured in the book – an ineffective intellectual, a pervert and the Communist.

Daniel is a homosexual who desires to become a stable thing-like being. He considers life as a project whose content can, unlike its form, change. To reach self-coincidence he uses self-punishment, by which he tries to reach freedom. However, these attempts of self-punishment disappointed him. Current situation forces him to marry a woman he detests. Later on, Daniel searches for solution at God about whom he thinks can see him.²³

Many opinions could summarize and explain his actions, for example, Freudian thinking could say that Daniels guilt of being gay forced him to self-torment. But Sartre claims that Daniel had a choice and he punished himself by making these choices.²⁴

Remaining two main characters also had to make many difficult choices, but each of them chose a little different path. On the one hand, there is Mathieu, who is a good-for-nothing opportunist, who always makes decisions so that it is in his favor. On the other hand, Brunet had voluntarily decided to join the Communist Party, but since then, he only blindly follows their commands and thoughts. On these examples it can be easily seen how individuals can use an abuse their own free will. From the reason that each human is unique it is not possible to see how individuals will handle their freedom.

It is generally known that Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus were, as mentioned above, good friends and they admired each other’s work. But as it happens, after some time their opinions started to differ, mutual respect disappeared. “Sartre believed himself the better

²² Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existencialismus je humanismus* (Prague: Vyšehrad, 2004), 24.

²³ Iris Murdoch, *Sartre Romantic Rationalist* (London: Vintage, 1999), 55.

²⁴ Murdoch, *Satre Romantic Rationalist*, 55.

philosopher, but envied Camus' superior talent as a novelist and storyteller."²⁵ And their friendship slowly vanished. How their opinions diverge will be discussed below.

Firstly, it is important to mention their view on how man can influence the development of their life. From Sartre's perspective, man becomes in his life who he wants to become. Life begins simply with existence itself, and then the essence is being shaped. It is entirely up to man for what choices man makes and what options man rejects. At the same time man is "sentenced to freedom", which makes him responsible for his actions, his life, but also for lives of other people, that could be influenced by his behavior.

Camus puts it differently. Given that his attitude is rather nihilistic he holds the view of vanity of human being, because anything that man does is useless and meaningless. According to him, it is not possible to achieve happiness which people seek because the whole world is against it. Whether doing their best, it is not worth it as life only brings pain and suffering. However, he never said to give up on life.

Based on this information, it could be concluded that Sartre takes life more actively, but it cannot be said that Camus says to stop giving life some value. His point is that man should reconcile his destiny and to rise above it.

An important difference can be seen on their view on timeline of existence. On the one hand, Sartre's human constantly moves forward, he does not live in the present. If man does something now, it is already past and the man moved to the future. On the other hand, Camus' human lives in the present and his past or future does not determine him. Past events do not concern him, because there is nothing he can do about anymore. And also, future does not make much sense as the world is going to hinder man's plans anyway.

1.2. Individualism

A topic that is continuously linked to the former one is individualism. According to Ellen Bliss Talbot, individuality can be defined as follows: "The ordinary conception of an 'individual' seems to include three chief factors - unity, uniqueness and completeness or self-sufficiency."²⁶ What she points out in her article "Individuality and Freedom" is that one is never completely independent and individual, because they are a part of a whole that influences them and makes them dependent on it.

²⁵ "The Alexandrian Papers," Burden of Freedom: Sartre & Camus, Choice & Free Will, last modified May 8, 2014, <https://www.thealexandriapapers.com/burden-or-freedom-sartre-camus-choice-free-will/>.

²⁶ Ellen Bliss Talbot, "Individuality and Freedom," *The Philosophical Review* 18, no 6 (November 1909): 606

Individualism is defined by Oxford Learners Dictionaries as “The quality of being different from other people and doing things in your own way.”²⁷ Even though there are many branches of individualism, the basic thought is that our actions, hobbies, opinions and beliefs make each of us unique.

The first branch of individualism is called ethical egoism. Its history is long but its exact origin cannot be precisely specified. Jan Österberg defines ethical egoism as a:

...set of normative theories which prescribe or permit that anyone to whom they address themselves act so as to promote his own good ('good' being taken to embrace anything that ethical egoists have stated as ultimate ends worth aiming at).²⁸

Another stream of individualism is individualist anarchism, also known as egoist anarchism. It evolved during the 19th century in North America and emphasizes human autonomy. Among the important representatives belong Max Stirner, Benjamin Tucker, or Jossiah Warren. According to Max Stirner the state is not legitimate because of a conflict between self-control of individuals and the duty of observing the law. He claims that demands of the state are not necessary binding for human and that everybody should act according to his own discretion.²⁹

Ann Caldwell Butler writes about Josiah Warren, who strived for achieving progressive restoration of freedom and worked on a fair reward – building security, peace and meaning to create happiness and satisfaction. His ideal society should be guided by the laws of human nature, especially its individualities. These laws teach us that our happiness is closely related to respecting happiness of others, and that is why the society should not create social measures which require compulsion or violation of natural freedom. A man should be given the opportunity to adapt to the situations at his discretion, not to follow organized associations which share the same interest. These laws of nature support the idea of the principle labor for labor. It means that all natural wealth is common and buying a property for a purpose of resale for further profit is unacceptable. The same applies to interest and operation of banks and other financial institutions.³⁰

²⁷ “Oxford Learners Dictionaries,” Individualism,

https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/american_english/individualism

²⁸ Jan Österberg, *Self and Others a Study of Ethical Egoism* (Netherlands: Springer, 1988), 35.

²⁹ “Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,” Max Stirner, last modified September 17, 2015, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/max-stirner/>.

³⁰ Ann Caldwell Butler, “Josiah Warren and the Sovereignty of the Individual,” *The Journal of Libertarian Studies* 4, no. 4 (Fall 1980).

1.3.Humanism

A term dealing with individuals is called humanism, which is a term that occurred during the 16th century among scholars of the European Renaissance. Corliss Lamont, the author of the book *The Philosophy of Humanism* claims that "...it is a philosophy of joyous service for the greater good of all humanity in this natural world and advocating the methods of reason, science, and democracy."³¹

Humanists support free flow of thoughts and say that human is a part of the nature. This movement spread from Italy to the western Europe. The main representatives were Desiderius Erasmus Roterodamus, Johan Reuchlin and Ulrich von Hutten. Humanists claim, that there exists no conscious life after death, because our brain is inseparably connected to our body. They consider people to be capable of solving their own problems thanks to their knowledge and scientific progress. Achieving knowledge, self-satisfaction and other activities are the keys for reaching harmony in life.³² These activities and newly acquired experience led to the so-called Renaissance which resulted in philosophers having abandoned humanism and began to devote themselves to renaissance man. Humanism was left to the disciples.

Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) was once asked a question how to make sense of humanism again. Heidegger replied that it is important to reject humanism at all and start from the beginning, without any signs of knowledge about existentialist philosophy. Previous interpretations of man show man in relation to history, or nature, but does not concern the relationship of existence itself to man. Before man starts to talk or act, he should let himself to be approached by existence.³³

Hedonism is another philosophy that deals with an individual. Hedonist philosophers believe, that every human has the right to reach as much happiness and pleasure as possible. Hedonism is sometimes defined as "Pleasure is the only thing worth seeking for its own sake."³⁴ The more pleasure one enjoys the better is one's life. Hedonists however do not want to say that pleasure is necessarily only good.

Libertinism or freethought was a philosophical viewpoint of liberal thinking during the 19th and 20th century. They promote freedom of opinion and moral standards. They also deviate from traditional religious, cultural or moral values.³⁵ This philosophical flow deals with human's pleasure and it is also sometimes described as an extreme form of hedonism. A

³¹ Corliss Lamont, *The Philosophy of Humanism* (New York: Humanist Press, 1997), 13.

³² Lamont, *The Philosophy of Humanism*, 11–15.

³³ Störig, *Malé dějiny filosofie*, 462-465.

³⁴ Fred Feldman, *Utilitarianism, hedonism, and desert* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 80.

³⁵ Alena Bakešová, *Filosofický slovník* (Prague: Knižní Klub, 2009), 202.

libertine person is “...a person, usually a man, who leads an immoral life and is interested in pleasure, especially sexual pleasure.”³⁶ Francisco Ferrer Guardia or John Wilmot are considered to be the most known person connected with this movement.

³⁶ “Oxford Learners Dictionaries,” Libertine, accessed June 27, 2018.
<https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/libertine?q=libertine>.

2. EXISTENTIALISM IN JOHN FOWLES' SHORT STORIES

2.1. Choices

Doing things in one's own way and being unique is basically a definition of individuality. This could sound too selfish, because behaving as one wants to might negatively affect their family or friends. Therefore, it is easy to find moments in which characters from Fowles' stories have to or decided to give up the right to decide for themselves. At the same time, there are moments in which characters behave in such a way so that they profit from it.

In "The Ebony Tower" young artist David gave up on his dream, which was making a living by painting. With a family this was no longer possible and he had to take more jobs to support his family. Later, after meeting Diana, David contemplates his life without children and wife. In contrary, Diana considers staying, even marrying an old man, because she thinks that: "He needs me".³⁷ The climax of their story reveals they fell in love with each other, but in the end, they decide not to change anything. David is sad and devastated, but "Coët had remorselessly demonstrated what he was born, still was, and always would be: a decent man and eternal also-ran."³⁸ When standing on the airport, every bone in his body wants to return to Diane, but his personality makes him stay and be the man he was before Coëtminais.

An example of a situation in which a person acts according to their free will but justifies it as a necessary act to achieve common satisfaction is when the king in *Eliduc* decides to release his best warrior Eliduc from service, based on rumors from jealous and envious citizens. This is an example which Alan Brian Carter mentions in his article "Morality and Freedom": "And we find ourselves blamed for failing to adhere to their demand unless we can offer an adequate justification. It is not surprising, therefore, that we grow up with a strongly felt need to justify ourselves in the face of possible criticism."³⁹ Even though the king never gives Eliduc any reason for making his decision, it is very clear why he did it. Because he is a king, he is under a lot of pressure and good reputation is important to him. Therefore, it is better for him to behave in order to satisfy the people than one of his warriors.

A very complicated decision had been made by a new king to which Eliduc served. But in contrast with the first example, this decision unleashes the war and endangers the people as the new king to which Eliduc serves refuses to marry his daughter to a neighboring king. His

³⁷ John Fowles, "The Ebony Tower," in *The Ebony Tower* (London: Vintage, 2006), 98.

³⁸ Fowles, "The Ebony Tower," 127.

³⁹ Carter, "Morality," 167.

daughter is obviously more important for him than the people, but his decision endangered whole kingdom which conflicts with Carter's statement.

According to the kind of contractualism I am now considering, we are to appraise demands on the basis of a presumption concerning, we are to appraise demands on the basis of a presumption concerning what hypothetically we would all agree to. And it seems that any hypothetical agreement must be limited to what other would at least be able to agree to where they all in a position contract together.⁴⁰

To make a decision involving so many people, it is very important to make sure, that everybody has a right to have a word in such matter. And that one's decision will not handicap anybody. People tend to consider their freedom as more valuable and thus there is no space for maximizing freedom of others.

On the contrary, Eliduc's wife Guildeüec loves him so much that she is willing to forgive him and understand his love for Guilliadun. Therefore she

...asked his formal permission for a separation, she wished to become a nun and serve God. He must give her some of his land and she would found an abbey on it. And then he must marry the girl he loved so much, since it was neither decent nor proper, besides being against the law, to live with two wives.⁴¹

Such compromise enabled Eliduc and Guilliadun to live fortunate life and marriage which is in accordance with the abovementioned Carter's statement. After spending a long time in a happy marriage, achieving their life goals, and eventually turning religious, they donated money and land to a church which Eliduc had built behind his castle. Guilliadun was sent to live in the monastery with Guildeüec while Eliduc "...surrenders himself with his servants to omnipotent God."⁴² They pray for each other and devote their lives to God, thereby achieving eternal bliss which complies with Christian philosophy as a mandatory goal of every human life. "One can fight against the evil but can not to be redeemed. It is only possible to achieve bliss from God's grace in unity with God's son, who became human."⁴³

2.2.Obstacles and permissions

While all the above-mentioned situations are based on deciding according to individual's free will, the writer in "Poor Koko" did not have this opportunity, he is deprived of his physical freedom. The very first ability that he loses is sight. The thief forbids him to take glasses and throws them out of the window. After being tightly tied, which completely prevents

⁴⁰ Carter, "Morality," 166.

⁴¹ John Fowles, "Eliduc" in *The Ebony Tower* (London: Vintage, 2006), 153.

⁴² Fowles, "Eliduc," 153-154.

⁴³ Störig, *Malé dějiny filosofie*, 164.

him from moving, he is also silenced with duct tape. “I felt the plaster pressed obliquely against my grimly resentful mouth. Then it was smoothed down on my cheeks; then the other lengths.”⁴⁴ The writer is prevented from natural movement and talking and loses his free will. In this case it is possible to contradict Jean-Paul Sartre, who denotes free will as a burden that can make one feel uncomfortable. It makes one to only rely on himself, one cannot even appeal to higher power, which could possibly save him. The writer is robbed of freedom; therefore, it can be said that he is relieved of the burden, but it does not make him much luckier. It should not be forgotten to mention, that what the thief did to the writer also violates Arthur Schopenhauer’s view on physical freedom, because there are physical obstacles that prevent him from moving and speaking. He claims in his essay “On the Will in Nature” that free will can be specified as: “That a given human being, in a given situation, can act in two different ways.”⁴⁵ This statement proves that the writer did not have free will at that moment because he only had one option – sit and suffer quietly. His physical condition did not allow him to act any different and he was then reliant on actions of a strange man.

In “The Collector” Miranda’s physical freedom is also violated, as Clegg holds her in his cellar against her will. She is not prevented from moving, but she cannot leave the cellar because she is locked there and the door is secured properly. “What I did was I undid her arms and then immediately went back out; she struggled to get the gag off, but I got the door closed first and the bolts in.”⁴⁶, Clegg said. His part of the book is rather descriptive and lacks emotions or his deep inner thoughts. Whereas Miranda describes her feelings about her imprisonment in detail and quite poetically.

I am one in a row of specimens. It's when I try to flutter out of line that he hates me. I'm meant to be dead, pinned, always the same, always beautiful. He knows that part of my beauty is being alive, but it's the dead me he wants. He wants me living but-dead. I felt it terribly strong today. That my being alive and changing and having a separate mind and having moods and all that was becoming a nuisance.⁴⁷

From her writing, it is obvious how much she suffers in the cellar. She is very sensitive and ignoring the fact what Clegg does to her, she also detests his personality. She despises him for wanting her only because she is pretty, not for her intellect or soul. She says he is just a collector admiring his specimens.

⁴⁴ Fowles, “The Ebony Tower,” 187.

⁴⁵ Schopenhauer, *Two Essays*, 55.

⁴⁶ John Fowles, *The Collector* (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1963), 27.

⁴⁷ Fowles, *The Collector*, 217-218.

“The Ebony Tower” shows more to how to overcome an obstacle. When David arrives to Cœtminas, the gate is seemingly locked, which surprises him because he is an expected visitor. Even though he is aware of the fact that there should be a dog - “Chien méchant”⁴⁸, as a sign on the gate warns, he decides to jump over it and goes towards the mansion. On the contrary, the entrance to the house is lodged open. After a brief hesitation David steps in as there is no visible barrier preventing him from entering. Obviously, David had many options to choose from, moreover his physical condition allowed him to overcome an obstacle which at that moment was the gate. Therefore, it can be said that David could act according to his free will without any major problems.

David does not need any permission for entering the house, while Eliduc must ask his new king whether he could return to his homeland and help the king in need. After helping with the riots, he again offers his service to the new king. This request seems to be feasible and in accordance with good morals. In this case it is possible to return to Carter, who claims that the demands on people should not be “...too excessive, because we all value our freedom.”⁴⁹ In this case, the request meets Carter’s conditions because Eliduc asks for the permission during peace period and promises to return if the kingdom is in trouble. Moreover, an approval of this request would not affect freedom of the king in any way.

Interesting topic in terms of violating or restricting someone’s physical freedom is nudity. If one wants to be completely free, even clothes might limit the possibility of free movement. Shoes might be uncomfortable, pants too tight, simply clothes can be very restrictive. Moreover, nudity is perfectly natural, especially for artists who find nudity inspiring. There is no wonder then, that Henry approves, maybe even requires the girls to sunbathe and swim naked. He even said to David who asked about the dress code for dinner: “Freedom House, dear boy. Stark naked, if you like. Gels won't mind.”⁵⁰ Later on when they go swimming, David decides to swim naked with the girls. Further on, during their conversation on a picnic blanket it could be said that their mutual nudity broke the ice and they get closer to each other. Signs of nudity are also mentioned in “Eliduc” where he describes the princess to be wearing transparent silk dress decorated with gold.

⁴⁸ Fowles, “The Ebony Tower,” 4.

⁴⁹ Carter, “Morality,” 166.

⁵⁰ Fowles, “The Ebony Tower,” 30.

2.3.Promises and general expectations

An immoral request which should not be met is also a part of this short story. On the way back for Guilliadun Eliduc asks his co-travelers to promise confidentiality, which means not telling his mistress about him being married. It could be said that the majority of people would not support infidelity and would reveal his secret. This request is not in accordance with good morals therefore, such a promise could affect the freedom of the individual. His co-traveler could be honest men and Eliduc's demand may conflict with their principles.

An oath of confidentiality is not the only promise mentioned in Eliduc. There is actually a lot of promises mentioned and a significant number of them is violated. When leaving homeland his wife is afraid of losing him so Eliduc "...swore solemnly that he would stay true to her."⁵¹ During his first visit at Guilliadun he immediately adores the princess and has to remind himself of promising his wife to behave as a good husband. However, it does not bother him for long, as he soon promises the king to stay in his kingdom so he could stay with the princess. It is seemingly easy for Eliduc to break his promises because at that moment he has two women who do not know about each other and he is not about to tell them. It is obvious that being faithful is not easy for Eliduc but it also causes him some inconveniences. On his example Kant's principle can be presented. He once claimed: "Act in such a way that you can also will that the maximum of your action should become a universal law."⁵² It means that if a man is not willing to follow a rule which he expects to be followed by others, this rule is no longer valid. Such a person cannot consider it a valid moral rule when he does not follow it. Breaking the rule could cause other people to think that it is appropriate to break rules, which could result in not following rules at all. In that case nobody could ever believe or promise anybody and therefore the idea of a promise would lose its value.⁵³ It can be expected that Eliduc does not want either of his women to be unfaithful, yet he does not behave according to this principle, which means that none of their fidelity promises is valid anymore.

Even though Eliduc is not the prototype of the perfect partner in terms of loyalty and keeping promises, he is always loyal to his king. The first king who eventually dismissed him from services finds himself in need and Eliduc does not hesitate to help despite the king's unfair verdict. After he helps to end unrest in his homeland, Eliduc wants to return to his new king and his mistress. His wife is naturally worried and sad, but Eliduc explains his return to the

⁵¹ Fowles, "Eliduc," 135.

⁵² Störig, *Malé dějiny filosofie*, 311.

⁵³ "British Broadcasting Corporation," Duty-based ethics, http://www.bbc.co.uk/ethics/introduction/duty_1.shtml.

king, saying: "I will not break promises."⁵⁴ That means he is lying again because the king does not actually need him. And Eliduc just wants to go back to Guilliadun.

Eliduc's behavior is not fair and he does not behave as would be generally expected, given his status and fame. Acting according to someone's expectations could, however, be considered as degradation of human's individuality because: "The highest principle of individuality is freedom, understood as the right to promote our own interests."⁵⁵ Many situations in which people refuse to act in a way society expects them to act appear in Fowles' short stories.

One of these situations is when the Mouse tells David the story of how she met Henry. She and her boyfriend at that time decided to visit him, because they admired his work. They were making fun of him at the beginning because of his age and behavior, but when they saw his awesome work, the Mouse was truly impressed. It was difficult for her to accept that during her studies she had to paint accurately, and suddenly she met someone like Henry, a man who ignores all the rules. "You've spent three years getting all the right attitudes to painting. Knowing even less what you're doing at the end than you did at the beginning. Then you meet this ridiculous old ragbag of all the wrong attitudes. And he's there. All your own clever little triumphs and progresses are suddenly cut down to scale."⁵⁶ It follows that her life was tied by the rules, conventions and precision which were the things Henry disrespected. As it is mentioned in Talbot's article "Individuality and Freedom", individuality of a person requires at least three factors – unity, uniqueness and completeness. It might seem as if Henry is a prototype of an individualist but according to the characteristics that individualist should have, he is not one. From what is known about him from the short story, it could be said that he is unique. His behavior is non-standard, his opinions are sometimes scandalous and basically his whole life is beyond the standard. But it cannot be said, that he is complete and united. Diane knows him very well and she assumes from his behavior how vulnerable he is and how much he needs the girls to stay with him. "Deep down he's just a rather lonely and frightened old man. I don't think he'd paint any more if I left. It would kill him. Perhaps even literally."⁵⁷ Henry even asked her to marry him, because he does not want to be alone. He admits to David that she is his muse and says "Dread losing her. Try to hide it."⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Fowles, "Eliduc," 147.

⁵⁵ Bakešová, *Filosofický slovník*, 158.

⁵⁶ Fowles, "The Ebony Tower," 70.

⁵⁷ Fowles, "The Ebony Tower," 98.

⁵⁸ Fowles, "The Ebony Tower," 88.

The Mouse is even considering staying in Cœtminais and marry Henry because she feels like he needs her. It is a very serious decision, considering her youth and potential. On the one hand, she is likely to learn new techniques and learn more about art. On the other hand, it is also possible for her to be widowed, inherit the house and stay in this solitude forever. She would sacrifice her youth, maybe her whole life for one old man. At her age she could be expected to be experiencing life, studying, falling in love, but she is not interested in any of these things. Josiah Warren claims that:

...society is the clock; individual liberty is the pendulum. Individuals must not surrender any portion of their liberty permanently. They may surrender a portion of liberty temporarily for a present moment, often with advantage, but if any surrender of individual liberty is made into a principle to be carried into the unknown circumstances of the future, to be applied and put to use by others, individual liberty then becomes as the shortened pendulum, out of proportion, and the longer it runs in this condition, the more it deviates from the right and true state of things.⁵⁹

This statement confirms that what the Mouse is about to do is a very big step and she might lose her freedom permanently. It is most likely that Henry will not live for too long and she could be free again. The problem is, as mentioned above, that she might be scared to leave the mansion and start a new life somewhere else.

Mouse is also very unique, but it seems she is also very insecure and a little bit lost. Individuality is usually examined on individuals in society, which is difficult in her case, as she spends her days in the same company of people and refuses contact with strangers, however it could be said that she had not found her individuality and life direction yet.

In contrary, there is David, who is very conventional and reasonably considers all advantages and disadvantages of every situation he deals with. Therefore, it is no wonder that he changes his mind when he wants to grab Mouse's hand. In David's case it is obvious that he comes from a good family and adheres to the principles of good behavior, even though his thoughts prove different. In fact, David is the type of a person following given rules therefore it is quite difficult to find uniqueness in him. However, his mental development can be seen in the story. During his stay David finds out how much his family is dependent on him and with them he lost the possibility of different life experiences. This could be the moment in his life that would bring him to his actual self and personal needs, but he ends up back with his wife.

⁵⁹ Butler, "Josiah Warren," 435.

In "Poor Koko" the thief does something unexpected. It is generally assumed that thieves steal expensive and valuable items. This thief is an exception, he does not want to steal anything expensive and he also does not want to hurt anybody physically. When it seems that he has finished his job stealing small things, he takes the writer's work and burns it in front of him in the fireplace. This is the most surprising moment of the story. As mentioned above, there are some prejudices people have towards thieves and it is not very probable that a thief would act so gently to a man whose presence in the cottage surprised him. And in contrary that he would destroy someone's work in order to hurt him mentally. From his speech it is obvious that he belonged to the "British young" group which, as the writer describes, does not support class snobbery, does not respect proper language and they "...mistakenly believe them to be shamefully bourgeois."⁶⁰ His behavior shows his hatred for the system which he tries to demonstrate by breaking in strangers' houses.

2.4.Social issues and revolt

A certain type of revolt is mentioned in the story "The Enigma". Mr. Fielding is a respected man who cannot misbehave in public. given his social status, it would be unacceptable for him to have a mistress, to drink too much or to wear inappropriate clothes. Such behavior could cost him his job and popularity. His colleague from the House told the Police his theory about Fielding's disappearance. The theory is that Fielding does not want to live his life like this anymore and decides to leave quietly without any track. In his colleague's words, he is always too serious and precise, so he thought that he might have been fed up with living in a world full of hypocrisy and wants to start new life. This could be true because Fielding's son later admitted that their life is full of pretending that everything is good. "You don't actually show the truth till the world splits in half under your feet."⁶¹ This statement suggests that even his closest family might have not known about his deepest desires.

In the case of the thief there is obvious how he despises people, especially the rich and successful people from higher classes. His way of fighting this absurd society is taking inexpensive things from their houses, it is his kind of a revolt. In the second case in which Mr. Fielding unexplainably disappears could show a revolting man who wants to change something in his own life. In both cases there is obvious disagreement with current society and its criteria. Albert Camus writes about revolt in his book *Myth of Sisyphus* and he explains that revolt begins in one's mind. Just the fact that man can realize what is wrong and sees the absurdity of the

⁶⁰ John Fowles, "Poor Koko," in *The Ebony Tower* (London: Vintage, 2006), 168.

⁶¹ John Fowles, "The Enigma," in *The Ebony Tower* (London: Vintage, 2006), 225.

world is a great step. The problem is that it is not possible to fight absurdity in mind. Also, it is not possible to destroy absurdity of the whole world but it is essential to try. To revolt properly it is important to continue revolting practically, just like the thief did. If this theory was true, Mr. Fielding's behavior would be considered revolting.

Social issues and how they influence peoples' individuality are often repeated topic in Fowles' short stories. People usually do not agree with someone's attitude, they do not like their social status and anything connected with it, etc. One of the examples can be seen in "Poor Koko" when the thief complains about the system and claims that nobody in this country, except for the "The fucking Tories."⁶² is trying. He also expresses his sympathies for the Russian system in which everything belongs to everybody and explains that he would never rob a museum or any other public place, because "... you don't just do a museum, you do every other poor sod who goes to look."⁶³ Even though a man is free to choose arbitrary ideology, his decision comes hand in hand with responsibility. The thief does not want to be enriched by robbing empty houses, he just wants to fight the existing system, but his actions influence innocent people in a bad way. Therefore, Sartre warned about the big responsibility that comes with man's free decisions. In his book *The Roads to Freedom* there is a character who blindly follows communist ideology and tries to persuade other people to join the Communist Party too. Ellen Bliss Talbot claims: "A man who has no opinions of his own, who borrows from others his theory of life and his code of morals, whose choices seem to be decided by the play of circumstances, is said to lack individuality."⁶⁴ The thief acts similarly, he also sympathizes with the Communists, but he does not follow all their principles. He does what he thinks is the best way of showing how much he does not agree with the system. He builds his individuality on some ideologies but interprets them in his own way which makes him a completely free man, who chooses which rules to follow and which not to follow. The thief's behavior perfectly fulfills principles of Max Stirner, who claims that: "Own will and the state are powers in deadly hostility, between which no 'perpetual peace' is possible."⁶⁵ The meaning of this statement is that it is not possible to act free when there is the state or someone who establishes rules which one is to follow.

Moreover, it can be seen in this short story how man's background can define his personality and how other people can guess by his behavior many important details of his life.

⁶² Fowles, "Poo Koko," 175.

⁶³ Fowles, "Poo Koko," 174.

⁶⁴ Talbot, "Individuality and Freedom," 603.

⁶⁵ Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, "Max Stirner".

Specifically, in this story the writer tries to find out from where the thief could be from, so that it would be easier for the police to find him. According to his speech, which does not show signs of any regional accent, the writer deduces that he probably lives in London. And because of jargon he uses, the writer assumes that he could come from a working-class. However, based on their previous dialogues, the writer thinks that the thief might have a relatively good education and probably attended some Redbrick university. He also sees many features in his behavior that are like behavior of children of his friends, which helps him to guess with what kind of people he associates with. Jane, who is his friend, once said that her son wanted to climb Everest in one day and once he realized it is not possible, he gave up. So, she summarized today's society of young people as impatient people who want everything right now, but they do not want to make any effort. Similarity with this characteristic leads the writer to a conclusion that the thief might be a friend of Jane's son, or at least he could belong to similar group of young people. As Ellen Bliss Talbot mentions in her article: "All normal human beings share in a certain common nature."⁶⁶ And the small differences taken from the environment in which and individual lives make each human unique and distinguishable from others.

Clegg, who comes from a lower social class seems to have certain troubles with his individuality. Given the fact he did not grow up with his parents, there is no wonder that he lacks love and understanding from someone close. He also has no sexual experience and Miranda attracts him very much. He wants her to love him and live with him like normal couples do, which means that he also expects her to have sex with him. He begins slowly, by taking pictures of her sitting and reading. Then he starts to take pictures of her whenever she lets him. When Clegg stunts Miranda with chloroform, he decides to undress her and take photos of her unconscious body. Later on, when Clegg feels he has control over her, he decides to command Miranda to pose on pictures she would not want to be public, threatening not to move her upstairs as he promised. Based on this information, some signs of libertinism can be seen in Clegg's behavior. Even though he is unexperienced, he gets a strange feeling of satisfaction when watching and taking pictures of Miranda, who sexually attracts him. Libertines find happiness in sexual satisfaction, which can certainly be the case of Clegg in a perverted way.

Differences in behavior of people who come from different social classes are easily recognizable in *The Collector*. Miranda was a student at the Slade School of Fine Art, raised in a respected middle-class family, unlike Clegg, who was raised by his aunt and uncle in poor

⁶⁶ Talbot, "Individuality and Freedom," 602.

conditions. Clegg is rather narrow-minded, quiet and not well-educated man in his mid-20's with no experience with women. Miranda, on the other hand, is an educated 20 years old woman, who likes to experience life. Because she comes from a higher class, her behavior corresponds with the demands of such society. She always looks neat, speaks politely and walks "Like a bird."⁶⁷ During her imprisonment are these differences more perceptible. While Miranda tries to negotiate with Clegg, offering smart deals and being mostly nice, Clegg acts like an amateur with no further plan. The difference between their education and the way of dealing with people can be seen there and it is obvious how much their environment influences their behavior.

Categorizing people according to their behavior, appearance or job is nothing uncommon. Description of Bel speaks for itself. She is described as a typical Irishwoman with pretty, rounded face, green eyes and fox-red hair, even though she never lived in Ireland, she just inherited genes from her grandmother's side. Also, Jennings, the detective, confided to Isobel how he felt in his work position. He does not like being an authority to people who do not take him seriously, and that he can never be himself. He even claims that his own generation perceives him as a leper.

Social status is something people tend to cling to very often. It is no wonder then that people want to protect their lives and reputation. Once man gains higher social status, it is difficult to ensure that it remains like this. In "The Enigma" it can be seen how Mrs. Fielding was worried about her family's reputation in case that her husband was cheating on her. As a politician he was under constant supervision of media and their friends or colleagues who would definitely not want to be connected with a problematic family. Living such life could be a good example of absurdity. As mentioned in the first chapter, individual needs to be perceived as a part of a society not as a single person. But how can an individual behave according to his will, desires and needs, when it is basically undesirable to develop a personality in such society? Their lives usually spin in cycles, as they are obliged to attend social events and behave according to etiquette. It can be only possible if one decides not to do this anymore and risk being excluded from the society. Obviously, Mrs. Fielding would never consider doing that, because she was too afraid of losing her family's status. The detective even observes from her behavior that she is basically welded into her role in this society. Also, Isobel mentions

⁶⁷ Fowles, *The Collector*, 12.

something similar during their later dialogue. “She really believes in the formal hostess bit. Leaving the gentleman to the port and cigars.”⁶⁸

In contrary, according to Isobel’s theory, Mrs. Fielding’s husband Marcus might have been fed up with living his role and could not dissemble anymore. Isobel told the detective that she thinks Mr. Fielding was feeling failed and trapped by pretending how happy he was. He could not be creative or study historical biography of great man, like Winston Churchill, which he was really keen on. Sartre’s character in *The Roads to Freedom* decided to take his life as a project, which can be improved all the time. Maybe Mr. Fielding wanted to project his whole new life too. If Isobel’s theory was right, Mr. Fielding would definitely agree with Catherine from “The Cloud”, who said that she does not see horrors in people, but at what makes them what they are. And she said she cannot stand actresses, especially the bad ones, referring to people who pretend just like Mr. Fielding’s family members, including himself, did.

Topic of pretending is repeated in “The Cloud” quite often, for example, Catherine says that people do things automatically, with no purpose, only because everybody does it. She likens these activities to little islands which do not communicate together and do not cooperate. After moving to another island, there is no previous continuity to the previous island and the surrounding does not change much. Same masks, voices and emptiness behind the words are present all over the islands. She also criticizes Paul for going with the herd, just like others.⁶⁹

2.5.Goals, absurdity and suicide

To become unique individual and create a strong personality, it is important to set some goals. In “Poor Koko”, the writer mentions his friend, who claims that there are four moments every person should go through in his life if he wished to say that he had lived life to the fullest. The first one is to almost drown, second one is being caught in bed with someone else’s wife, third is seeing a ghost and the last one is killing another human being. The writer claims that he had never experienced any of these things, but “...here I finally was, after a safe sixty-six years of existence, undergoing yet another of those 'vital' experiences: knowing one was not alone in a house where one believed one was.”⁷⁰

In “The Enigma” the colleague of Marcus Fielding claimed that Marcus might have been disappointed with his career and superficial life and this could be the reason for leaving

⁶⁸ John Fowles, “The Enigma,” in *The Ebony Tower* (London: Vintage, 2006), 247.

⁶⁹ John Fowles, “The Cloud,” in *The Ebony Tower* (London: Vintage, 2006), 274-276.

⁷⁰ Fowles, “Poor Koko,” 156.

without telling anybody. He could have gone to search for better life, in which he could fulfill his dreams and desires.

Such life goals can be fulfilled, but they can also be confounded easily. David's case is a little bit contradictory, as he fell in love with the Mouse. On the one hand, he could have had a new young girlfriend, with who he shared love for art. They could start and could have experienced something new and exciting. Instead he left Coëtminais alone, brokenhearted. On the other hand, there are many consequences that such a decision would bring. The Mouse would have to leave Henry, who might collapse and David would have to divorce, resolve property settlement, etc. He would lose everything he had built in his life, including the whole family. These are the reasons why he felt disillusioned when he was leaving to Paris to meet his wife.

The writer in *Poor Koko* starts to plan revenge while he is tied to the chair, cannot move and eagerly waits for help. His anger and determination are noticeable from his words.

The world was insane, I no longer wished to have anything to do with it. I would devote the rest of my life to revenge, to tracking that sadistic young fiend down. I would comb every likely coffee-bar in London, I would make Maurice and Jane give the most exact description of everything that had been stolen. I would ruthlessly pursue my suspicions over Richard.⁷¹

At this moment, he seems to be determined to find the thief and arrange vengeance. His anger creates a new sense of life in him, which would apparently require patience and determination. This should not be a problem for him because he is used to researching and putting information together step by step.

David in "The Cloud" talks enthusiastically about how setting goals and having a plan is highly important. While Catherine who listens to his monologue thinks how unnecessary all this planning is. She thinks that long discussions and planning usually do not lead anywhere and most things could be done through improvisation.

Henry talks about a Pisanello's fresco, which is the gloomiest picture that can be seen in his mansion. He specifically talks about the hangmen in the back and the people watching them. Henry says, that the people who are watching look like they want to be hanged too. Could it be possible, that people would envy someone their death? Especially, when the two hangmen are probably dead because it was their punishment.

⁷¹ Fowles, "Poor Koko," 189.

Catherine in “The Cloud” talks about somebody she lost and asks whether Paul and Bela are afraid that she might kill herself too. Paul resolutely negates this thought and Catherine says that the reason for not committing suicide is “...that I like what I am. What I've become.”⁷²

Clegg in *The Collector* thinks about taking his life, because it seems that there is no other option. Finding answers in death is a frequent phenomenon among existentialists, however, Sartre says that living and creating individual life is man's predestination to which also belongs responsibility. “All I had to do was kill myself, then the others could think what they liked. The people in the waiting-room, the Annexe people. Aunt Annie and Mabel, all of them. I would be out of it.”⁷³ He considers committing suicide because without Miranda his life is senseless and also, this is a perfect way to get rid of responsibility for his actions. People tend to think about suicide at the time of failure, disappointment and when they think that it is the only possible solution to their problems. Clegg finds himself in a tight corner, because his plan to have a beautiful girlfriend closed in his house forever ended up tragically. Surprisingly, he reconsiders his plan and decides to stay alive. “I found her diary which shows she never loved me, she only thought of herself and the other man all the time.”⁷⁴ Clegg feels like Miranda, who never loved him, does not deserve him to die for her. He buries her in his garden under the apple trees and begins to plot new abduction, which becomes the new sense of his life. Camus considers the topic of suicide an important topic:

There only exists one serious philosophical problem: and that is a suicide.

Making a decision whether life is worth living or not, means to answer the basic philosophical question. Anything else, whether life is three-dimensional, whether it has nine or twelve categories is secondary.⁷⁵

In the book *Myth of Sisyphus* Camus admits that if man finds the absurdity in his life, it is then logical to think about suicide. The question is, whether suicide is really a solution. After much deliberation over irrationality, God, or reason, Camus concludes that voluntary death is not a solution and it would confirm the existence of absurdity and let it win. Clegg decided not to commit a suicide because he set a new goal in his life and felt prepared and resolute to reach it.

Catherine, who seems to be generally very sensitive complains about her feelings of being sad. She thinks that everybody is happier than she is and that this state is permanent. She

⁷² Fowles, “The Cloud,” 288.

⁷³ Fowles, *The collector*, 298.

⁷⁴ Fowles, *The collector*, 303.

⁷⁵ Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, 14.

is depressed because of some sad experience and since then she spins in cycles of sadness, depression and anxiety. Her life does not make much sense, she feels like there is no way out of this. What Catherine experiences are typical signs of absurd life. She is rather reconciled with her destiny, but there are many people who try to show her beauties of life.

3. CONCLUSION

John Fowles provides a great number of situations in which people must deal with existential problems, such as anxiety, frustration, lack of moral behavior of others, social issues, freedom, etc. The aim of the thesis was to compare such situations and feelings of characters from Fowles' short stories from *The Ebony Tower* and his novel *The Collector* with opinions of philosophers who deal with such topics and especially find connections with Fowles and Albert Camus.

Fowles' books are a great source of many interesting characters who find themselves in difficult situations and describe their feelings. The way these books are written gives the reader opportunity to emphasize with the character. Unfortunately, majority of the situations seems to be rather negative than positive, because these books are mainly existential. And as mentioned in the first chapter, existentialism comes with negative thoughts which usually arise from negative experience from the past. Fowles usually describes people who face a difficult decision, or people who lost their option to decide.

Situations in which characters find themselves are timeless, thus very similar to the situations people are dealing with today, as well as to the situations people were dealing with in the past. Timelessness is very important in this case, because it proves that theories of philosophers from ancient Greece to the nowadays philosophers were right hundreds of years ago and their thoughts are still valid in the present time.

The thesis revealed that there exists a certain connection between Fowles and Camus. However, Camus' influence is not significantly visible in the two examined books by Fowles. The only examples which were found are depicted in the fourth section of the second chapter. Particularly speaking about the topic of revolt. For instance, in Fowles' short story about Mr. Fielding's disappearance, his colleague told the police his theory about Mr. Fielding being dissatisfied with his life and hypocrisy in the society. These conditions led him to vanish quietly which could be considered as a form of revolt. By Mr. Fielding's act, Fowles agrees with Camus' theory about fighting against absurdity with revolt. Revolt is also recognized in behavior of the thief who demonstrates his disagreement with system by robbing houses of rich people. This kind of revolt is more active than the previous one.

Contemplating about suicide is another topic both authors deal with. Camus says that suicide does not solve the problem of absurdity and this is what Fowles agrees with in the books. The key example is Clegg, who decides not to commit suicide, even though the way his life changed seems to have no other solution than voluntary death. However, this example proves that Fowles agrees with Camus' point of view.

Unfortunately, these are the only situations from the books that are compatible with Camus' opinions mentioned in the first chapter. Therefore, it cannot be confirmed that Camus had a big impact on Fowles' production. However, Fowles as well as Camus are considered to be existentialists and the rest of the thesis proves that Fowles aligns with other existentialists opinions.

Big part of the thesis deals with giving and breaking promises in accordance with Immanuel Kant's principle in which he describes that if one breaks the rule, the rule is no longer valid, because it does not relate to everybody anymore. There are many examples of such behavior shown in "Eliduc".

Another confirmed similarity with existentialist philosophers is when Fowles depicts restriction of someone's physical freedom. Arthur Schopenhauer describes such violation in his book *On the Will in Nature* and Fowles' characters face situations in which they are prevented or at least have difficulties with free movement.

People's disagreement with different social issues, rules and classes show how one can be limited to evolve into an individual person, following his own instincts and free will. Possibility of such behavior would be in accordance with Ann Caldwell Butler's view on people living by the laws of nature.

Many other examples from Fowles' books prove that he was significantly affected by existentialists works. Starting with the issue of free will and ending with humanism. It would be interesting to focus only on individuality of characters and their development. But I am afraid it would not be possible within the short stories, because such development needs to be examined rather in novels.

RESUMÉ

John Fowles patří mezi významné britské spisovatele a esejisty. Jeho díla se řadí mezi modernu a postmodernu. Mezi jeho neznámější díla patří romány *Sběratel*, *Mág* nebo také *Francouzova milénka*. Tato práce se věnuje zejména jeho sbírce povídek *Ebenová věž* a již zmíněnému *Sběrateli*. Je obecně známo, že Fowles velice dobře ovládal postupy modernistů a stejně tak se velice dobře orientoval na půdě francouzské literatury, kterou studoval. Významně ho také ovlivnila existenciální próza, často se uvádí, že hlavně Albert Camus a Jean-Paul Sartre.

Hlavním úkolem této práce je prozkoumat Fowlesovo pojetí svobody, individuality a humanismu v jeho krátké próze a románu *Sběratel*. Dále také porovnat jeho pohled na věc s Albertem Camusem a jinými filozofy zajímavými se o tato témata.

Knih *Sběratel* se řadí mezi psychologické thrillery, v němž se nacházejí dvě hlavní postavy. Clegg, jakožto šílený sběratel motýlů a Miranda, mladá studentka umění, kterou Clegg vězní ve sklepě svého domu. V tomto románu jsou jasně viditelné známky existencialismu. Například naprosté omezení Mirandiny svobody, když jí Clegg zamkne ve sklepě. Dále zde můžeme vidět značné rozdíly ve společenském původu obou hlavních postav a jak je jejich zázemí ovlivnilo. Zatímco Miranda je křehká, chytrá dívka se zájmem poznávat svět, Clegg je trochu hloupý, nezkušený mladík, který si se svým životem očividně neví moc rady. Na základě rozhovorů, při kterých se Miranda snažila Cleggovi otevřít oči a ukázat možnosti, které život přináší, je vidět, že Clegg o nic takového nestojí.

Miranda bohužel už své sny nebude nikdy moci naplnit, jelikož během svého uvěznění na následky zápalu plic zemře. Clegg má sice stále možnost svůj život radikálně změnit, ale dle posledních vět v knize se rozhodl unést další dívku.

Sbírka povídek *Ebenová věž* obsahuje pět povídek, z nichž ani jedna není podobná té druhé. Povídky jsou velmi pestré, co se týče témat a také situací, ve kterých se postavy nacházejí. Tyto situace jsou stěžejní částí této práce. Postavy se zde setkávají s pocitem ztráty osobnosti, zejména v případech vysoce postavených osob a jejich rodin. Příkladem může být pan Fielding a jeho rodina v níž zřejmě všichni, kromě jeho ženy pocíťují drsný tlak společnosti a cítí se být nesvobodní.

Setkáváme se zde i s pocitem naprosté fyzické nesvobody, kdy zloděj přiváže muže k židli a nechá ho sledovat, jak ničí jeho několikaletý výzkum. Naopak zde můžeme vidět i způsob, jak lze menší překážky, které by mohly někoho v pohybu omezit, jednoduše obejít. Problémem společnosti je i to, že člověk se nemůže individuálně vyvíjet, jelikož je omezován nepřehledným množstvím věcí, které mu v tom brání. V povídce *Ebenová věž*, můžeme vidět,

jak se mladý David neochotně vrací ke své ženě se kterou má dvě malé děti, tudíž i jistou morální povinnost postarat se o ně. Během svého pobytu v Cöetminais se zamiloval do mladičké Diany a velice touží po tom, aby spolu mohli být. Nakonec poměrně nedobrovolně zvítězí rozum nad láskou a oba se vracejí tam, kam si myslí, že patří.

Dalším zajímavým tématem je problematika slibů. Hrdina jedné z povídek, Eliduk, ve svém příběhu nespočetněkrát něco slíbí a nespočetněkrát svůj slib nedodrží. Nejenže mu to ubírá na kredibilitě, ale způsobuje mu to i problémy v osobním životě. Zachrání ho jeho neuvěřitelně velkorysá manželka, která mu umožní vzít si jinou ženu a sama se zatím odstěhuje do kláštera, kam nakonec přijme i Elidukovu novou ženu.

Její čin rozhodně nepatří mezi činy, které bychom od svých blízkých či přátel běžně očekávali. Další kategorií jsou právě činy, které se od lidí automaticky vyžadují, obvykle na základě nějakých společenských konvencí. Některé postavy z povídek odmítají tyto zvyklosti dodržovat a velice často se tedy ocitají v situacích, kdy jejich okolí nevěřicně kroutí hlavou nad tou drzostí. Zajímavým příkladem je situace v povídce Chudák Koko, kde se zloděj rozhodne vykrást chatu, ve které je ale obyvatel, o kterém zloděj netuší. Zloděj nečekaného obyvatele brzy objeví, přiváže ho k židli a pokračuje v loupení. Nicméně, zvláštní moment přichází ve chvíli, kdy se zloděj přizná k tomu, že záměrně nekrade cenné věci, ale dává si záležet na tom, aby bylo poznat, že v domě někdo byl. Dalším netypickým znakem pro zloděje bylo to, že se zdál být poměrně dobře vzdělaný, což se u zloděje všeobecně nepředpokládá.

Mezi důležitá existenciální témata patří zajisté smrt a sebevražda. I o těchto tématech se ve Fowlesových knihách také dočteme. Nejdetailněji rozepsanou úvahu popisuje autor ve Sběrateli. Po Mirandině smrti přemýšlí Clegg nad sebevraždou. Rychlý spád událostí a fatální následek ho nutí myslet si, že vzít si život je jediné řešení. Navíc by tak mohl být už navždy se svou láskou a zbavit se zodpovědnosti za své činy. Nicméně poté co Clegg najde Mirandin deník, ve kterém se dočte, že ho nikdy nemilovala, změní svůj názor. Pohřbí Mirandu na zahradě a začne plánovat únos další nevinné dívky.

Všechna tato témata spojují termíny existencialismus, individualismus a humanismus. Téměř každá situace z výše zmíněných knih má k sobě filozofické vysvětlení a rozbor. Existencialismem se zabýval již Aristoteles v antickém Řecku. Jeho středem zájmu byla svobodná vůle z etické perspektivy. Je důležité, aby se člověk řídil rozumem i vůlí, protože tím tvoří základ morálního chování. S jeho tvrzením se ztotožňuje i René Descartes, který říká, že svobodná vůle může být využita k tvoření dobra, ale také zla, pokud je využita špatně.

Křesťanská teologie v čele se svatým Tomášem Akvinským tvrdí, že svoboda, po které člověk touží, je dosažitelná pouze za předpokladu, že člověk dosáhne věčné blaženosti.

Kategorický imperativ Immanuela Kanta zase zjednodušeně říká, abychom se chovali tak, jak bychom si přáli, aby se jiní chovali k nám. Toto tvrzení opět navazuje na tvrzení zmíněná výše, jelikož chce Kant zabránit zneužívání svobodné vůle. Svobodná vůle může být někomu snadno odebrána, například Arthur Schopenhauer mluví o třech druzích svobody, jedna z nich je fyzická, druhá intelektuální a poslední je morální svoboda.

Alan B. Carter ve svém článku rozebírá hodnotu svobody a jak můžeme takovou hodnotu zjistit u cizího člověka. Dále zde rozepisuje svůj názor na to, proč mají lidé neustále tendence své činy zdůvodňovat.

Důležitým existencialistou pro tuto práci je Albert Camus, který se ve svých dílech zabývá zejména absurditou života, revoltou, svobodou a vášní, což jsou podle něj jediné způsoby, jak se absurdity zbavit. Dále řeší, zda má život nějakou hodnotu a pokud ano, tak jakou. Jean-Paul Sartre, jeho blízký kamarád se zabývá podobnými tématy, nicméně ne ve všech se shodnou. Pro Sartra je život takzvaným „odsouzením ke svobodě“, kdežto Camus považuje život spíše za absurdní výzvu.

Individualisté jako třeba Ellen Bliss Talbot tvrdí, že aby byl člověk jedinečným, musí splňovat tyto tři faktory: jednotnost, jedinečnost a úplnost. Individualističtí anarchisté zase tvrdí, že člověk by se měl chovat tak, jak se chovat chce. Podobný, jen méně razantní názor sdílí i Ann Butler. Podle ní by se měl člověk chovat v souladu s přírodou a jejími zákony.

Humanisté hledají vesměs potěšení ze života. Nezavrhují pokrok, naopak jsou rádi za nové podněty ke studiu a sebezdokonalování. Hedonisté se snaží v životě dosáhnout co největšího potěšení a radosti, je to jejich jediným smyslem života. Libertinisté jsou extrémnějším odvětvím Hedonistů, jelikož nacházejí své potěšení zejména v sexu.

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