

## J. FOWLES AT THE CROSSROAD OF INTERTEXTUALITY AND AUTOINTERTEXTUALITY

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### ABSTRACT:

The article aims at studying the concept "isolation" in J. Fowles' works "The Aristos" and "The Magus" in the light of intertextuality and autointertextuality. The study shows that the concept is actualized via autointertextuality, as well as via intertextuality as the extract where the concept is verbalized alludes to J. Donne's works. So, the concept "isolation" is actualized via intertextuality and autointertextuality at the same time which makes the deciphering process a unique one.

**Keywords:** intertextuality, auto intertextuality, concept, isolation, J. Fowles.

### INTRODUCTION:

The outstanding British writer J. Fowles is an exceptional writer whose writings can be studied through the prism of his autobiographical philosophical essays "The Aristos". Here the writer sets out his own views on life. Maybe if he would like to be a novelist from the very beginning he would not have written "The Aristos" or as he initially wanted to entitle it "Self-portrait in Ideas". The author confesses that the prime personal reason for this book was to announce that he did not intend to walk into the cage labeled "novelist" [4,p.7]. The author published the book against the advice of almost everyone who read it. However, he was obstinate and the book was released. The book is a reflection of the author's ideas. Luckily, the recipients have an opportunity to see how the ideas developed in the author's mind and stated in "The Aristos" get flesh and body in his other works.

J. Fowles' works stand at the crossroad of intertextuality and autointertextuality. On the one hand he is an exemplary post-modern writer whose works are vividly marked with intertextual components, intertexts, on the other hand, all his works reflect the ideas stated in "The Aristos", in other words autointertextuality is also clearly notable in his works. Moreover, in many cases they are interwoven with each other in his writings as in the following discussions referring to the concept of isolation.

### ACTUALIZATION OF THE CONCEPT "ISOLATION" IN "THE ARISTOS":

The concept "isolation" is verbalized in the following excerpt taken from "The Aristos" which depicts the writer's picture of the world.

"The old religions and philosophies were refuges, kind to man in a world that his ignorance of science and technology made unkind. Never try to pass us by, they always said, for behind us is nothing but misery and horror. [4,p.38]

It is cold and bare outside, says the mother; but one day the child goes out. This age is still our first day alone out, and we feel ourselves alone; more free and more alone"[4,p.38].

In the given passage one can notice the juxtaposition of the old religions, philosophies on the one hand and ignorance of science and technology, on the other hand. Old religions and philosophies are defined as being **kind**. Old religions and philosophies were kind as they protected people by warning them that behind them the latter can face misery and horror. In the second paragraph mother acts as a protector (*It is cold and bare outside, says*

*the mother*). But one day a child goes out. Here the word "**child**" has a metonymic usage, it refers to human beings, one day they do not obey and start to make individual actions. In the same paragraph we come across metaphor ***This age is still our first day alone out.*** It is noteworthy to pay attention to the fact that the writer emphasizes ***This age*** as a period of loneliness. "**This age**" refers to the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a reference to the period of his writing. So, he believes that in the 20<sup>th</sup> century people get more freedom, however, they feel themselves more alone. The idea is further developed in the next paragraphs.

*"Our stereotypical societies force us to feel more alone. They stamp masks on us and isolate out real selves. We all live in two worlds: the old comfortable man-centered world of absolutes and the harsh real world of relatives. The latter, the relativity reality, terrifies us; and isolates and dwarfs us all".[4,p.39].*

In the given paragraph the author blames stereotypical societies for human's loneliness by stamping masks on them and this way isolating them from their real selves. Here the lexeme "**real**" acquires special significance. It is repeated in the next sentence with the combination "**harsh real world of relatives**". The epithet "**harsh**" having the meaning "cruel", expresses the author's negative attitude towards the real world. This is supported by another epithet which is of a reversed nature "**world of relatives (relative world)**". The idea is supplemented by oxymoron "**relativity reality**" based on alliteration of the sound "r". In this part of the text J.Fowles claims that all people live in two worlds- one is man-centered, absolute, the other is relative. This relativity terrifies, isolates and dwarfs everybody. The tripling of the verbs "**terrify**", "**isolate**", "**dwarf**" creates gradation.

*"Great social concern may paradoxically, only increase this isolation. The more society interferes and supervises and plays the good Samaritan, the less needed and lonelier the secret individual gets"[4,p.39].*

It is a paradox that the greater the social concern about human beings, the more isolated they become. It is even more paradoxical that the more society interferes and supervises the lonelier the individual becomes. In order to make his ideas more vivid J.Fowles resorts to "**allusion**" to play good Samaritan", i.e someone who helps a stranger[6].

The verb "play" transfers negative meaning to the expression **good Samaritan**, originally having positive meaning, as it expresses falsity of intentions.

*"More and more we know how far we are from the persons we should like to be. Less and less do we believe that a man can be any other than he is born and conditioned to be. The more science reveals our mechanical nature the more a hurried "free" man, a Robin Hood in each, retreats into the forests of the private mind [4,p.39].*

*Once again the indifferent process of infinity seems at first sight to have trapped us into a corner. But we are trapped only by our own stupidity and weakness. The escape is clear"[ibid].*

In the above-deduced paragraph the author uses double comparative construction "*more and more*" and parcellation to disclose the concept "isolation". On the one hand due to the parcellation the detached part of the sentence (***Less and less do we believe that a man can be any other than he is born and conditioned to be***) becomes foregrounded and, on the other hand, it transfers additional implicit meaning to the utterance, namely, isolation. The next sentence is also foregrounded by means of double comparison (***The more science reveals our mechanical nature the more a hurried "free" man, a Robin***

*Hood in each, retreats into the forests of the private mind*). The more science develops, the more humans become isolated. Here it is worth paying attention to the lexeme "free" used in the inverted commas. The author refers to man's freedom sarcastically. The concept "isolation" is actualized in another part of the sentence by means of **allusion and metaphor** "a Robin Hood in each, retreats into the forests of the private mind". Each person is alone with his/her own mind. More and more people become isolated with the development of science and technologies. The last sentence summarizes the author's philosophical approach to the issue. He believes that human's stupidity and weakness are responsible for such an escape. To make his ideas more expressive J.Fowles resorts to metaphor "Once again the indifferent process of infinity seems at first sight to have trapped us into a corner".

Summarizing the above stated ideas it should be noted that the concept "isolation" actualized in "The Aristos" is closely connected with the concept "freedom", the more freedom the humanity gets, the more isolated they become from the society. Another argument stated here is that old religions and philosophies were refuges for people, though they limited people's freedom, they did not let them isolate themselves from the society. With the development of science people as if got more freedom, in fact, they became more isolated. However, the author blames people for this, as the isolation, in fact, is the result of their weakness and stupidity.

#### **AUTOINTERTEXTUAL MARKERS IN "THE ARISTOS" AND "THE MAGUS":**

Thus, the author expressed his ideas about isolation in his philosophical essays "The Aristos", later the same ideas got flesh and body in "The Magus" in the form of a dialogue between the protagonists.

Conchis, the magus, and young English teacher Nicholas were discussing about love and here Nicholas confessed that he didn't know what love was.

"I suppose I don't know what love is, really. If it isn't sex. And I don't even really care a damn any more, anyway.

"My dear young man, you are a disaster. So defeated. So pessimistic".

"I was rather ambitious once. I ought to have been blind as well. Then perhaps I wouldn't feel defeated". "It's not all me. It's in the age. In all my generation. We feel the same".

"In the greatest age of enlightenment in the history of this earth? When we have destroyed more darkness in this last fifty years than in the last five million?"

"As at Neuve Chapelle? Hiroshima?"

"But you and I! We live, we are this wonderful age. We are not destroyed. We did not even destroy."

#### **"No man is an island."**

*"Rubbish. Every one of us is an island. If it were not so we should go mad at once. Between these islands there are ships, airplanes, telephones, wireless what you will. But they remain islands. Islands that can sink or disappear for ever. You are an island that has not sunk. You cannot be such a pessimist. It is not possible."* [3, p. 146].

The dialogue takes place between two characters from different generations. The younger one – Nicholas begins his speech with the statement "No man is an island" and the reply is "Every one of us is an island". Both statements prompt the reader that the two characters know the intertext lying between their speeches quite well. It is essential to notice that here one can observe two voices, two authors. The interpretation of the given dialogue would be incomplete without resorting to the original text. "No man is an

*island*” is an intertext taken from J. Donne’s “Meditation 17” which, in fact, activates the whole excerpt in the reader’s mind. The single sentence stands for a whole idea, moreover for an ideology peculiar, specific to another century, namely 17<sup>th</sup> century, as J. Donne’s outlooks mostly represented commonly accepted viewpoints of his time.

By referring to the whole excerpt the whole picture is restored and a very exciting dialogue opens in front of the reader: a dialogue between a 20<sup>th</sup> - century writer and a 17<sup>th</sup>- century writer.

*No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as any manner of thy friends or of thine own were; any man's death diminishes me because I am involved in mankind. And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee [1].*

The given idea is juxtaposed with the reply “*Every one of us is an island*” made by another character, the older one – Conchis, behind whom the writer, i.e. J. Fowles, is hidden. As it is seen it is a dialogue between opposite viewpoints, in fact, it is a dialogue between representatives from different centuries. Different viewpoints clash with each other. To penetrate deeply into the two authors' viewpoints we should do comparative conceptual analysis of both texts.

Thus, in both texts man is associated with an island. This can be explained by the etymology of the word “island”. The root of the word has a Latin origin “insula” meaning insulate, isolate which gives explanation to the associated lexemes “island” and “man”. J. Donne’s “Meditation 17” states the idea of wholeness, each person is connected with the others, is part of the whole. The author's viewpoint is expressed by the conceptual metaphor (No man is an island) which is

actualized here via metaphorical simile *if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were*. For the purpose of vividness the author brings forth the lexemes **clod** “a lump of earth” and **promontory** “a high, long piece of land that goes out into the ocean”. It doesn't matter whether a clod or a promontory were washed away by the sea, eventually the continent would become less. It should be mentioned that the two meanings of the lexeme **clod** are activated at the same time. The second meaning of **clod** is “someone who is not graceful and behaves in a stupid way”, in the same way the author imparts connotational meaning to the lexeme promontory “*someone very prominent*”. The idea is the following: everyone has his/her place in the world and it doesn't matter whether that someone is a prominent person or a stupid one, the world would still become less losing them. The author is very sentimental, he is involved in mankind and any man's death diminishes him.

In contrast to this J. Fowles argues his own viewpoint. The ideas of “the Many” and “the Elect” have their distinct place in J. Fowles' works. We can observe them distinctly in the given dialogue as well. So, he thinks that every one of us is an island. The pronoun **every one** is deliberately written separately – once again to emphasize people's loneliness, isolation. The author thinks that every person deep in his/her heart is alone. It doesn't matter how many friends he has, who they are, deep in his/her heart man is alone. Another technique used by the author to emphasize man's loneliness is the use of parcellated anadiplosis (But they remain islands. Islands that can sink or disappear for ever). Metaphorically the simile *there are islands that can sink or disappear* refers to people who die without leaving any traits after them. The author calls them the Many. However, as there are islands which don't sink, there are people who don't “die”, they live forever. They live in the hearts of many people

and different generations. These are the Elect [5].

If in this part of text the author uses an implicit intertext, taken from J. Donne's "Meditation 17" and builds a dialogue around it, in another part of the novel the author explicitly refers to him.

*"As something too small to mourn; the very word was archaic and superstitious, of the age of Browne, or Hervey; yet Donne was right, her death detracted, would for ever detract, from my own life. Each death laid a dreadful charge of complicity on the living; each death was incongruous, its guilt irreducible, its sadness immortal; a bracelet of bright hair about the bone" [3, p.441].*

Here we can see the intrusion of Donne's voice in the novel. It should be noted that in this passage the author activates two different texts written by J. Donne. The first part "*Yet Donne was right, her death detracted, would for ever detract, from my own life. Each death laid a dreadful charge of complicity on the living; each death was incongruous, its guilt irreducible, its sadness immortal*" alludes to "Meditation 17" where the idea is stated in the following way: *any man's death diminishes me because I am involved in mankind.*" and the second one just a phrase, which summarizes the above mentioned idea "**a bracelet of bright hair about the bone**" alludes to J. Donne's "The Relic"[2].

*When my grave is broke up again  
Some second guest to entertain,  
(For graves have learn'd that woman head,  
To be to more than one a bed)*

*And he that digs it, spies  
**A bracelet of bright hair about the bone**  
Will he not let us alone,  
And think that there a loving couple lies,  
Who thought that this device might be some way  
To make their souls, at the last busy day,  
Meet at this grave, and make a little stay?[2]*

As it can be seen the alluded phrase activates the whole poem. So, the phrase "**a bracelet of bright hair about the bone**" symbolizes a couple where "a bracelet of bright hair" refers to a woman and the bone – to man.

Thus, the intertext intersects with the author's philosophical essay "The Aristos" and J. Donne's two different texts.

## CONCLUSION:

We can say that J. Fowles encodes his writings by means of allusions, the decoding of which very often depends on the reader's thesaurus. "The Magus" is a kind of game with the reader, who undergoes a test of knowledge at each step of reading. Some of the information that the writer wants to transfer to the reader is hidden behind the allusions. So, the reader either should recognize and reconstruct in his/her mind the alluded text, or in order to understand the message look it up in different sources. The writer most likely enjoyed creating labyrinths for his readers. Consciously or unconsciously he wrote "The Aristos" as a guide for understanding his philosophy.

So, the study revealed that auto intertextuality can be an important component in the conceptual and linguistic world picture of the writer. The concept "isolation" is thoroughly described in J. Fowles' philosophical essays "The Aristos" which is actualized in "The Magus". First of all auto intertextual markers here are of ideological nature, one can see the same philosophy about "isolation" in both texts, nevertheless, one can also notice the key words "retreat", "weakness". It should be stated that freedom and isolation go together in both texts: the more freedom an individual gets, the more isolated becomes. The writer also believes that it is due to the weakness and stupidity.

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