New Horizons in English Studies 9/2024

LITERATURE

Marta Szymczyk

The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Poland
marta.szymczykk@gmail.com
https://orcid.org/0009-0007-8808-2213

Nicholas Urfe's Individuation and Existential Development in *The Magus* by John Fowles

Abstract. This article attempts to establish a connection between Jungian analytical psychology and Albert Camus's existentialism using the example of *The Magus* by John Fowles. The novel has already been analysed in the context of these theories separately (Ładuch 2022; Onega 1989). However, little has been said about the similarities between the two concepts and how Fowles's narrative foregrounds them. Jung's individuation is a process of acknowledging and exploring the archetypes, i.e., separate elements of the collective unconscious, while Camus's philosophy deals primarily with the clash between the human urge for knowledge and the silence of the world. The article seeks to demonstrate that it is possible to depict a step-by-step personal development process from the writings of these authors and find similarities between them, especially with regard to their outcomes. Influenced by his experiences on Bourani, the protagonist of *The Magus* goes through individuation that blend elements of Jung's and Camus's visions. The "godgame" prepared for Nicholas by Maurice Conchis could be interpreted as both a realisation of the absurd and an opportunity to deal with archetypes. As a result of the experiment, the protagonist becomes authentic, starts to make an effort to maintain personal relationships, and establishes an individual moral code. Finally, the paper asserts that the process is circular, i.e., never-ending, and requires constant effort, which also corresponds with Jung's and Camus's frameworks.

Keywords: *The Magus*; John Fowles; Carl Gustav Jung; Albert Camus; archetypes; individuation; existentialism.

Carl Gustav Jung and Albert Camus created and explored such powerful ideas that their impact stretches far beyond their original fields. A psychiatrist and a precursor of psychology, Jung also contributed to philosophy by introducing the concept of the collec-

DOI: 10.17951/nh.2024.9.76-88

tive unconscious. Similarly, Camus's existentialism can be conceived as a philosophical system as well as the root of personality psychology. In spite of the great popularity of Jung's and Camus's frameworks, little attention has been paid to the relationship between the two theories. For instance, as noted by Piotr Oleś ([2003] 2009), there is a tendency in today's personality psychology to integrate many theories into a single, comprehensive and complex system. Nonetheless, psychologists exploring the topic, such as Dan McAdams, Robert McCrae, and Paul Costa, show little interest in embracing both existential and analytical psychology (Oleś [2003] 2009). However, attempts at combining the thoughts of the two authors have been made in literary studies. For example, Albert Camus's short story, *The Growing Stone*, was analysed from the Jungian perspective (Mellon 1991). Nevertheless, the resemblance between Camus's and Jung's ideas has not been investigated in the context of *The Magus* by John Fowles, which is a theoretical and critical void that the present study aims to address.

Although Jung's and Camus's theories draw on different concepts of the human psyche, both of them were popular in the twentieth century and exerted a considerable impact on culture. John Fowles admitted on several occasions that he was influenced by both thinkers ([1976] 2004, 6; [1964] 1993, 121-3). The purpose of this study is to demonstrate that this extraordinary piece of literature provides a platform for a comparative analysis of existentialism via a Jungian approach. The parallel manifests itself in the hero's quest for maturity presented in the book. The theoretical part of this article deals with the Jungian concept of the collective unconscious and its relationship with individuation. Then, it focuses on Camus's philosophy and tries to pinpoint a step-by-step process of the hero's evolution, with special attention to individuation. Finally, the analytical part considers the plot of *The Magus* as an exemplification of personal growth in both Jungian and existential terms.

Jung's analytical psychology focuses primarily on the unconscious. His original idea was that this part of the psyche is both collective and individual. He defined the two by employing contrast. The individual unconscious consists of "contents which have at one time been conscious but which have disappeared from consciousness through having been forgotten or repressed" (Jung [1959] 1969, 42). On the other hand, collective unconscious thoughts "have never been in consciousness and therefore have never been individually acquired, but owe their existence exclusively to heredity" (Jung [1959] 1969, 42). It is the collective unconscious, shared by all humans, that is the source of archetypes.

As Peter Saunders and Patricia Skar (2001) observe, "[a]nother half-century on, Jungians are still arguing about the meaning of the term archetype, struggling to remain faithful to Jung's conception while increasingly attempting to ground the concept in examples from other fields" (2). One of the reasons for this situation might be the fact that Jung developed the idea of archetypes while examining a considerable number of creative texts. He aimed to find general patterns among archetypes, which recur independently of place and time. The subject matter of his research was far from concrete. In *The Psychology of the Child Archetype* Jung stated: "Not for a moment dare

we succumb to the illusion that an archetype can be finally explained and disposed of" (quoted in Saunders and Skar 2001, 3). For the purpose of this article, the following definition has been adopted: "[a]rchetypes are universal symbols, primordial images, that recur in dreams, legends, and religions the world over" (Mellon 1991, 935).

In *The Concept of the Collective Unconscious*, Jung claims that "[t]here are as many archetypes as there are typical situations in life" (quoted in Saunders and Skar 2001, 5). Therefore, analysis of Jungian archetypes is limited here to just four: the anima/animus, the shadow, and the persona. The first one – the anima – is a female image carried by every man, made "of all the ancestral experiences of the female, a deposit, as it were, of all the impressions ever made by women" (Jung 1982, 50). In other words, it is not the image of one's mother, feminine caregiver, sister, or women from one's formative years. The anima contains all the expectations and intentions towards women as well as fictional images that anyone in the world has ever had. Its masculine counterpart is called animus.

Another significant archetype is the shadow – the wildest part of human nature and the root of aggression and sexuality. Since this part of the psyche is socially unacceptable, people tend to hide it behind the persona, which serves as a mask. The clearest cultural representation of these two archetypes is Robert Louis Stevenson's novella, *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, where the shadow of the main character literally separates from him. According to Jung ([1959] 1969), "[t]he shadow is a living personality and therefore wants to live with it in some form. It cannot be argued out of existence or rationalized into harmlessness" (20). He saw great danger in the repression of one's shadow, which can become uncontrollable when ignored.

Although archetypes are originally unconscious, they can become conscious in the process of individuation, whose key aspect is the confrontation with the shadow and the anima/animus. For Jung, this is the only way to mature and release one's true potential. The term "individuation" originates from the word "individuality," which points out another crucial aspect of the process. As Jung (1990) explained, "[i]ndividuation means becoming an 'individual', and, in so far as 'individuality' embraces our innermost, last, and incomparable uniqueness, it also implies becoming one's own self" (147).

The premises of existentialism differ from those of analytical psychology. Existentialism focuses on the absurdity of human life and various ways of dealing with this fact. In Albert Camus's view, there are three basic facts of existence: "First, there is the longing by humans for clarity and understanding. … Second, the world stands in an irrational silence with respect to humans. … Third, humans and the world stand in conflict and confrontation" (Fleming 1986, 114). These facts point to the crucial paradox of Camus's philosophy, which is facing the senselessness of life as an individual. For this reason, his thought is also known as the philosophy of the absurd. The term was coined by Jean-Paul Sartre after Camus had denied repeatedly being either an existentialist or even a philosopher (Aronson 2011, chap. 1). Notwithstanding, Camus's works are considered fundamental for existentialism, which includes not only philosophers such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, but also visual artists,

directors, writers, and psychologists (Aho 2023). Having contributed to such a vast cultural and social phenomenon, Camus is more often called an existentialist than an absurdist. The philosophy of the absurd is then a version of existentialism that refers exclusively to Camus's thought.

Despite Camus's stress on the absurdity of the world, he was in constant search for the purpose of life. Once the absurdist formulated the crucial paradox described above, he posed the question: "Can we live our lives without the transcendental moorings that religion once provided?" (Mikics and Zaretsky 2013, 203). As Aronson (2011) discusses:

> … [Camus] begins from a presumption of scepticism – until he finds the basis for a non-skeptical conclusion. And he builds a unique philosophical construction, whose premises are often left unstated and which is not always argued clearly, but which develops in distinct stages over the course of his brief lifetime. (Aronson, chap. 1)

Camus provided the answer to the paradox in his well-known work, *The Myth of Sisyphus*. As observed by Aronson (2011), "the main concern of the book is to sketch ways of living our lives so as to make them worth living despite their being meaningless" (chap. 3.1). Camus (1955) exchanged nihilism for absurdity, explaining the latter through the example of Sisyphus: "Sisyphus is the absurd hero. He is, as much through his passions as through his torture. His scorn of the gods, his hatred of death, and his passion for life won him that unspeakable penalty in which the whole being is exerted toward accomplishing nothing" (Camus 1955, 76). His needless and hopeless work resembles the fate of humans who rejected religion and beheld the absurdity of their existence. Camus tried to answer the question of what one can do in such a desperate situation. His novel idea was to call into question the severity of this mythological hero's penalty. He contended that one can be happy even after realising the meaninglessness of one's actions because of a sense of freedom. Although Sisyphus finally loses his opportunity to escape his fate, he is still able to decide how he perceives his life. According to Camus (1955), "There is no fate that cannot be surmounted by scorn." (77) He implied that an absurd hero can deal with senselessness in solitude because he is always free.

As Camus contended, one is free because, regardless of the situation, it is possible to interpret it from an individual perspective. In other words, creating personal meaning gives sense to life by becoming an antidote to the absurd. For the sake of this analysis, it is also essential to see that Sisyphus creates the meaning of his life alone and does not follow the opinions of others. He even scorns the gods whose objective is to make him miserable. Sisyphus is authentic in the sense that he is faithful to himself. Such stress on the value of independence also agrees with the aims of Jungian individuation.

Camus (1957) also promoted the notion of authenticity in *The Fall*, a prose monologue and confession of the lawyer Jean Baptiste-Clamence who realises that he has been inauthentic in simple acts of kindness to strangers. Although these acts seem to be noble, their morality is questioned as they are guided by the protagonist's affectation. In Jungian terms, the lawyer's persona is too strong. Both Jung and Camus would condemn this as inauthenticity. As observed by Donna Ladkin, Chellie Spiller, and Gareth Craze (2016), even though Jung did not directly mention authenticity as the goal of individuation, it is a substantial effect. In the view of both thinkers, one can reach authenticity through individuation by accepting the unconscious (which also means accepting the smaller role of individual agency) and integrating the repressed parts of the self. Researchers support this view by pointing out the similarity between Jung's individuation and the definitions of authenticity proposed by Michael Kernis and Susan Harter. According to Ladkin Chellie Spiller, and Gareth Craze (2016), a "Jungian-informed view of authenticity recognizes the need to acknowledge and involve all aspects of the self, lest they leak out in unhelpful or even destructive ways" (20). In other words, not only do they link individuation with the quest for authenticity but also stress its significance in maintaining one's well-being.

Although the journey of the protagonist in *The Magus* has already been described in Jungian (e.g. Onega 1989) and existential (e.g. Ładuch 2022) terms, this paper elaborates on those aspects of the plot which blend the two philosophies. In Susan Onega's (1989, 40) view, *The Magus* fits in with Joseph Campbell's three-stage hero's quest for maturity. First, the immature and irresponsible Nicholas resides in his homeland, as covered in chapters 1-9. Then, in chapters 10-67, he travels to Phraxos and meets Maurice Conchis. Their confrontation as part of the so-called godgame is supposed to lead Nicholas to greater maturity. Finally, the game is over in chapters 68-77 and its impact on Urfe is demonstrated. If the trials that the protagonist undergoes are interpreted as his confrontation with the collective unconscious, the three-stage process resembles Jung's individuation (Vassilieva 2004, 95). In contrast to Jung, Camus did not name or describe in detail any kind of process of personal growth. However, it is possible to demonstrate the evolution of an absurd hero which covers slightly different steps but is still comparable. First, one lives in unawareness of the absurd. This is followed by the stage of awakening. The meaninglessness seems to be overwhelming, and one may choose to leap away from it by repressing it, turning to religion, surrendering to hopelessness, or committing suicide. Nevertheless, to become an absurd hero one must embrace the absurd and find a subjective purpose. Initially, both Jungian and existential heroes are ignorant. Then, they are confronted with their unconscious or the absurd, which can, at least, change them into someone more authentic, responsible, and benevolent.

At the beginning of the novel, Nicholas Urfe's actions resemble the kind of behaviour criticised by Jung and Camus. Urfe is not involved in any kind of serious romantic relationship or friendship; neither is he emotionally attached to any of his relatives. His superficial self-narration about loneliness, his pseudo-existential worldview, and

artistic interests seem to be attractive to some women. As Urfe boasts, "I didn't collect conquests, but by the time I left Oxford I was a dozen girls away from virginity" (Fowles [1966] 2004, 21) and calls women he slept with "victims." As noted by Elena Vassilieva (2004), "he certainly is in a complicated psychological situation, trapped by his own sexist and exploitational attitude to women and in general" (100). Urfe admits: "I had got away from what I hated, but I hadn't found where I loved, and so I pretended that there was nowhere to love" (Fowles [1966] 2004, 17). In Jungian terms, Nicholas does not confront his problems and make his persona grow. With respect to existentialism, he is inauthentic but does not know how to go beyond cynicism.

Nicholas is also void of any pursuits. He thinks himself to be an existentialist during his time at Oxford but does not understand its principles. He avoids analysing the condition of the absurd and creating individual meaning. Upon graduation, he becomes an English teacher in a small village, hating both the job and his provincial colleagues. He despises them just as he shows little respect towards women. Finally, Nicholas resigns and starts to seek something else. He applies for a job on the Greek island of Phraxos on the same day he meets Alison. Thus, although unaware, he begins his individuation process (or the absurdist quest for meaning), which starts with being made to see through his mask and acknowledge its falsehood.

According to Jung ([1959] 1969), the initial moment of individuation is illumination, which is represented by the water archetype: "The mirror does not flatter, it faithfully shows whatever looks into it; namely, the face we never show to the world because we cover it with the persona" (Jung [1959] 1969, 20). Not only is it possible to see one's reflection on the surface of water, but it also conveys the idea of depth and danger related to self-knowledge. Numerous factors force the protagonist to follow this path. Alison is the first to point out his hypocrisy:

> When I was going on one day in the car about not having any close friends – using my favourite metaphor: the cage of glass between me and the rest of the world – she just laughed. 'You like it', she said. 'You say you're isolated, boyo, but you really think you're different.' She broke my hurt silence by saying, too late, 'You are different.'
> 'And isolated.' (Fowles, 35)

Nicholas persists in the persona of a loner. Nevertheless, when Alison proposes to marry him a moment later, he disagrees, which reveals Urfe's affectation. One day, he has a "terrible deathlike feeling, which anyone less cerebral or self-absorbed than I was then would have realized was simply love" (Fowles [1966] 2004, 35). Notwithstanding, he leaves Alison to work on Phraxos. There, he suffers from real isolation related to the wildness of the island, overwhelming silence, and language barrier. Shortly, Urfe is diagnosed with venereal disease and the gossip about it spreads around the school, leading him to a suicide attempt, which can be treated as another mirror since it exposes his insincerity:

> All the time I felt I was being watched, that I was not alone, that I was putting on an act for the benefit of someone, that this action could be done only if it was spontaneous, pure – and moral. … I was trying to commit not a moral action, but a fundamentally aesthetic one; to do something that would end my life sensationally, significantly, consistently. … A death to be remembered, not the true death of a true suicide, the death obliterate. (Fowles, 62)

The purpose of his suicide would be to impress people; consequently, the act would be inauthentic. As Urfe concludes that his will to kill himself is not pure, he progresses in his existential advancement as well as in his individuation. Acting only on external motivation is the result of letting the persona become too strong. In existentialist terms, Urfe might have thought of suicide since he started to realise the absurd. However, such a leap away was strongly disapproved of by Camus.

Shortly afterwards, he encounters Maurice Conchis – the magus – and enters the godgame, which can be interpreted as another mirror. One of the purposes of the confrontation between the two involves challenging Nicholas's confidence by forcing him to reassess his intellect. Conchis conducts the godgame on two concurrent levels. On the first, more explicit one, he delivers a series of lectures on the pivotal moments in his life. They are supposed to demonstrate and challenge diverse ideologies, which the magus deflates one at a time: patriotism, commonly understood faith, consequentialism, the value and ethics of psychological research, the superiority of good over beauty, materialism, and rationality. "The only original rule of life today [is] to learn to live and to die, and in order to be a man, to refuse to be a god," Camus argued (1954, 306). This truth seems to be prominent in the teachings of Conchis. Nicholas is led to the painful admission that all he knows is a subjective and pint-size scrap of reality.

Simultaneously, Conchis guides a group of actors whose participation in the godgame works to immerse Nicholas further in it. Once again, he is forced to doubt his own intelligence. He keeps losing trust in the actors as he is often lied to. Conchis's group uncovers multiple masks as Nicholas sets before himself the goal to find the last one. The protagonist treats the godgame as if it were a detective mystery to be solved and consequently exposes himself to Conchis's criticism. As the magus suggests, "I do not ask you to believe. All I ask you is to pretend to believe. It will be easier" ([1966] 2004, 137). In this, he is hinting that a complete denial of the archetypal layer of the reality might hamper Urfe's growth: "To mature, Nicholas must be able to understand the essentially polymorphous nature of truth and the futility of drawing boundaries between the real and the unreal, the ontological and the psychological" (Onega 1989, 47). In other words, embracing the implausible elements of the godgame is a crucial step in the process.

The structure of the godgame resonates with elements of both the absurd and the collective unconscious. Nicholas cannot solve the riddles of Conchis, nor is he supposed to – it is not the aim of the masquerade. Similarly, the reader is dissuaded from such an approach since the author claims in the foreword to *The Magus* that "[n]ovels … are not like crossword puzzles" ([1976] 2004, 9). In that sense, the godgame draws on the absurd

as it seems to have no meaning. The cognitive needs of Nicholas and the reader remain unmet. Nonetheless, the same godgame might be interpreted as a reflection of collective unconscious. Confrontation with archetypes is an essential part of the individuation process. Similarly, confronting and embracing the absurd is a vital step in the progress of the existentialist as it motivates him to find individual meaning despite overwhelming senselessness. An additional link between the narrative structure and both philosophies can be observed in the void of the godgame's clear resolution. In the last chapter, the narrator claims that "the maze has no centre. An ending is no more than a point in sequence" (Fowles [1966] 2004, 645). The godgame is supposed to mimic real life, which is a journey of discovery and contains secrets to uncover even when Conchis leaves the scene. His objectives are revealed neither to the reader nor to Nicholas, which may lead them to accept the absurd and confront the collective unconscious.

Another crucial aspect of both individuation and the evolution of an absurd hero is the development of one's approach to others. As highlighted by Jung, the balance between individual advancement and maintaining personal relationships should be preserved throughout the process: "The individual is not just a single, separate being, but by his very existence presupposes a collective relationship, it follows that the process of individuation must lead to more intense and broader collective relationships and not to isolation" (Jung 1990, 267). While explaining the topic, Mario Jacoby (2000) uses the following metaphor: "no one can individuate on the Mount Everest" (492). For Jung, one needs to recognise the way the collective unconscious influences his or her life through social, religious and cultural conventions.

Camus's early emphasis on the solitary struggle shifted after the outbreak of WWII. His previous viewpoint seemed insufficient and inappropriate in the face of generational trauma and widespread brutality. In *The Rebel*, published in 1951, he analysed a variety of historical rebellions and revolts in and through art, finally coming to different conclusions on senselessness. As David Mikics and Robert Zaretsky (2013) note, "Absurdity, he saw, was nothing more than a first step towards the truth. In his private journal, he wrote that the absurd 'teaches nothing'. Instead of looking only at ourselves, as do Sisyphus or Nietzsche's superman, we must look to others" (203). This shift can be perceived as either an alternative solution to the absurd or an expansion of this idea. Prior to writing *The Rebel*, Camus asserted that the meaning of life is created individually. Nevertheless, he modified his views and made humanitarian ideas more prominent in his philosophical system. It seems that in *The Rebel* Camus may have discovered a universal sense in charity. He investigated this notion before in *The Plague*, whose main characters may be contrasted with Jean Baptiste-Clamence: "[N] either Tarrou nor Rieux 'falls'; both dedicate themselves to doing what they can for life" (Hartsock 1961, 360). Having realised the absurd, they accept it and try to cure the diseased. They make individual decisions and risk their lives to fight the plague. In other words, they recognise their purpose as helping others and at the same time remaining authentic. "What interests me, is being a man" (Camus 1960, 23), Dr. Rieux comments, demonstrating a more universal approach as he considers his attitude to-

wards the absurd to be the essence of humanity. Even though sense must be created individually, it seems that it should be linked to kindness and responsibility for other people. The quest for meaning resembles the Jungian individuation process, which also combines, paradoxically, the idea of becoming more authentic as growing independent of society yet fostering stronger relationships with others.

Since Conchis aims to enable Nicholas to become oriented towards others, this comprises another aspect of the novel where the philosophies of Camus and Jung overlap. The magus tries to achieve this goal at least in two ways. First, he tells him about a traumatic event from the Greek occupation of Phraxos. Wimmel, an SS colonel notorious for his cruelty, made an offer to Conchis: "I will permit [eighty peasants from Phraxos] not to be executed. To go to a labour camp. On one condition. That is that you, as mayor of this village, carry out in front of them the execution of these two murderers" (Fowles [1966] 2004, 431). Conchis agreed and was given a submachine gun. He wanted to fire, yet the gun was not loaded. He was supposed to beat them to death. When Conchis came closer to his previously tortured victims it appeared to him that one of them struggled to mumble the word *eleutheria*—freedom. Grasping this idea made him refuse to perform the execution, condemning eighty peasants to death. At that point, Conchis started to believe that freedom means loyalty to oneself. The moral of the story is in line with both existential and Jungian theories. In *The Rebel*, Camus (1954) argued that humanity itself is a value that must always be preserved. In light of Jung's theory, Conchis remained authentic, which corresponds to the aims of the individuation process. Even though Nicholas will not have to make such a decision, he is forced to redefine the notion of freedom in his life. According to Roberta Rubenstein (1975):

> Nicholas' morality before meeting Conchis had been "freedom" in the most self-serving and exploitative sense: not a radical awareness of the limits of freedom created by the intersection of one's own personality with chance, but the illusion of freedom produced by emotional insulation and isolation. (333)

The godgame attempts to make Urfe more humane also in the field of romantic relationships. The teachings of the magus concur in this respect with Fowles's worldview presented in *The Aristos*, where the author praises monogamous marriages as an antidote to the objectification that may occur in solely sexual relationships ([1964] 1993, 175). As discussed above, in the first part of the novel Nicholas disrespects people, especially women. It is explicitly stated that he loves Alison but nevertheless decides to leave her. Taking on the commitments involved in settling down with her could mean an end to his exploitative attitude towards women. He might stop considering women as mere objects of desire. Conchis tries to push Urfe towards Alison ever since he compelled Nicholas to confide in him:

'You think of her, you want to see her – you must write again. … You are leaving it to hazard. We no more have to leave everything to hazard than we have to drown in the sea. … Swim!'

> 'It's not the swimming. It's knowing in which direction.'
> 'Towards the girl. She sees through you, you say, she understands you. That is good.' (Fowles, 145-6)

Concurrently, he introduces Nicholas to Lily, and Urfe is immediately attracted to her: "I realized then that the lamp had been put behind me so that it would light her entrance; and it was an entrance to take the breath away" (Fowles [1966] 2004, 167). Lily, just like Conchis, applies various, plausible masks. Urfe's curiosity to discover her identity grows with his desire. When Nicholas is convinced that Lily is, in fact, called Julia and suffers from schizophrenia, Conchis warns him:

> I should not want you to repel every advance she makes, every hint of physical intimacy, but you must accept that there are certain bounds that cannot be transgressed. … If – I speak purely hypothetically – some situation should arise where you found temptation too strong, I should be obliged to intervene. (Fowles, 229)

The magus's caution and the fact that Julia seems to be attracted to Nicholas but repeatedly refuses to have sex with him increases his desire. Although Conchis consistently advises Urfe to continue, or rather restore his relationship with Alison, the magus deliberately involves Julia in the godgame. Finally, just after Nicholas and Julia have sex for the first time, her last mask in the novel falls off and Conchis's warning is fulfilled. She leaves the room and Nicholas is captivated. Subsequently, Urfe is led to a trial where Julia is introduced as Doctor Vanessa Maxwell and the godgame is presented as an innovative psychological experiment. Nicholas feels betrayed: "I waited above all for Lily to look at me, but when she did there was nothing in her eyes" (Fowles [1966] 2004, 504). Additionally, he is forced to watch a movie named *The Shameful Truth*, which includes a recording of Doctor Maxwell having sex with another man. Nicholas is deserted by Lily/Julia/Vanessa and utterly humiliated.

Julius Rowan Raper (1988) considers the fluid personality of Lily/Julia/Vanessa as an attempt to reconstruct Urfe's anima and make him capable of forming a sincere relationship. Moreover, an analogy may exist between Conchis and Lily, and the mythological pair of Gnosticism's founders – Simon Magus and Helena, who are recalled by Jung in his works concerning the anima (1982, 162-3; [1959] 1969, 30-1). Simon, known as a sorcerer who played tricks on crowds, bought Helena from a house of ill repute. She was supposed to be a personification of *Ennoia*, the first thought of God. The combination of a fallen woman and a representation of wisdom can be found in many cultural texts, including *The Magus*. Conchis and Lily represent this archetype as they lead Nicholas to wisdom through sex and deception. At the same time, the

encounter leads the protagonist to become more responsible and humane, in line with existentialism.

In the final section of the novel, the effects of the godgame become apparent. Nicholas is finally individuated and resembles an absurd hero. First, the experiment enables Urfe to form relationships. After the godgame, Nicholas adopts a new standpoint with respect to interpersonal relations. He restrains himself from having sex. Moreover, he establishes non-sexual bonds with two women – Kemp and Jojo. Urfe cares about their well-being and does not focus on their appearance. He assures the latter that "Being pretty is just something that's thrown in. Like the paper round the present. Not the present" (Fowles [1966] 2004, 642). Even though Urfe does not find himself in a situation as serious as the one faced by Conchis, the story of *eleutheria* and the relation with Lily taught him to be more charitable, as advocated by both discussed philosophers.

The effects of individuation (or the absurd hero's quest) are also prominent in the final scene of *The Magus*. After Conchis's withdrawal from Nicholas's life, the protagonist seeks to meet Alison who faked suicide for the vague purposes of the godgame. During their eagerly awaited encounter he is sure that the godgame has not finished and he is still being assessed. Conchis, however, retreats, which is acknowledged by Nicholas shortly after hitting Alison. This hit might be considered a form of penalty for becoming involved in Conchis's mystification. At this moment, Urfe's persona is depleted since he vents negative emotions regardless of social disapproval. At the end of the novel, he is able to channel his libido as well as integrate his shadow. The punishment might be considered valid because of the dubious ethics of the godgame. Urfe undoubtedly could feel like a victim. For Camus, Nicholas could be viewed as an absurd hero in this scene as he acts independently of both Conchis and society but in harmony with himself.

There are significant similarities between the theories of Jung and Camus made visible in the plot of *The Magus*. Understanding Fowles's novel as an example of the individuation process is one of its most popular interpretations (Onega 1989; Vassilieva 2004). However, the godgame can be also interpreted as representing the existential quest of an absurd hero. Although Camus did not provide any detailed description of such a quest, it is possible to derive it from his writings. The similarity of the two processes in Fowles's novel shows that there is a commonality between existential and Jungian philosophy.

At the beginning of the novel, Nicholas lives in unawareness and has no intimate bonds. The process that he undergoes on Phraxos resembles both individuation and the absurd hero's quest. The structure of the godgame as well as the lessons both theoretical and practical guide the protagonist to greater humbleness, sincerity and humanity – virtues valued by Jung and Camus. Finally, both philosophers would agree that the process of self-development is never-ending. Nicholas undoubtedly reaches a milestone through the godgame but continues his journey since the novel is open-ended. Likewise, readers are offered neither a resolution of the conflict with Alison nor a clear purpose of the godgame. For Fowles, a novel "can't change society, but it can push

people a little bit or show them the way" (Fowles and Barnum 1985, 192). In this sense, the ethical conclusion of the godgame is supposed to influence not only the protagonist but also readers. They are encouraged to further explore both the absurd and the primal collective unconscious – a task that entails constant struggle.

References

Aho, Kevin. 2023. "Existentialism." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, eds. Edward N. Zalta and Uri Nodelman. Accessed December 18, 2023. https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2023/entries/existentialism/.

Aronson, Ronald. 2011. "Albert Camus." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* eds. Edward N. Zalta and Uri Nodelman. Accessed December 18, 2023. https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2022/entries/camus/.

Camus, Albert. 1954. *The Rebel: An Essay on Man in Revolt*, trans. Anthony Bower. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

---. 1955. *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*, trans. Justin O'Brien. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

---. 1957. *The Fall*, trans. Justin O'Brien. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

---. 1960. *The Plague*, trans. Stuart Gilbert. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Fleming, Richard. 1986. "Remarks on the Ethical Conclusion of Camus' 'The Rebel.'" *CEA Critic* 49 (2/4): 114–23. http://www.jstor.org/stable/44376990.

Fowles, John, and Carol M. Barnum. 1985. "An Interview With John Fowles." *Modern Fiction Studies* 31(1): 187–203. http://www.jstor.org/stable/26281415.

Fowles, John. (1964) 1993. *The Aristos.* Reprint, London: Picador.

---. (1966) 2004. *The Magus*. Reprint, London: Vintage Books.

---. (1976) 2004. Foreword to *The Magus*. Reprint, London: Vintage Books.

Hartsock, Mildred. 1961. "Camus' 'The Fall': Dialogue of One." *Modern Fiction Studies* 7(4): 357–64. http://www.jstor.org/stable/26277213.

Jacoby, Mario. 2000. "The Growing convergence of contemporary psychoanalysis and Jungian analysis." *Psychoanalytic Dialogues: The International Journal of Relational Perspectives* 10(3): 489–503. doi:10.1080/10481881009348560.

Jung, Carl G. (1959) 1969. *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, trans. Richard F. Carrington Hull. Reprint, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

---. 1982. *Collected Works: Aspects of the Feminine*, trans. Richard F. Carrington Hull. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

---. 1990. *The Basic Writings of C. G. Jung*, trans. Richard F. Carrington Hull. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Ladkin, Donna, Chellie Spiller, and Gareth Craze. 2016. "The journey of individuation: A Jungian alternative to the theory and practice of leading authentically." *Leadership* 14(4): 415-34. doi:10.1177/1742715016681942.

Ładuch, Edyta. 2022. "Various aspects of freedom in John Fowles novels The Collector and The Magus." *Forum Filologiczne Ateneum* 1(10): 317-332. doi:10.36575/2353-2912/1(10)2022.317.

Mellon, Linda F. 1991. "An Archetypal Analysis of Albert Camus's 'La Pierre Qui Pousse': The Quest as Process of Individuation." *The French Review* 64(6): 934–44. http://www.jstor.org/stable/396087.

Mikics, David, and Robert Zaretsky. 2013. "From Solitude to Solidarity: How Camus Left Nihilism Behind." *The Virginia Quarterly Review* 89(2): 201–4. http://www.jstor.org/stable/26446761.

Oleś, Piotr K. (2003) 2009. *Wprowadzenie do Psychologii Osobowości.* Reprint, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar.

Onega, Susana. 1989. *Form and Meaning in the Novels of John Fowles.* Michigan: UMI Research Press.

Raper, Julius R. 1988. "John Fowles: The Psychological Complexity of 'The Magus.'" *American Imago* 45(1): 61–83. http://www.jstor.org/stable/26303958.

Rubenstein, Roberta. 1975. "Myth, Mystery, and Irony: John Fowles's 'The Magus.'" *Contemporary Literature* 16(3): 328–39. doi:10.2307/1207406.

Saunders, Peter, and Patricia Skar. 2001. "Archetypes, complexes and self-organization." *Journal of Analytical Psychology* 46(2): 305-23. doi:10.1111/1465-5922.00238.

Vassilieva, Elena. 2004. "John Fowles and the Gothic Tradition." Doctoral Dissertation, Kingston University.

Winsworth, Ben. 2010. "Existential Psychodynamics in John Fowles's The Magus." In *Autonomy and Commitment in Twentieth-Century British Literature*, eds. Jean-Michel Ganteau, and Christine Reynier, 181-190. Montpellier: Presses Universitaires de la Méditerranée. http://books.openedition.org/pulm/14558?nomobile=1.