

Abstract in English

This Bachelor thesis engages with the topic of a portrayal of the city in the postmodern novel which is then studied on the example of two chosen novels: *Alexandria Quartet* by Lawrence Durrell and *The Moor's Last Sigh* by Salman Rushdie. Both novels present the urban space as a female character with a strong influence upon the events and the formation of the protagonist's identity.

The second chapter is dedicated to a theoretical framework which helps to establish what we can understand under the term modernist literature and it traces the basic features such a literature possesses. For this framework I adopted the study of postmodernism presented by the work of Linda Hutcheon, mostly her *A Poetics of Postmodernism*. A special attention is dedicated to the aspects of postmodernism that can be applied on the portrayal of space and the relationship existing between postmodernism and modernism.

The third chapter outlines the basic concepts of space established by modernism. The major concepts dealt with in this thesis are: subjectivity, perspective, palimpsest and myth. As follows from the relationship between modernism and postmodernism, these concepts should be traceable also in postmodern fiction in a transformed state. According to Linda Hutcheon, the basic tool of this transformation is the use of parody which enables installing the concepts and subsequently subverting them in order to question their validity in our processes of creating meaning.

The following chapter presents the particular forms into which the concepts evolved and how they present themselves in postmodern fiction. The subjectivity through which the space was regarded in modernism is dissolved because of the de-centering of the subject of narration. The palimpsest which attempted to find an underlying unity in the modernist text, loses its unifying capability and transforms the resulting image into a hybrid. The explanatory and ordering function of the myth is undermined by postmodern parody and the perspective shifts into the peculiar postmodern position of being simultaneously outside and inside. In this context arises also the question of postcolonial literature.

In chapter five the conclusions about the postmodern transformation of the concepts of space are applied on the two novels. The aim is mainly to observe how specifically the theoretical conclusions present themselves in the respective novels and to draw more general conclusions from the similarities or possible differences of the image of the city. The first part of this chapter argues in what regard the novels can be understood as pieces of postmodern writing and it concludes that *The Moor's Last Sigh*, on the one hand, is more typically postmodern and it encompasses most of the features Hutcheon's work delineates. *Alexandria Quartet*, on the other hand, can be understood

more as a transition between modernism and postmodernism and thus it is possible to trace both modernist and postmodern aspects in it. Because both the cities portrayed in the novels were former British colonies, the relationship of both the authors and also their novels to postcolonial literature is analysed with a stress on the substitution of binary oppositions with the concept of a difference, preferred by postmodernism as a way of problematizing the reader's concepts. The focus then shifts to tracing the concrete transformations of the concepts of metaphor & allegory and palimpsest & hybridity and the way they present themselves in the image of the city. This chapter concludes with discussing the dissolving of subjectivity in the two novels.

The last chapter closes the discussion with the conclusion that both portrayed cities are perceived as women but that they play different feminine roles. While Alexandria is presented as the woman-lover with all the connotations of sex and sensuality, Bombay is mostly interpreted as the woman-mother. Only the relationship of two partners can be dissolved, unlike the mother-son relationship, and thus only the protagonist of *Alexandria Quartet* is capable of leaving the city and starting a new life.