

ATILIM UNIVERSITY

THE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

M.A. THESIS

*A Maggot* and *The French Lieutenant's Woman* by John Fowles as  
Historiographic Metafictions

ÖZLEM ŞAHİN DEMİRBİLEK

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## ABSTRACT

In this thesis the technique of historiographic metafiction that is theorized in the second half of the twentieth century is analysed in reference to two works of John Fowles, namely *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and *A Maggot*.

The novel as a genre has changed both in form and content enormously in the course of time. At the beginning of the second half of the twentieth century it was considered “dead” or “exhausted”. The term “metafiction” appeared in the 1960s in order to define the works which are related to the process of writing the novel itself. The characteristics attributed to this form of narrative such as placing the novel between the boundary of reality and imagination, its self-reflexivity and the paradoxical status of the author and the narrator play a significant role not only on the works that were produced in this era but also on the writers who, in a way, assume the role the critic, and the reader whose reading process is underlined by these writer-critics.

In the 1980s, metafiction scholars pointed out the relationship between historiography and metafiction, thus creating the combination of historiographic-metafiction that became prominent in the last two decades of the twentieth century. *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1969) and *A Maggot* (1985) by John Fowles display the characteristics of historiographic metafiction. Fowles chooses to place his novels in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and through assuming the role of a writer-critic, he interferes in his plots to make comments on the process of writing and/or to explain the era.

The thesis consists of an introductory chapter, two main chapters and a concluding chapter. In the first part of the Introduction, the evolution of the novel genre from 18<sup>th</sup> century until today is briefly summarized, and in the second part, the

characteristics of postmodernism and metafiction are detailed. In the body chapters, the above mentioned novels are analyzed in detail by referring to the historiographic metafiction. The ending of this thesis gives a brief summary of the concepts discussed in the introduction and body parts so as to emphasize the place of the historiographic metafiction in the rebirth of the novel genre in the second half of the twentieth century, and the metafictional characteristics in Fowles' two works.

## ÖZET

Bu tezde yirminci yüzyılın ikinci yarısında teorize edilmiş olan tarihyazımsal üstkurmaca tekniği, bu tekniğin önde gelen uygulayıcılarından John Fowles'ın *Fransız Teğmenin Kadını* ve *Yaratık* adlı eserlerine uygulanarak incelenmiştir.

Roman bir tür olarak zaman içerisinde hem biçim hem de içerik açısından çok büyük değişim göstermiştir. Özellikle yirminci yüzyılın ikinci yarısının başlarında "tükenmiş" ya da "ölü" sayılmıştır. Üst-kurmaca terimi 1960'larda ortaya çıkmış ve bir şekilde eserin kendisiyle ilgili romanları tanımlamak için kullanılmıştır. Bu türe atfedilen romanın gerçeğe hayal gücü arasındaki sınırdaki görülmesi, öz bilinç ve öz-yansıtma ve de yazarın esere karşı çelişkili görünen tutumu gibi özellikler hem bu dönemde üretilen eserler açısından, hem de bir şekilde eleştirmen rolünü benimseyen yazarlar ve okuma süreçlerinin önemi bu yazar-eleştirmenler tarafından vurgulanan okurlar açısından da önem kazanmıştır.

1980'lerde üst-kurmaca tekniğini inceleyen eleştirmenler, tarih-yazımı ile üst-kurmaca arasındaki ilişkiye dikkat çekerek tarihyazımsal üst-kurmaca tekniğini teorize etmişlerdir. Bu teknik son yirmi yıla damgasını vurmuştur. John Fowles'ın *Fransız Teğmen'in Kadını* (1969) ve *Yaratık* (1985) adlı eserleri tarihyazımsal üst-kurmaca tekniğine atfedilen özelliklerin hemen hemen hepsini sergiler. Fowles hikayelerini *Yaratık* romanında 18. yüzyıl İngiltere'sine ve *Fransız Teğmen'in Kadını* romanında 19. yüzyıl İngiltere'sine oturtur ve benimsediği yazar-eleştirmen rolünün sağladığı ayrıcalıkla hem yazma süreci hem de dönemlerin tarihsel özellikleri hakkında yorum yapmak üzere olay örgüsüne müdahalede bulunur.

Bu tez, bir giriş, iki esas ve bir de sonuç bölümünden oluşmaktadır. Giriş bölümünün ilk kısmında romanın 18. yüzyıldan günümüze kadar geçirdiği evrim kısaca özetlenmekte ve devam eden kısımda postmodernizm ve üst-kurmacanın özellikleri verilmektedir. Gelişme bölümlerinde yukarıda adı geçen romanlar

tarihyazımsal üstkurmaca tekniğine uygulanarak detaylı bir şekilde incelenmektedir. Tezin sonuç bölümü giriş ve gelişme bölümlerinde tartışılan tarihyazımsal üstkurmaca tekniğinin roman türünün yeniden doğuşundaki yeri ve önemini özetlemektedir. John Fowles'ın bahsi geçen iki eserinin bu türün bütün özelliklerini gösterdiği de bu bölümde tekrar vurgulanmaktadır.



## INTRODUCTION

The novel, one of the youngest genres of literature, has undergone a rapid evolution over the last three centuries. The term “novel” used to be applied to any kind of extended work of prose fiction. It is distinguished from other narratives by its length and magnitude, which permits a great variety of characters and a complicated plot or plots. It uses all the elements of storytelling: plot, character, setting, theme, and point of view<sup>1</sup>. The reader of the conventional novel expects certain things; a certain story with events realistically expressed, a chronologically organized introduction, development and ending. At the beginning of the twentieth century these conventions of the novel began to be shattered by experimental works. First, with the modernist novel in the first half of the twentieth century, and later in the second half of the twentieth century with postmodernist fiction. Metafiction and historiographic metafiction are included in this second category. In the last 50 years, in particular, the novel had to be redefined due to the changes in the concept of reality and history. Malcolm Bradbury, for example, defines the “novel” written in the twentieth century as

a form of fictional prose narrative that contains infinite variety, many different genres, from reportage and social history to fantasy and romance, and reaches from serious exploration of the narrative frontiers to popular gratification and endless generic repetition.<sup>2</sup>

The writers and critics of the novel pointed out that this genre had been exhausted and had to be revived. In this thesis I will try to show the place of historiographic metafiction in this process through an analysis of two of John Fowles’ works which are considered to be of the historiographic metafiction sub-genre.

The fashions of the novel, when it is compared with the other literary genres, are the shortest lived forms of literature because of its close relationship with the social changes in the world. A work of fiction can be very popular and subsequently out of date in a very short period of time. Since it is the aesthetic reflection of a particular era, its evolution is more rapid than the other genres of literature. Patricia Waugh refers to this characteristic of the novel in her article “What is Metafiction and Why are They Saying Such Awful Things About it?”:

The historical period we are living through has been singularly uncertain, insecure, self questioning and culturally pluralistic. Contemporary fiction clearly reflects this

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<sup>1</sup> Anderson et al. **Elements of Literature**, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston Inc., 1989, p. 805.

<sup>2</sup> Malcolm Bradbury **The Modern British Novel**, London, Secker & Warburg, 1993, p. X.

dissatisfaction with, and breakdown of, traditional values.<sup>3</sup>

The roots of the novel became a bone of contention for many scholars of literature in that some of them trace it back to classical times, to narrative epics written in verse, and some others underline the influence of medieval romances and romances written during the Renaissance. This group sees Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and Boccaccio's *Decameron* (14<sup>th</sup> century), as the first steps in storytelling. In these works, as opposed to their predecessors, reflections of real life with ordinary characters and events are observed for the first time. However, the novel, in the present meaning of the word, had to wait until the early 18<sup>th</sup> century to emerge, and it has been the most popular form of storytelling since then.

The three main reasons that prepared a suitable atmosphere for the existence of the novel in the 18<sup>th</sup> century were the rise of the middle class reader who although having become rich through trade was not well-educated, and so needed to find new ways of entertainment; the growth of individualism under the influence of the Industrial Revolution and Capitalism; and the rise of realism under the influence of philosophers such as John Locke and Descartes who claimed that truth was particular, based on individual experience instead of a general, universal concept of truth. Thus a new form of literature, that was different from the previous forms with its use of non-traditional plots, rejection of general human types, emphasis on using particularized time and setting with real but ordinary characters and a referential or everyday language that corresponded to the real world, was formed. According to Ian Watt the novel as a genre entered into the literary scene mainly with the works of Daniel Defoe, Samuel Richardson, and Henry Fielding.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, Dale Spender questions this idea in *The Mothers of the Novel* (1987), and her article entitled "Women and Literary History"<sup>5</sup>. In this article, she advocates that women have a necessary role, more than that, a half-share in the emergence of the novel as a literary genre in the eighteenth century. She questions the male-dominated ideas of Ian Watt and accuses him of not considering the works of the female writers who formed the "esteemed" majority of the period. She asserts that the number of ignored women novelists is about a hundred and the number of their works that are omitted from the literary history totals six hundred. Since the women writers of the period were ignored, Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding seemed to be the only representatives of the eighteenth century British novel. Each of them used different techniques of narration; for instance Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) is the story of a shipwrecked sailor expressing an account of his adventures in chronological sequence, and *Pamela* (1740) by Richardson is a sentimental novel in epistolary form, that is to say, in the form of letters which reflect the inner thoughts of the main characters. In the late

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<sup>3</sup> Patricia Waugh **Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction**. London, Methuen, 1984, p.44.

<sup>4</sup> Ian Watt **The Rise of the Novel**, Middlesex, Penguin Books, 1957.

<sup>5</sup> Dale Spender "Women and Literary History", **The Feminist Reader: Essays in Gender and the Politics of Literary Criticism**, Catherine Belsey and Jane Moore, Eds., London, Macmillan Education Ltd., 1989. pp. 21-33.

18<sup>th</sup> century and the early 19<sup>th</sup> century the novel was not accepted as a serious art form. It was particularly addressed to the female members of the middle class, and reflected the moral values and life style of this class. In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the novel became a serious art form, and the writers theorized the novel. It became a genre for highly intellectual people instead of middle class women and gradually became the dominant form in literature. In fact, the 19<sup>th</sup> century was the period of literary realism in the world with such great writers as Honore de Balzac, Gustave Flaubert, Fiodor Dostoevski, and Henry James. In Britain the new spirit of realism came to the fore with such great novelists as William Makepeace Thackeray, Charles Dickens, and Thomas Hardy. In this period, the historical novel, which will be mentioned later in connection with historiography, that appeared in the twentieth century, developed. In historical novels “historical personages and events are worked into a fictitious narrative.”<sup>6</sup> A younger generation of novelists followed with their attempt to represent the life of their time with great exactness in a critical way. Arnold Bennett, John Galsworthy and H.G. Wells wrote in this manner.

However, some of the most distinguished examples of the novel, particularly in Britain, appeared in the first half of the twentieth century, what is known as the Modern Period. The influence of two World Wars, a serious economic depression, changing views of human psychology with Freud and Jung, Bergson’s theory on time, the political and ideological storm that came with Marx have all affected the novelists of the early twentieth century. Writers such as James Joyce and Virginia Woolf are the most distinguished names of the Modern Period with their use of the stream-of-consciousness technique in which the author approximates the flow of thoughts and sensory impressions that pass through the mind of the characters without interfering. The rising trend of this period was experimenting with new writing techniques. The novelists of the period rejected traditional objectivity and constant points of view. For example, they emphasized the subjectivity of characters, their inner worlds rather than the objective reality of the outer world. Thus, instead of the universally accepted, unchanging reality, the concept of reality had become relative, changing from one character to another. They also questioned certain values of Western culture such as order, meaning, God, religion, and love. Through breaking up the narrative continuity, and violating the traditional syntax and coherence of narrative, the novelists subverted the basic conventions of earlier prose fiction. It is observed that after the Second World War, a kind of eclecticism has prevailed in English fiction, and no clearly definable trends have appeared. The fiction writers associated with postmodernism experimented with literary forms more radically than the authors of the Modern Period. After the 1960s novelists turned to the work itself instead of to an outer reality as they had in the Period of Realism or the author’s analysis of his character’s own inner reality through the stream of consciousness technique as in the Modern Period. Critics have coined a variety of terms to describe this type of writing: Raymond Federman’s “surfiction” (1975), Robert Scholes’s “fabulation”(1967), and Willam Gass’s “metafiction” (1970), and some other terms

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<sup>6</sup> Ross Murfin **Bedford Glossary of Literary Terms**, Boston, Rinehart English Pamphlets, 1997. p. 113.

such as “the introverted novel”, “the self-begetting novel”. There had been examples of self-consciousness in which the process of writing is revealed openly in the work before, such as *Tristram Shandy* by Laurence Sterne, but the first attempts to define this approach appear after the 1960s.

## POSTMODERNISM AND METAFICTION

Postmodernism, though its roots go back to the 1960s, even as early as the 1940s, became an area of serious academic study in the 1980s. As a matter of fact, many cultural disciplines and areas of study such as architecture, literature, film, video, music, television, theatre, visual arts, dance, and also political thought, philosophy, aesthetic criticism and theory, sociology, anthropology, historiography, and technology have been influenced by this trend of postmodernism.

In order to understand what postmodernism means exactly, one should go back and understand the characteristics of modernism, because postmodernism has many common points with modernism. Both of them are avant-garde movements and they advocate breaking away from traditional standards and reject rigid genre distinctions. Both favour a fragmented and relative concept of reality which is subjective and changing. Both have a tendency towards self-reflexivity and self-consciousness, particularly about a work's process of production, and emphasize fragmented, discontinuous narratives and collages of different materials. However, postmodernism is not simply the shadow or echo of modernism. It differs in its attitude towards many of these trends. In the introduction of *A Postmodern Reader*, it is argued that:

Postmodernity's assertion of the value of inclusive "both/and" thinking deliberately contests the exclusive "either/or" binary oppositions of modernity. Postmodern paradox, ambiguity, irony, indeterminacy and contingency are seen to replace modern closure, unity, order, the absolute, and the rational.<sup>7</sup>

Postmodernism tends to present a fragmented view of human subjectivity and history. As opposed to the modernist's searching for meaning and unity in this world, it celebrates that the world is meaningless, even chaotic and fragmentary. Postmodernist art claims and then intentionally subverts such principles as meaning, order, value, identity and control that were the basis of modernism. Postmodernism is distinguished from modernism by the belief that artistic autonomy is neither possible nor desirable.<sup>8</sup> One of the most famous definitions of postmodernism came from Fredric Jameson in his "The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism."<sup>9</sup> To him the hundred-year-old modern movement is spent and exhausted with expressionism in painting, existentialism in philosophy, the final forms of representation in the novel, and the modernist school of poetry. He defines the period as empirical, chaotic, and heterogeneous. While the high-modernist period of "grand narratives" was passing away,

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<sup>7</sup> Linda Hutcheon & Joseph Natoli, Eds., **A Postmodern Reader**, Albany, State University of New York, 1993, p. ix.

<sup>8</sup> John McGowan **Postmodernism and Its Critics**, Cornell University Press, Ithaca & London, 1991.

<sup>9</sup> Fredric Jameson, "Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism", **A Postmodern Reader**, Joseph Natoli & Linda Hutcheon, Eds., Albany, State University of New York, 1993, p. 312.

new forms of cultural productions appeared. Jameson characterizes these changes as matters of “surface”, “pastiche”, and “paranoia”.

However, on the other hand, Lyotard tries to explain postmodernism in terms of the general condition of knowledge in an age of informational technology. He defines the term postmodernism as incredulity toward metanarratives: “This incredulity is undoubtedly a product of progress in sciences: but that progress in turn presupposes it”<sup>10</sup>

Linda Hutcheon, from another point of view, alludes to the words “discontinuity”, “disruption”, “dislocation”, “decentring”, “indeterminacy” and “anti-totalization” at the beginning of her article “Beginning to Theorize Postmodernism”. To Hutcheon, the sixties were the time of ideological formation for many of the postmodernist thinkers and artists of the eighties and the results of that formation are seen now. It is possible to place the work of John Fowles in this line. For example, his *The French Lieutenant’s Woman*, written in the mid-sixties, not only guided the writers of later years with its innovatory technique, but also became one of the most frequently referred books by the critics as a historiographic metafiction.

Metafiction is a complicated term that has various definitions and most of these definitions remain inadequate to confront its complexity. It is a kind of post-modern fiction, which was first identified in the late 1960s by William Gass as it is already stated before. He used the term “metafiction” to define the works of fiction that were somehow about fiction itself. This kind of fiction, which was firstly seen as the exhaustion of the possibilities of the novel, and, more than that, “the death of the novel” (as Ronald Sukenick states in “The Death of the Novel and the Other Stories”), was later accepted on as the rebirth of the novel. In the 1970s the definition of metafiction turned out to be “fiction with self consciousness, self-awareness, self knowledge, ironic self-distance.”<sup>11</sup>

Mark Currie defines metafiction as “a borderline discourse, as a kind of writing which places itself on the border between fiction and criticism, and which takes that border as its subject.” (Currie: 1995, p.2) This definition includes almost all the characteristics of this kind of fiction; its place on the boundary of imagination and reality, its self-awareness and its self-reflexivity. According to Mark Currie:

The critical self-consciousness of metafiction once seemed to announce the death of the novel, appeared to be a decadent response to its exhausted possibilities, but now seems like an unlimited vitality: what was once thought introspective and self-referential is in fact outward-looking. (Currie: 1995, p.2)

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<sup>10</sup> Jean-François Lyotard, “The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge”, **A Postmodern Reader**, Joseph Natoli & Linda Hutcheon ,Eds., Albany, State University of New York, 1993, p. 72.

<sup>11</sup> **Metafiction**, Ed. Mark Currie, London, Longman Press, 1995.

The self-consciousness of metafiction was accepted as the exhaustion of possibilities, therefore, the death of the novel; however it denoted the rebirth of the novel. Currie not only talks about the characteristics of metafiction but also the author's role both as a critic and a writer, which put the novel on the boundary between fiction and criticism. He adds that this definition requires a rather loose interpretation of 'criticism'.

Currie points out Saussurean linguistics and literary modernism as the two principal sources of the linguistic self-consciousness in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For the Saussurean linguistic approach the 'referential function of language is implicitly self referential because it depends upon the hidden system of differences, systemic and contextual, which give each sign its value'. (Currie: 1995, p.6) According to Saussure, it is the language that creates the reality. There is no pre-existing reality to weaken the relationship between the language and the external world. Likewise, literary modernism seeks 'to foreground the hidden conditions –structural principles, the process of production, the conventions and the artifice-which permitted the production of the meaning.' (Currie: 1995, p.6) In other words, the modernists favoured inner reality to an outer reality which is relative and which also shows that the relationship between language and the external world has been weakened.

Robert Scholes, in his article "Metafiction", tries to define the term 'metafiction' in the early 1970s. (Ed.Currie: 1995, p. 21-39) This article is an attempt to link the ideas that derive from John Barth's essay 'The Literature of Exhaustion' and approaches of experimental fiction of the 1960s. Barth's famous article "The Literature of Exhaustion" starts with a quotation from Jorge Luis Borges', *Labyrinths*: "The fact is that every writer *creates* his own precursors. His work modifies our conception of the past, as it will modify the future."<sup>12</sup> The reader can know the past only through reading it since it is impossible for him to experience it. Therefore the writers create the past according to their own perceptions; and what is really lived and what is the production of their imagination can hardly be distinguished. This is the main point of debate in history writing.

What Barth means by 'literature of exhaustion', as he states clearly in his essay, is "the used-upness of certain forms or exhaustion of certain possibilities". Barth tries to clarify the rapid changes in the definitions of certain forms and genres. He also mentions such newly emerged concepts as the 'intermedia arts' or 'mixed-means art' that rebel against the traditional art. In other words, after the 60s, the popular literature rises up against the traditional literature. According to Barth 'intermedia arts' not only rebel against the traditional art, but also try to eliminate the traditional audience and the traditional notion of the artist. His comment on the 'omniscient author' that reflects the idea of many writers of this period is extremely radical: "the very idea of the controlling artist, has been condemned as politically reactionary, even fascist." (Barth: 1967, p. 162) This quotation will be discussed later in this

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<sup>12</sup> John Barth, "The Literature of Exhaustion", **Metafiction**, Ed. Mark Currie, London, Longman Press, 1995, p.162.

study in connection with the narrators of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and *A Maggot*. The writer can use ultimately experimental forms to show that the novel has exhausted its possibilities. Parody, which Fowles employs in his novels, is one of these forms. The author pretends to be the author, or, as Barth puts into words “novels which imitate the form of the Novel, by an author who imitates the role of Author” (Barth: 1967, p.170) that reminds us of the classical Aristotelian idea that art is the imitation of life. However, now, art turns to be the representation of representation instead of the representation of life directly.

Patricia Waugh defines the term ‘metafiction’ as the theory of fiction through the practice of writing fiction. She claims that the practice of metafiction is as old as the novel itself, though the term is new and it is a tendency or function inherent in all novels. For instance, Laurence Sterne (1713-1768), a writer who belonged to the period in which *A Maggot* is placed, frustrated all the fixed expectations of the reader with his work *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*. This work is known for its inconsistent plot, which has no logical order of a beginning, middle, and an end.<sup>13</sup> It has even blank pages that surprise and challenge its reader.

Critics such as Raymond Federman have supported Waugh’s idea that the practice of metafiction is as old as the novel itself. According to Federman all fiction is implicitly self-reflexive. The novel of the last three decades departs from the previous fiction in that, it is explicitly self-reflexive.<sup>14</sup>

Raymond Federman refers to self-reflexive fiction as a troublesome, irritating, exasperating form of narrative. To him, nowadays, this kind of novel is about to come to an end. Though he says, “we got rid of it” (p.17), he accepts that self-reflexivity liberated the novel from certain obsolete conventions. What he does not accept is that self-reflexive fiction is not the product of the 1960s or 1970s, but goes back to *Tristram Shandy*, as was mentioned previously in page 10. The process of writing turned out to be the main concern of the novel in this particular period. He considers self-reflexive fiction as a form of divergence from the story. Federman separates self-consciousness and self-reflexiveness in fiction. Self-consciousness, he advocates, functions as a window that opens from the outside into the text, whereas self-reflexiveness functions like mirror inside the text. They may intersect within the same novel, for they both use the same tools –parody, irony, digression, playfulness- to demystify the illusionary aspects of the story.

Waugh tries to bring out a comprehensive definition of metafiction in her *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction*. She defines the term in “What is Metafiction and Why are They Saying Such Awful Things About it?”:

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<sup>13</sup> M.H. Abrams, Ed., **The Norton Anthology of English Literature** (Sixth Ed.)- Volume 1, London & New York, W.W. Norton & Company, 1993, p, 1785.

<sup>14</sup> Raymond Federman, **Critifiction: Postmodernist Essays**, New York, State University of New York Press, 1993, p. 2.



Metafiction is a term given to fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality. In providing a critique of their own methods of construction, such writings not only examine the fundamental structures of narrative fiction, they also explore the possible fictionality of the world outside the literary fictional text. (Waugh: 1984, p.40)

In this definition she points out the self-consciousness of the novel, the relationship between fiction and reality, and possible fictionality of the world outside the literary fictional text. Besides this, Waugh deals with the question of what the reader expects from a “realistic” novel, and what the metafictional novel presents to its reader. The rejection of realism was considered to be the exhaustion or the rejection of the novel itself. The writers of metafiction had a fear of being misunderstood due to the reader’s expectations based on the tradition of the realistic novel. Hence, through some obvious metanarrative signs, they tried to escape from realistic expectations. In the introduction of Gerald Prince’s article “Metanarrative Signs” it is mentioned that metanarrative signs are inherent features of narrative in general, and not merely characteristics of metafictional novels. According to Prince “metanarrative signs are as glosses on parts of a text and its underlying codes: as a metanarrative commentary which builds into the text instructions on how to read.”<sup>15</sup> Therefore, the writer of a metafiction has a double duty; the first is to express what he wants to convey to his reader, and the second is to present to the reader a way on how to read and evaluate this particular text. For Prince, metanarrative signs do not only tell the reader how to read, but they also underline the distance between a text’s self-commentary and the reading process, stressing that there is no appropriate reading. Gerald Prince deals with the problem of discourse as “metalinguistic” in his article. He writes:

When the subject of a discourse is narrative, we may say that the discourse is meta-narrative....a verbal narrative itself may be metanarrative: a given tale may refer to other tales; it may comment on narrators and narratees; or it may discuss the act of narration. Just as obviously, a particular narrative may refer to itself and to those elements by which it is constituted and communicated. (p.55-56)

Both *The French Lieutenant’s Woman* and *A Maggot* by Fowles fall in with this explanation, for in both novels the narrator either refers to his own course of writing and the work itself or to the act of narration from a critic’s point of view. This matter will be dealt with in detail in later chapters.

As Raymond Federman states, explicit self-reflexiveness is seen twice in the history of fiction; in the 18<sup>th</sup> century novel and novel after the 1960s. The first was at the time of the novel’s birth, when the

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<sup>15</sup> Gerald Prince. “Metanarrative Signs”, **Metafiction**, Ed. Mark Currie, London, Longman, 1995, pp. 55-71.

novel was a new genre, and in order to prove itself, turned its face to explicit self-reflexiveness. Likewise, the second one was at a time when the novel was seen as 'exhausted', and it remarked the rebirth of the genre. (Federman: 1993, pp.17-18)

In his article "Fiction Today or the Pursuit of Non-Knowledge" (Federman: 1993, p.2), Federman puts the problem of representation, that is to say, the relationship of fiction to reality, at the centre of the discussion about contemporary fiction, which has been continuing for more than four decades. Fiction had to *represent* the world (to mirror reality) or to *express* the inner-self of man (to mirror the soul) in order to be acceptable, readable, useful and marketable. This explanation refers to the 'realist' and 'modernist' periods of literature. However, contemporary novel, labelled as 'experimental novel' is far from these approaches. This is why it was considered a failure according to the traditional view of fiction known as Expression / Representation Doctrine. (Federman: 1993, p.3) This doctrine, Federman argues, lasted till the end of 1950s, until the advent of New Fiction, Antifiction, Metafiction, Post-modern Fiction or Surfiction as he calls it. Among these the term "metafiction" will be used in this thesis.

Metafiction has questioned, challenged, and even rejected the old type of fiction. In this essay Federman makes a list of the writers who oppose committing themselves to the problems of Man and the injustices of society and prefer to concern themselves with the problems of writing their books: Alain Robbe-Grillet, Nathalie Sarrute, Samuel Beckett, John Barth, William Gass, Ronald Sukenick, Jorge Luis Borges, Julio Cortazar, B.S. Johnson, and Federman himself.

To Federman, the roots of this refusal in fiction go back to Marcel Proust. Federman's answer to the question of 'Can there be a literature that refuses to represent the world or to express the inner-self of man' is 'Samuel Beckett's writings' in short. He chooses a sentence from *Molloy* to summarize the mind of contemporary writers:

For to know nothing is nothing, not to want to know anything likewise, but to be beyond knowing anything, to know you are beyond knowing anything, that is when peace enters into the soul of the incurious seeker.<sup>16</sup>

Federman comes to the conclusion that, in any event, absolute truth no longer exists. The New Fiction or Metafiction, therefore, invents its own reality, cuts itself off from referential points with the external world.

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<sup>16</sup> Raymond Federman **Critifiction**, (quoted from Samuel Beckett, *Molloy*) ,p.20.

Search (and research) replaces the absolute knowledge in writing fiction, and that appears as an act of self-reflection, and therefore fiction becomes a metaphor of its own narrative progress. Contemporary fiction is full of pitfalls for the reader; totally rejects old tradition and structure, yet uses them, seems exhausted and yet refuses to die... Fragmentation, incoherence, discontinuity, montage, collage, nonsense, chance happening, automatism, abstraction, stream of consciousness, and so on became the governing elements of great art in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Blurring the lines of reality resulted in a kind of total abstraction, and eventually total erasing of reality.

Federman, in his article "Surfiction: A Postmodern Position" refers, like Barth, to the current idea that the novel is dead; writing fiction in the traditional way, is no longer possible or necessary because what is regarded as postmodern life is much more interesting than the fiction itself. However, he thinks that the novel is far from being moribund. According to Federman surfiction, or metafiction, is the only fiction which is still meaningful. Because it tries to explore the possibilities of fiction beyond its own limitations, it challenges the tradition that governs it; it constantly renews our faith in man's intelligence and imagination, rather than man's limited and one-sided view of reality. (Federman: 1993, p. 37)

He refers to the idea that no meaning precedes language; language creates meaning as it goes along. Since language creates meaning that does not exist before, to write is to create and to progress and not to reproduce a pre-existing meaning. He writes:

In the fiction today and tomorrow, all distinctions between real and the imaginary, between the conscious and the subconscious, between the past and the present, between the truth and the untruth will be abolished. ( Federman: 1993, p.39)

Contemporary metafiction foregrounds "framing" as a problem, examining the frame methods in the construction of the real world and of novels. It draws attention to the fact that life, as well as novels, is constructed through frames, and that it is finally impossible to know where one frame ends and another begins. According to Linda Hutcheon, for metafictional writers the most fundamental assumption is that composing a novel is no different from composing or constructing one's "reality". Writing itself, rather than consciousness, becomes the main object of attention. Through metafictional novels, on the one hand, the role of the author as God is questioned. On the other, the authority of the consciousness of the mind, which was the main concern of modernist literature, is denied. Metafiction, as Hutcheon points out, establishes the categorization of the world through the arbitrary system of language.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Linda Hutcheon **Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox**, New York, Routledge, 1991, p. XIII.

Hutcheon questions the role of metafiction as pre-empting the critic's role as commentator in its self-analytic overtness. She asserts that the frequent parodic intertextuality of metafiction allows critics to situate it in literary history easily. The formal and thematic self-consciousness of metafiction is the reflection of the postmodern world on literature, as it is seen in other cultural forms. Hutcheon expresses that "metafiction is today recognized as a manifestation of postmodernism."(Hutcheon: 1991, p. xii)

In *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction*, Hutcheon refers to the idea that literature and history were regarded as branches of the same tree of learning that interpret experience in order to guide and elevate man.

Since history and literature share the same subject matter, that is human experience, starting from the time of Aristotle, the distinction between these two branches has become one of the main points of discussion among the philosophers, writers and the critics. According to Aristotle:

The poet and the historian differ not by writing in verse or prose. The work of Herodotus might be put into verse, and it would still be a species of history, with metre no less than without it. The true difference is that one relates what has happened, the other what may happen. Poetry, therefore, is a more philosophical and a higher thing than history: for poetry tends to express the universal, history the particular.<sup>18</sup>

Although, the distinction between these two forms is as old as Aristotle, it was not a sharp distinction as it was in the 19<sup>th</sup> and in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the separation became more acute with the rise of Ranke's "scientific history" that argue the possibility of writing unquestionable truths that are observable.<sup>19</sup> However postmodernist theory challenged this separation:

it is this very separation of the literary and the historical that is now being challenged in postmodern theory and art, and recent critical readings of both history and fiction have focused more on what the two modes of writing share than on how they differ.... they are both identified as linguistic constructs, highly conventionalised in their narrative forms, and not at all transparent either in terms of language or structure, and they appear to be equally intertextual, deploying the text of the past within their own complex textuality. (Hutcheon: 1999, p.105)

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<sup>18</sup> Lionel Trilling, Ed. and trans., **Literary Criticism**, London & New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc, 1970, p. 60.

<sup>19</sup> Linda Hutcheon, **A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction**, New York & London, Routledge, 1999, p. 105.

As it is stated above, the discussion about the history and the fiction, which Hutcheon also refers to in her article titled “Historiographic Metafiction”, goes back to Aristotle; the historian could speak only of what has happened, of the reality; but the poet should speak of what could or might happen; in other words, of universals. However the boundary between these two disciplines was always very obscure because they are both constructed through language by a writer. Historians used fictional techniques, and the fiction writers used history as material. The writers of fiction, for example in the eighteenth century, tried to persuade their readers that their works were not made up but simply existed. Yet, today the new demand has become the fictitiousness under the guise of the “real”, or rather the blending of fact and fiction which is now called the “historiographic metafiction”.

History writing could never be as reliable as Aristotle declared, due to the question of objectivity and unavailability of some facts, documents, even details. The Poststructuralist and Postmodernist critics have questioned the transparency of language in history writing, and history has lost its importance as a kind of meta-discourse or grand-narrative, which claims to provide universal objectives, and explanations. Hayden White regards history as fictitious like any kind of fiction, because it is simply a narration. White focuses on the articulation of historiographical matters in narrative form. Narrative is seen as a form of discourse in professional studies. However, historical discourse differentiates itself from the literary discourse by virtue of its subject matter. According to White the distinction between the historical and the fictional lies in their content rather than their form.<sup>20</sup> It is impossible to reflect the past as it is because objectivity cannot be achieved in narratives since the history writer can not isolate her/his subjectivity from the object s/he is writing about. Therefore we may say that any history writer presents the events of history according to her/his point of view.

History writing, especially after the 1980s, attracted more attention with the works of Poststructuralists and Postmodernists. The mode of criticism, called New Historicism, unlike New Criticism and Formalism in the Modernist Period, refused to treat the work of art free from the social and historical context. As opposed to the Formalists and New Critics that focused on the form rather than the content and viewed works as freestanding, independent entities, the New Historicists argued that a work of literature is neither an autonomous entity against the social and historical background nor a reflection of a certain world view and characteristics of an era. (Murfin: 1997, p.354) Instead, they regard a literary text as “situated” within all the institutions, social practices and discourses of a particular time and place and in interaction with other cultural products. Louis Montrose, one of the leading scholars of New Historicism argues that history is conceived not to be a set of fixed objective facts, but, like the literature with which it interacts, a text which itself needs to be interpreted. For Montrose:

the newer historical criticism is *new* in its refusal of unproblematic distinctions between “literature” and

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<sup>20</sup> Hayden White, “The Question of Narrative in Contemporary Historical Theory”, **Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction**, Ed. Patricia Waugh, London, Methuen, 1984, p.105.

“history”, between “text” and “context”; new in resisting a prevalent tendency to posit and privilege a unified and autonomous individual – whether an Author or a Work – to be set against a social or literary background.<sup>21</sup>

Thus, the boundaries among various texts, either historical or literary, have become transparent. Louis Althusser, another prominent thinker, argues that whether consciously or not all works manifest an ideology. In his article “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses” Althusser claims that, “world outlooks” such as religious ideology, ethical ideology, political ideology, legal ideology etc. are largely imaginary since none of them corresponds to reality.<sup>22</sup> That is to say, we do not live any of these ideologies as truth. However, though not corresponding to reality they constitute an illusion, and it is admitted that they do make allusion to reality, that they need only to be “interpreted” to discover the reality of the world behind their imaginary representation of that world. Therefore, the efforts of Fowles both in *The French Lieutenant’s Woman* and *A Maggot* can be regarded as interpretations and representations of the history of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The concept of history is re-examined in post-modern discourse with variations in its substance. The historiographic postmodern novel questions the fictionality and subjectivity of history. What is basically regarded as a problem is the distinction between history and fiction. The writers of historiographic metafiction pick out an event from history and articulate it in narrative form.

Hutcheon, in her *A Poetics* (1988) argues that postmodern theory and art, and contemporary critics of history and fiction concentrate on what the two modes of writing share more than on how they differ. They are both regarded as linguistic constructs which have a special and conventional form, and depend on language. She adds that these are the teachings of historiographic metafiction as well. In *A Poetics*, Hutcheon claims that history writing and historical novel writing influenced each other mutually in the last century. (Hutcheon: 1999, p. 106) When the 19<sup>th</sup> century historical novel and the historiographic metafiction are compared, we see that history is the shaping force of both. However historical faithfulness is to be achieved in the historical novel, whereas historiographic metafiction plays on the truth and lies of the historical record as it is seen in *A Maggot* by Fowles. The historiographic metafictional self-reflexive novels acknowledge the paradox of the reality of the past that is accessible only in textualized forms.

What is problematic in the relationship between history and fiction is that history can only be known through texts, since it is usually impossible to experience it. Therefore, it is possible to subvert history, or even play upon it. Linda Hutcheon asserts that what is challenged in post-modern literature and art is

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<sup>21</sup> Louis Montrose, “Professing the Renaissance: The Poetics and Politics of Culture.”, **Literary Theory: An Anthology**, Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan, Eds., Blackwell, U.S.A., 1998. pp. 777-785.

<sup>22</sup> Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State apparatuses.”, **Literary Theory: An Anthology**, Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan, Eds., Blackwell, U.S.A., 1998. pp. 294-305.

the separation of the literary and the historical. To her, historiographic metafiction attempts to demarginalize the literary through confrontation with the historical, and it does so both thematically and formally. (Hutcheon: 1999, p.108) Whether it is possible to know or not to know the past is the basis of her discussion. She also brings out the question that whether it is right or not to use the terms truth and falsity to discuss fiction.

She also makes clear that the ultimate aim of a modernist text is the imposition of a single meaning, whereas postmodernist metafiction tends more to play with the possibilities of meaning and form. The reader of a postmodern novel is expected to take part in the process of meaning production. Postmodern fiction is much more challenging and demanding than modernist fiction in this respect.

John Robert Fowles is a writer who never aimed to write history. However, to him, history is a form of literature. The difference is that history seems more restricted to historical facts and statistics than fiction which is a form free from these restrictions. Thus *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and *A Maggot* are not historical novels whose setting and some characters and events are from history, which in turn make the historical events and issues crucial for the main characters and narrative.<sup>23</sup> Instead, history is used as a framework that is constructed in the present in these works. In both novels a modern narrator recontextualizes the past without any assertions.

John Fowles, who is known to be one of the masters of metafiction with his use of layered-storytelling, illusionism, and ambiguous endings, reflects his own observations and experiences in his novels.<sup>24</sup> He is said to be a keen observer of human behaviour and nature. He likens the observation of nature to watching how a character in a novel develops. And he suggests that “literary criticism ought to devote more time to its subjects’ ethnology: how living writers actually feel and behave” (Aubrey: 1991, p.2) According to Fowles autobiographical data is not irrelevant to the understanding of a writer.

John Fowles was born on 31 March 1926, into a middle class family in Leigh-On-Sea, a suburb of London at the mouth of the River Thames. He describes Leigh-On-Sea as “a small town dominated by conformism –the pursuit of respectability. The rows of respectable little houses inhabited by respectable little people had an early depressive effect on me.”<sup>25</sup>

John Fowles was the son of Robert Fowles, a prosperous cigar merchant, and Gladys Richards Fowles. His family was a conventional Victorian family, and he grew up in a comfortable suburban neighbourhood. Fowles attended Alleyn Court School and Bedford School from 1939 to 1941, one of the classic public boarding schools preparing boys for university. His family was evacuated to a small

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<sup>23</sup> M.H. Abrams, **A Glossary of Literary Terms** (Third Edition), London, Rihehart English Pamphlets, 1993, p.113.

<sup>24</sup> James Aubrey, **John Fowles: A Reference Companion**, London, Greenwood Press, 1991, p.2.

<sup>25</sup> Michael Thorpe, **John Fowles**, Windsor, Profile Books, 1982, p.7.



Devonshire village near Dartmoor in order to escape from the German threat during World War II. There he developed a love of the West Country. He did his military service as a lieutenant in the Royal Marines. Later he specialized in French at New College, Oxford where he took a high second-class honours degree. He had the chance to take part in discussions on existentialism at Oxford and these years have contributed to his self-exploration. He continued to be interested in natural history as well as literature and philosophy during his Oxford years. After his graduation in 1950, he lectured for a year at the University of Poitiers, and then he spent his next two years on the Greek island of Spetsai teaching literature. He met his future wife, Elizabeth Whitton, in Spetsai. They married in 1956. The story of his famous novel *The Magus* (1966) is based on his experiences in this island. Then he returned to England and taught at a variety of schools in England and became interested in the trade union and socialist positions held by a number of his students. After the success of *The Collector* in 1963, he gave up teaching and devoted himself to writing. He published *The Aristos: A Self Portrait in Ideas* in 1964, *The Magus* in 1965, and *The French Lieutenant's Woman* in 1969.

Fowles brings forward a boundless concept of freedom for fiction, which includes history as setting, and criticism as subject matter. He creates an opportunity to look back upon the past from the windows of the contemporary world through a self-reflexive narrative. This is what Linda Hutcheon calls 'historiographic metafiction'.

Susana Onega places historiographic metafiction in British literature in her article titled "British Historiographic Metafiction". She mentions the rarity of historiographic metafiction until the 1980s (stating that *The French Lieutenant's Woman* is the only remarkable example) and gives a long list of this kind of work written after the 1980s including *A Maggot* by Fowles. She mentions that the first critics to deal with *The French Lieutenant's Woman* accused Fowles of imitating old conventions and trying to make the reader accept them as new. The accurate evaluation of the work came later with the theorization of the historiographic metafiction.<sup>26</sup>

According to Onega, metafiction either tends to sacrifice content in favour of artistic form, or its self-reflexiveness is limited by the desire to communicate an intelligible message. The first part of this explanation is applicable to American fiction, whereas the second is more suitable to British fiction in which the novels of John Fowles take a major position. (Onega: 1989, p.7) Onega claims that the paradox of John Fowles depends on his desire to create a realistic novel and to communicate a coherent message: experimentalism and the turning of the medium into a literary artefact. In order to realize his aim, Fowles employs metafictional mechanisms, especially parody. To Onega, Fowles' novels show striking formal and thematic coincidences despite their stylistic differences. Onega expresses that, the early novels of Fowles, *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, in particular, foreshadow his later works like

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<sup>26</sup> Susana Onega, **Form and Meaning in the Novels of John Fowles**, London, UMI Research Press, 1989, p. 70.



*A Maggot*, and they complement each other both formally and thematically. Onega defines the works of Fowles as:

simultaneously appear as realistic and fantastic, as traditional and experimental, as accurately set in historical time and as epically timeless; while heroes and heroines are both realistically drawn individuals and archetypal, representative figures. (Onega: 1989, p.10)

Since freedom, both for human beings and the self, is the most important element of life and fiction, he tries to create the illusion of freedom in order to reflect the unattainable, limitless freedom.

The use of intertextuality in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and the real documents from a magazine in *A Maggot* will also be discussed in this thesis. Through using such intertextual references and real documents, Fowles reinforces the historical backgrounds of his novels. During the writer's reconstruction of the past, the ironic tone of the narrator works in the opposite way and deconstructs the past.

### ***THE FRENCH LIEUTENANT'S WOMAN***<sup>27</sup>

*The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1969) is one of the first examples of historiographic metafiction, to employ almost all of the technical devices attributed to this kind of novel, such as intertextual references and allusions, examining of fictional systems within the narrative, the author's intrusion, sometimes with fictional characters, sometimes directly addressing the reader, questioning the conventions of narrative, displaying self-reflexivity, and having multiple endings, thus emphasizing the fictionality of the work rather than its reality. It is important for the history of the novel that it presents the distinguishing differences between the contemporary metafiction and previous forms of novelistic techniques.

Although *The French Lieutenant's Woman* is usually regarded as an imitation or a pastiche of the Victorian novel, Fowles' aim seems to be deeper than that. It is mid-Victorian in subject-matter, setting and characters; however, it is not a historical novel in the sense that it reflects elements true-to-life, simply by making use of historical personages and events in a fictitious narrative, but through a point of view and criticism that belong to a narrator living in the twentieth century. Its formal resemblances to the Victorian novels are employed to achieve effects of irony and contrast. Thomas C. Foster, in his

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<sup>27</sup> John Fowles **The French Lieutenant's Woman**, New York, Penguin Books, 1981, (All passages refer to this edition.)

research titled *Understanding Fowles*, states that Fowles wrote *The French Lieutenant's Woman* during a period in which the novelists and critics were trying to escape from the legacy of the Victorian novel, and he couldn't escape from the accusations of this group. They accused Fowles of writing a spoof or copy of the Victorian novel. What they could not see was that Fowles was borrowing from this form in order to create his own form of narrative technique:

Beginning with Jorge Luis Borges and Vladimir Nabakov on through John Barth and Italo Calvino, writers since World War II, have used elements of other genres and other centuries to construct their fiction. Fowles, however, is among the first to return to an earlier form of fiction as a way of constructing his novel.<sup>28</sup>

*The French Lieutenant's Woman* directly criticises the classical realism of the nineteenth century fiction that depends on a singular truth and a one-sided point of view. It demonstrates a multiplicity of truths and points of view through a self-conscious, postmodernist narrative technique under the guise of the Victorian narrative style. Fowles creates an imaginary world, which resembles real life, as all the writers try to create in their novels; however, he does not end his narrative at this point, and shocks his reader by distorting and even destroying this very world in the middle of the narrative in order to show that what we regard as truth is relative and usually fictitious. Hence, he illustrates that there can be more than one truths due to diverse perspectives. It is paradoxical that the ironic tone of the narrator and the destruction of this fictitious world, which resembles the real world, do not serve to damage the actualisation of reality, but support it and cause it to be more believable. The use of history, historical settings and historical personages in this novel serve to fulfil the same purpose that makes this novel a historiographic metafiction.

The century in which Fowles chose to place his story, is one of the most striking eras in British history. The nineteenth century, or the Victorian period, witnessed a rapid, dynamic change in terms of political, social, and cultural life in British history. The Mid-Victorian Period in which *The French Lieutenant's Woman* takes place is referred to as "The Age of Improvement". The pride in technological progress which later resulted in the conflict between religion and science is traced in the novel as well. For instance Tennyson's *In Memoriam* (1850), parts of which are directly quoted as epigraphs at the beginnings of some chapters, indicates this conflict. In the nineteenth century, stability and Victorian values that seemed unchangeable had started to be shaken with the industrial revolution. The system of hierarchy was being destroyed and the class structure had started to change. A struggle had started among the classes, instead of blind respect for the higher class. The idea of the higher class protecting the lower class and the lower class respecting the higher had changed. In *The French Lieutenant's Woman* this situation is clearly seen in that Mr. Freeman, who became rich through

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<sup>28</sup> Thomas C. Foster, *Understanding John Fowles*, South Carolina, University of S.C. Press, 1994, p. 67.

commerce, has power to influence Charles Smithson, who is from the nobility: “Charles flushed red. Mr. Freeman’s eyes bored him. He could only lower his head.” (p. 322) On another occasion, Sam, Charles’ valet, becomes successful in trade and gains enough money to have his own servant:

Thus Sam gained a footing, a very lowly one, in the great store. But it was enough. What deficiencies he had in education he supplied with his natural sharpness. (p. 329)

The individual concepts that were important in the Romantic age, such as friendship, honour, and love were replaced with material values. Fowles reflects this change of class structure and the social mobility in the novel through using quotations from the writers and thinkers of the period who write about their century. For instance the epigraph from Matthew Arnold’s *Culture and Anarchy* (1869) at the beginning of Chapter 53 deals with this change:

For we see whither it has brought us... the insisting on perfection in one part of our nature and not in all; the singling out of the moral side, the side of obedience and action, for such intent regard; making strictness of the moral conscience so far the principal thing, and putting off for hereafter and for another world the core of being complete at all points, the full and harmonious development of our humanity. (p. 308)

The writer, therefore, reconstructs the past in order to emphasize the class distinction and the social inequality as well as the social mobility. In reflecting the Victorian Period from a modern perspective the narrator follows any historical order in the traditional sense, as in the novels of the nineteenth century writers who follow a chronological development of events from a certain point of view. There are references both to the future and the past and the writer moves backward and forward in time. He makes use of anachronism to emphasize the differences and similarities between the nineteenth century and the twentieth century concept of man and life. The narrator constantly refers to the twentieth century during his description of the nineteenth century:

Sam was a very fair example of a snob, in this localized sense of the word. He had a very sharp sense of clothes style – quite as sharp as a “mod” of the 1960s; and he spent most of his wages on keeping in fashion. (p. 39)

Mahmoud Salami discusses the blending of history and fiction in *The French Lieutenant’s Woman* in his work entitled *John Fowles’s Fiction and the Poetics of Postmodernism*. According to Salami:

They (the quotations) are arranged in the novel by the narrator in order to function as contexts within which the

characters try to construct their subjectivities and to free themselves from the novel's dominant ideology.<sup>29</sup>

What is meant by the novel's "dominant ideology" can be explained as Victorianism, which is constituted of Victorian history, the political realities and social ideologies that claim certain norms and values such as order, stability, hierarchy, and tradition. Salami argues that history is realized as a text in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. To him, Fowles regards both history and fiction as narrative discourses, human constructs, and they are both reflections of the real world. Fiction and history are equally mixed and they complete each other in depicting the lives of the characters in the novel. Since Fowles's motive is not writing history, the novel's world is a fiction, whereas through making use of intertextuality in the form of allusions to other texts, placing his characters into a real place, and employing real personages from the history, he creates a "historical" world as well. As Salami points out, the novel violates the rules of both history and fiction, and promotes its own world which is self-reflexive.

The plot of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* is fairly simple. It is the story of Sarah Woodroof, an outcast in Victorian society, and Charles Smithson, an aristocrat, whose life changes completely after meeting that mysterious woman and falling in love with her.

In his essay "Notes on an Unfinished Novel" Fowles describes how the image of a woman standing on The Cobb, staring out to sea, came to him in a waking dream in the autumn of 1966:

A woman stands at the end of a deserted quay and stares out to sea... The woman had no face, no particular degree of sexuality. But she was Victorian; and since I always saw her in the same static long shot, with her back turned, she represented a reproach on the Victorian Age. An outcast.<sup>30</sup>

Thomas C. Foster adds that the novel is an attempt to complete that image, to enliven that lonely figure, to find her story. (Foster: 1994, p.69) Fowles wrote the first draft in a one month period, and spent two years creating the illusion of Victorian prose and dialogue, adding the material about the nineteenth century life that includes some documents and the quotations from various writers and thinkers of the period such as Charles Darwin, Karl Marx, Matthew Arnold, Lewis Carroll, A.H. Clough, Thomas Hardy, Alfred Tennyson, Jane Austin, and Leslie Stephen. He turns this story into one of the first examples of historiographic metafiction with its constant concern with nineteenth century history, self-reflexivity, ironic tone of the narrator and multiple endings.

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<sup>29</sup> Mahmoud Salami, **John Fowles's Fiction and the Poetics of Postmodernism**, London&Toronto, Associated University Press, 1992, p. 107.

<sup>30</sup> John Fowles, "Notes on an Unfinished Novel", **Afterwords: Novelists on Their Novels**, Ed. Thomas McCormick, New York, Harper, 1969, p.61.

The story, as it is shortly mentioned above in the quotation from Fowles himself, starts with the description of Lyme Bay and The Cobb in 1867, and a figure, that is motionless, staring out to sea. This figure belongs to a woman who has not a

beautiful face, by any period's standard or taste. But it was an unforgettable face, and a tragic face. Its sorrow welled out of it as purely, naturally and unstoppably as water out of a woodland spring. (p. 14)

Fowles creates an independent character out of this figure; Sarah Woodroof, a melancholic and passionate governess who is assumed to have been seduced and abandoned by a French naval lieutenant. This unfortunate relationship and her silence about this affair, which cause people to think that she experienced something insulting, make her an outcast in the society. She deliberately condemns herself to isolation and Foster claims that Fowles remains inadequate in revealing the mystery of that character for she is the least fully realized character in the novel. (Foster: 1994, p. 69) Salami makes a more feminist comment on her: "Sarah embodies the theme of freedom in every respect. She represents the entire age of emancipation for women." (Salami: 1992, p.128) As it is stated in the epigraph from Marx at the title page of the novel: "Every emancipation is a restoration of the human world and of human relationships to man himself." (p.3)

Beside Sarah, the reader meets Charles Smithson and Ernestina Freeman in the first chapter, walking along the quay in Lyme Regis where they see Sarah in her above mentioned state. Ernestina, who is engaged to Charles and has come to The Cobb to spend a few days with her aunt, recounts the tragic story of this woman "abandoned by a French lieutenant" and known as the "Tragedy" by the gentry and "The French Loot'n't's Hoer" by the lower class. Sarah works in the house of Mrs. Poulteney, a typical Victorian lady who has strict morals and principles. She is a conventional catholic woman who can not tolerate immorality and dirtiness. Mrs. Poulteney employs Sarah only to show off, seeming as a merciful and charitable lady in the eyes of the town's people, which will enhance her prestige. Though she claims to be a good Christian, because of her inhumane personality Fowles writes an end in hell for her in the first ending of the novel. The narrator assures that she deserves a place in the Gestapo (p. 23) and "[i]n her fashion she was an epitome of all the most crassly arrogant traits of the ascendant British Empire." (p. 23)

Charles Smithson, an amateur palaeontologist and middle-aged bachelor who has an aristocratic background, is the best kind of person, in a way, through whom the characteristics of the Victorian era might be reflected in accordance with the writer's aim. He appears to be the man of his age with his title and private income. Moreover, he has the expectation of further inheritance of money and title when his uncle dies. Charles has fashionable scientific interests, such as the theory of Darwin, though the narrator explains that he had not really understood his theory (and indeed Darwin could not

understand it as well) He is about to marry Ernestina, who is, though not from a noble background, rich enough to marry a man from the upper class, which reflects the upward social mobility of the era.

Charles tries to direct Sarah away from the end of The Cobb; however, he is rejected by a glance from her, which impresses him. At this point, the narrator starts to comment on the perspective of Charles as well as the characteristics of the era with casual references to and comparisons with the twentieth century. As he puts it:

One of the commonest symptoms of wealth today is destructive neurosis; in his century it was tranquil boredom. It is true that the wave of revolution in 1848, the memory of the now extinct Chartists, stood like a mountainous shadow behind the period... (p. 16)

After this first encounter Charles and Sarah see each other once more; this time, while Charles is looking for fossils along the Undercliff, he sees Sarah while she is sleeping. Sarah wakes and catches him watching her. This encounter increases Charles's curiosity and he tries to learn more about her. Thomas Foster refers to Sarah as a "female Heathcliff" who comes straight out of the dark romantics with her choice of setting as well: "tragic, stormy, attached to the deeper impulses of the self, ignoring social conventions." (Foster: 1994, p.70) According to Foster, Sarah's silence is a kind of passive resistance; even while she is obeying the orders of her employer she never submits completely. He defines Sarah's misery as a kind of "existentialist suffering":

Although she can not recognize them (being born a century too early), she exhibits the symptoms of existentialism as delineated by Sartre and Camus. She is alienated from herself, from God, and from society. She has her moments of absurdist recognition and suicidal despair. Her life is without essential meaning, and ultimately she must take charge of her life and invest it with meaning, must create her being as she goes. (Foster: 1994, p.72)

Charles experiences similar existentialist sufferings. Despite his aristocratic background and conformist role in society, he turns into an outcast from society through his own will at the end of the novel.

John Fowles combines 19<sup>th</sup> century sensualism with 20<sup>th</sup> century existential freedom through the pain this character goes through. However, Sarah presents two different moods in the novel. In the first half she is in a "kind of suicidal despair" as Foster mentions, but in the second half she chooses her own way and profits from her position in the way of self-actualisation. Mahmoud Salami claims that although Sarah appears to be the victim of male domination, she becomes a dangerous woman, a "femme fatale" (as Malcolm Bradbury uses in *The Modern British Novel* – p.361- to describe Sarah) because she is unreachable, mysterious and vague, thus she is a sort of threat to the male and his duty in

society. (Salami: 1992, p.129) For Charles she symbolizes both “the fallen women” and “the lost sister and the mother” (p. 62)

Although the narrator of the novel refers to Sarah as the “protagonist” it is obvious that Charles and his dilemmas are the main concerns of Fowles. Apparently, the canon of the Victorian era is signed by men as it is seen in the quotations at the beginning of every chapter in the book. However, Charles’ experiences reflect the beginning of a change, the changing of the Victorian values and class structure, for example, the gap between the higher and lower classes and the concept of “free”, “individual” woman.

Until the twelfth chapter the novel, except for some anachronistic references and comments on the period, continues like a traditional novel. At the end of this chapter the reader faces two questions: “Who is Sarah? Out of what shadow does she come?”(p.80) The narration changes completely in the famous Chapter 13. The narrator shocks the reader by declaring, “This story I’m telling is all imagination. These characters I create, never existed out of my own mind” (p. 80) With this metafictional interval, the narrator starts to discuss the difficulty of writing a story when characters behave independently. The variations in the narrative technique are explained in this interval. The narrator of the novel firstly mimics the traditional, omnipotent, God-like narrator of the Victorian novels, though from time to time he leads the reader to doubt his omnipotence and makes him feel the distance between the characters and the narrator. But then, all the rules of mimetic tradition that view art as an imitation, reflection, or representation of the world and human life are shattered. The narrator subverts the traditional, mimetic tradition by exposing himself as a modern narrator who, unlike the traditional narrator is, not omnipotent. The self-reflexiveness of the novel comes to the fore by this revelation. The writer aims to create the feeling that all the things experienced by the reader are fiction, that exist only inside the writer’s mind; “we wish to create worlds as real as, but other than the world that is” and he continues, “a created world must be independent of its creator; a planned world (a world that fully reveals its planning) is a dead world” (p. 81) Hence, the characters begin to gain autonomy, they appear to have been given their freedom. Therefore, through such a self-reflexive manner he tries to escape from the conventions that make the novel a dead form. Mahmoud Salami, in his analysis of John Fowles’s fiction, clarifies that the position of the narrator in *The French Lieutenant’s Woman* and states:

[t]he narrator constructs a special persona who takes the responsibility for arranging the novel’s various texts, constructing the three endings, selecting the Victorian epigraphs, taking the role of a godlike novelist who is able to intervene in his narrative and who can probe the minds of his characters as he wishes. (Salami: 1992, p.105)



Through creating a distance between the narrator and the characters of the novel by claiming that he cannot know the innermost thoughts and the feelings of the characters, Fowles gives his reader the chance to produce meaning about the inner lives of the characters. He makes his characters rebel against the writer in order to liberate them: "I ordered him to walk straight back to Lyme Regis. But he did not; he gratuitously turned and went to the Dairy." (p. 81) Here he stresses the autonomy of his characters, and declares that the narrative is out of control and even his plans are not working. Concerning Charles, he writes that: "It is not only that he has begun to gain an autonomy; I must respect it, and disrespect all my quasi-divine plans for him, if I wish him to be real." (pp. 81-82)

As Salami also stresses, the author's use of Victorian narrative convention is a disguise, and it is, in fact, a means of attacking the omniscient and godlike narrator. Since the characters seem to be free to decide their own lives, they construct their own subjectivities. The writer's denial of his dominance over his narrative appears as a metafictional device. However, if there is a created world, there must be a creator even if he denies it. We can regard this situation as the unwanted but inevitable authority of the writer over the text. Thus, it is ironic that self-reflexivity is used by Fowles in order to conceal his authority. He openly reveals in the novel that freedom is the most necessary matter in the writing: "There is only one good definition of God: the freedom that allows other freedom to exist." (p. 82) If the writer is the god of the text, then he must allow the freedom of the characters in order to confirm their existence. Ellen Pifer states that Fowles was greatly influenced by the French existentialists' notion of freedom. Like the famous existentialists Camus and Sartre, he examines the possibilities for meaningful choice, action and purpose in an accidental universe.<sup>31</sup> Ronald Binns explains Fowles's existentialist philosophy as locating itself more in the eclectic unity through dramatic fictional situations than in the ideas themselves. To Binns, the emphasis on the personal choice in the works of Fowles is derived from Kierkegaard, Heidegger and Sartre<sup>32</sup>.

After the interval in chapter 13, the narrator goes on to tell the main story. Sarah and Charles meet in the Undercliff once more; Sarah wants to share her secret that she is not waiting for the French Lieutenant any more with him, because she knows that the Lieutenant is married. Her aim appears to be to obtain Charles' advice on her condition. Charles explains this situation to Dr. Grogan, an elderly bachelor who knows the surroundings well. According to Grogan, this woman is without any reason addicted to melancholia and trying to save her would be in vain, because she *wants* to be a victim. She appears to be proud of her position as an outcast, for it estranges her from a society that she does not want to be a part of anyway. When Sarah attempts to meet Charles once more by sending him a telegram, Dr. Grogan warns him against her. However, Charles goes to the meeting place and Sarah confesses that she allowed herself to be seen and consequently dismissed by Mrs. Poulteney. This, in a sense, confirms what Grogan has said about Sarah. Charles, though trying to resist, kisses her and Sam

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<sup>31</sup> Ellen Pifer, **Critical Essays on Modern British Literature**, Boston, G.K. Hall & Co., 1986, p.3.

<sup>32</sup> Ronald Binns, **Contemporary Writers**, London & New York, Methuen, 1986, pp.26-27.



and Mary, his valet and the servant of Ernestina's aunt, happen to see them; Charles urges them to keep this secret.

In the following chapter Charles decides to go to see Mr. Freeman, Ernestina's father, because Charles' uneasiness about this engagement is increasing. Later, Mr Grogan informs Charles about a letter from Sarah, notifying him that she is in a hotel in Exeter. Grogan warns him again that this could be a trap planned for him. The narrator recounts one of the possible endings of the story in chapter 44; Charles and Ernestina get married, live together till the end of their lives though not always happily, and have seven children; Charles becomes a businessman because he can not obtain the title and the inheritance that he expected from his uncle. "And so ends the story. What happened to Sarah, I do not know – whatever it was, she never troubled Charles again in person, however long she may have lingered in his memory." (p.264) Chapter 45 starts with the self-reflexive confession of the narrator that everything he recounted in the previous two chapters was false; in order to deceive the reader, and this traditional ending is just one possibility. The recounted ending is one of the hypothetical theories that emerge in Charles' mind on the way from London to Exeter. The narrator warns the reader about Charles' mind:

If you noticed in those last chapters an abruptness, a lack of consonance, a betrayal of Charles's deeper potentiality and a small matter of his being given a span of very nearly a century and a quarter; if you entertained a suspicion, not common in literature, that the writer's breath has given out and he has rather arbitrarily ended the race while he feels he's still winning, then do not blame me; because all these feelings, or reflections of them, were very present in Charles's own mind. (pp. 266-267)

Therefore Charles recognizes his freedom of choice as the narrator recognizes his freedom to write any kind of ending for his story, even more than one.

Charles visits Sarah at the hotel in Exeter. He goes to her room since she cannot walk because of her supposedly injured ankle. They can not overcome their desire and go to bed together, which leads Charles to find out that she is indeed a virgin. However, though Sarah confesses that she has deceived him and prepared that trap, she does not want to marry him, because she does not deserve him. Two more endings appear through the last pages of the novel. In the first of them, when Charles goes back to London to break his engagement, Sarah leaves the hotel without leaving any forwarding address. While following her by train, Charles meets a bearded man who appears to be the author himself:

Now the question I am asking, as I stare at Charles... what the devil am I going to do with you? I have already thought of ending Charles's career here and now; of leaving him for eternity on his way to London. But the conventions of

Victorian fiction allow, allowed no place for the open, the inconclusive ending..(p.317)

As it is seen in the quotation above *The French Lieutenant's Woman* marks the border between fiction and criticism that is a characteristic of metafiction. The author assumes the role of both writer and critic. And he continues to comment on the nature of writing by the metaphor of fixing a fight in favour of a boxer:

Fiction usually pretends to conform to the reality: the writer puts the conflicting wants in the ring and then describes the fight –but in fact fixes the fight letting that what he himself favours win. And we judge writers of fiction both by the skill they show in fixing the fights (in other words, in persuading us that they were not fixed) and by the kind of fighter they fix in favour of: the good one, the tragic one, the evil one, the funny one, and so on. (p. 317)

This intrusion to comment on the nature of writing, the examination of fictional techniques within the narrative, the refusal to become real life and the rejection of the conventional techniques of narrative emphasize the fictionality of the story, which is, in short, a feature of metafiction.

The narrator continues to describe Charles' search for Sarah through advertisements, checking the agencies for governesses and the places where prostitutes loiter, which result in disappointment. He goes to the United States of America in order to continue his search there, and finally finds a trace after two years. Sarah is found in the house of Dante Gabriel Rossetti in England, not sorry about leaving him without any clues, sure of herself, and having attained a kind of self-knowledge and self possession: "He sensed that now their positions were strangely reversed. He was now the suppliant, she the reluctant listener." (p.348) In a free environment she finds opportunity to express herself without any restriction. She appears to have set herself free from the conventions and the barriers of the Victorian England. She lives with the Pre-Raphaelite artists and their models that were notorious at the time. Charles expected her to be in a totally different position:

He had come to raise her from penury, from some bed post in a crabbed house. In full armour, ready to slay the dragon - and now the damsel had broken all the rules. No chains, no sobs, no beseeching hands. He was the man who appears to be a formal *soirée* under the impression it was a fancy dress ball. (p.349)

His expectation depends on the myth that women are weak and incompetent and men are the heroes to save them. When he sees that she is happy in the house of Rossetti's and does not need not to be saved he feels disappointed. Later Charles learns that she had a daughter by him, named Lalage. It is apparent that this is the second ending planned by the narrator.

The last ending starts in Chapter 61, and traces Sarah's last steps in self-actualisation. The chapter starts with a description of the bearded narrator in front of Sarah's house with a watch, which he sets back fifteen minutes and continues from there. He writes a different version of the events recounted in the previous pages and creates a new ending out of them. Sarah tells Charles that she can not marry him because she can not love him as a husband, and that would be betraying herself. Her idea of individualism and independence keeps her away from the institution of marriage, and this time Charles leaves the house without noticing the little girl. In a sense she refuses all male discourses that may colonize her. Charles cannot understand the way Sarah talks but it is obvious that his life will also change. These three endings are analyzed by Salami from the existentialist point of view:

The first ending epitomizes the rejection of freedom, the obedience to duty, and Victorian ideology. The second represents Charles's choice of freedom by uniting with Sarah, but Sarah herself refuses to be inscribed, dominated by him. In short, this ending is a kind of wish-fulfilment of Charles's fantasies of a happy life with her. The third ending is in fact appropriate to the theme of freedom. Charles is left alone, but he is capable of change and can understand the implication of existentialism that Sarah has tried to teach him throughout the novel.(Salami:1992, p.132)

Salami, in analysing the narrative technique that Fowles employs in his fictions, points out that the identity of the narrative voices he deploys, the confrontation of history with the novel's self-reflexive narrative, and the device of multiple endings problematize his fiction. In metafiction the novel is considered history in the sense that it constructs the past like any historical text. For Salami, the fiction of John Fowles is an embodiment of freedom, of individuality, and of existentialism. In his *John Fowles's Fiction and the Poetics of Postmodernism*, Salami points out that the narrative of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* is historicized through the evocation of a certain period in the past, with detailed representations from all classes and real personages such as Darwin, Marx, Rosetti, Ruskin and the Victorian poets. While recontextualizing the Victorian texts, he presents these real figures as imaginary as well. For instance, Dante Gabriel Rosetti and his household are presented as if they were a product of the writer's imagination. Indeed, the writer uses name "Rosetti" because it reflects the spirit that Fowles imputes on Sarah. For Salami, history, both in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and in *A Maggot* is realised as text. (Salami: 1992, p. 105)

The narrator of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* mentions that the times have changed and the traditional novel is out of fashion, novels may seem more real if characters do not behave like puppets, and the narrators do not behave like God. For example the narrator self reflexively reveals his plans for Charles:

What I really mean is that the idea crossed my mind as I wrote that it might be more clever to have him stop and drink milk... and meet Sarah again... I can only report – and I am the most reliable witness – that the idea seemed to me to come clearly from Charles, not myself. (p. 81)

Therefore he pretends to set his characters free, as well as his reader in their interpretation and choice of endings. The quotation above also proves that Fowles is a master of “worlds within worlds” or the Chinese-box structure, which is a characteristic of metafiction. According to Hutcheon, Fowles stands beyond the worlds he created: “he masterminds both the creation of the Chinese-box structure and the tensions which exist between these worlds and which are functional within the novel as a whole.” (Hutcheon: 1980, pp.57-58)

The text-oriented theories like Formalism and New Criticism paid almost no attention to the reader’s role. Since the texts are written to be read and the reader completes its meaning by reading, the passive role of the reader has changed. The reader’s role in producing meaning actively has been advanced since the 1970s. Roland Barthes separated the texts as readerly and writerly (lisible and scriptable) to mark the distinction between the traditional literary works such as the classical novel and those of twentieth century, like metafiction. According to Barthes readerly texts do not locate the reader as a site of the production of meaning, but only as the receiver of a fixed, predetermined meaning. However, the writerly texts self-consciously accept the plurality of meanings and the infinity of languages.<sup>33</sup> No consequent language can be superimposed upon a writerly text, therefore the reader is an active participant in the construction of the meaning. *The French Lieutenant’s Woman* is a writerly text, in that sense, because it demands the participation of the reader in producing meaning.

As it is known, the basis of discussion on the narrative technique in metafictional novels concentrates on the roles of the author, the narrator, and the reader. The narrator is seen as the implied author, and likewise, there is an implied reader and a real reader who takes part in the act of producing meaning. Salami believes that, the implied author and the real author need not be identical. (Salami: 1992, p.14) Literary criticism of the postmodernist period differs from the previous schools of criticism in that traditional criticism does not include this distinction between the real and the implied author. For instance, the reader of *The French Lieutenant’s Woman* can never be sure about the identity of the narrator. The shifts are so blurred that even the author himself takes a minor role and appears as a character in the course of the events. Furthermore, he is mentioned as “he”: “I continue to stare at Charles... The only way I can take no part in the fight is to show two versions of it.” and “The bearded man” who is assumed to be the author himself “has disappeared in the throng” (p. 318) These appearances as “I” and “he” throughout the novel seem to have a special purpose. For Salami, this shift

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<sup>33</sup> Roland Barthes, “The Death of the Author” **Image, Music, Text**. Stephen Heath, Ed and trans., New York, Hill, 1977. p.131.

of point of view makes it possible to see the multiple forms of narrative: “subjective narrative with the use of “I”, objective narrative with the omniscient “he” and indeed the narrative past in which events narrate themselves.” (Salami: 1992, p.18)

History and fiction are blended together in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* in order to reflect the Victorian era in a new perspective. This is not a combination that is completely true to the historical facts of the period in the sense that is accepted by historians. On the other hand it appears that it is impossible to deny the historical facts in it. According to Mahmoud Salami:

The Victorian world of this novel is both fictional and yet historical, and also this world is available to us only through discourse ...it incorporates the intertextual past as part of its constitutive structure...this world is not an ordinary one; it is the world of texts, and the world of discourses within which these texts are situated. (Salami: 1992, p.109)

Intertextuality appears as one of the most important features that makes this novel a distinguished example of metafiction. The reader of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* travels into two worlds, the fictional world of the characters and the real Victorian era, which is reflected by the direct references and intertextuality. Salami regards this state as a challenge, and, also, both “the use and the abuse of not only the history but also the fiction”. (Salami: 1992, p.111) Thus, it is possible to say that history is fictionalised and the fiction is historicized by Fowles in this novel.

Intertextuality is defined by Salami as “the ideological combination of fiction and history, the issue of subjectivity and authority in the novel.” (Salami: 1992, p.111) Hutcheon, on the other hand, asserts that postmodern intertextuality has a desire to close the gap between the past and the present of the reader and a new desire to rewrite the past in a new context.(Hutcheon: 1988, p.118) The epigraphs at the beginning of each chapter not only serve to present the characteristics of the era but also function as foreshadowing elements. The quotations from Darwin, Marx, Leslie Stephen, E. Royston Pike, Matthew Arnold and from various reports such as the Children's Employment Commission Report and Report from the Mining District help the reader to understand the period, by creating the historical atmosphere of the work. The extracts from Darwin for example, have an important place in the novel. Charles Smithson symbolizes the amateur scientists of the era who argue for Darwin's theory without understanding it. The epigraph from Darwin's *The Origin of Species* (1859) at the beginning of the Chapter 19 draws attention to the struggle for existence, which constitutes one of the most important themes of the novel:

A many more individuals of each species are born than can possibly survive; and as, consequently, there is a frequently recurring struggle for existence, it follows that any being, if it vary however slightly in any manner profitable to itself, under the complex and sometimes varying conditions of life, will have a better chance of surviving, and thus be *naturally selected*. (p. 120)

The social metamorphosis in the society and the world is reflected through a quotation from the *Communist Manifesto* (1848) by Marx at the beginning of the Chapter 37:

The bourgeoisie... compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilisation into their midst, that is, to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image. (p.222)

The first end that the narrator plans for Charles is foreshadowed by this quotation. Charles accepts the way of life that Mr. Freeman offers him and has to adapt himself to his new position in order to “survive” in a sense. The dialogues between Mr. Freeman and Charles directly reflect what Marx means in the quotation above. Likewise, the condition of the working class in this wind of change is reflected through the quotations from Marx in which he explains what he means by “the alienating of labour”:

In what does the alienation of labor consist? First, that the work is external to the worker, that this is not a part of his nature, that consequently he does not fulfil himself in his work but denies himself, has a feeling of misery, not of well-being... The worker therefore feels himself at home only during his leisure, whereas at work he feels homeless. (p. 72)

As the quotation above reflects the alienation of a worker from his work, the epigraph below reflects the condition of women in the 19<sup>th</sup> century England. Thus, we understand that Sarah’ fate is shared by many of her contemporaries. It is clarified with this quotation from E. Royston Pike’s *Human Documents of the Victorian Golden Age*:

In that year (1851) there were some 8,155,000 females of the age ten upwards in British population, as compared with 7,600,000 males. Already it will be clear that if the accepted destiny of the Victorian girl was to become a wife and mother, it was unlikely that there would be enough men to go round. (p. 11)

On the other hand, the quotations in verse from Hardy, Tennyson, A.H. Clough, and Matthew Arnold seem to function as foreshadowing elements and they convey the mood of the novel. For example the epigraph of the first chapter taken from Hardy’s poem “The Riddle”, foreshadows the mystery of Sarah:

Stretching eyes west  
Over the sea,  
Wind foul or fair,  
Always stood she  
Prospect –impressed;  
Solely out there  
Did her gaze rest,  
Never elsewhere  
Seemed charm to be. (p. 9)

In a sense, the character of Sarah is based on this figure and the whole novel is an effort to create and solve the mystery of this figure. Presenting Sarah as a character from myth in the middle of a nineteenth century setting is also a metafictional device. As it is known, the writers of metafiction present ordinary events together with



fantastic and dreamlike elements as well as with materials derived from myth and fairy tales. Another epigraph, at the beginning of chapter 47, taken from “The Scholar Gypsy” by Matthew Arnold, foreshadows that Sarah will disappear right after their love-making with Charles and keep her distance:

Averse, as Dido<sup>34</sup> did with gesture stern  
From her false friend’s approach in Hades  
Wave us away, and keep thy  
turn,  
solitude. (p. 275)

However, as opposed to the story of Dido and Aeneas, the abandoned side of the relationship is the man in *The French Lieutenant’s Woman*. Sarah, like Aeneas, sails away for regeneration and freedom. The last epigraph of the novel from Matthew Arnold (*Notebooks*- 1868) summarizes what Sarah stands for in the novel: “True piety is acting what one knows.” (p.361)

Apart from the epigraphs, Fowles also makes use of footnotes in an ironic tone in order to inform the reader about certain issues that are peculiar to the age. The footnotes that are most frequently referred to by the critics appear in chapter 35. The narrator informs the reader about the methods of birth-control in the nineteenth century:

The first sheaths (of sausage skin) were on sale in the late eighteenth century. Malthus, of all people, condemned birth-control techniques as “improper”, but agitation for their use began in the 1820s. The first approach to a modern “sex manual” was Dr. George Drysdale’s somewhat obliquely entitled *The Elements of Social Science: or Physical, Sexual, and Natural Religion*. (p. 212)

In this chapter, the Victorian view of sexuality is foregrounded and we see how the author interferes to make comments on the difference between Victorian and modern approach to sexuality.

Though the references and the epigraphs in *The French Lieutenant’s Woman* appear as historical elements of the novel, Salami thinks that Fowles signifies their illusory nature because the historical Victorian in the novel is available to the reader only through texts, discourse. (Salami: 1992, pp.109-110) It seems that Fowles uses intertextuality in accordance with his purpose while recontextualizing the Victorian era. The author presents these texts in order to offer his reader a chance to compare and contrast two different centuries, the nineteenth century and the twentieth century. Fowles situates his novel both within the world of fiction and history, or as Michel Foucault puts into words “within the archive” because the archives are the “textualized record[s] of history”<sup>35</sup> This argument considers history as simply narrative.

The terms parody and pastiche are also referred to while defining the technical characteristics of *The French Lieutenant’s Woman*. Parody is described as a literary term that imitates a specific literary work or the style of an author, usually to ridicule or criticize that work, author or style. (Murfin: 1997, p.268) According to Hutcheon,

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<sup>34</sup> According to the story, Dido (the queen of Carthage) and Aeneas (the Trojan warrior) fall in love at first sight. Although Dido pleads him to not to go, Aeneas abandons her to continue his destined journey to Italy; she curses Aeneas and his descendants and kills herself with the sword of Aeneas. While sailing away, Aeneas sees the flames of fire in which Dido threw herself.

<sup>35</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith, London, Tavistock, 1972. pp. 126-131.

“parody is the result of a conflict between realistic and aesthetic motivation which has become weak and obvious.”<sup>36</sup> She argues that *The French Lieutenant’s Woman* is parodic in its intertextual relation to the traditions and conventions of both history and fiction. Parody is a perfect postmodernist form, she adds, for it paradoxically both incorporates and challenges that form it parodies. To her, subject matters that were taken seriously and presented with detailed motivation can become victim to irony and parody in time. Obviously the Victorian convention – its peculiar traditional plot structure, the element of suspense, characterization etc.- are employed by Fowles in terms of parody. For instance the narrator turns the Victorian tradition of the omnipotent godlike narrator upside down, thus he reveals the shortcomings of Victorian novelistic tradition by using it in a subversive form. According to Malcolm Bradbury, Fowles attempts to make the Victorian novel a “pre-text” for a late modern fiction. (Bradbury: 1993, p.360) To Bradbury *The French Lieutenant’s Woman* both reconstructs and deconstructs the Victorian novel with its idea of character and society, historical progress and evolution, chronological narrative and God-like story-telling, and this novel pastiches elements from various novelists of the period such as Dickens, Trollope, George Eliot and Thomas Hardy. Pastiche, on the other hand, is used as a kind of imitation in non-subversive form that depends on borrowing from other works. Fowles quotes from nineteenth century writers and thinkers in order to establish the mood of his work and all of the quotations are carefully chosen in order to reflect the social and the ideological state of Britain in the Victorian era.

The problem of the relationship between the real and the imaginary appears to be one of the main themes of the work. Fowles theorizes his approach in chapter 13. “I have disgracefully broken the illusion? No...Fiction is woven into all...” (p.82) The boundary of the real and the imaginary is discussed by the writer within the narrative. Fowles also questions the concept of past in relation to his idea of reality. To him:

You do not even think of your own past as quite real; you dress it up, you gild it or blacken it, censor it, tinker with it... fictionalize it, in a word, and put it away on a shelf – your book, your romanced autobiography. ( p.82)

Likewise, Fowles chooses a period in the past, dresses it up, fictionalizes it and he writes the history of that particular period in his own way. The Victorian Period is not the real Victorian Period of the history but his re-written version of it.

Linda Hutcheon, in her article “The Real World(s) of Fiction: *The French Lieutenant’s Woman*” argues that the critics of metafiction do not simply imply “fiction for fiction’s sake” and exclude the previous traditional mimetic orientation of the novel genre. To her, “metafiction” is not new and not anti-mimetic at all. It still imitates, though on a different level. She regards *The French Lieutenant’s Woman* as an example in which the main subject matter is the making of fiction and this process is discussed as a part of the plot. Moreover, Fowles adds a third dimension through demanding the participation of the reader. Hutcheon regards this novel as a kind of “summation of metafictional techniques with its use of allegory, parody, self mirroring structures and overt commentary”. She explains the novel as having worlds within worlds. To her the worlds in *The French Lieutenant’s Woman* are as follows:

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<sup>36</sup> Linda Hutcheon, “The Real World(s) of Fiction: *The French Lieutenant’s Woman*”, **Critical Essays on John Fowles**, Ellen Pifer, Ed., , Boston, G.K. Hall&Co., 1986, p. 102.



The central or more traditional novel world is that of the characters themselves. Outside and including this world is one in which exists the man in the train, the impresario – in other words, the narrator’s various *personae* who enter that central world at times. Outside is the world of the narrator’s voice. But beyond this stands John Fowles – the man who masterminds. (Hutcheon: 1986, p.119)

This layered arrangement of the novel is referred to as the Chinese-box structure, which is a metafictional device successfully employed by Fowles.

The narrator tries to create links between fiction and reality; and past and present through referring to everyday reality as a construct similar to that of fiction, and alluding to the present while recounting the past. For example, he states that Ernestina died on the same day that Hitler invaded Poland, and Mary’s great-great grand daughter resembles Mary very much and she is a famous actress in the 1960s, the time when the novel is written. Therefore, he mixes up the historical and the fictional features. Likewise when he writes:

So perhaps I am writing a transposed autobiography; perhaps I now live in one of the houses I have brought into the fiction; perhaps Charles is myself disguised. Perhaps it is only a game. (p. 80)

the same effect is achieved. To Onega, here the narrator refers to an “implied author” not to Fowles himself. (Onega: 1989, p.77) She argues that the narrator refuses to be identified with this implied author. On another occasion, when Fowles chooses the house of Dante Gabriel Rossetti for Sarah to live in after leaving Charles, the author again combines history and fiction through blurring the boundaries of each genre. Fowles presents different discourses in portraying his characters. Each of the characters has a private manner of speech that represents his/her social class, gender, educational background. For example, Sarah, Charles and Sam do not speak with the same words. In other words they all have their own discourses or “alphabets” as Fowles names it. Sometimes his characters may even adopt more than one vocabulary:

but she was still looking up at him then; and his words tailed off into silence. Charles as you will have noticed, had more than one vocabulary. With Sam in the morning, with Ernestina across a gay lunch, and here in the role of Alarmed Propriety.. (p. 118)

This is a subject that Fowles especially focuses on in *A Maggot*, as will be discussed in the related part.

Sarah is a character who has the capability to challenge the existing norms and values of the society, therefore she makes history. On the other hand, the characters like Mrs. Poulteney and Ernestina are shaped by history because they are subject to history. Sarah has the power to influence the people around her, either by disturbing or by reminding them of something that they forgot. She regenerates Charles by reminding him of love and helping him to understand the real face of society with its restricting conventions. In a sense, she leads him in her exile, to suffer to become an individual. At the end of the novel we sense that Sarah, even unconsciously, indeed enjoys the difference. Self-isolation is her victory as well, because she achieves freedom and becomes an individual through this loneliness. Sarah, with her understanding and practice of freedom, is beyond the Victorian period. She seems to

belong to the twentieth century with this sense of freedom and this is why she forms a protective barrier around herself made up of shame:

What has kept me alive is my shame, my knowing that I am truly not like other women ... Sometimes I almost pity them. I think I have a freedom they cannot understand. No insult, no blame can touch me. I have set myself beyond the pale. (p. 142)

Thus, people cannot hurt her any more: as she says, she has nothing left to lose. While being punished by the society, she also punishes it by not leaving Lyme but standing like a symbol of sin and rebellion. She confesses that she wrote her own role in the society and she is what she wants to be. She is perfectly aware of the privilege that her position brings her. According to Michael Thorpe, if there is a seducer in the novel, it is she, not Charles: “the ‘poor girl’ here leads ‘the gentleman’ astray” (Thorpe: 1982, p.27)

She deliberately wants to be “the other”. Therefore Fowles’s choice of Rossetti’s house in which to settle her seems to be the most suitable place in that her approach to life is like that of an artist, a bohemian life away from the restrictions of the society. Fowles, in an interview with James Campbell, states that “the Pre-Raphaelite movement was one of the key movements in working out the awful strait-jacketed, puritanical aspect of the Victorian age...Rossetti’s a very good symbol of a breakthrough.”<sup>37</sup>

In the works of John Fowles the theme of “the divided self” is one of the central concerns. In this novel, both Sarah and Charles are depicted as having split characters. Charles is in between his desires as a man and expected social manner. When he solves this dilemma he becomes an outcast in the society, like the woman he loves. Sarah, on the other hand, appears to be both the innocent victim because of being different, and the wild, free woman who rejects any kind of male domination. Pamela Cooper, a feminist critic who analyzes the power relations in Fowles’s work, makes a further comment on the character of Sarah and other female characters in his novels. She argues that although the female characters of John Fowles both in *The French Lieutenant’s Woman* and *A Maggot* seem to be the early feminists with their rejection of the norms of the society, they “end up being rendered passive, manipulated by both the narrative and its narrator, their creative potential contained by its relegation to the ‘feminine’ instinctual realm, their voice muted.”<sup>38</sup> For example, Sarah becomes a model for a famous artist, not the producer of art but the medium of the production in symbolic terms. Therefore they are the providers of the material for art – “objet d’art”. (Cooper: 1991, p.12) Likewise in *A Maggot* Rebecca Hocknell helps the lord to understand the deeper reality, but she is not the one who understands. This interpretation is just the other side of the coin, because although Fowles does not aim to reflect real life as it is, apparently, he considers the traditional characteristics of the era in which he chose to place his story. In that sense, both Sarah and Rebecca suffer because they do not belong to the periods they live in. Yet, they are the pioneers of a transformation, a new mentality and a new era.

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<sup>37</sup> Vipond, Dianne L. Ed., **Conversations with John Fowles**, USA, University of Press of Mississippi, 1999, p. 41.

<sup>38</sup> Pamela Cooper, **The Fictions of John Fowles: Power, Creativity, Femininity**, Ottawa & Paris, University of Ottawa Press, 1991, p. viii. (Foreword by Linda Hutcheon)

Charles is obsessed by the enigma of Sarah, and wants to possess her. Yet, he is instead possessed by her, which leads him to experience contradictory feelings. What he goes through is in fact his awakening to gain his individual freedom, though he is not aware of it. He experiences contradictions in his own nature in the search for his authentic identity. Therefore, he has to refuse the security of the bourgeois world that Ernestina offers him in favour of Sarah, who represents a threat for society. Bradbury describes Charles's position as one of the era's key fables: "the male hero faced with the choice between the fair and the dark lady, between the sentiment and sensuality, social affirmation and danger." (Bradbury: 1993, p.358) Ronald Binns regards Sarah's "half-deliberate, half-unconscious" seduction of Charles as a form of revenge on the repressive Victorian ethic that oppresses them both. (Binns: 1986, p.35) They suffer in order to reach their existential freedom and find themselves, in other words, emancipated from their roles in society that enslaves them. Sarah plays the role of the teacher in this process. According to Hutcheon, the teaching of this lesson is one of Sarah's moral functions in the novel. She attains self-actualization before him and chooses freedom and individuality over the bondage of marriage. (Hutcheon: 1992, p.123) Sarah tries to explain her reasons:

The rival you both share is myself. I do not wish to marry. I do not wish to marry because... first, because of my past which habituated me to loneliness...I do not want to share my life. I wish to be what I am, not a husband, however kind, however indulgent, must expect me to become in marriage. (pp. 352-353)

She, in a way, plans the whole novel because her fictional identity is created before Charles. Salami thinks that "Sarah embodies the theme of freedom in every respect. She represents the entire age of emancipation for women". (Salami: 1992, p.28) As it is stated in the epigraph from Marx in the title page of the novel: "Every emancipation is a restoration of the human world and of human relationships to man himself." (p. 3)

Fowles, as opposed to the writers of the Modernist Period such as James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, who try to depict the innermost ideas and feelings of their character's consciousness without formal remarks and keep themselves outside the story to preserve impersonality and objectivity, directly interferes in his novel and wants his reader to remember that what he created is only a fiction. His narrators in both *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and *A Maggot* appear to know only the outer reality, but not what goes on in the minds of the characters except for Charles, whose inner-most thoughts and feelings are given. Since he aims to liberate his characters, he tries to give them freedom as much as he can and behaves as if the characters were outside of his control. He is against the omniscient, God-like narrator of the traditional novel, because due to the changes in attitude towards life and God in the twentieth century, omnipotence turned into a doubtful position. Since the reader has lost his belief in such a creator, the narrators of the novels reflect their loss of belief as well. Instead of being a creator who is all-knowing, the narrator became just an observer of life. He recounts only what he perceives through his senses. However those might not be true, because what is true for one person might not be true for another. Thus, the plurality and subjectivity of truth comes to the fore in the postmodernist novel.

Fowles applies these postmodernist approaches to history by choosing his frame settings from the past in his novels. The question of whether the past can be truly reflected or not becomes the main concern of the writers who deal in history. The answer is obviously no. Since the reader can only know the past through reading about it and it is impossible to experience it, the texts about the past become the only sources of the writers of both history and literature. The writers reconstruct the past according to their own perspectives, as Fowles does in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, and it is hard to distinguish what is really lived and what is the product of his imagination. Historiography in postmodernist literature appears to be a subtle blending of real events and imagination. Hence, the literary and the historical are mixed in order to evade the questions of truth and falsity.

*The French Lieutenant's Woman* has become a highly celebrated novel since it was published in 1969. It is praised by outstanding critics of literature such as Malcolm Bradbury as one of the most interesting and attractive books written in the second half of the twentieth century. Bradbury praised the book as "the most significant work of 1969." To him, Fowles shows his acknowledgement of some "epochal change" in the representation of life, the angle of vision, and the notion of Britain and culture through *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. (Bradbury: 1993, p. 4-5)

The film adaptation of the novel gathered as much attention as the book. Karel Reiz directed the film with Harold Pinter as scriptwriter. They turned a novel about writing a novel into a movie about making a movie. According to Charles Garard, the layers of meanings in John Fowles's work provide challenge in translating the novel into cinematic terms.<sup>39</sup> In this film version, the story of Victorian Sarah and Charles is interrupted by the parallel story of Ann and Mike (Meryl Streep & Jeremy Irons), who are the actress and actor playing Sarah and Charles. They are having an adulterous affair off the film set. They are so influenced by the parts they play in the film-within-the-film that the border between their lives and the characters they act out become blurred from time to time. Though Mike wants Ann to leave her husband, Anna leaves Mike and drives off at the end. The events happen in the set, and while she is leaving Mike shouts Ann's screen name "Sarah". So the two stories are mixed in order to reflect the ambiguity in the novel. The film version of the work supports the idea that what we see is not the objective reality but our limited perception of it based on our perspective.

### *A MAGGOT*

*A Maggot*, which is considered to be a continuation of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* in technical terms, was written by Fowles in 1986. Fowles once more chooses a historical period in which to set his plot. It is written in the form of an eighteenth - century detective novel that presents the characteristics of historiographic metafiction with its self-reflexivity, self-consciousness, dialogical narrative, author's intrusion to make comments on what is going on, and the use of

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<sup>39</sup> Charles Garard, **Point of View in Fiction and Film**, London & New York, Peter Lang Publishing, 1991, p. 1.

real documents. Where *A Maggot* differs from *The French Lieutenant's Woman* is in that the reconstruction of the period, that is the eighteenth century, is mostly dependant on the documents from the Historical Chronicle of *The Gentleman's Magazine* dated 1736, interrogations and each speaker's subjectivity, whereas the latter, as has been mentioned before, goes back and reshapes the past through the arrangement of many texts, which are deployed as epigraphs at the beginning of each chapter.

Fowles creates a fantasy about, a religious sect, the Shakers through reconstituting history by subverting it.

The author defines the word "maggot" in the first sentence of the preface as: "the larval stage of a winged creature"<sup>40</sup> which he compares to "the written text". He adds the word's second and more archaic meaning afterwards: "a whim or quirk", which means a sudden desire or idea that will soon pass. Fowles states that he wrote this fiction out of an obsession with a theme; the image of "a small group of travellers, faceless, without any apparent motive" (p.1). This has a parallel in that he wrote *The French Lieutenant's Woman* out of an image of a woman standing at the end of a deserted quay. Fowles has created a fantasy about the Christian sect known as "the Shakers", that is completely different from their real history, out of this whim or quirk. Thus, as mentioned earlier in the chapter entitled *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, he directed the attention of the writers, historians and critics to the process and techniques of writing both history and fiction. The modern narrator of *A Maggot*, who belongs to the twentieth century, reconstructs history by using facsimile documents from the "Historical Chronicle" of *The Gentleman's Magazine* of 1736. He subverts the historical reality presented in these texts through fictionalizing them, and warns the reader at the end of the prologue: "what follows may seem like a historical novel: but it is not. It is a maggot" (p.1) which is the beginning stage of something new, in process.

*A Maggot* begins with a traditional third-person narrative describing five characters all on horseback in the West Country of England in April, in 1736. They are making their way along the northern part of the county of Devon. The narrator describes the members of the group one by one: a man in his late twenties, in a dark bistre greatcoat, boots and a tricorne hat leads the group; an older man in a dark grey greatcoat on a smaller horse comes behind him. They are followed by two people, a bareheaded man in a long sleeved blouse, heavy drugged jerkin and leather breeches, and a young woman enveloped in a brown hooded cloak. The last figure appears "dramatically" from where the way enters the trees. He adds colour to the group with his faded scarlet riding-coat and big hat. They travel in silence: "No friendly word seems spoken." (p. 5) This description alludes to many literary works such as Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* (1386) and T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* which alludes to the former as well. The members of the group seem to belong to the various classes of society and the journey takes place in April, like the pilgrims riding towards the shrine of Thomas Beckett under the "soot showers" of an April in *The Canterbury Tales*. However the description is more like *The Waste Land*:

There lies about them, in the bleak landscape, too high to have yet felt the obvious effects of spring, in the uniform grey of the overcast sky, an aura of dismal monotony, an

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<sup>40</sup> John Fowles *A Maggot*, London and New York, Penguin Books, 1985. p.1. (All passages refer to this edition.)



accepted tedium of both journey and season...The day is quite windless, held in a dull suspension. (p.3)

The narrative style with which the group's appearances and movements are depicted suggests that the narrator is contemporaneous with the modern reader as the text has several references to twentieth century life. Besides the description of the characters, the narrator also talks about the social and economic structure of British society in the eighteenth century in the past tense: "In those days a single animal dominated the agricultural economy of the West England: the sheep – and the needs of its pasturing." (p. 9) On another occasion he writes about the wool trade in Devon:

Indeed it was only just becoming anything but a distinctly prosperous time for this county of Devon. Its ports, its ships, its towns and villages lived, and largely thrived, as they had for the last half-millennium, on one great staple: wool... still at this time half of Europe, even colonial America and imperial Russia, bought and made clothes from the Devonshire dozen, its famous length of serge and perpetuana. (p. 12)

The subject of narration returns to the characters after this interval. The group arrives at the small town of C----. The exact name of the town, like that of the protagonist who will disappear at the end of the novel, is not given. The narrator intervenes to make comments not only on the period but also on the historical process before this period in this first scene:

A twentieth-century mind, could it have journeyed back and taken on the sensibilities and eyes of those two better – class travellers riding that day into the town... This particular last day of April falls in a year very nearly equidistant from 1689, the culmination of the English Revolution, and 1789, the start of the French...at a time of reaction from the intemperate extremisms of the previous century, yet already hatching the seeds of the world-changing upheaval to come. (p.11-12)

The modern narrator reveals himself in sentences like: "there were higher real wages than for centuries past- and very nearly two centuries to come." (p. 12) Fowles makes use of appropriate language and linguistic structures when he has his characters speak. The first sentence comes from a villager who wants to sell something to the travellers: "Buy'un, maister? Penny a'oop, penny a'oop!" (p.13) as is seen in the quotation Fowles modifies the language structure according to the characters that speak.

The group stay at an inn, where half of the events takes place. They introduce themselves as Mr. Brown and his nephew, a deaf-mute servant named Dick, a maid called Louise and a servant named Sergeant Farthing. They tell the staff at the Black Hart Inn that the aim of their journey, which began in London and has brought them to Devon, is an elopement. The nephew will meet his beloved secretly because his father does not want them to marry. However, when conversations among the members of the group start, it becomes apparent that their relationships are not as they seem to be. The uncle, whom the young man calls Mr. Lacy, not Mr. Brown, is subordinate to the nephew and addresses him as "sir". The reader learns in the following pages that they are all in disguise: Mr. Bartholomew-or Mr. B (a duke's son) is playing the role of nephew to Mr. Brown, who is actually an actor from

London named Francis Lacy and hired by Mr. B. for this role; the servant Sergeant Farthing (another minor actor from Wales named David Jones) is playing the role of bodyguard to protect them from thieves along this journey; and the woman, Louise-Fanny or Rebecca Lee (a Quaker girl) has been hired from a London brothel for private reasons. She not only serves Mr. Bartholomew but also has a kind of secret relationship with Dick, Mr. B's deaf-mute servant, who is assumed to be the spiritual twin brother or a kind of alter ego to Mr. B. The reader can never be sure of the real identities of the characters not because they are not sure themselves, but because the author infers that they are "actors" hired by the author-narrator and the only person who is aware of this is Mr. B.. He tries to tell what he thinks about being characters or actors in a novel or play, but Lacy remains inadequate to understand him:

he likened mankind to an audience in a playhouse, who knew not of actors, and had no notion that they acted to fixed and written lines, and even less that behind the actors lay an audience and a manager. (p.143)

Lacy interprets this "author" as God, the Creator, but what the lord means is quite clear: "he said it would be juster to say we were like the personages in a tale or novel." (p.143)

The aim of the journey, like the identities of the characters, is clear neither at the beginning nor at the end of the novel. Lacy tries to learn the actual purpose of their journey from Mr. B. during the night that they spend in the Black Hart Inn. However, he learns that his and Jones's mission will come to an end the following morning. Mr. B. makes up, or in a sense writes, various scenarios about their purpose and recounts them to Lacy. This causes him to be more confused:

I go to meet one I desire to know, and respect, as much as I would a bride – or my Muse indeed... Perhaps I am one of those seditious northern Jacks?... I go to plot with some emissary of James Stuart... I am here to creep in the woods and meet some disciple of the Witch of Endor. To exchange my eternal soul against the secrets of the other world. (p. 37)

After these half-serious, half-teasing suppositions he states that he will bring no harm to his country or to any one else; and neither the bodies nor the souls of those that attend to him are subject to danger, with the proviso that any risk would only be in that attendant's own mind but that would be his own business. Besides the story of the elopement and these speculations, Mr. B. thinks up other "explanations" to be given to inquisitive people around them during the journey. For example, Mr. Brown (Lacy) tells the curate of the parish, Sampson Beckford, that Mr. B. is travelling to his wealthy aunt in Bidesford to save his inheritance, or, in another version, that he is suffering from impotence and trying to find a kind of water to cure his ailment. All of the reasons appear to be credible for the eighteenth century in that no one suspects a young aristocrat, be he on the way of an elopement, trying to save his inheritance, or searching for a cure for an ailment. Mr. B. offers a fourth version, which increases the mystery of the novel: that he is searching for a kind of profound knowledge like that of Dr. Faustus. This is one of the allusions in the novel that prevails all through the narrative. Susana Onega interprets Mr. B.'s Journey as a psychological one by referring to Jung's scheme of the quaternary: "father = the Unnameable Lord, the son = Mr. B., the devil = Dick and the spirit = Rebecca Lee."(Onega: 1989, pp.153-154)

According to Onega, the psychological interpretation of the journey helps to explain why Mr. B. needed Rebecca-Fanny for the journey and also why she has a paradoxical nature, being depicted both as a whore and a virgin. To Onega, she represents the split of the hero's personality, the anima, repressed by Mr. B. (which can be referred to as the conscious side of the ego) and lusted by Dick (the unconscious side).

The relationship among these three characters is open to further comment. For example, the narrator describes the silent communication between Mr. B and Dick as "husband and wife, or siblings" and they share "a kind of exchange of secret feeling". (p. 40) Mr. B.'s attitude towards Rebecca is paradoxical again, alternately brutal and kind. The three of them share a sexual relationship in which Dick and Rebecca take an active role and Mr. B. that of the watcher. Moreover, an implication of a homosexual relationship can be deduced from the interviews in which the roles are different; Dick is the master and Mr. B. is the servant. Since Mr. B. comes from an aristocratic family, Henry Ayscough, the lawyer who is trying to find Mr. B. after his disappearance in the cave in Stonehenge, can not ask questions about this relationship openly, but he most surely implies it: "What is most unnatural, and a great crime, while servant may become master, and master, servant."(p. 344) Yet, another hypothesis about this relationship is that Dick is the spiritual half of Mr. B. that comes to the fore with Rebecca's statements: "I told thee, there was such closeness between them they needed no words, they were as one person, tho' two in body." (p. 311) Though they are not biological twins, they were born on the same date and suckled by the same nurse. According to James R. Aubrey, Dick's death signals the liberation of his spiritual twin. (Aubrey: 1991, p.133) Rebecca explains their relationship and Dick's death in her own language which is full of religious symbolism:

I spake this yesterday of his Lordship and his man, how in much they seemed as one... Dick of the carnal and imperfect body, his Lordship of the spirit; such twin natures as we all must hold, in them made outward and a seeming two. (p. 417)

According to her explanation, since the spiritual half decided to leave this world and live in June Eternal (the name of the utopic world Rebecca describes), the carnal body must die, which means the separated halves are united to live in this utopic heaven. Dick, the fallen half, or the flesh, must suffer for the pleasures he has had with Rebecca, and only through this suffering can he be saved. Rebecca chiefly uses Christian imagery during her interview and presents Mr. B. as Christ and Dick as the flesh of the Christ who suffers on the cross. Not only Rebecca presents Mr. B. as Christ, but also the whole novel is full of parallels with Mr. B. and Christ. For example, in the events in the cave, Mr. B. disappears and is searched for exactly as Christ was searched by his disciples. And he is the one who brings "light".

Katherine Tarbox explains the character of Dick Thurlow in relation to vegetation mythology to clarify his ambiguity. Dick is referred to as a faithful dog throughout the novel. To Tarbox this associates him with Attis, the great Phrygian vegetation god whose mother, Cybele, the mother of all gods, loved excessively and in her



jealousy compelled Attis to kill himself alone under a tree, in a forest and, like the violets in Dick's mouth, violets sprang from his blood signifying the life springing from death.<sup>41</sup> Likewise, the character of Rebecca is a combination of various allusions. According to Tarbox, she is "a Pandora figure as she looses onto the world the secrets of Bartholomew's mysterious chest." (Tarbox: 1988, p. 146) She is also like Eve, the Christian counterpart of Pandora. Giving birth to Ann Lee, the mother of the Shakers that believe in the second coming of Christ, she is also reminiscent of Mary Magdalena who cried outside Christ's tomb after His ascension.

The cave in which Mr. B. gets lost symbolizes the tomb and as well as the womb according to Tarbox. (Tarbox: 1988, p. 148) The journey is interpreted by Tarbox as an archetype of diverse meanings. The death of the lord and the rebirth of Rebecca prove this interpretation. As a matter of fact, after the events that took place in the cave in Stonehenge, everything turns out to be good for the members of the group. Aside from Mr. B.'s disappearance and Dick's suicide all the characters continue their lives in better positions; Rebecca is reconciled with her family, marries a man who accepts her in spite of her sinful past, and she is rescued from Madam Claiborne's brothel; Lacy and Jones have higher living standards due to the money they earned from the journey.

The third person modern narrator of the novel stops his narration, after some fifty pages, without having made clear either the characters or the plot of the novel because the narrator's knowledge of the characters seems not to be more than the reader's. The narrator is replaced by various kinds of narration, such as uncommented upon real documents from a newspaper, dialogues in the form of an interrogation, and letters. What the reader learns about the characters and the event that takes place in the cave which results in the disappearance of Mr. B. which has to be in the most part deduced from this part of the narrative. However, the reliability of the above mentioned data is open to question, because each of the witnesses tells what she/he believes to be the truth according to his/her own perspectives. In a sense, the story is narrated by different narrators, from different perspectives, which is very modern, unlike the traditional 18<sup>th</sup> century novel with a single, omniscient narrator. However, these 18<sup>th</sup> century realist texts involve no true participation from the reader other than the consumption of a fixed meaning with their familiar conventions. The extracts from *The Gentleman's Magazine* that constitute a part of the narration are chosen and arranged chronologically and in parallel to the advancement of the investigation that is conveyed through an interrogatory text. The narrator does not interfere or make comments during this process and the deduction of meaning is left to the reader. *A Maggot*, like *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, demands a high level of reader participation because the reader has to produce his own meanings from its fragmentary even contradictory hints. Therefore *A Maggot* is a writerly text as well. Actually, when the novel was a newly born genre, the "reality enhancing mechanisms" were employed by the writers. As Onega mentions in *Form and Meaning in the Novels of John Fowles* "reality enhancing mechanisms" were necessary to the eighteenth century novel to emphasize its difference from romance and other literary forms. Therefore "the writer assumed the role of 'editor' and

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<sup>41</sup> Katherine Tarbox, *The Art of John Fowles*, Georgia, University of Georgia Press, 1988, p. 145.

professed the historical genuineness of the material gathered either directly from the mouth of the protagonist of the events narrated, or transcribed from the latter's "true" letters or memories." like *The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, *Moll Flanders* etc. (Onega: 1989, p.137) In that sense, Fowles not only uses typical characters and the setting from the eighteenth century but also the novelistic conventions in *A Maggot*, like his use of not only Victorian characters and themes but also novelistic techniques in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. The use of prologue and epilogue is also peculiar to the eighteenth century novel. The narrators of prologues and epilogues were expected to be all-knowing according to the tradition; however Fowles himself appears to be the narrator in these parts who makes comments on his novel self-reflexively. He tells how the idea of writing *A Maggot* came to his mind, and how it progressed.

This fictional maggot was written very much for the same reason as those old musical ones of the period in which it is set; out of obsession with a theme. For some years before its writing a small group of travellers, faceless, without apparent motive, went in my mind towards an event. (p. 1)

The narrator of the first part of the narrative in *A Maggot* is more like an observer and a historian who mirrors the events and makes comments on the social and political life of the era without interpreting the events of the novel.

The interrogation section introduces one of the leading characters of the novel, Henry Ayscough, a rationalistic, sceptical, and aggressive lawyer who has a deep trust and respect in the class-structured, conventional, hierarchical system of England. It is obvious that Ayscough believes in inequality and to him, the only way of preserving the status quo is stability. Therefore any idea that proposes change in the existing system must be abolished. To Foster, he represents the seventeenth and the eighteenth century English notions of "elite, tradition bound, classist, and classicist" (Foster: 1994, pp. 151-152) Almost all of the interviewees are from the lower class that Ayscough deeply despises, so he has a difficult task in that he has to search for the truth among these people without giving any harm to the noble family. While trying to find out what happened to Mr. B. or where he is at that moment, Ayscough speaks to an innkeeper, the maid of the inn, a Welshman (which is the lowest of the low for him), two actors, a bagnio owner and a prostitute. These people coming from the lower class are not from the centre of the society, so they are, in a sense, marginalized and pose a threat to society. So Ayscough does not avoid using his rudest bullying tactics to make them speak. The first two witnesses are Thomas Puddicombe, the landlord of the Black Hart Inn, and Dorcas Hellyer, the maid. They know very little of the story because they appear to be just the audience of the play written and directed by Mr. B. They tell Ayscough what they themselves have been told and have observed. However, they are far from the truth because what is told to them is actually made up by Mr. B.. Puddicombe tells the lawyer that Jones (as Farthing) goes out early in the morning and never returns. The information he gives does not help Ayscough to solve the mystery; on the contrary, it increases it, as Ayscough is left to wonder why the bodyguard of the group has left them on the morning of that particular day. Dorcas Hellyer gives more details, especially about Mr. B.'s baggage, which causes curiosity among the staff of the inn. She recounts that the wooden baggage is full of strange papers:

Q: What manner of papers?

A: I could not tell sir. I has no alphabet.

.....

Q: You mean there were numbers written thereon?

A: Yes, sir. Numbers and signs that were no alphabet letters, for I knows their look.

Q: And fell these numbers in lines and columns, us upon a bill or accompt?

A: No, sir. Among figures.

Q: What figures?

A: Us saw one, 'twas a great circle, and another with three sides, and marks like the moon. (pp. 77-78)

Although Dorcas cannot tell what she saw exactly, it can be deduced that these signs on the papers are about the zodiac or alchemy because Mr. B. is interested in science. However, they may also include the map of his secret meeting. Moreover, Dorcas states that she had noticed Louise entering Mr. B.'s room late at night and going back into her own room much later. But she remarks that the meeting had no sexual purpose because the bed was not slept in that night. This is one of the proofs of Mr. B.'s impotence, and leads the reader to wonder why Rebecca had been taken from a London brothel and taken to the cave in this part of the country.

The whole text of interrogation, in which there are only questions marked by Q's and answers marked by A's, is signed by Henry Ayscough. The concepts of truth and falsehood become blurred during the interviews. The truth becomes plural in that there are as many truths as points of view. The truth is always subjective and it is articulated from a particular position, which is one of the main themes of the novel. Each of the witnesses recounts what they see, hear, sense or think, that is, what they believe to be the truth. Even if what they say is not the absolute reality (if there is such a thing), we cannot say that theirs is not the truth. On the other hand, their versions depend on their social, economic, religious, and psychological backgrounds. The language and the imagery that they employ reflect their lives as well. For example Rebecca uses a simple, unsophisticated, direct language which is a characteristic of the sect that she belongs to.

After the first two witnesses from the inn, the lawyer interviews Sampson Beckford, the curate of the parish who visited them before the event. He becomes the first person to sense that Mr. B. is the son of a noble person:

Q. I thank you for attending me, sir. I shall take little of your time.

A. Take all you will, sir. I am at your service.

Q. I thank you, Mr. Beckford. I take it you had never set eyes on Mr. Brown or Mr. Bartholomew before this 30<sup>th</sup> of April last?.....

A. Nor that, sir.....

Q. You have my sympathies, sir.

Ayscough's attitude towards Beckford gives the reader a chance to understand his character, because his language is totally different here from his social inferiors like Jones:

I will tell thee why, thou rogue, and how near the gallows thou art... In which black mystery a strong presumption is that they lie murdered also- and a stronger still, that is by thee.... (p. 146)

The witnesses, who probably know what has happened in the cave and where Mr. B. has gone, are left to be questioned in the end, in order to increase the tension. After the interrogations of Puddicombe, Dorcas, and Sampson Beckford, Ayscough interviews Francis Lacy, who played the role of Mr. Brown and appeared to be the closest person to Mr. B.. Lacy, like the previous interviewees, does not contribute to the solving of the mystery. However, he gives significant clues about the personality and the mysterious aim of Mr. B.. Ayscough is on the side of the reader in learning what happened in the cavern. In a sense, he asks questions on behalf of the reader. In his interrogation, Lacy appears to be honest and forthright. He has a sharp memory due to his actor's training; therefore he remembers all the dialogues exactly and recounts them as though he were playing them back in his mind:

He asked me what I should say, were I suitably rewarded, to playing a part for him alone. I requested to know what kind of part. He replied, one should I give you. (p.122)

Mr. B. shares his theories about mathematics, Stonehenge<sup>42</sup>, and the importance of trying to find one's "life's meridian" with Lacy. He explains this ambiguous concept by referring to ancient Rome, "These ancients knew a secret I should give all I possess to secure. They knew their life's meridian, and I still search mine." (p.142) However, Lacy can not understand Mr. B. and his purpose. He cannot combine Mr. B's theories with what has happened to him in the cavern.

The paradox of the journey is that though Mr. B. insists on secrecy and disguise, he hires two actors and a famous prostitute. Thus, he wants the people around him to be seen in order to hide himself. In that sense, the members of the group are hired to be seen, not to see.

After Lacy, Ayscough interrogates David Jones, whose testimony has no validity because it depends on what Rebecca told him, and she later confesses that she "lied" to Jones, or told him "what he might believe." (p.300) Fowles conveys the subjectivity of reality through these explanations of each witness from their own perspectives. David Jones, as Farthing, presents the characteristics of a braggart soldier or military booster by telling stories of heroism and by his attitude towards Dorcas, the maid, searching for sexual advances. He is hired especially for his talent of speaking too much, yet saying nothing. Jones' speech is in the form of reports because he recounts what Rebecca has told him. Rebecca falls down on her knees when she gets out of the cave, seemingly not injured but in a daze.

In the middle of Jones' interrogation the narrator intervenes to make comments on the period once more. He mentions the social structure of the eighteenth century with its dynamic and static elements. To him the middle class and the churchmen have the chance to change their lives through education, whereas the members of the lower class are destined to be poor and do not even dare to change their fates. (pp. 227-229) The narrator also criticizes the English people's worship of property and says that for an Englishman the right of property is more important than theology: "What the nation agreed must be preserved at all costs was really far less the theology of the established church than the right to, and security of, ownership." (p.228) Fowles

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<sup>42</sup> Stonehenge is the megalithic ruin that stands on the open downland of Salisbury Plain two miles west of the town of Amesbury, Wiltshire, in Southern England. It consists of stone structures that were revised and re-modeled over a period of more than 1400 years. In a sense it symbolizes mystery, unknowability, fascination, and unreachability due to its unknown history.

gives a quotation from Defoe in order to sum up the attitude of the century: “we hang men for trifles and banish them for things not worth naming”. (p.229)

Jones’ story continues after this interval. It is a story of witchcraft that recalls the beginning of Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*. Rebecca tells him that she saw three witches inside the cave and was raped by Satan. Moreover, she witnessed a ceremony of marriage between Mr. B. and the youngest witch. As it is mentioned before in relation to the class problem, Jones is presented as a liar or, in other words, a fiction-maker in order to save himself or earn money. Therefore Ayscough does not believe his report:

Jones is a liar, a man who lives from hand to mouth, by what wit he has... Pride he has not, nor can he afford it. Yet, in many ways (and not only in that millipns will copy him, later in the century, in deserting country and province for the city) he is the future, and Ayscough the past: and both are like most of us, still today, equal victims in the debtors’ prison of History, and equally unable to leave it. (p.231)

To the narrator, we live in the prison of “History” because we are controlled by our past-history. Only the ones who try to change their lives and their fates are excused from this prison. Ayscough is the one who does not want and does not work for change; therefore, he is static, subject to history; whereas, Jones, like Rebecca, seeks for change though he comes from the lowest class of the society whose fate was fixed from the day of birth. This makes him dynamic in history. He and people like him “write” history. It is so natural that the oppressed, marginal part of a society should want to change in order to live under better circumstances, and to be free from restrictions, while those in power struggle against them in order to preserve stability and tradition, in other words, the past.

Thomas C. Foster refers to the progression of witnesses under examination from the least knowledgeable to the most, from the innkeeper Puddicombe, to Rebecca as “artificial”. (Foster: 1994, p. 144) To Foster, this is a strategy used by Fowles in order to remind readers that the novel is all “artifice”.

Rebecca’s interrogation is left to the end as if it will solve the mystery. She is the only survivor that can be found after the event that took place in the cavern. She only adds another dimension to the story that contradicts the previous ones. Through the character of Rebecca the contradictions and the oppositions between the male and the female discourses, between reason and irrationality and between subjectivity and objectivity reach their highest points.

Rebecca, whose name constantly changes through the narrative, was born as Rebecca Hocknell, known in London brothels as “Fanny”, and played the role of “Louise” the maid during the journey and became Rebecca Lee, the wife of a Quaker man, John Lee, at the end, thus proving the unreliability and elusiveness of what we call the “truth”. In a sense, Fowles challenges his reader not only through reminding the slippery nature of the fiction but also the elusiveness and unreliability of the truth. According to Rebecca’s version, they visited Stonehenge twice. She recounts that she saw a bright light and was told to engage in sexual intercourse with Dick while Mr. B. was watching. About their last visit to Stonehenge, she recounts that she saw a big maggot-like machine floating in the air, with a door and lights inside it. She was taken inside the “maggot” by a woman wearing a silver dress. She saw three women of different ages there that later became one in appearance. She was shown various



scenes from a “window”. The writer animates the idea of television without using its name. This extraordinary experience sounds nonsensical for Ayscough, but what she says is not incomprehensible for a twentieth century reader. The word “maggot” that Rebecca uses to depict the thing that she saw refers to a spaceship, which is in turn familiar to the contemporary reader, and the people in silver dresses are either aliens from another planet or time-travellers. Nevertheless Ayscough and Rebecca are lacking in “alphabet” to talk about such an experience. Actually, she talks about telescreens, tanks, bombers, electronic control panels, spaceships, though she does not know how to name them: “’Tis in my telling I deceive thee. In naught else. I tell thee what I saw, tho’ how I saw it I know not.” (p. 367) As Foster puts into words “something completely outside one’s experience cannot be comprehended” (Foster: 1994, p. 162) She describes the world that she saw from the “window” as a utopic world which appears to be socialist as well as pastoral:

Fine large buildings where it seemed all did live in common, without distinction nor difference. The most lay without fences or walls and scattered among the green, not crowded close nor smoking foul. All fair, each like to a great farmhouse in its field. All green, as high summer. And the sun shone on all, like to June eternal. (p.369)

Rebecca claims that Mr. B. had decided to live in this heavenly world named “June Eternal” by Rebecca. Ayscough, as he did not believe Jones, does not believe her story and considers it incredible. When he asks Rebecca whether she knows what has happened to the lord or not, she asserts that the cave was empty when she awoke, but possibly, Mr. B. had gone to “June Eternal” having left his fallen half, Dick, behind. Tarbox remarks that what Rebecca saw was inside was “the desire for a better, fairer, more civilized society than the one she lived in.”(Tarbox: 1988, p. 152)

During the interview she sees a vision of Mr. B. in the room, which leads to the narrator’s interference in order to make explanations about the difference of their perceptions. He states that they are unlike each other not only in age, sex, class, education, native province and the rest, but also

by belonging to two very different halves of the human spirit, perhaps at root those, left and right; of the two hemispheres of the brain. In themselves these are neither good nor evil. Those whom the left lobe (and the right hand) dominates are rational, mathematical, ordered, glib with words, usually careful and conventional. . . those dominated by the right globe as far less desirable, except in one or two very peripheral things like art and religion, where mysticism and lack of logic are given value. (pp. 425-426)

To the narrator Rebecca is poor at reason and easily confused during the discussions because of being dominated by the right hemisphere of her brain, whereas Ayscough is the voice of reason and order, the opposite side. This is why they speak for opposite poles though they both live in 1736.

Rebecca Lee, like Jones, is a class-conscious character. She embodies all the qualities that Ayscough despises: a female from a working class background, a Dissenter from the Quaker sect and a prostitute. Moreover she is brave enough to contradict Ayscough openly. Although she is repentant, he still behaves towards her as prostitute during the interview, but Rebecca shows no sign of fear or panic. According to Salami she

epitomizes the female figure who deploys her various tropes in order to make her language and her text stand as the basis for determining her subjectivity. Indeed, it is her own language, her own alphabet that make her different, peripheral, “ex-centric”, an eccentric female (p. 246)

against male discourses that symbolize the attitude of a society like Ayscough’s. Rebecca tells Ayscough that she is five months pregnant and the father of her child is Dick. She prophesizes that *she* (Rebecca mentions her baby as “she”) will be more than herself, “I am but brought to bring her” (p. 417) and she will be the sign of “more light and more love” (p. 416) Ayscough, ironically, proclaims that she shall preach and prophesy when she is grown while teasing Rebecca: “May God forgive me for uttering the very thought, dost thee not in secret believe there is now carried in thy womb such a woman Christ?” (p.416) Later in the epilogue, the narrator states that Rebecca’s baby, born in 1736, is Ann Lee, the mother of a religious sect, the Shakers, that believe in Christ’s second coming in a female body. The name of the real founder of The Shakers is Ann Lee, but, as Fowles also states, she was born before the fictitious character Ann Lee, therefore Dick Thurlow and Rebecca Lee cannot be her real father and mother. In the Epilogue Fowles emphasizes that he does not know Ann Lee’s real date of birth, and who she indeed was. Fowles adds this character only to historicize his fiction. For that reason Fowles calls his work not a historical novel but a “maggot”, or what is called historiographic metafiction by the critics.

The factual Ann Lee was the daughter of a blacksmith named John and her mother is unknown. She joined the society of The Shakers, following her parents. She managed to be an influential person in the society with her energy and her innovative ideas. Ann Lee and her followers immigrated to America in 1774 and she established the real Shakers and the thought of the practice of it there. (Salami: 1992, p. 232) According to Salami, the Shakers believe in the duality of God and in Christ’s second appearing as a baby girl. They believe that God has two faces, one is male – The Father, and the other is female – The Holy Mother Wisdom, and these manifest themselves on earth through Jesus Christ, the son and Ann Lee, the daughter. That sounds fairly equal and even feminist, because women are given a supreme position in Shaker societies. However, the women who believe in the Shakers, refuse their femininity and any kind of sexual relationship in order to keep their purity. In the Shaker villages, the inhabitants share all the goods equally and all work for the common good, as Rebecca saw in the world of June Eternal. This equality and sharing of possessions recalls “a model of true communism” (Tarbox: 1988, p. 159) Therefore Rebecca describes a Shaker world in the June Eternal in which all boundaries of race, gender, social and economic background and language are destroyed and all the human beings are the world’s people. There are “no poor, no beggars, no cripples, no sick, not one who starved. Nor...more rich and magnificent.” (p.370) All wear the same dress of the same colour, and all live in similar houses in green gardens. Rebecca appears to be an early feminist and socialist against a male-and-money-dominated world.

To Rebecca, the two men she saw at Stonehenge were God the Father and God the Son and the three women were a female trinity of the “Holy Mother Wisdom”, Christ’s widow and Christ’s daughter. Rebecca is, in a sense, baptized in order to wash away her previous life’s sins and gain her new identity through this experience.

Ayscough's attitude towards Rebecca changes for the better by the end of the interrogation though he states that she will be hanged yet, and even her baby will not be able to save her.

The importance of discourse comes to the fore during these interrogations. Each of the witnesses and Ayscough have their own "alphabets" or languages that are peculiar to the social and economic backgrounds that they come from. Being a lawyer in close relationships with the aristocracy, Ayscough speaks the language of the middle-class and reason that dominated the era. He uses an elevated language full of Latin words. What he wants to hear is just what his mind can accept. Therefore, he experiences difficulty not only in expressing himself but also in understanding the others. Rebecca is aware of this difference though she is illiterate: "Thee has thy alphabet, and I mine, that is all. And I must speak mine." (p.313) She refuses to be dominated by Ayscough's discourse and defends her own. She explains to him that his language prevents him from accepting a truth that transcends "truth incontestable", which is the truth of religious revelation. Rebecca openly reveals that she suffers from the dominance of male discourse: "Q: Is it not divinely appointed it is sin to rebel against the authority of man? A: 'Tis reported so, by men." (p.424) Rebecca's misfortune is that her language is unfamiliar to the Age of Reason into which she was born. Her language is more like the Romantics that would appear a century later with their emphasis on individual feelings and free will.

They stare at each other. "A prophecy. Thou'lt be hanged yet. Still Rebecca stares at him.

"Thee's need also, master Ayscough. I give thee more love."(p. 434)

The narrator's comment on the period also indicates the conflict between her understanding of life and the values of the eighteenth century:

Her time has little power of seeing people other than they are in outward... such a world would seem abominably prescribed, with personal destiny fixed to an intolerable degree, totalitarian in its essence; while to its chained humans our present lives would seem incredibly fluid, mobile, rich in free will... and above all anarchically, if not insanely, driven by self-esteem and self-interest. (p.49)

The difference of language is emphasized in David Jones' (Sergeant Farthing) interrogation as well. Jones' language is despised by Ayscough, not only because of the class difference between them but also for his Welshness. He is accused of being "a liar" because, to Ayscough, lying is a typical characteristic of Welshmen. According to Salami, David Jones is the most class-conscious character in the novel. (Salami: 1992, p.240) He comes from a working-class family living in a poor mining town in South Wales. He faces Ayscough's social prejudice that Welshmen are cowardly liars, barbarous and greedy. The real reason should be their potential for rebellion. This threat against order and stability makes Ayscough hate him:

Q: Thou'lt say them to me, by Heaven, Jones. Or see thy own evil carcass hanged. I'll have thee swung for horse-stealer, if not for murderer.

A: Yes, sir. (More in Welsh tongue.)

Q: And enough of thy barbarous gibberish. (p.207)

Thus, the modern narrator of the novel illustrates how the eighteenth-century lawyer practices his social prejudice against the witnesses. Salami thinks that: "he



[Ayscough] is both destined and determined to seek wealth, to defend the law and the establishment, and to defend the rich and prosecute the poor.” (Salami: 1992, p. 241) According to Salami, Fowles employs the confrontation of discourses intentionally. Fowles realizes his purpose and succeeds in using various languages efficiently:

The interaction between the past and the present, between the languages of the different classes, is deployed by Fowles in order to reconstitute the eighteenth century, to produce a critique of it, to illuminate and thereby to defamiliarize the linguistic dimension of both periods. (Salami: 1992, p.224)

Fowles places facsimile extracts from the “Historical Chronicle” of *The Gentleman’s Magazine* dated 1736 in order to historicize the fiction while fictionalising the reality. The pages from the magazine are real documents and are presented in their original form (see page 70), thus becoming a part of the intertextuality of the novel. However, Fowles inserts an account of a man being found hanged in the magazine dated 1736 and thereby foreshadows Dick’s suicide.

Fowles employs intertextuality not only through these facsimile articles but also by references to eighteenth century drama and novels. Two of the characters, Lacy and Jones, are actors. Lacy is playing the leading role in Fielding’s *Pasquin* at the time he is hired by Mr. B. and he also mentions John Gay’s *The Beggar’s Opera*. The use of these references allows the author to mirror the typical attitude of English society towards the theatre in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Ayscough’s prejudice towards the theatre signifies the dislike of the stage and actors that resulted in the closing of the theatres in England in 1642 under the influence of the Puritans. Though the period in which the theatres were closed lasted for only eighteen years, its negative affects could still be traced a century later. Lacy tells Ayscough: “Not all have your poor opinion of the stage” and he adds “my profession is less richly rewarded than yours.” (p. 121) Intertextual reference is also made to the fiction of the period, particularly to that of Daniel Defoe, an author who is highly admired by Fowles himself, as he states in the epilogue:

I have mentioned Daniel Defoe (who died in 1731) only once in these pages; which is poor recognition of the admiration and liking I have always felt for him. *A Maggot* is not at all meant to be in any direct imitation; he is, in any case, inimitable. (p. 449)

The interrogations are not only interrupted by facsimile documents from the *Gentlemen’s Magazine* but also by letters to an unnamed duke who is addressed as

“Your Grace”. This duke appears to be the father of the lost lord, who hired Ayscough to find his son. Ayscough reports the results of the interviews and his research to the duke through these letters. According to Foster, the letters have three functions in the novel: the first one is stating the date; the second one is to reveal the beliefs of the lawyer and to indicate his presuppositions, especially that Mr. B. is still alive, and to display the variations in his personality, from the bullying detective to the hired flatterer. In his last letter, his attitude completely changes in that he accepts that he has failed. He does not believe Rebecca and creates his own “truth” which is “reasonable”.

In this work Fowles points out that truth may have a contradictory nature that sounds nonsensical, but that does not prove that it is not the truth. The clerk who is writing the report of the interview explains this vague nature of truth to Rebecca:

There are two truths, mistress. One that a person believes is truth; and one that is truth incontestable. We will credit you the first, but the second is what we seek. (p. 345)

*A Maggot* like *The French Lieutenant's Woman* is a writerly text that demands reader's participation in producing meaning. Moreover, due to the mystical mood and plurality of assumed truths from different perspectives it challenges the reader more than the earlier one.

The title of the book “A Maggot” signifies novelty both in literature and life. It symbolizes the incubation period of any kind of change. In literary terms, though the history is used as a frame in the work, it is not an attempt to write a historical novel, and the writer insists that his aim is not to reproduce the known history. He parodies the existing forms of literature in order to create his own technique. On the other hand, the main characters of the novel, Mr. B. and Rebecca are struggling against the existing norms to create a better world. Rebecca's efforts to change the world come into existence with her baby. In a sense her baby symbolizes rebirth and change for the better. Mr. B. should be analyzed on a different level because of his self-awareness. Since he is aware of his being a character in a fiction, his disappearance can be regarded as an escape from the novel. He does not want to be a character in a work and world written by someone else, on the contrary he wants to be a “writer”. Therefore, he opposes the idea of being an object, instead he wants to be a subject and write his life and his past, in other words, the history. Thus the whole novel appears to be a quest story in which a fictional character rebels against the writer for his existence and all the other characters try to find him.

In conclusion, we may say that *A Maggot* is a novel the mystery of which remains undisclosed at the end. What is presented in the novel the plurality and the subjectivity of truth. Fowles points out that there are truths as much as perspectives and through the open ending of the novel that introduces a historical personage in connection to his story, he shows that history is full of gaps and uncertainties. In other words, it is no longer a grand-narrative or meta-narrative, that is to say, a universal, authoritative theory from a single perspective. On the contrary, it consists of “little narratives” such as Mr. Bartholomew's and Rebecca's narratives, as Lyotard puts it in his *Postmodern Condition* which will stand up against authoritarianism represented by Ayscough in the novel. Thus, it is a discourse, like

literature that can be reconstructed. The relative majority of the texts in the novel (the extracts from a magazine, letters and depositions, etc.) make this “maggot” a particular example of historiographic metafiction.

#### CONCLUSION

In this thesis, the theory underlying the technique of historiographic metafiction in the second half of the twentieth century, as practised in the two novels *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and *A Maggot* by John Fowles has been analyzed. The conclusion drawn in the analysis of Fowles' works is that this technique has brought a new dimension to the novel genre.

Postmodernism, the roots of which go back to the 1960s, and even to 1940s, has become an area of academic study in the 1980s. It has marked all cultural disciplines and the areas of study in the second half of the twentieth century. In literature, critics such as Patricia Waugh, Robert Scholes and Linda Hutcheon categorized the works of fiction that are under the influence of postmodernism as “metafiction”. This term is used to classify the novel which lies on the border between fiction and criticism and examines this border within the novel. Despite the fact that the characteristics of metafiction can be detected in earlier works of fiction, the technique has taken its place in the field of literary criticism in the last four decades. Metafiction has not only questioned and challenged the old fiction but also rejected it. The aim of the novel that sought to represent the world as it is, or express the inner-self of man, has been replaced by the criticism of the work within the work and self-reflexiveness during this period.

The works of John Fowles have an important place on the boundaries between both fiction and reality, and fiction and history. Fowles is one of the writers to recognize and present the changes in the general world view, their understanding of literature, society and theology. These changes made him aware that it was impossible to continue with the old techniques of narrative, and this is why he experimented with new techniques of writing. Like other postmodernists, he feels the necessity of pointing out the tricks of writing openly, because the readers know the devices and techniques that novelists have used and they no longer accept what the writer gives without question. Fowles wants the reader to interact with his text, on a sophisticated level. His reader is supposed to take an active role in producing the meaning out of the text.

Both *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and *A Maggot* are outstanding examples of not only metafiction but also historiography in that Fowles chooses certain periods in history in which to set his stories, while including criticism and parody of the earlier forms. He creates original works by means of imitating the existing forms of narrative.

Historiographic metafiction questions the complete “knowability” of the past through filling the gaps in history with fiction. It plays with the “known truth” in order to demonstrate the need for the redefinition of terms such as “reality” and “truth”, as Fowles presents in both *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and *A Maggot*. In these novels, Fowles points out that what is regarded as truth is relative and subjective, and, indeed, it is usually fictitious. This is a prevailing theme in *A Maggot* in that the meanings in the novel are pluralized through the presentation of plural perspectives. The lawyer, who is trying to find “the absolute truth” interrogates eight people, and

attains eight different truths instead of the one he is searching for. As a result, he “writes” his own truth in the form of a letter to the Lord’s father. At the end of the novel, the mystery of the truth remains obscure, and the reader is left without any solution. Fowles proves that history is full of such mysteries and there can never be one truth or one false in the analysis of the past, because history, like fiction, is only a narrative. Thus, he demonstrates that history and fiction are established on the same level of discourse. Likewise, Fowles leaves gaps in his story which are to be filled by the reader. He tries to make his readers see that they interpret their environment in relation to certain established codes, and with the change of these codes their interpretations may change completely at different times. This is why both of the novels are open-ended and the reader is left to imagine any kind of ending according to his own process of establishing meaning.

The above mentioned works of Fowles have almost all the typical features of the historiographic metafictional novels. Fowles, as a writer of metafiction violates narrative levels by intruding to comment on his own writing process, involving himself with fictional characters and addressing the reader directly throughout the novels. The narrators in both novels interfere directly in the novels, and assume many roles at once; as authors, historians and critics. Fowles makes use of Chinese-box structure or the world within world technique, and, thus, he mixes the world he lives in with the world he creates. Through displaying self-reflexivity, Fowles emphasizes the fictionality of each of his works rather than claiming their reality. Although the novels improve upon a plan and have plots, he pretends as if he didn’t arrange an organized narrative through multiplying the choices of the characters as well as the reader’s. He makes use of previous texts, both literary and non-literary,

and he explicitly parodies these texts. Pastiche is another metafictional device employed by Fowles. His works are like patchworks that are made up of both fictional and historical materials. In mixing these materials, he self-consciously imitates previous writing styles from the eighteenth century in *A Maggot* and from the nineteenth century in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*.

In *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, Fowles presents his mid-Victorian subject-matter, setting and characters from a twentieth century perspective. The self-questioning narrator of the novel recontextualizes the past in the optic present, by offering a contemporary perspective on nineteenth century experience. In creating the mood of the novel Fowles employs the traditional characteristics of the Victorian period by comparing and contrasting it to the twentieth century. This novel, which was written at the end of the 1960's, illustrates the differentiating contrasts between contemporary metafiction and previous forms of novelistic techniques. Likewise in *A Maggot*, which is set in the historical frame of the eighteenth century, the social characteristics of the era support the mood of the novel. The narrator, as his predecessor in the former novel, narrates the eighteenth century characters and events from a twentieth century perspective. While reinforcing the realism of the imaginary worlds through using real personages and texts from the past, Fowles' narrators break into these worlds to remind the reader that what they are reading is only fictions that exist just in the author's mind. Fowles points out that both history and fiction are human constructs and his works are the results of the rethinking and reworking of the forms and contents of the past.

Fowles in both his novels that have critical depth and his interviews constantly repeats that his aim is not to write history or historical novels. History is used in his

novels as a frame to provide the necessary atmosphere for the themes and characters.

The use of texts that belong to the period in which the stories take place, has the same function of historicizing his fiction while fictionalizing the reality.

Fowles' major concern is human freedom, both in relation to self and to society. The relationship of the individual with society is expressed in terms of power-bondage relationships, whereas the problem of human freedom in relation to the self is presented as a hero's quest for existence. On the other hand, Fowles questions the absolute power of the author over the text by emphasising fictional self-awareness and the theme of existentialist freedom. Fowles argues that freedom is the most necessary element in achieving one's existence both in the world of fiction and in real life. Thus, he tries to set his characters free as much as possible. Since he rejects the omnipotent, God-like narrators of the traditional novel, he pretends that his characters are out of control and doing what they want to do instead of what the writer wants them to do. Therefore, the narrators of the novels are only like observers or voyeurs who only report what they see. Both in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and *A Maggot*, there is the implication of the character's escape from the novel.

Sarah, for example, disappears in the middle of the novel, and the narrator confesses that even he does not know where she has gone. Mr. B.'s disappearance is a more challenging one, because he *knows* that he is a character in a novel and disobeys the narrator by stepping out of the world created for him by the author, thus refusing to be a part of the pre-determined history.

Intertextuality is another metafictional device that Fowles employs in both *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and *A Maggot*. In the former, he refers to the nineteenth century texts not only in the context of the authors and poets of the period but also

from that of the thinkers and the philosophers, as well as from reports on social investigations and extracts from newspapers. He quotes directly from these texts in order to create a suitable atmosphere for his work, and, in a way, to historicise his fiction. He also uses these texts as foreshadowing elements. In the latter process, Fowles borrows facsimile extracts from the “Historical Chronicle” of *The Gentleman’s Magazine* dated 1736 as a part of intertextuality in order to historicise his fiction as in the first novel. There are also references to the eighteenth century novel and drama throughout the novel.

In conclusion, the role of the technique of metafiction in the rebirth of the novel genre in the second half of the twentieth century is beyond a shadow of a doubt. This thesis hopes to demonstrate that John Fowles, whose works represent all the characteristics of historiographic metafiction, and combines the theory and practice of the self-reflexive and self-conscious novel.

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