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YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

REPRESENTATION OF THE VICTORIAN ERA IN POSTMODERN ENGLISH NOVELS: THE FRENCH LIEUTENANT'S WOMAN AND EVER AFTER

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TEZ SAVUNMA SINAVI, İÜ Lisansüstü Eğitim-Öğretim Yönetmeliği'nin **36. Maddesi** uyarınca yapılmış, sorulan sorulara alınan cevaplar sonunda adayın tezinin **KABULÜNE** OYBİRLİĞİ / ~~OYÇOKLUĞUYLA~~ karar verilmiştir.

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ÖZ

POSTMODERN İNGİLİZ ROMANINDA VİKTORYA DÖNEMİNE BAKIŞ: FRANSIZ TEĞMENİN KADINI VE SONSUZA KADAR

MERİ TEK

Bu çalışmanın amacı John Fowles'un **Fransız Teğmenin Kadını** ve Graham Swift'in **Sonsuza Kadar** romanları üzerinden, postmodern İngiliz romanındaki Viktorya dönemine yaklaşımı incelemektir. Üstkurmaca tekniğinden pastişe postmodern roman çeşitli özellik ve tekniklere sahiptir. Bu özelliklerin arasında, incelenecek iki romanda görüldüğü üzere postmodern içerikte tarihsellik kullanımı önemli bir yere sahiptir. John Fowles hikayesini ondokuzuncu yüzyıl üzerinde şekillendirirken, Graham Swift'in ondokuzuncu yüzyıl kullanımı, çağdaş bir karakterin ondokuzuncu yüzyılda yaşamış bir akrabasının defterleriyle uygulanıyor. Buna dayanarak, bu çalışmada tarih, karakter ve anlatım teknikleri üzerinden postmodern İngiliz romanında Viktorya döneminin hangi şekilde ele alındığı incelenecektir. İlk bölümde kuramsal altyapı ele alınırken, incelenen iki romanda da postmodern yazarların Viktorya dönemi eleştirel bakışı incelenerek, kurmacayı oluşturma şekilleri ve yazar olarak eserdeki yerleri tartışılacaktır. Bu bağlamda Postmodern romanda Viktorya döneminin ayrıntılı incelenmesiyle birlikte, Viktorya dönemi temasının postmodern temaya ne katkıda bulunduğu da ele alınacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Tarihsel üstkurmaca, postmodernizm, üstkurmaca, Viktorya dönemi, John Fowles, Graham Swift

ABSTRACT

REPRESENTATION OF THE VICTORIAN ERA IN POSTMODERN ENGLISH NOVELS: THE FRENCH LIEUTENANT'S WOMAN AND EVER AFTER

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The aim of this study is to examine the postmodern approach to theVictorian era through the novels, **The French Lieutenant's Woman** by John Fowles and **Ever After** by Graham Swift. Postmodern fiction contains various features from metafiction to pastiche. Among these features the use of history in postmodern context has a significant role which can be observed in both novels that will be examined. While John Fowles sets the main story in the nineteenth century basis, Graham Swift's nineteenth century treatment is practised in the contemporary setting through the notebooks of the main character's ancestor dating back to the nineteenth century. Thus, in this study on what grounds the nineteenth century is represented in English postmodern fiction will be examined by observing the historical basis, characters and narration. While the first chapter of this study focuses on the theoretical background, in the following two chapters the critical approach of the postmodern authors to the Victorian era and their position as the postmodern authors will be examined in both of the novels.With the detailed examination of the Victorian era in postmodern fiction, the attribution of the Victorian features in the postmodern setting will also be observed.

Keywords: Historiographic Metafiction, Postmodernism, Metafiction, Victorian Era, John Fowles, Graham Swift

PREFACE

This study is the product of my growing interest in the postmodern novel theory. Thanks to the courses on the novel theory by Assoc. Prof. Canan Şavkay and Assoc. Prof. Yıldız Kılıç, I discovered a new link between history and metafiction which fascinated me. By my fascination, I have chosen two postmodern novels, **The French Lieutenant's Woman** and **Ever After** and by examining the two novels I found the opportunity to broaden my knowledge in what Linda Hutcheon titles as Historiographic Metafiction, which foregrounds the theoretical basis of this thesis. Luckily, I had the honour to contact Linda Hutcheon via e-mail. Her kind response also encouraged me and cherished me to work on this subject. It has been a challenging yet a great experience to take this research. Thus, completing my thesis, I would like to share my gratitude for those who have always been there for me during the process.

I would like to deliver my thanks to my former lecturers at the department of English Language and Literature, İstanbul Kültür University. They always believed in me and encouraged me to carry my journey in literature. Coming to my postgraduate studies, I owe my thanks for all the lecturers of English Language and Literature Department of Istanbul University. While I am grateful to all my lecturers, I would like to deliver my greatest thanks and gratitude to my supervisor Assist. Prof. Ferah İncesu. I feel myself lucky to be her student. She was always there for me with all her support, positive energy and kindness.

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I would also like to thank to all my friends who never left me alone during my journey. Especially to Zuhal Adalan, who was always there ready to help me

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INTRODUCTION

Ever since its emergence as a reaction to modernist architecture in the 1940s, Postmodernism has been a problematic term to define. What makes postmodernism such an argumentative and compound term is, its being fragmented and split among various types of cultural and social circles. While postmodernism foregrounds various social and cultural fields, literature is the one that carries its influence by bringing a new approach to the conventional literary genres. Since this study aims to examine how the Victorian era is represented in the novels **The French Lieutenant's Woman** and **Ever After**, the first chapter will focus on the definition of Postmodern fiction and Historiographic metafiction. Historiographic metafiction's primary aim is not to imitate past, but rather gain new interpretations with a postmodern outlook. Thus, through problematizing the Victorian past and narrative with the contemporary in the grounds of Historiographic metafiction, the novels aimed to be examined in this study represent the values and crisis in Victorian society by playing with the narrative forms with a critical approach. Thus in accordance with this aim, after a brief outline of the problematics of Postmodernism in relation with Modernism, postmodern fiction and its relation with history will be observed in terms of Linda Hutcheon's theory of Historiographic Metafiction. In this respect, the chapter aims to reflect why and how history is interpreted by the postmodern metafiction authors. In this chapter there will not be examination of the novels since it primarily aims to foreground the theoretical approach before beginning the examinations of the novels.

The second chapter will focus on John Fowles's novel, **The French Lieutenant's Woman**. In this novel, Fowles parodies the Victorian period, by creating a Victorian setting and characters. However, he does not only imitate the Victorian past, but he re-interprets Victorians with a critical perspective. In order to understand how Fowles reflects the Victorians, the relationship and the motivations of the major characters, Sarah and Charles will be closely examined. Since Sarah

Woodruff is known for her notorious reputation, she is excluded from society. Being a woman and being labelled as a fallen image, Sarah is excluded from her society. However, Fowles creates a modern woman image who gains her freedom by disguising herself as a fallen woman. Sarah's pretence raises the problematic of the novel, which will be discussed both in Victorian and postmodern terms. Besides, Fowles's plays in the grounds of Victorian and postmodern authorship will also be examined in this chapter.

Focusing on Graham Swift's **Ever After**, the third chapter examines the postmodern reinterpretation of the Victorians through the protagonist and narrator Bill Unwin. Bill Unwin is a middle-aged literature scholar who undergoes crisis due to the ruins of his life. The desperation he undergoes leads his way to his Victorian ancestor Matthew Pearce's notebooks which foreground the Victorian crisis of Matthew. Creating a postmodern and a Victorian character, Swift constructs a dual narrative line throughout the novel. Considering the duality in the narrative, how postmodern and Victorian crisis are linked to each other will be discussed. In this respect, how official history and personal histories are used in historiographic metafiction will also be observed.

Thus, examining the Victorian representations in both novels, how postmodernism deals with the past and in what ways they criticise and problematize the present will be discussed.

CHAPTER I

DEFINING POSTMODERN METAFICTION

Every period comes up with its own characteristics and developments which influence society in many aspects. One of these aspects is surely literature which creates a universal link among various societies. For instance, if we speak of 19th century English literature, the first thing to basically comprehend is the realism in the English novel. Because of the limited and suppressed Victorian society manners, the literature of the 19th century is formed with the influence of the social and political structure. However, things changed in the second half of the 19th century and one can see how fin-de-siècle literature sought to break the limited Victorian understanding of the novel. Following, the Modernist period, on the other hand, brought new narrative forms, breaking the constructed form of the 19th century into the fragments. Indisputably, defining these two periods with only few words cannot be sufficient, and I will have to make many references to the 19th century in the following chapters in behalf of my thesis topic; however, it is notable that what is stated about these periods are the basic qualities that one can count at first glance. Yet, defining Postmodernism with a basic definition is not that easy. Brian McHale draws attention to the problematic about the term "Postmodernist" stating that nothing about this term is unproblematic or satisfactory.[1] What makes Postmodernism such a problematic term to define is its pluralistic approach since its development.

The historical background of Postmodernism stands for the middle of the 20th century as an attack to architecture and art. Eventually, it started to gain cultural and social dimensions for the critics. Even though the prefix "Post" in the term Postmodern stands for "after" in its dictionary meaning, it is not sufficient to define "Postmodern" as the successor of Modernism. "Post" can refer to different meanings apart from its time related meaning. It can be used to refer to the extension of the

[1] Brian McHale, **Postmodernist Fiction**, New York, Methuen, 1987, p.3.

Modernist writing experiments in Postmodernism while it can be also used to refer to the differences between the two.[2] The reason of diversity in meaning is that Postmodernism does not represent a single concept. Postmodernism became a widespread definition after emerging as a reaction in Modern Architecture and eventually started to be used in defining many political and cultural productions, thus gained new meanings spreading to many disciplines from social theory, media, to visual arts.[3] One of the effects of this phenomenon was adopted in literature which is the subject of this study. Since the examination will be held on postmodern fiction it would be better to focus on how Postmodern literature is defined.

Postmodernism is not a term that primarily appeared as a literary genre, but inevitably it is literature and mostly fiction that Postmodernism made its epoch. However, even though postmodernism is popular with literature, just as the term "Postmodern" alone cannot be simply defined, it is still not easy to define Postmodern fiction as well, because as Bran Nicol states:

> Postmodern fiction, far too diverse in style to be a genre, nor is it a historical label like "Victorian fiction" as to speak of the late 20th century as the postmodern period would be to misrepresent a great many contemporary writers whose work cannot usefully be related to postmodernism. [4]

In other words, Postmodern fiction cannot be positioned either in a basic form or a time period. The early years of Postmodern literature coincided with Modernism period which dominated the arts and culture of the first half of the 20th century. Modernism was a way of deconstruction for the 19th century structure of art and literature. The major effect of Modernism was felt in Vienna between1890 and 1910 and was spread to whole Europe from France to Germany and eventually to

[2] Nick Bentley, **Contemporary British Fiction**, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2008, p.33.
[3] Bran Nicol, **The Cambridge Introduction to Postmodern Fiction**, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2009, p. 1.
[4] **Ibid.**, p.XVI.

Britain.[5] While in different disciplines of art from music to painting the traditional forms and materials were excluded, the same attitude became valid for literature. With the search of new forms chronological plots, consequential narratives and closed endings were put aside and new experiments were held by the Modernist writers. Among the Modernist experiments of writing, the most important developments were fragmentation and reflexivity. In this respect, Modernism and Postmodernism are always considered to be in close relationship and it is an approved view among the most prominent postmodern critiques:

> Postmodernism has a close relationship to Modernism. Many of the most important definitions of postmodernism, like by McHale, Hutcheon, Eco are founded upon a comparison with Modernist values and aesthetic techniques.[6]

However, this close link does not always bring similarities between the two and therefore, comparing both periods is a way to reach to the literary definition of the "problematic" term Postmodernism.

Comparing the two, the first thing to focus on is fragmentation in narrative. As Modernism did not support the 19th century realist narrative and structure in literature, with the Post World War effect, Modernists gave prominence to fragmented narratives. In all genres of literature, from novel to poetry, writers started to use fragmented structures. This fragmented style of writing is also a feature of Postmodernism and it is an important characteristic in defining Postmodern fiction. Nevertheless, it is not a practice in the sense of Modernism. In **Beginning Theory**, Peter Barry emphasizes how Modernism and Postmodernism are different attitudes with reference to Jeremy Hawthorn:

[5] Peter Barry, **Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory**, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2009, p.78.
[6] Nicol**, Op.Cit**., pp. XVI-XVII.

> In Jeremy Hawthorn's "Concise Glossary of Contemporary Literary Theory" (Edward Arnold 1992) he says, both give prominence to fragmentation as a feature of the 20th century art and culture, but they do so in very different moods.[7]

The dissemblance in attitudes derives from Postmodernism's celebration of fragmentation. Because of the Post World War Period, Modernism's reaction to the 19th century writing style was also integrated with the despair of the period. The deconstructed art forms, and desperate literary implications are the consequences of such an atmosphere in the period. Nevertheless, Postmodernism does not use fragmentation and deconstruction of art forms as a reaction of despair. In contrast, Postmodernist deconstruction is a celebrating attitude. Postmodern writers give prominence to fictional quality of the work, rather than how it reflects the reality. Postmodern writing's aim is to create a world on fictional basis and free the reader from the dominance of the author. Therefore, their way of writing in fragmentation becomes a positive practice, instead of implication of despair. There is the state of being fictional and constructed in Postmodern writing and this puts it in a different position than Modernist writing because, even though Modernism does not support realism in the 19th century sense, its focus on the individual inner voice and consciousness takes all the attention. Yet, Postmodern writing already accepts and labels its writing as "fiction".

The way postmodern fiction is written may change, there are several approaches of postmodern fiction writing. Not one of them can specifically be considered as the right understanding of Postmodernism. Yet, it is a fact that the authors of postmodern fiction acknowledge that a postmodern work is constructed upon fiction which is named as metafiction. Patricia Waugh defines metafiction as:

> 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

[7] Barry**, Op.Cit**., p.80.

> only examine the fundamental structures of narrative fiction, they also explore the possible fictionality of the world outside the literary fictional text.[8]

The postmodern author's self-conscious construction of the fictional world in metafiction leads way to "reflexivity" which can also be traced in modernist writing in different characteristics. With Modernism, writers started to focus on the nature of their works and the distinguishing between what is seen or how is seen became more apparent which eventually raised the stream of consciousness technique. Nevertheless, this approach does not have the concern with implying the text is fiction. Postmodernism focuses on the text, thus on writing. Waugh explains how Modernist writing and postmodern metafictional writing differs in this respect:

> Whereas loss of order for the modernist led to the belief in its recovery at a deeper level of the mind, for metafictional writers the most fundamental assumption is that composing a novel is basically no different from composing or constructing one's 'reality'. Writing itself rather than consciousness becomes the main object of attention. Questioning not only the notion of the novelist as God, through the flaunting of the author's godlike role, but also the authority of consciousness, of the mind, metafiction establishes the categorization of the world through the arbitrary system of language.[9]

In other words, writing is the major focus of postmodernist writers and their approach to writing differs from Modernist approach since writing is a way of construction.

In this respect, the construction of Postmodern metafiction is in close relation with the author's position. Modernism was famous for excluding the author's presence in the text:

> The modernists sought to remove the traces of their presence, from the surface of their writing, and to this end exploited or developed various forms of ostensibly "narratorless" texts – texts based in large part on direct dialogue exchanges

[8] Patricia Waugh, **Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction**, New York, Methuen, 1984, p.2.
[9] **Ibid**., p.24.

> (Hemingway, Ivy Compton-Burnett) or on free indirect discourse (early Joyce, Woolf, Dos Passos). Or they effaced their own subjectivities behind the surrogate subjectivity of a first-person narrator or interior monologuist (Conrad, Faulkner, Joyce in Ulysses, Woolf in The Waves). [10]

However, McHale also draws attention to the fact that these practices aiming to remove author's presence from the text brought more attention to their position. Modernism was focused on the principle of structure in order to establish poetics for the novel form.[11] Establishing such a structure, modernist authors started to deal with the matter of narration. Different perspectives and voices were needed according to Modernists. However, as McHale stated, they tried to hide themselves as the narrative voice. Postmodernism developed the argument of author further and manifested "the death of the author" through Roland Barthes. In his essay, Roland Barthes refers to author as absent in any level of reading the text. According to Barthes, beginning of the writing means the death of the author.[12] In traditional thought, literary works can be examined on authorial basis. However, he draws attention to Mallarme's view on language and states his support:

> For him, for us too, it is language which speaks, not the author; to write is, through a prerequisite impersonality (not at all to be confused with the castrating objectivity of the realist novelist), to reach that point where only language acts, 'performs', and not 'me'.[13]

By stating that the language speaks, Barthes promotes the prominence of the text over the author. Even though for the classical thought the author's existence comes before the text, the modernist author's and text's presence begin simultaneously.[14] Author does not have a former existence, experiencing several conditions in order to write. So, there is no reason to accept author as the originator

[10] McHale, Op.Cit.,p.199.
[11] Steven Connor, **"Postmodernism and Literature", The Cambridge Companion to Postmodernism**, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2004, p.63.
[12] Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author", **The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism**, ed. by.Vincent B. Leitch, New York, W.W. Norton & Company, 2001, p.1466.
[13] Barhtes, **Ibid**.,p.1467.
[14] **Ibid**., p.1468.

of the writing because according to Barthes the text's only origin is the language itself. Breaking the author's domination on the text Barthes draws attention to the meaning of the text:

> We know now that a text is not a line of words releasing a single 'theological' meaning (the 'message' of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. [15]

When everything in the text is imposed on the author in the realist terms, the meaning of the text is limited. Nevertheless, when language is given the chance, it becomes the key for the reader to open doors to multidimensional perspectives in the text. In this respect, Barthes is critical for the classical criticism stating that it never paid attention to the reader and promoted the author as the only person in literature[16]. Moreover, Barthes also states that the author does not produce a new discourse. Words do not carry a single, fundamental meaning that should be endorsed by the author. Texts include various writings and dimensions:

> Thus is revealed the total existence of writing: a text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation, but there is one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader, not, as was hitherto said, the author.[17]

In other words, a text consists of a blend of writings. As Barthes asserts the author does not produce something original anymore because everything is tried. Since nothing new can be produced, it leads to intertextual and pluralistic practices in terms of writing. So, at this level, the main focus should be on the reader's approach to the text, which is the production of language and culture, in order to reach and constitute multiplicity in meaning, rather than focusing on the author. Barthes's

[15] Barthes, **Loc.Cit**.
[16] **Ibid**., p.1469.
[17] Barthes, **Loc.Cit**.

claims about the language's dominance in the text are important elements that are recognized by postmodern authors. Patricia Waugh explains the contemporary status of language in metafiction:

> The simple notion that language passively reflects a coherent, meaningful and 'objective' world is no longer tenable. Language is an independent, self-contained system which generates its own 'meanings.' Its relationship to the phenomenal world is highly complex, problematic and regulated by convention. 'Meta' terms, therefore, are required in order to explore the relationship between this arbitrary linguistic system and the world to which it apparently refers. In fiction they are required in order to explore the relationship between the world of the fiction and the world outside the fiction.[18]

While language's dominance is acknowledged in postmodern writing, Michel Foucault took the author in a different level than Barthes and asked "what is an author?" claiming that author is a function for the text. According to Foucault the author's position as an individual and all the meanings that are dedicated to this position should be re-evaluated. Foucault questions the heroic representation of the author. In this respect, he appreciates the way writing exists. However, regarding the author as dead or disappeared is not sufficient for Foucault because there is an empty space that should be observed:

> It is obviously insufficient to repeat empty slogans: the author has disappeared; God and man died a common death. Rather, we should re-examine the empty space left by the author's disappearance; we should attentively observe, along its gaps and fault lines, its new demarcations, and the reapportionment of this void; we should await the fluid functions released by this disappearance. In this context we can briefly consider the problems that arise in the use of an author's name.[19]

It is acceptable that contemporary writing deals with the text, and it freed itself from the boundaries of author's domination in terms of Author-God discourse.

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[18] Waugh, **Op.Cit**., p.3.

[19] Micheal Foucault, "What is an Author", **The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism**, ed. Vincent B. Leitch, New York, W.W. Norton & Company, 2001, p.1626.

Nevertheless, the author is still present as a function which characterizes the certain discourses of society.[20] This characterization is partly linked with the author's name. When an author's name is considered, it does not just mean to refer to him as an individual. The author's name represents the works he produced. With this representation it also categorizes the types of the works. So, the author does not represent a single meaning for the reader:

> Its presence is functional in that it serves as a means of classification. A name can group together a number of texts and thus differentiate them from others. A name also establishes different forms of relationships among texts. Neither Hermes nor Hippocrates existed in the sense that we can say Balzac existed, but the fact that a number of texts were attached to a single name implies that relationships of homogeneity, filiation, reciprocal explanation, authentification, or of common utilization were established among them.[21]

In addition, Foucault also draws attention to the fact that literary discourse was acceptable as long as it carried an author's name. Any kind of literary work, prose or poetry, was obliged to have an author's name and its time. Contemporary thinking is able to break such a link with the author. Nevertheless, Foucault still notes that even though he refers to the author as a function, his functional status in the text is not such simplistic. The voice in the narrative cannot be directly linked to the author. Foucault states that "the 'author function' arises out of their scission – in the division and distance of the two."[22] In other words, the author is in a functional position and this position derives from the space between text and author. Thus, Foucault does not completely kill the author but dedicates a function which is even more sophisticated than its single meaning. McHale states his comment on Foucault drawing attention to the rediscovery of author: "Our period has "rediscovered" the death of the author; and it is this rediscovery that permits Foucault to conceive of the author as a function. "[23] The rediscovery of the death of the author, as McHale states,

[20] **Ibid**., p.1628.
[21] **Ibid**., p.1627.
[22] **Ibid**., p.1631.
[23] McHale, **Op.Cit**., p.201.

brought postmodernism a new dimension. Author's absence in the writing is celebrated by the postmodern authors. What Barthes and Foucault argued about the text's origins and author's position are accepted by the postmodern author. They accept that nothing is original and they play with the narrative structures, hence their approach differs from the modernist approach to the author.

Whilst the comparison between Modernism and Postmodernism disclose much about Postmodernism, still the exact definition is debatable because while some critics argue that Postmodernism already is a convention like past periods, some disagree claiming that the world undergoes a postmodern period. Also, as previously said, postmodern as a term gained various meanings and all these meanings make it hard to define postmodernism in a simple manner. Among the critics that argue about the time being of Postmodernism there is Canadian Postmodern critic Linda Hutcheon who mainly draws attention to the term Historiography in Postmodern literature, which constitutes the major theoretical approach of this dissertation. Linda Hutcheon is known for her studies in the poetics of postmodernism and she is one of the pioneering names who developed postmodern criticism further. Among her examinations on Postmodern theory, she is mostly concerned with the problematization of history which is the basic issue of Historiographic Metafiction.

Before explaining Hutcheon's problematization of history in Postmodern fiction, it should be noted that history has been a mode of literature since the ancient past and a brief look should be taken to the evolution of history in the novel genre.

Even though history constitutes a major social discipline of its own, it forms the basic background of other social and scientific disciplines. Thus the link between literature and history is inevitable. **Oxford Dictionary** defines the word "history" as "study of past events and description of past events"[24] With this basic definition one can simply infer that history is related to the past. In fact, without the dictionary definition, the term "history" is accepted as the definition of past. As history is the

[24] **Oxford Learner's Pocket Dictionary: New Edition**, Oxford University Press, 2005, p.204.

subject of the past, then anything related to the past, individually or socially seems to be a part of history. This relation to the past finds its place in literature and displays its routes from drama to fiction. For example, Elizabethan drama is rich in contextualizing official historical events and characters. For instance, Shakespearean historical plays such as **Richard III, Henry IV** are known with their construction in historical frame with blending the imagination of Shakespeare. While historical framework in English drama can be observed in different periods, the rise of the novel genre in English literature in the early 18th century also adapted a historical framework. Historicism in the novel genre is not a coincidental or a surprising fact because as Terry Eagleton states in **The English Novel**, novel is the "queen" of all genres in literature and is capable of doing everything.[25] The novel's relation with history in its early development and its latter link with postmodern historiography is inevitable.

Historical novel was prevalent all around Europe beginning from the 18th century and it eventually gained a position with the rise of the English novel in the 18th century. The raise of Historicism in novel genre is explained with the interest in the collected information of antiquarians on history among novelists.[26] What concerned authors about historical knowledge were the manners, customs and living styles of the past periods which helped to create a realist framework for their fictive narrations and characters. While such an interest developed among the writers of the period, Sir Walter Scott is thought to be the one who brought Historical Fiction as a genre in English literature to a distinctive position. Terry Eagleton draws attention to Walter Scott's prominence in the development process of historical novel:

> The father of the realist historical novel is often said to be Walter Scott, and it was certainly Scott, with his pop-idol like fame throughout Europe and America, who played a major role in establishing the novel as a genuinely "serious" literary genre.[27]

[25] Terry Eagleton, **The English Novel: An Introduction,** Blackwell Publishing, 2005, p.1.
[26] Elisabeth Wesseling, **Writing History as a Prophet: Postmodernist Innovations of the Historical Novel**, Amsterdam, J. Benjamins Publishing, 1991, p. 27.
[27] Eagleton, **Op.Cit**., p.95.

Among Scott's novels, **Waverley**, which was about the 1745 rebellion, became a general model for his novels and for historical novel as a genre. Though some critics opposed Walter Scott's prominence in historical fiction and claimed that his writing did not create any prominence for the genre, but rather an artful narrative, he was considered to be a model for the historical English novel.[28] As the English novel continued to develop since the 18th century, the form and understanding of realism was thus transformed. Victorian society had its own moral codes for social institutions and social roles. Women's place in society, the marriage institution, religion was among the most important issues for the society's order. Eventually such a social structure affected the mode of writing. Authors started to construct plot dominated narratives and instead of using past histories they focused more on their social structure. In accordance with the novelistic features, history became a background, a basis that the fictional world was constructed upon to reveal a realist mood. Referring to Marxist theorist Georg Lukacs, Bran Nicol states that the 19th century historical novel draws a picture of the society and represents a real historical period to which the reader can have access through fiction.[29] However, even though historical novel represents a historical period, it does not sought to problematize history or develop a critical approach in examining history because it is written in a realist fashion. This is the point which differs from Postmodern historical fiction because Postmodern historical fiction, called "Historiographic Metafiction" by Linda Hutcheon, has further concerns than creating a realist historical story. This concern may not be shared by all the writers of postmodern novel because it cannot be said that all the postmodern metafiction writers deal with history. It is also possible to find different approaches to history and those approaches can even be conflicting. For instance, Marxist critics of Postmodernism do not find anything relatable to historicism in the age of Postmodernism. On the other hand, some critics argue that

[28] Wesseling, **Op.Cit**., p.170.
[29] Nicol, **Op.Cit**., p.100.

historicism is being weakened in the postmodern period.[30] However, New Historicism, a criticism emerged in the late 20th century focuses on the ideological and social concerns of history.

New Historicism is concerned with social and ideological affairs and brings a new awareness to the narrative of fiction and history. For New Historicism, a work of literature cannot be analysed with the ignorance of the ideological and cultural background. It cannot be freed of the time it is written. One of the most influential theorists for historical debates has been Foucault with his definition of "Genealogy" by which he refers to history and power. Drawing attention to history and power, Foucault claims that the doubtful, blurring parts of history is ignored so that today's world can be regarded as a continuation of a non-problematic past.[31] Nevertheless, those ignored, isolated facts should be revealed. In other words, not only the grand narratives but alternative histories should also be measured. Foucault's approach is ground-breaking for the debates of Historicism because it maintains a critical approach to history by offering to disclose the ignored evidences of history which eventually pioneers a pluralistic criticism to history.

As a Postmodern literary critic, dealing with history and fiction, Hutcheon develops pluralistic approach of historicism and she links it to literature. Her appreciation to the awareness rises through the diverse assessments of historical examinations is stated in her major theoretical work **A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction:**

> Thanks to the pioneering work of Marxists, feminists, gays, black and ethnic theorists, there is a new awareness in these fields that history cannot be written without ideological and institutional analysis, including analysis of the act of writing itself. It is no longer enough to be suspicious or playful as a writer about art or literature (or history, though there it never really was), the theorist and the critic are inevitably implicated in both ideologies and institutions.[32]

[30] Bentley, **Op.Cit**., p.128.
[31] **Ibid**., p.129.
[32] Linda Hutcheon, **A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction**, London, Routledge, 1988, p.91.

With her appreciation of the progress of historical criticism, Linda Hutcheon highlights the fact that writers and theorists are now more obliged to acquire a critical eye to examine history in the light of ideological and institutional analysis. Such a methodology of history is indispensable for Hutcheon because what is named as Postmodernism fosters pluralism in any field, so in history.

If Linda Hutcheon's understanding of Postmodernism is observed in detail, her approach to historical metafiction can be comprehended better as Postmodernism is genuinely a complex, sophisticated term for Hutcheon. Linda Hutcheon firstly begins to explain the complexity and multiplicity of Postmodernism by referring to the major arguments on Postmodernism and states her own perspective on Postmodernism:

> Given all the confusion and vagueness associated with the term itself, I would like to begin by arguing that, for me, postmodernism is a contradictory phenomenon, one that uses and abuses, installs and then subverts, the very concepts it challenges – be it in architecture, literature, painting, sculpture, film, video, dance, TV, music, philosophy, aesthetic theory, psychoanalysis, linguistics, or historiography.[33]

This statement by Hutcheon essentially puts forward an overall definition of Postmodernism which is argued and tried to be defined by many critics. While Hutcheon draws attention to Postmodernism in many disciplines, she centralizes on literature and explains what she defines as Historiographic Metafiction.

Initially, for Hutcheon, past and present is the primary problematic of Postmodernism. She objects to the critics who claim postmodern as the synonym of contemporary, since such a pluralistic term cannot be simplified with the contemporary label. Postmodernism should not be generalized and considered as the reflection of the contemporary. On the other hand, however, it is not the definition of the past. According to Hutcheon, the problem with postmodernism is the past's

[33] **Ibid**, p.3.

presence because "We must add something else to this definition: an equally self-conscious dimension of history." [34]

Considering the dimension of history in Postmodernism, Hutcheon primarily draws attention to architecture which is the first field that postmodern movement originated from and develops her approach of Historiographic Metafiction on the basis of architecture and Postmodernism.

As previously noted, architecture is the primary field which brought Postmodernism. In various resources about Postmodernism, architecture's prominence can be examined. Among these examinations, Hutcheon specifically focuses on the link between history and architecture and refers to Italian architect Paolo Portoghesi who claims that "The past whose presence we claim is not a golden age to be recuperated."[35] In other words, for Portoghesi past is not there with nostalgic purposes in architecture. In his analysis, he states that the past is revisited with critical purposes. The society and art forms of past are rethought critically and reflected to present. Thus, there is not a nostalgic return to the past in terms of architecture. History rather generates a critical eye to understand the present practices better. This situation is valid in terms of literature for Hutcheon and is best examined in the metafictional novel.

Today, history is a form of narrative which officially represents the past. Through textuality the past documents are accessible. Therefore, in Linda Hutcheon's view, it is not wrong to mark history as a human construction because it is reflected through texts. While through textuality the past is reflected in history, the fictionality of fiction is also reflected thus is called self-reflexive. Consequently, there is a major bond between history and fiction which is textuality. Both are textual forms and especially in postmodern works the narratives of history, theory and literature are major focuses for Hutcheon. With this argument, she claims that:

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[34] Linda Hutcheon, "Historiographic Metafiction: Parody and Intertextuality of History", **Intertextuality and Contemporary American Fiction**, Ed.by. Patrich O'Donnell & Ed.by. Robert Con Davis, London, John Hopkins University Press, 1995, p.3.

[35] Hutcheon, **A Poetics of Postmodernism,** p.4.

> Historiographic metafiction incorporates all three of these domains: that is, its theoretical self-awareness of history and fiction as human constructs (historiographic metafiction) is made the grounds for rethinking and reworking of the forms and contents of the past. [36]

In the light of Linda Hutcheon's view then, Historiographic metafiction is, first of all, a blend of two human constructed narrative forms: fiction and history. This blend between two is notable by the name. Nevertheless, the reason of merging the two should be focused in detail in order to apprehend the distinctiveness of the genre.

There lies a sophisticated problematization in Historiographic Metafiction. The problem of Historiographic Metafiction is basically the past and present as in Postmodern architecture. Similar to Portoghesi's view for Postmodern architecture, past is present for Postmodern Metafiction. Being in multiplicity, the postmodern novel gains many new constructions. However, this does not detach it from history as the whole Postmodernism cannot. It was previously noted that, for Linda Hutcheon defining postmodernism without the historical dimension is incomplete. Hence, history takes its position in postmodern Metafiction which is famous for its "being fiction about fiction". Such a form, then, cannot have history for simple, basic purposes. This is the major point which Linda Hutcheon constructs her argument on.

The modernist approach is in need of a nostalgic return to the past in literature. History was there to seek or to destroy the past, but not to criticize it. Nevertheless, today there is a tendency of thinking historically and thinking historically means thinking critically for Hutcheon[37]. Thus thinking historically, therefore, critically leads a way to write critically. Today there are various postmodern metafictions which are written in historical context. However, it is not accurate to label them as Historical fictions of the contemporary period in the traditional sense, because the Postmodern novel's primary aim is not to inform the reader about the past as a non-problematic, ideal world. The contemporary period we

[36] **Ibid**.,p.5.
[37] **Ibid**., p.88.

are living is uncertain and pluralistic which brings the break with the traditional values[38]. Historiography in Postmodern Metafiction retells history within its fictional construction. However, this retelling should not be confused with nostalgia. Nostalgia in Postmodern metafiction is the view that Hutcheon strongly objects because in her view Postmodern metafiction's return to history has critical purposes. If past is revisited with only nostalgia, there can hardly be sought any new perspectives. Past remains as a part of history, but only the way it is reflected. It can only be observed in the context that it was experienced and narrated. Therefore, a critical examination is hardly made. That is why historical revisiting is called a "Modernist nightmare"[39] by Hutcheon. Because modernism cannot leave the nostalgic yearning for the past, they cannot develop a further approach. However, Postmodernism is able to gain the critical approach to history. Postmodern metafiction masterfully subverts history's superior position to fiction. History in postmodern metafiction does not necessarily exist to represent a model for the present. History is not unchallengeable in Postmodern writing anymore and authors find way to subvert history in different ways while constructing their fiction. Consequently, the past becomes reconstructed within the fiction. The reconstruction of fiction and history together opens a way to revisit the past with today's perspective. Meanwhile, it should be noted that the postmodern author does not deny that he self-consciously constructs a fictional narrative because:

> Contemporary metafictional writing is both a response and a contribution to an even more thoroughgoing sense that reality or history are provisional: no longer a world of eternal verities but a series of constructions, artifices, impermanent structures. The materialist, positivist and empiricist world-view on which realistic fiction is premised no longer exists. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that more and more novelists have come to question and reject the forms that correspond to this ordered reality.[40]

[38] Waugh, **Op.Cit**., p.6.
[39] **Loc.Cit**., p.88.
[40] Waugh, **Op.Cit.**, p.7.

In this respect, the postmodern author also does not deny that he subverts or deconstructs the past with his own purpose in his metafiction. Yet, this is not a practice just to surprise the reader, but to open doors to new perspectives. For Postmodern thinking, the pluralistic approach in every field should be comprehended. In case of literature, this approach broadens with the unification of history and metafiction because:

> By extension, we can say that historiographic metafiction is fiction which uses metafictional techniques to remind us that history is a construction, not something natural that equates to 'the past'. History is not 'the past', but a narrative based on documents and other material created in the past. [41]

In other words, history cannot be freed of construction and cannot be considered as the exact definition of the past. For Postmodernists, what creates history is a form of constructed narrative upon the past documents and in the Postmodern world nothing is unique in meaning anymore. So, written histories cannot be accepted completely accurate or unquestionable. This is a similar attitude to Jean-François Lyotard's objection of metanarratives. Examining the condition of knowledge in post-industrial society which is computerized now, in **The Postmodern Condition** Lyotard claims that metanarratives function as the controlling force both socially and ideologically since the Enlightenment.[42] According to Lyotard, Postmodernism weakens the metanarratives. Instead of metanarratives Postmodernism is more interested in little narratives because postmodern thinking does not consider narrative as something natural. Postmodernists are aware of the fact that what is narrated is what the narrator chooses to narrate. Hence, the function of metanarrative is not dominant as it is used to be and it leaves its place to what is called little-narratives by Lyotard. What Lyotard calls as little-narrative does not aim to have an ideological control. Hence, Lyotard's approach to metanarrative can be considered close to Hutcheon's approach

[41] Nicol, **Op.Cit.**, p.99.
[42] **Ibid.**, p.11.

to history, because history cannot be considered as a one-dimensional and unquestionable discourse anymore while it is a written document. Postmodern Historiography seeks for multiplicity in the examination of history, so that new perspectives can be attained and can contribute to the present. Hence, Historiographic Metafiction deals with the construction of history which is a written form. It is not the past that is problematized but how it is reflected through written materials. Therefore, a multiplied examination is needed. Thus Historiographic Metafiction deals with the constructed history and problematizes it through fiction. It challenges the conventional understanding of history and realism. Also, with this challenge a new link is established between past and present which can refer to "Past's presence" as previously mentioned.

Constructing a fictional world with Historiography, postmodern authors tend to practice various ways of subverting history that is different from the methods used in the 19th century. How early historical fiction was formed is already referred through different sources so that the aim and difference of postmodern historiography can be acknowledged. However, Postmodern innovations in writing contributes to the formation of historicism in metafiction. Since, according to Postmodernism, nothing new and original can be produced anymore, whatever written or practiced in different fields are considered as re-productions. This is a major influence in Postmodern thinking and it establishes the style of parody. Basically, parody is the re-writing of an already written story, however the way it is re-rewritten is such a playful style. According to Hutcheon, Postmodernism is essentially contradictory with its art forms and theories in which it installs and destabilizes convention in parodic ways, offering a critical or ironic re-reading of the art of the past.[43] In other words, through parody, what is already known is released to new interpretations. It contains humour and criticism together with a postmodern style and creates a critical interpretation. According to Waugh, metafictional parody forces reader to consider new perspectives:

[43] Hutcheon, **A Poetics of Postmodernism**, p.23.

> Metafictional parody reveals how a particular set of contents was expressed in a particular set of conventions recognized as 'literature' by its readers, and it considers what relevance these may still have for readers situated at a different point in history. It exploits the indeterminacy of the text, forcing the reader to revise his or her rigid preconceptions based on literary and social conventions, by playing off contemporary and earlier paradigms against each other and thus defeating the reader's expectations about both of them.[44]

Historiographic metafiction enjoys parodic narrative, because it is one of the best ways to re-write the historical events in a postmodern context. Among the major historiographic metafictions, past's representation is parodied. For example, John Fowles's novel **French Lieutenant's Woman** which will be examined in the following chapter is one of the best examples of historical parody. The Victorian era and its narrative style is parodied through Fowles' narrative. However, there is an important detail about parody in historiographic metafiction. Historiographic metafiction does not use parody and pastiche in order to amuse the reader. It is not a technique to simply make fun of the past events or degrade it. Re-telling the past through parody, or imitating it is a way of criticism. While the author parodies a specific historical event or time he aims to re-tell it with a new interpretation. The Past is already known as it is written, however, it is not officially written with a critical approach. Through parody, historiographic metafiction breaks the non-critical approach and establishes a reader approach to history. It is an intertextual reading of what is known as reality. Hutcheon states that she does not refer to parody as a ridiculing imitation and adds that parodic practices can be traced in different fields:

> What I mean by "parody" here – as elsewhere in this study – is not the ridiculing imitation of the standard theories and definitions that are rooted in eighteenth-century theories of wit. The collective weight of parodic practice suggests a redefinition of parody as repetition with critical distance that allows ironic signalling of difference at the very heart of similarity. In historiographic metafiction, in film, in painting, in music, and in architecture, this parody paradoxically enacts both change and cultural continuity: the Greek prefix para can mean both 'counter' or 'against' and 'near' or 'beside'.[45]

[44] Waugh, **Op.Cit.**, p.67.
[45] Hutcheon, **A Poetics of Postmodernism**, Ibid., p.26.

Considering Hutcheon's approach to parody, it can be said that even though postmodernists claim that nothing new can be produced anymore because everything is already written, Postmodernism indeed produces something new through historiographic metafiction:

> The intertextual parody of historiographic metafiction enacts, in a way, the views of certain contemporary historiographers: it offers a sense of the presence of the past, but a past that can be known only from its texts, its traces – be they literary or historical.[46]

Becoming the link between past and present, reality and fiction, historiographic metafiction stands in the middle of the terms and leads the reader to that link. There is no pure reality, or no pure fiction however the way they become united creates the originality and parody plays an important role in this sense.

Besides of parody, Brian McHale draws attention to apocryphal history and anachronism and historical fantasy in historiographic metafiction. What McHale refers to with these terms is the falsification of history in the fiction. The falsified famous historical events stand for the apocryphal history while anachronism is the disruption of temporal order with inconsistencies of details and setting.[47] For instance, some historiographic metafictional novels deliberately convert the real historical events by subverting the dates or the historical character roles. This is a way of activating perceptions because to read something accepted in a different context leads the reader to questioning. While the reader knows what subject is subverted, it makes the reader to view it in a different perspective. McHale highlights how classic historical fiction tries to hide the joint of history and reality and avoids anachronism and states postmodernism's difference:

[46] **Ibid.**, p.125.
[47] Barry Lewis, "Postmodernism and Literature (or: Word Salad Days,1960-90)", ed. Stuart Sim, **The Routledge Companion to Postmodernism**, London, Routledge , 2001, p.124.

> Postmodernist fiction, by contrast, seeks to foreground this seam by making the transition from one realm to the other as jarring as possible. This it does by violating the constraints on "classic" historical fiction: by visibly contradicting the public record of "official" history, by flaunting anachronisms; and by integrating history and the fantastic. [48]

In this respect, McHale calls apocryphal history, creative anachronism and historical fantasy as the typical strategies of the postmodernist historical novel. Through apocryphal history what is hidden in official version is aimed to be restored and revealed while the official history can also be totally replaced.[49] Such an interpretation of history on the fictional basis challenges the official history and does not try to undermine fiction by promoting what is interpreted as the official version of past reality. Instead, history and fiction are integrated in such a manner that McHale states:

> In Postmodernist revisionist historical fiction, history and fiction exchange places, history becoming fictional and fiction becoming "true" history – and the real world seems to get lost in the shuffle. But of course this is precisely the question postmodernist fiction is designed to raise: real, compared to what? [50]

The exchange of place between history and fiction as McHale refers to sometimes appears in a parallel manner. For instance, Graham Swift's novel **Ever After** which will be also examined in the third chapter constructs a parallel line with the Victorian era and contemporary period through the main character Bill Unwin's search. Step by step the Victorian crisis of Matthew Pearce reveals its parallelism with Bill Unwin's contemporary crisis. In this respect alternative worlds become one in both historical and fictional contexts. According to McHale with these features the postmodern historical novel is revisionist in terms of revising and reinterpreting the

[48] McHale,**Op.Cit**., p. 90.
[49] **Loc. Cit.**
[50] **Ibid**., p.96.

content of historical novel and transforming the conventions of historical fiction itself.[51]

Even though until now historical events are told to be subverted, famous historical characters are also the subject of postmodern subversion. Famous historical characters are placed in the construction of historiographic metafiction which is named as double-bind.[52] Besides the historical characters, the author whose position is already discussed as the problematic of postmodernism steps in to the fictional world that he creates. Thus there is a world that cannot be separated as fictional or real. With such character appearances in the fictional world it becomes possible to find the sense of reality and manifested fiction together. While the reader acknowledges the reality, he becomes aware that what he is reading is a fictionalized version of history. This fictionalized version of history contains stories and made up stories together that becomes double coded. Also, it should be noted that the postmodern practices about historiographic metafiction can be placed within the parodied framework of the story. While they can be used with historiographic purposes, they can also be used in different metafictional works within different modes.

Overall, it can be briefly interpreted that at the centre of the postmodern thought there lies the idea of pluralism which can be traced in Postmodern literature as well. Even though Postmodernism is interpreted in the light of Modernism, it goes beyond the practices of the Modernist thought. As postmodernism in literature breaks the traditional modes of narrative and understanding of fiction, it also foregrounds the idea of history to its context and develops the classic form of the novel into postmodern historiographic metafiction as Linda Hutcheon argues. With such a development, history's construction and narrative form is opened to new interpretations with the problematization of history which will be observed in the following two chapters.

[51]**Ibid.**, p.90.
[52]Lewis, **Op.Cit**., p.131.

CHAPTER II

REPRESENTING VICTORIANS IN POSTMODERN GROUNDS IN THE FRENCH LIEUTENANT'S WOMAN

"But I live in the age of Alain Robbe-Grillet and Roland Barthes; if this is a novel, it cannot be a novel in the modern sense of the word."[1]

Touching upon all the merits of postmodern thought, John Fowles is one of the pioneering authors of English postmodern metafiction. In his works, Fowles creates worlds that stretch through time and space with various characters and events.[2] By constructing diverse metafictional worlds, he also subverts the authorial roles of the realist novelist. In other words, he deconstructs the Author-God figure through postmodern approach to written texts that was examined in the first chapter. In his foreword to **The Timescapes of John Fowles**, Fowles states that his writing is far more experiments with a search, standing beyond the outward narrative and themes.[3] While his authorial and narrative search is constructed mostly upon existential premises, his criticism does not only deal with the contemporary world, but rather reaches back to history as a re-examination of the past. Among his works, **The French Lieutenant's Woman**, which is aimed to be examined in this chapter, is the one which parodies the 19th century by foregrounding a Victorian story with a postmodern perspective.

Based in the Victorian England, **The French Lieutenant's Woman**, as the name refers, is basically constructed upon the story of a female protagonist, Sarah Woodruff who is accused of a scandalous affair with a French lieutenant. Eventually her story catches the attention of Charles, an aristocrat by birth who is already

[1] John Fowles, **The French Lieutenant's Woman**, London,Vintage, 2004, p.95.
[2] William J. Palmer,**The Fiction of John Fowles: Tradition, Art, And The Loneliness of Selfhood,** Columbia, University of Missouri Press,1974, p.1.
[3] William H. Fawkner, **The Timescapes of John Fowles/ H.W. Fawkner; Foreword by John Fowles**, Rutherford, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1984, p.9.

engaged with Ernestina Freeman, a rich draper's daughter. As the story seems most likely to turn into a love-triangle, Fowles begins subverting the context of the story, by linking the 19th century conceptualization to present. In this respect, Fowles foregrounds the social dilemma of Victorians with existentialist by centralizing on Sarah and Charles. Sarah's self-struggle carrying a fallen woman image in a society with strict social ethos becomes Charles's enigmatic self-realization. Thus, the story goes beyond being a contemporary imitation of the 19th century, but becomes a critical parody, problematizing past and present which can be examined in the grounds of historiographic metafiction. As Linda Hutcheon argues, the postmodern revisit of the past cannot be considered nostalgic in the way Marxist critics claim, but rather, postmodern thinking confronts the past with present by criticising both in each other's lights.[4] In order to define the Victorian period with the 20th century perspective, Fowles uses parody. Through parodying 19th century England in metafiction, Fowles represents the individual's struggle in Victorian society by centralizing on the relationship between Sarah and Charles. Through parodic approach to Victorian concepts from narrative to Victorian repression and crisis, Fowles links his story to the 20th century existentialism and postmodern narrative. Hence, he first establishes the Victorian plot in Lyme Regis, setting the year 1867 by the omniscient narrator, who eventually reveals himself with contemporary analysis of the Victorian mores.[5] Afterwards, in the middle of the story, he manifests the postmodernism and the fictionality of his work, breaking the Victorian atmosphere with his contemporary perspective. Doing this, Fowles draws attention to Charles and Sarah revealing the existential potential of the century which is formed by Sarah's detachment from the society. Besides, he includes intertextual elements in order to design the Victorian background. This way, in order to examine how Fowles represents the Victorian period, I aim to focus on the motifs of Sarah, Charles and Ernestina after making a brief observation of the plot development. Focusing on how

[4] Linda Hutcheon, **A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction**, London, Routledge, 1988, p.39.
[5] Jonathan Loesberg, "The Afterlife of Victorian Sexuality: Foucault and Neo-Victorian Historical Fiction," **CLIO**, 2007, p.371.

Fowles depicts the hidden sides and concerns of the Victorians through his major characters, his subversion of the Victorian author through interruptions and multiple endings by using intertextual elements in a postmodern basis will also be examined in this chapter.

The novel, having an epigraph of Thomas Hardy, begins with the description of Lyme Regis in 1867. The detailed overlook to Lyme Regis by the omniscient narrator builds the impression of historical fiction which is examined in the first chapter of this study. Yet, he adds a parodic approach:

> Primitive yet complex, elephantine but delicate; as full of subtle curves and volumes as a Henry Moore or a Michelangelo; and pure, clean, salt, a paragon of mass. I exaggerate? Perhaps, but I can be put to the test, for the Cobb has changed very little since the year of which I write; though the town of Lyme has, and the test is not fair if you look back towards land.[6]

As the major setting of the novel is introduced and the reader is informed that this is a story concerning the Victorian age, the narrator's revealing himself in first person at the very early stage of the story is an important reference for the postmodern routes of the novel. Thus, from the very beginning, Fowles underlines that the narrator will be a playful one. This is followed by "the local spy"[7] who draws attention to Charles, Ernestina and Sarah, the major characters of the novel. Before coming to Sarah, there seems an ongoing quarrel between Ernestina and Charles through which their interests and characterisations can be observed. Their quarrel is important since it is about the major issues of the 19th century. Ernestina attacks Charles for his sharing opinions about Charles Darwin with her father as Charles states that they disagree about Darwin. As Darwin is the first concern of the dialogue, science is supported by the male character Charles while it seems disgraceful for Ernestina. However, next time it is Ernestina who refers to Jane Austen and now it is despised by Charles. There is also an interesting connotation

[6] Fowles, **Op.Cit**., p.4.
[7] Fowles, **Loc. Cit**.

about their names, since Charles shares the same name with Darwin, while Ernestina's name refers to seriousness. Besides, it is interesting that a fictional character refers to Jane Austen's fictional work. **Persuasion** just like **The French Lieutenant's Woman** is a fictional work, while the Cobb is at least a real landscape. In this respect, Fowles not only creates a realist notion by referring to Jane Austen, but also plays with the postmodern intertextual elements by making a fictional character to comment on yet another fictional character in a realistic setting.[8] Eventually, Sarah enters the view of the couple, with all her mystery from the distance and becomes another discussion topic between Charles and Ernestina. As the figure catches Charles's attention, Ernestina seems bothered to encounter her. From Ernestina's replies to Charles, it is revealed that this female figure is titled "Poor Tragedy" yet this is not the only nickname she has. The other "gross" nickname, as Ernestina titles is, "The French Lieutenant's Woman":

> 'But I'm intrigued. Who is this French Lieutenant?'
> 'A man she is said to have…'
> 'Fallen in love with?'
> 'Worse than that.'
> 'And he abandoned her? There is a child?'
> 'No. I think no child. It is all gossip.'
> 'But what is she doing there?'
> 'They say she waits for him to return.'[9]

This dialogue is significant as it reflects how female sexual liberty is a patriarchal problematic. What is discovered about Sarah is simply that she had a love-affair with a French lieutenant and now she is abandoned. At first glance, this may be taken as a typical story for the contemporary reader. However, in a Victorian basis it is such a degrading situation that Ernestina can hardly tell the rest of the story. As a lady, Ernestina takes on unease to face a fallen woman. Hence, she sides

[8] Jens Pollheide, **Postmodernist Narrative Strategies in the Novels of John Fowles**, Bielfield, Bielfield University Press, 2003, p.70.
[9] Fowles, **Op.Cit**., p.9.

with the patriarchy against a fallen woman. Nevertheless, Sarah's face as " not a beautiful face by any period's standard or taste"[10] becomes an unforgettable face for Charles. This is because her appearance cannot be typified in Victorian basis. The distant encounter of Sarah and Charles establishes the plot and eventually leads Charles to solve her mystery as an enlightened gentleman which ends up with his self-realization. In this respect, developing the plot in a Victorian context both in terms of story and narrative, the readers are introduced to the key points of the story. After constructing the realist Victorian impression in this chapter, Fowles starts to uncover more facts about his characters. Playing the omniscient narrator, he knows the contemporary reader's perception of Victorian life and through his playful method he discloses the hidden sides of the Victorians in the novel. Thus, he centralizes on his characters, especially Sarah who leads Charles's self-realization.

Sarah, the female protagonist of the novel, is first introduced with her nicknames as we have seen through Ernestina's dialogue. Disgracing nicknames "Poor Tragedy", and "The French Lieutenant's Woman" leave its place to her real name Sarah Woodruff when the vicar recommends her to old Mrs Poulteney, a wealthy old woman from Lyme Regis, looking for a companion for charity in her house. As she is introduced to Mrs Poulteney, a Dickensian grotesque figure, parodying the hypocritical link between wealth and religion of the Victorians, Sarah's background is reported by the vicar. According to the vicar, Sarah's father was a clergyman and was caring about his daughter's education. Thus, Sarah is more educated than she is expected to be. Besides, the vicar does not blame Sarah for her affair with the lieutenant and defines her as the victim by calling the lieutenant "a heartless deceiver."[11] Eventually, he adds that she suffers from melancholia. This melancholic situation explains her visits to the sea coast, where the reader first meets her. Madness was a major concept for Victorians and was related to various situations.[12] Sean Purchase also underlines James Cowles Pritchard's early Victorian claim in *Treatise on Insanity* (1835) that "madness represented a corrupted morality

[10] **Ibid.**, p.10.
[11] **Ibid.**, p.35.
[12] Sean Purchase, **Key Concepts in Victorian Literature**, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, p.93.

rather than any damage to 'intellectual faculties.'"[13] Towards the late 19th century Freudian perspective on madness broadened the view on madness and melancholia, however it appeared mostly being in relation with women and was reflected in literature. Therefore, in a Victorian context, Sarah's case is related with melancholia as a fallen woman. Nevertheless, Fowles's postmodern approach to uncover the hidden motives under Sarah's melancholia and love affair draws a different picture.

It is interesting that, before entering Sarah's inner world, Fowles first chooses to depict her as an image, and later presents information about her through different characters. From the beginning, she is informed to the reader as a fallen image in Victorian basis. According to the narrator, Sarah is an intelligent girl, but her intelligence is something distinctive. In a broader context, it carries further motives than the conventional Victorians, which is presented with Fowles's deconstruction of the Victorian plot. This is what distinguishes Sarah Woodruff from Ernestina Freeman. At first glance Ernestina seems the proper woman figure of the century, whereas Sarah's story makes her a fallen-woman. However, categorizing them in such terms is a product of the Victorian perception which is reflected before Fowles's manifestation of fictionality in the novel. Even though Fowles first creates the acknowledged impression about the two by using the omniscient narrator's perspective, he deconstructs this view approaching to the Victorian era as a postmodern author, which subsequently presents the fact that Sarah is falsifying her chastity in order to secure her independence in Lyme Regis. In this respect, Ernestina and Sarah become representatives of two oppositions. Ernestina Freeman is an ideal wife for a gentleman with her prettiness and obedient manners.[14] She is a conventional Victorian lady, embarrassed of telling that Sarah had a sexual affair with the French Lieutenant. In Victorian terms, she acts the way she is obliged like most of the women of her century. For Victorian society, a young girl was supposed

[13] Purchase, **Loc. Cit**.
[14] Qiming Ji, Ming Li. "Freedom in The French Lieutenant's Woman", **Theory and Practice in Language Studies**, 2013, p.2052.

to be brought up innocent and sexually ignorant before marriage.[15] However, entering Ernestina's room, Fowles draws attention to the supressed feelings of women by watching Ernestina's admiration of her own image:

> In her room that afternoon she unbuttoned her dress and stood before her mirror in her chemise and petticoats. For a few moments she became lost in a highly narcisstic self-contemplation. Her neck and shoulders did her face justice; she was really very pretty, one of the prettiest girls she knew. She imagined herself for a truly sinful moment as someone wicked – a dancer, an actress. And then, if you had been watching, you would have seen something very curious.[16]

The curiosity derives from the private moment Ernestina experiences. Fowles discloses the hidden desires Ernestina has in her mind that should never be voiced. The banished thoughts of sexuality frighten her and she feels it a must to control herself. Ernestina is not able to challenge the Victorian boundaries even in her imagination. Nevertheless, the narrator is able to uncover what she suppresses in her mind. In a broader sense, Fowles reflects another face of the Victorian women who were supposed to be limited and domestic. Obeying to the Victorian values does not totally banish the women's feelings and thoughts as in Ernestina's case. Yet, Ernestina prefers to obey her society and throughout the novel, she does not experience any change. She continues to be the conventional girl who seeks for a wealthy and socially acceptable living with her aristocrat fiancé. In this respect she differs from Sarah and her shallowness is realised by Charles the more he learns about Sarah. As Linda Hutcheon argues, postmodernism questions the closed systems that are totalized, but does not destroy since it aims to point out that systems are human constructs, they are not natural orders.[17] As examining the constructions, postmodernism also suits the human conditions into the examined systems without

[15]Martha Vicinus, "Introduction: The Perfect Victorian Lady", ed. Martha Vicinus, **Suffer and Be Still: Women in the Victorian Age**, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1972, p.ix.
[16] Fowles, **Op.Cit**., p.29.
[17] Hutcheon, **Op.Cit**., p.41.

denying individuality but rather undermining the dominancy.[18] This is the way Fowles examines his characters by constructing a Victorian story and situating them with various representations. By drawing attention to a Victorian past, he reflects a woman's place in a restricted society. As through Ernestina's characterization he reflects a restricted and obeying woman image, by Sarah he reflects a marginal image for her society at first place which eventually evolves into a modernized thinking for today. Thus, though both women belong to Victorian society, they represent opposition that Charles stands in-between as the enlightened Victorian gentleman.

From Charles's earlier dialogue with Ernestina, his interest in Darwinian innovations was observed. As a reference for his Darwinian interest, one of the epigraphs used in describing Charles belongs to Darwin. His interest in palaeontology and in current scientific developments brought many questions to his mind, but "After all, it was only 1867. He was only thirty-two years old. And he had always asked life too many questions."[19] The period is reminded once more before presenting Charles's personal history. Nevertheless, the narrator also reminds that he belongs to future, referring to our understanding of time while he implicitly remarks Charles's scientific interest by exemplifying time:

> Though Charles liked to think of himself as a scientific young man and would probably not have been too surprised had news reached him out of the future of the aeroplane, the jet engine, television, radar: what would have astounded him was the changed attitude to time itself. The supposed great misery of our century is the lack of time; our sense of that, not a disinterested love of science, and certainly not wisdom, is why we devote such a huge proportion of ingenuity and income of our societies to finding faster ways of doing things – as if the final aim of mankind was to grow closer not to a perfect humanity, but to a perfect lightning-flash.[20]

While Fowles comments on Charles's understanding of time, he also refers to the present by contemplating Charles's view about the present. In this respect there is

[18] **Ibid.,** p.46.
[19] Fowles, **Op.Cit**., p.12.
[20] **Ibid.**, p.13.

the use of projection. At first the period is indicated again and Charles is supposed to be pictured in Victorian terms. Nevertheless, the narrator puts forward a comment of contemporary problem of time linking it to Charles's situation. According to the postmodern author, Charles would be surprised to see contemporary men's attitude to time. Lack of time is a misery and the contemporary world cares for reaching lightning-flash more than perfect humanity because it would be the solution. However, the narrator also states that for Charles and his contemporaries "time signature over existence was firmly adagio."[21] which means time was a slow notion, a movement for the Victorians in the contemporary terms. The narrator's focus centralizes on Charles as a Victorian character, but he also wants to carry out his narrative plays through diachronic elements. Therefore, he refers to different aspects of the century, such as Karl Marx. Similar to earlier Jane Austen example, Marx is a real historical figure but his visit to the British Museum that afternoon is a fictive element which is used to reinforce the realistic theme of the novel.[22] With such playful comments Charles's characterization is presented to the reader as an aristocrat and a man interested in palaeontology and current scientific developments. Being described as a well-fortuned, aristocrat young man in Victorian terms, he seems to be a suitable husband for Ernestina.

As stated earlier, Fowles begins constructing the Victorian storyline with its major aspects. Until the interference in the Victorian narration, the reader acknowledges Ernestina and Charles as a suitable couple, whereas Sarah is a fallen figure for the whole society. Not only the upper class, but even for the lower class man Sarah is an image of shame; a local worker calls her a whore when Charles asks about Sarah. A lower-class man does not hesitate to judge her as being a whore in the period. Except for the authorial comments and intertextual elements in metafictional basis, Fowles is able to create a realist impression through omniscient narration. Picturing Sarah as the fallen antagonist to the Victorian status quo is a common Victorian plot. If we regard this as the first part of the story, we can say that the

[21] Fowles, **Loc. Cit.**
[22] Pollheide, **Op.Cit**., p.70.

second part uncovers the postmodern perception through presenting Sarah's modernized self and self-realizing of Charles. Before uncovering Sarah's motivation, however, Fowles breaks with the Victorian plot by manifesting the fictionality of his work:

> I do not know. This story I am telling is all imagination. These characters I create never existed outside my own mind. If I have pretended until now to know my character' mind and inner-most thoughts, it is because I am writing in (just as I have assumed some of the vocabulary and 'voice' of) a convention universally accepted at the time of my story: that the novelist stands next to God. [23]

Fowles's manifestation can be regarded as the reflection of what I have examined about the postmodern approach to literature in the first chapter of this study. Metafiction rejects the traditional figure of the author as a construction.[24] Interfering in the omniscient narration, Fowles enters the picture, announcing his work as fiction. Through this interruption he develops a metafictional beginning in the novel.[25] Since the plot is developed in the Victorian context by omniscient narration, a similar continuation is expected. However, before Fowles continues his Victorian fiction, he drives our attention to something beyond the realist norms. Through this metafictional beginning we face a different Sarah figure than the fallen one. Her fallen image is subverted into a free-willed woman while Charles is led to a self-struggle by her. As Fowles states, his novel exceeds the merits of the novel in modern sense, since he is a postmodern author and is prevailed with the 20th century criticism of the novel form.[26] Fowles's manifestation of the 20th century authorship can be interpreted with the diachronic references he made to the modern world until the chapter thirteen. However, at this point he breaks with what he constructed so far. According to Fowles, the reader may think that authors already have plans for the continuation of the story pattern while they write, but he strongly disagrees with this

[23] Fowles, **Op.Cit.**, p.95.
[24] Waugh, **Op.Cit.**, p.16.
[25] Nicol, **Op.Cit**., p.108.
[26] Fowles, **Loc.Cit.**

interpretation because he thinks that "a genuinely created world must be independent of its creator; 'a planned world (a world that fully reveals its planning) is a dead world.'"[27] Referring to the 19th century author and narrator link, Roesberg underlines the fact that nineteenth century realist authors commented on how their characters became real and free, but in contrast to the postmodern author, they avoided to make it within their work in order not to destroy the illusion and release that their work is fiction.[28] However, Fowles does not find any harm in expressing the fictional side of his story, because postmodern literature is self-conscious of constructing fiction as previously stated. In authorial basis, Fowles believes that the author is still a god, but not in the Victorian image:

> The novelist is still a god, since he creates (and not even the most aleatory avant-garde modern novel has managed to extirpate its author completely); what has changed is that we are no longer the gods of the Victorian image, omniscient and decreeing; but in the new theological image, with freedom our first principle, not authority.[29]

In **The Return of the Omniscient Narrator** Paul Dawson links Fowles's attitude to John Barth's "Literature of Exhaustion" in which he claims that as long as the contemporary authors build an ironic awareness in constructing their narratives, they can reclaim the pleasures of plot and narrative.[30] What Barth claims is practised by Fowles in historiographic basis and he not only declares the fictionality of his work, but also claims that the 20th century author image is not like the Victorian author god anymore. That is the reason, why his characters are freed. In this respect, he both refers to postmodern writing practices and he problematizes the past which can be observed in parallel to Linda Hutcheon's view, especially after this chapter of declaration when he starts to heighten his criticism on the Victorians through Sarah,

[27] **Ibid.**, p.96.
[28] Roesberg, **Op.Cit**.,p. 374.
[29] Fowles, **Op.Cit**., p.97.
[30] Paul Dawson, **The Return of the Omniscient Narrator: Authorship and Authority in Twenty-First Century Fiction**, The Ohio State University Press, Colombus, 2013, p.67.

uncovering the existentiality in the age, and challenging the Victorian context he established with multiple endings through a contemporary perspective.

In the light of the Victorian observation until the chapter thirteen, from now on I aim to focus on how Victorianism is subverted through the postmodern approach, which takes place after Fowles's declaration of fiction. In this respect, Charles and Sarah's relationship should be observed. After Fowles's declaration, even though the plot continues in the Victorian context, how we perceive Sarah changes because Fowles transforms her "fallen image" into a free-willed woman. Sarah's transformation is passively achieved and Charles's repressed self is awakened by the consequence of their relationship. As McHale remarks, Fowles represents the first references of modernity in Victorian culture through characterization of Sarah by giving her 1960s mentality in a Victorian context.[31] Sarah's modern mentality is shaped by the Victorian approach to women's place in society and oppression of female sexuality. Victorian society is known by its highly strict social codes, especially for women. As previously mentioned in Ernestina's case, Victorian women were supposed to abstain from sexuality before marriage. An ideal life for a woman required marriage, a domestic life devoted to the household, thus brought the concept "the angel in the house". For an unmarried woman, on the other hand, a necessary occupation was being a governess which was subject to charitable works.[32] A governess was supposed to live in the household, or visit the household daily to teach and accompany the employer. As in many Victorian novels, Fowles constructs Sarah as a governess, however, before we learn that she indeed has the education to be a governess, we are given her notorious love affair which matters more than her other qualities. From the beginning of the novel, Sarah's affair with a French lieutenant is reflected by different perceptions. While Ernestina as an upper-class girl finds her affair disturbing, a vicar finds her pitiful. Yet, another cruel judgment comes from a local worker, calling her a prostitute. Thus, Sarah can be referred to as a notorious character from the beginning which helps us to observe the

[31] Brian McHale, **Postmodernist Fiction**, New York, Methuen, 1987, p.93.
[32] Vicinus, **Op.Cit.**, p.4.

approach to woman in the century. Considering all these, we should first acknowledge that, even though Sarah is known through this affair and even the novel has its title referring to Sarah, Fowles does not let us reach Sarah's motives totally.[33] We discover Sarah step by step through different approaches and finally we focus how she reflects herself to Charles and Charles's perception. Thus, Fowles first reflects how Victorians would approach Sarah's case and after that he breaks the Victorian approach, but in such an unexpected manner that it plays both with Victorian and postmodern existential ideas that links to Charles and through both problematics Fowles reaches his way of representing of the Victorian age.

In this respect, how Charles engagement with Sarah's story personally comes in the 18th chapter when Charles goes to fossil hunt. During the Victorian development of the story, Charles and Sarah came across each other many times. Nevertheless, in the previous acquaintances of Sarah and Charles, there was no direct dialogue about Sarah's situation. Sarah was mostly trying to avoid any encounter with him. However, in this chapter for the first time Sarah seems eager to contact Charles. What is important here is Charles's hesitation about Sarah in spite of his attraction; he plans how to avoid having a conversation with Sarah in case he comes across her. Yet, his plans are in vain because Sarah catches him. First she presents him fossils, knowing his interest in palaeontology. Eventually, she uncovers her desire of speaking to Charles about herself and thus Charles's dilemma starts to rise. Even though he tries to avoid her, he also wants to see her face which has such an attractive yet sorrowful expression, but he does not know how far he should communicate with her. Sarah tells that she knows what she will face if she goes to London, as a disgraced woman when Charles advises her leaving Lyme. As Charles is looking for a way to close the issue and trying to understand why Sarah wants to confess to him, we see Sarah's observation of the circle around her for the first time:

[33] Tony E. Jackson, "Charles and the Hopeful Monster: Postmodern Evolutionary Theory in the French Lieutenant's Woman", **Twentieth Century Literature**,1997, p.227.

> ‘Because you have travelled. Because you are educated. Because you are a gentleman. Because… because, I do not know, I live among people the world tells me are kind, pious, Christian people. And they seem to me crueller than the cruellest heathens, stupider than the stupidest animals. I cannot believe that the truth is so. That life is without understanding or compassion. That there are not spirits generous enough to understand what I have suffered and why I suffer… and that, whatever sins I have committed, it is not right that I should suffer so much.’ [34]

This remains as Sarah’s first manifestation of what she really thinks and feels about the world around her. Sarah’s referring to Charles as educated and gentleman is important in terms of Charles’s attitude to Sarah. What Sarah describes is the general portrayal of Charles that we have at the beginning. This is the image that Charles enjoys. Thus Sarah gives Charles a chance to offer her an explanation, a way to get rid of the judgement of the society, which she calls “the cruellest, stupidest animals” even though they are meant to be kind Christians. While Charles tests the fossils he finds, now he is being tested by Sarah. Yet, Charles fails this test and cannot justify his education and gentleness, because he is speechless and further dubious to be seen with Sarah. Therefore, he tries to leave there as soon as possible, but Sarah seems confident to meet Charles again saying that she has no one and someone should understand her. While the struggle continues among the two, Fowles reminds us that we see three different Charles images with different vocabulary via Charles which he likens to “Darwinian phrase: cryptic coloration, survival by learning to blend with one’s surroundings”.[35] Charles has already a portrayal of a gentleman. Yet, he has different dimensions in his inner self and outer self which are realised by Sarah. However, there is not much to learn from Ernestina since she reflects a shallow figure when compared to Sarah. Fowles draws attention to their situation, the fragile bonds between Ernestina and Charles while Sarah calls him to break those boundaries of the society and refers to Charles “come clean Charles, come clean.” [36] Yet, there is a long way for Charles to understand what Sarah means because eventually he wants to escape from his relation with Sarah. He knows that it

[34] Fowles, **Op.Cit**., p. 142.
[35] **Ibid.**, p.145.
[36] **Ibid.**, p.146.

is not proper for him to be associated with Sarah because as Fowles mentioned at the very beginning of the novel, "after all he was a Victorian". Yet, his being a Victorian does not rescue him and even though he does not know it as "a Victorian", he is taken into an existential world in a Victorian society.

Taken into an enigma, Charles cannot escape from his Victorian boundaries easily. In this sense, Fowles underlines how Victorian men were in similar condition with women, caught in the trap of Victorian society. We know that, Charles starts to find Ernestina childish and shallow the more he discovers about Sarah. However, he also proves how he struggles between his own shallowness constructed through society and his enlightened self which becomes existentialist in contemporary terms. In order to examine Charles's dilemma, Fowles uses the problematics of female identity and sexuality by extending Sarah's case. After with his encounter with Sarah, Charles finds the opportunity to evaluate Sarah's situation with doctor Grogan, who visits Mrs Poulteney casually and knows Sarah's situation well. Doctor Grogan seems an enlightened figure similar to Charles as they chat about scientific and political issues in aunt Tranter's party. However, I insist on using the word "evaluate" even though Charles brings Sarah's issue deliberately, because both Charles and Grogan speak about Sarah like an obscure medical case. Dr Grogan does not have a despising attitude towards Sarah at first, but stating that "We know more about the fossils out there on the beach than we do about what takes place in that girl's mind."[37] he makes it clear that he is not able to understand her motives and links her case to melancholia. Charles is also unable to solve Sarah's inner world. As Cora Kaplan states in **Victoriana: Histories, Fictions, Criticism**, throughout the novel Charles is forced to listen to various nineteenth century views from morality to medicine and female sexuality, nevertheless:

[37] **Ibid**., p.155.

> No more than Freud, and with something of the same ambivalence about women's demand for independence, can Charles, or his narrator, or Fowles find out what the women they have constructed really want.[38]

In this respect, since, Sarah remains ambiguous and does not accept any help, Grogan's only advice is her departure from Lyme which is also refused by Sarah. Thus Dr Grogan further claims:

> In the sense you intend, yes. Medicine can do nothing. You must not think she is like us men, able to reason clearly, examine her motives, understand why she behaves as she does. One must see her as a being in a mist. All we can do is wait and hope that the mists rise.[39]

Dr Grogan's claim contains such an ironic criticism because he compares Sarah to themselves, to the men who are reasonable, and labels Sarah as not being reasonable. Once again, Sarah is regarded as an outcast of the society, far from being reasonable, as an eccentric in Hutcheon's terms. Yet, it is ironic that, two enlightened men, interested in Darwinian developments, cannot find another way than calling Sarah as a strange case and commenting that she should leave. In this respect, it can be said that this interpretation does not make any difference than Ernestina's or dairyman's view on Sarah. The only difference is Charles and Grogan discuss her case in more formal and so-called enlightened bases, but not with a view that is truly enlightened. Nevertheless, soon Sarah proves how she is conscious about herself and how she is detached from the Victorian world in modern sense.

As she meets Charles once again in chapter 20, we hear her scandalous story from her point of view for the first time. At the beginning of her story she has a desperate tone. She confesses how she was mistaken by being attracted to the handsome and brave lieutenant. This may be seen as a typical Victorian story and would be acceptable because Sarah as a young governess accepts her guilt and is

[38] Cora Kaplan, **Victoriana: Histories, Fiction, Criticism**, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2007, p. 97.
[39] Fowles, **Op.Cit.**, p.157.

desperate for being attracted by a devilish womanizer who is disguised as an honourable man. However, she does not end her story blaming him, she reveals something else which changes the course of the story. What Sarah reveals is "giving herself to the French Lieutenant which makes her doubly dishonoured woman, by circumstances and by choice."[40] Sarah's confession becomes twice astonishing and disgraceful since having intimacy with a man without marriage is already a disgrace for the Victorian society. For instance, in Thomas Hardy's famous late-Victorian novel, **The Tess of the d'Urbervilles**, Tess is abandoned and punished by her lover Angel Clare only because Angel learns that she had sexual affair with Alec without marriage. When in reality it was rape, Tess is the one who is punished by Angel and indeed by the society. Tess cannot defend herself against the victimization of the society and cannot survive. Even though Hardy tries to portray a brave Tess, he as an author caught between the old and new values of the turn of the century, knows that Tess cannot survive in such a world and expresses how society victimizes the female identity. However, as the postmodern author, Fowles represents a free-willed Sarah whose survival is presented through the fallacy of being a fallen woman in the very same society of Tess. Sarah's shame is not fatal, rather, it is her way of existence. This fallacy is the only thing that keeps her free from all the social roles of female identity:

> What has kept me alive is my shame, my knowing that I am truly not like other women. I shall never have children, a husband, and those innocent happinesses they have. And they will never understand the reason for my crime.[41]

Therefore, we can interpret that Fowles begins to assert existentialism to the Victorian framework through Sarah's sexuality. Self existence is one of Fowles major concerns. Palmer emphasises Fowles's existentialist philosophy by referring to **Myth of Sisyphus** in which Camus examines existentialism through Sisyphus who is

[40] **Ibid.**, p.175.
[41] **Ibid.**, p.176.

punished with his rock. By referring to Camus's claim that what matters is one's awareness of his existence and freedom so that he can live, Palmer argues that for Fowles the meaning of existence is the same, that is existence is all.[42] Fowles himself puts forward his appreciation of existentialism in **The Aristos**, by asserting that, "Existentialism is the revolt of the individual against all those systems of thought, theories of psychology, and social and political pressures that attempt to rob him of his individuality."[43] Thus, in the light of Fowles's approach to existential thought, Sarah's situation makes more sense to the contemporary reader even though it is not explicable in terms of Charles in the Victorian framework. Sarah is obsessed with freedom. Her obsession with freedom alienates her from the world of objects and evokes an existential self-image of the twentieth century in Sartrean terms.[44] Without freedom she cannot exist, so she admits that she preferred to be accepted as a fallen woman for the sake of her freedom. Similar to Charles, Sarah is also a member of the Victorian society and she cannot make such a decision by being influenced of existential philosophy in the Victorian age. Yet, the way she breaks the society's limitations implies existential motives in a contemporary perspective. In this respect, Sarah is also similar to the postmodern author by creating her own fiction with the affair in order to exist.[45] Regarding Sarah's confession, we can observe how Fowles reaches the problematization between past and present through the restrictions of the Victorian society as stated previously. Developing the problematics through a woman's marginal attempt to gain freedom, Fowles also draws attention to Charles's approach which represents the Victorian approach. Charles is puzzled and cannot even find words to describe his feelings. Eventually the narrator uncovers Charles's mind. Not surprisingly, Charles cannot understand Sarah's giving herself to a man, but he is able to replace himself with the lieutenant Varguennes in his imagination, victimizing Sarah sexually which Fowles comments "Deep in himself he forgave her

[42] Palmer, **Op. Cit**., p.8.
[43] John Fowles, **Aristos**, London, Picador, 1993, p.122.
[44] Jackson, **Op.Cit**., p.229.
[45] Linda Hutcheon, "The 'Real World(s)' of Fiction: The French Lieutenant's Woman", **English Studies in Canada**, 1978, p.90.

unchastity; and glimpsed the dark shadows where he might have enjoyed himself." [46] In other words, learning Sarah's intentional affair forces the repressed desires in Charles mind. The pity and sympathy he feels towards Sarah transforms to sexual desire. Though he cannot fully understand what Sarah means by creating her own freedom, he enjoys the fantasy secretly in his mind, since he cannot reveal it in Victorian terms.[47] With this experience, Charles falls into an idealized world which Fowles explains by referring to the Pre-Raphaelites who admired the beauty of nature and sexuality. However, Charles cannot define Sarah in reality, but rather thinks of her in a mythical world. Therein lies the problem with Charles. What Sarah offers to Charles can only be regarded as mythical, because he does not yet have the modern enlightenment thus he feels himself in between and instead of facing the reality, he prefers to enjoy it in the mythical world. However, the next chapter draws attention to Sam, one of Charles's workers in the household. Sam's relationship with his lover reveals Charles's being trapped even further. Sam and Mary appear in the woods, where they freely enjoy and share their love both physically and emotionally. Charles watches them in embarrassment and in hesitation contemplating if Sarah knew them or not. As Sarah sees them, she gives an unexpected smile. Ironically, Fowles brings what Charles imagined in his fantasy world in front of his eyes by using Sam and Mary's relationship. Charles as a gentleman cannot have such a joy either with Ernestina or with Sarah. What he experiences with Ernestina is childish and almost artificial while what he desires for Sarah is impossible. Therefore, he chooses to protect his gentleman self and tells Sarah that they should never meet alone again.

Insofar as Fowles first developed the Victorian framework introducing his characters and eventually he started to reveal Sarah's motivations though he kept them limited. During Sarah's manifestation of herself, she took Charles into her enigmatic world which was destructive for Charles. Carrying the plot from Victorian to a subversive world both in narrative and storyline, Fowles started to play with one

[46] Fowles,**The French Lieutenant's Woman**, p.177.
[47] Loesberg, **Op.Cit.**, p.376.

of the greatest taboos of the Victorian society by using the fallacy of Sarah's sexual encounter with the French lieutenant. As Charles entered this world, he first tried to keep away from Sarah because as we have seen, he is portrayed as an aristocrat gentleman. Eventually, Fowles managed to astonish him by motivating Sarah's sexuality in contemporary terms. However, it was only the first step to the subversion of Victorian values. The biggest manifestation rises when Charles follows Sarah to Exeter through which Fowles creates two different endings for his novel, expressing and reminding us that this is a metafictional world, just as he did in chapter thirteen. In this respect, the endings should be examined in order to understand better Fowles's development of Victorian representation in metafictional framework.

Before leading Charles's way to Exeter in order to find Sarah, Fowles puzzles him further and suggests a typical ending for the Victorian story he develops. The development of the Victorian ending begins to be intertwined in chapter 22 when Charles receives a telegram from his uncle at Winsyatt. According Charles, Uncle Robert calls him to offer to move to the estate so that he can start to run the business when he gets married. Another possibility is he will offer one of the houses they own as a wedding gift to Charles. Even though Ernestina does not have sympathy to Uncle Robert, Charles thinks it would be pleasing for Ernestina. Fowles once again refers to Ernestina's conventionality through her dislike for the uncle by stating, "I do not think she is to be blamed. Like so many daughters of rich parents, before and since, she had been given no talent except that of conventional good taste… that is, she knew how to spend a great deal of money in dressmakers', milliners' and furniture shops."[48] After all Ernestina is aware that for an old aristocrat she is just a draper's daughter. In the Victorian era, there was hierarchal class distinction between old aristocracy and the nouveaux riches that were described as upstarts.[49] Thus, Ernestina was aware of her position. Ernestina's dislike turns into anger as soon as Uncle Robert informs Charles that he is about to get married which means Charles is most likely to be disinherited due to his uncle's marriage with a widowed and the

[48] Fowles, **Op.Cit.**, p.192.
[49] Purchase, **Op.Cit**., p.23.

possibility of having an heir. Charles is already puzzled in emotion and thought by Sarah's confession and his uncle puzzles him in terms of economic concerns. The material concern is related to his marriage to Ernestina because he should be providing a good life to her. Therefore, Fowles gives a brand new problem for Charles which is again a challenge for his aristocratic and rational self. Meanwhile, Sarah's presence does not leave him because she has the most important part in developing the various endings of the novel. In chapter 25, Charles receives a note from Sarah, informing that she wants to see him for one last time. Drawn in such a dilemma both by his sphere and by Sarah's sphere Charles meets Dr Grogan in chapter 27. Comparing Charles and Dr Grogan's earlier conversation about Sarah to the recent one, we can observe that Dr Grogan is determinant about his views on Sarah while Charles's transformation is apprehensible. According to Dr Grogan, Sarah attempts to manipulate the young gentleman by using her pitiful story and her innocence. Thus Charles should be careful not to feel an emotional attachment to her:

> Man, man, are we not both believers in science? Do we not both hold that truth is the one great principle? What did Socrates die for? A keeping social face? A homage to decorum? Do you think in my forty years as a doctor I have not learnt to tell when a man is in distress? And because he is hiding the truth from himself? Know thyself, Smithson, *know* thyself![50]

Dr Grogan's call to Charles to "Know thyself" pretty much resembles the earlier call "Come clean, Charles, Come clean" by Sarah. Since Charles is not able to understand what Sarah represents, he reluctantly but "rationally" as in Dr Grogan's views, agrees about sending Sarah to Exeter so that she can have medical care and he can go back to his affair with Ernestina as it is supposed to be. Once again, Sarah is represented as a medical case that should be cured and most importantly that should be kept away not to destroy the rational gentleman. Yet Charles is already destroyed as he cannot challenge his boundaries. Before Sarah is sent to Exeter, Charles visits Sarah for the last time, informing once more that she should leave. For the first time

[50] Fowles, **Op.Cit**., p.226.

Charles seems likely to break the walls between the two and takes her in his arms, almost kissing her lips. Nevertheless, all of a sudden he pushes her back with the fear that they are seen at the end of the chapter. As we have observed until now, even though Charles faces his inner transformation, he is still passivized by his own Victorian motives.

Leading the story to the end, Fowles interrupts in the chapter 35 in a similar way to the famous chapter 13. It appears as a parenthesis to the Victorian taboo of sexuality. Fowles draws attention to the duplicity of Victorians in terms of sexuality at the beginning:

> What are we faced with in the nineteenth century? An age where woman was sacred; and where you could buy a thirteen-year-old girl for a few pounds – a few shillings, if you wanted her for only an hour or two. Where more churches were built than in the whole previous history of the country; and where one in sixty houses in London was a brothel. (the modern ratio would be nearer one in six thousand)[51]

Beginning with the duplicity, Fowles makes his claim that Victorians were indeed as highly sexed as contemporary people and even more preoccupied than us.[52] I would like to underline this claim particularly, because so far, the Victorian plot expressed how sexuality is something mysterious for Victorians through examples of Sarah and Ernestina as female representations of sexuality. However, a contemporary eye is able to uncover the real motivations of the Victorians. Even though they might be aware, they would not express it, but a contemporary author does not hesitate to relate it to present. Thus he sets the enigma upon a sexual disgrace and leading Charles to the end of the story, he makes him face two sexual encounters.

His first sexual encounter is with a prostitute in chapter 39. While Charles tries to get away from Sarah in order not to destroy his nobility and responsibility towards Ernestina, he decides to pay for a prostitute to recover from his self-

[51] **Ibid.**, p.268.
[52] **Ibid.**, p.269.

destruction. If we consider Charles as playing the victimizer to fulfil his desires, we soon realize that he is the real victim rather than a victimizer. First he discovers that this young prostitute has a baby to take care of. When he asks if she did not try any other way to earn her living after being abandoned by a man, the girl expresses no implications of shame or regret. As soon as Charles finishes his drink and is ready to act, he is dazzled because he learns that the girl's name is Sarah. Thus he cannot perform the victimizer once he is faced with some other Sarah. The idealized Sarah for him is not a prostitute, but a way of freedom. However, just as he cannot have her, he cannot have another Sarah in spite of his superiority.

From now on, the first possible ending of the novel takes place. In chapter 43, Charles decides to continue his engagement with Ernestina. Even though in previous chapters, he feels insulted by having the offer to take part in Mr Freeman's business with his affection on Charles and thinking of his daughter, he now realizes that he has no other choice than to carry on with his gentleman self. He once more acknowledges that Sarah was a representation of freedom for him that he could never reach and comes to conclusion that "There was no doubt. He was one of life's victims, one more ammonite caught in the vast movements of history, stranded now for eternity, a potential turned to a fossil."[53]This desperate self-realization which is led by Sarah's enigmatic approach eventually ends with disappearance of Sarah and the marriage of Ernestina and Charles. Besides, Fowles knows how to add humour and parodies Mrs Poultney's religious concerns of going to heaven by an imaginary appointment of God and Mrs Poulteney in heaven, with an insisting Mrs Poultney to be expected to heaven telling, "My man! Make my way. I am she. Mrs Poulteney of Lyme Regis."[54]

Concluding his story with an expected ending, but adding parody through Mrs Poultney, Fowles eventually states that what happened in this traditional ending did not happen in the expected way and those are not what happened but Charles thought what might happen in his journey from London to Exeter. As the postmodern

[53] **Ibid.**, p.336.
[54] **Ibid.**, p.341.

author, Fowles aims to inform us about Charles's mind. As we have seen in the first ending, he decides to marry Ernestina and leave this adventure behind. However, he is led to Sarah more than ever as Sarah sends her address to him. Thus, Fowles states that he was not cheating the reader but:

> Where I have cheated was in analysing the effect that three-word letter continued to have on him. It tormented him, it obsessed him, it confused him. The more he thought about it the more Sarah-like that sending of the address – and nothing more – appeared. It was perfectly in key with all her other behaviour, and to be described only by oxymoron; luring-receding, subtle-simple, proud-begging, defending-accusing. The Victorian was a prolix age; and unaccustomed to the Delphic.[55]

What Fowles states does not only imply Charles's dilemma and motivation of following Sarah, but it expresses the metafictional routes of this novel over again. So far, we know that even though Fowles begins his story in a Victorian context and setting, he reminds us for several times that what we read is a product of the imagination and by using historiographic plays he interprets Victorianism both through their perspective and our perspective. However, he does not put an end to his novel, even though he knows the typical ending that would fit in to the Victorian context and carries his metafictional practices and reminders to subvert Victorianism as the narrator. As Hutcheon states, this is not a conventional Victorian novel, thus it cannot end with a closed ending, but rather, in the name of Sarah and her act as the protagonist, a modern, freed way of ending should be granted.[56] Therefore, his interference with the ending asserting that, it happened in some other way, is not surprising for the reader. Nevertheless, we still do not expect such a pluralistic ending which shows both postmodern qualities and the subversion of Victorianism.

The subversion begins when Charles finally meets Sarah in her hotel room at Exeter. Consequently, Charles makes his choice. Hesitating even to touch her in the previous chapters, he now gains his freedom and wants to fulfil his sexual desire to

[55] **Ibid.**, p.343.
[56] Hutcheon, **Op.Cit.**, p.93.

Sarah. What he imagines becomes real now and finally he goes into a sexual affair with Sarah. After this encounter, Charles feels that he reached a self-recognition because he admits that he came there by choice and he realizes how they misunderstood Sarah. However, his appreciation of Sarah does not last long as he finds out the fact that Sarah is a virgin by the blood on his shirt, thus he comes to a new recognition which is the most dazzling fact throughout the novel: "he forced a virgin."[57] This astonishing fact about Sarah destroys everything from plot to character because the plot is based on her sexual affair with the lieutenant through which she gains her freedom. However, the final manifestation of Sarah destroys everything. She turns the whole story into reality, not with a French lieutenant but with an English gentleman Charles. Therefore, Charles literally replaces the lieutenant, but not as a victimizer, but the victim of an enigma in a Victorian story. Eventually there awaits two possible endings for Charles that are officially ruled by the author in a represented world which enables the author to activate different approaches in mind as in Fowles's view.[58] Therefore, Fowles in chapter 55 follows Charles in the train, not only as a narrator, but as a character asking "what he is supposed to do with Charles?" With such a metafictional impulse, he informs that he has two endings in his mind.

On one hand, there is a happy ending, which restores what Charles and Sarah have gone through so far. Being a happy ending, though, does not mean that it is a simplistic one. After Charles loses Sarah and goes back to where he belongs, he understands that he cannot carry such a life and begins to travel. However, he is never able to get rid of Sarah in his mind and he tries to find her. Finally, in chapter 60 he discovers where she lives. Sarah was already a mysterious and unique character and her new life after leaving Charles, gains further authenticity. Sarah is employed by an artist and her transformation can be observed in her bohemian outlook, "someone in the full uniform of the New Woman"[59] that is far from his black outfit that she used to wear. Nevertheless, it can be said that, Sarah was already

[57] Fowles, **Op.Cit**., p.357.
[58] Nicol, **Op.Cit.**, p. 110.
[59] Fowles, **Op.Cit.**, p.446.

a representative of New Woman in passivized ways. New Woman is the concept that emerged in the 19th century as an early defence for women's rights and freedom. Though never titled a "New Woman" until now and mostly despised by the circle she lives in, Sarah has gained her own freedom by pretending to be a fallen woman. Now, her being a New Woman is recognized by Charles. Sarah does not think of marriage and she has gained a new circle with whom she is happy and does not have to pretend to enjoy her freedom as an individual. Subsequently, Sarah's disregard for marriage disappoints Charles who broke his engagement with Ernestina and has been searching for Sarah ever since. As Charles tries to understand Sarah's position in her employment, Fowles reveals the employer, Dante Gabriel Rossetti who is the famous name of pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Adding Rossetti to the picture as Sarah's employer hence presents a possibility of sexual dimension. What is more, Christina Rossetti enters the scene as the character to explain to Charles Sarah's real self. Even though Fowles makes references to major historical figures throughout the novel, for the first time he brings two major figures as characters. It is important that Sarah finally finds her place to rest and practise her own motivations because the Rossettis are famous for their appreciation of the female-self. Another and major surprise for Charles is to discover about their daughter Lalage. Sarah can be regarded as a single-mother in modern sense and does not need the marriage institution to raise her child. By her choice of freedom in Rossetti's home, she protects her integrity by giving up her passion to Charles and bringing up her child on her own as a New Woman against the restrictions of her society.[60] However, at the end of the chapter, despite all the desperation between them, Fowles decides to unite them with a humorous comment on Lalage's beating her doll towards her father like a "thousand violins cloy very rapidly without percussion."[61]

On the other hand, there is the second ending which finalizes the novel by referring to existentialism. The first ending is followed by the second ending in the same setting where Charles finds Sarah. However, in contrast to the previous ending,

[60] Kaplan, **Op.Cit.**, p.96.
[61] Fowles, **Op.Cit**., p.463.

Charles does not try to reunite with Sarah, but rather he complains about all he has gone through so far because of Sarah. Even though his complaints indicate that he still cannot solve the enigmatic nature of Sarah, he is able to recognize the reverse between them:

> There was a time when you spoke of me as your last resource. As your one remaining hope in life. Our situations are now reversed. You have no time for me. Very well. But don't try to defend yourself. It can only add malice to an already sufficient injury. [62]

What Charles at least recognizes is true, but in my opinion, what Charles thinks now happened is already valid since the beginning of the novel. Charles in order to reach a self-recognition has always needed a character like Sarah. After this burst of anger, we learn that Fowles is once again a character, watching what is going on from the window. Fowles does not give up using metafictionality until the end and finally he sets Charles free from this enigma, stating that he at least has discovered an atom of faith in himself to realize the life. Thus he comes to existential terms, freed from the Victorian boundaries in a bitter way. While Fowles states before that, he does not make any preferences between the two endings, this appears to be the preferable ending by uniting both the Victorian and the existential values together for one last time.[63] Besides, it is observed that in both official endings, he totally destroys the possibility of ending the novel with Charles and Ernestina's marriage and leaving Sarah out of the picture. In both cases, Fowles does not victimize his protagonist Sarah to the Victorian society, but he frees her further. In accordance with not ending his novel in Victorian terms, he keeps up his metafictional practices and even slightly enters the picture as a character.

Overall, throughout this chapter, in what ways Fowles represented the Victorian era in **The French Lieutenant's Woman** is aimed to be examined. As it is observed, Fowles does not follow a single path while constructing his Victorian plot because he does not only aim to imitate the past. His concerns of authorship and his

[62] **Ibid.**, p.466.
[63] Nicol, **Op.Cit.**, p.111.

approach to the Victorian world shape the novel in historiographic context that is defined by Hutcheon. This is because Fowles does not just portray Victorians in the conventional way. He portrays them in accordance to the contemporary view by developing a contemporary approach to a historical period which is famous for its conventions. Besides, throughout the novel he reminds us that this is metafiction, but he creates a new approach to the Victorian society by Sarah and Charles, which is an approach that cannot be openly made by a Victorian author. Thus, through Fowles's writerly approach, Victorians are represented with their anxieties and boundaries which can indeed be broken, since what they hide does not mean what they cannot do. In this respect, Fowles manages to uncover the period's taboos and develop a new approach to Victorianism which is not much different from today.

CHAPTER III

POSTMODERN REVISIT OF VICTORIAN CRISIS IN EVER AFTER

"I invent all this. I don't know that this is how it happened. It can't have been like this simply because I imagine it so." [1]

Graham Swift, one of the major authors of contemporary English fiction, is famous for his multi-layered metafictions which are mostly foregrounded by familial themes, haunted past events and self-struggles. Along with various themes, Swift's novels bring together different practices of the metafictional genre. His novels are not easily categorized since he constructs his novels by using a variety of metafictional forms. His novels are complex in terms of categorization, however, one major aspect which is central to the majority of his works is his fascination with historicism.[2] Each novel of Swift partakes historiographic line along with the context and theme that he underlies in his work. He does not necessarily take the distant past into account, he rather combines distant past with recent past by carrying it to present in accordance with personal history and official history. In other words, how he develops a historical framework in his novels can be interpreted as linking the past and present through official and personal histories which opens way to interpret it with the historiographic metafiction theory of Linda Hutcheon since it is not a nostalgic return to the past, but a critical one.

Postmodernism, as Linda Hutcheon argues, reinstalls and entirely problematizes historical knowledge.[3] What Linda Hutcheon states about the

[1] Graham Swift, **Ever After**, London, Pan Books: Picador,1992, p.109.
[2] David Malcolm, **Understanding Graham Swift,** Columbia, University of South Carolina Press, 2003, p.9.
[3] Linda Hutcheon, **A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction**, London, Routledge, 1988, p.90.

problematization of history can be observed in Swift's novels. For instance, his celebrated novel **Waterland** is based on the story of Tom Crick, a history teacher in his fifties. Tom develops unusual methods of history teaching, in order to present a sense of history to his students.[4] While he employs a wide range of historical events dating back to the18th century to present both in official and personal basis, Tom also reflects his personal crisis he is going through at present. Parallelization between history and his personal crisis is the way that Swift problematizes history. Through Tom's narration and approach to history, Swift examines the plurality of history. In this respect, along with retaining various postmodern elements in **Waterland**, Swift also encourages readers to think historically by problematizing and pluralizing the idea of history in parallel with Linda Hutcheon's problematics of history in Historiographic metafiction.[5]

Among his novels, **Ever After** is one of the examples which can be examined in a similar historiographic basis. **Ever After** is mainly a story of self-struggle of the protagonist and narrator Bill Unwin, whose life is destroyed by the losses he has experienced successively in such a short period. In a contemporary setting Bill's life turns to a reconsideration of his Victorian ancestor Matthew Pearce as he finds his notebooks written in the mid-nineteenth century England. At first glance, the plot can be considered as a typical contemporary novel with a suffering protagonist, searching for the meaning of life. Yet, Swift transforms this basic theme to an extent that practises postmodern narrative fragmentations along with Victorian conception which is aimed to be examined in this chapter. Foregrounding the major discussion of this chapter, **Ever After** has a different mode of narration than **The French Lieutenant's Woman** in terms of constructing and reinterpreting the Victorian context since Swift's primary setting in **Ever After** is not Victorian England. Rather than beginning the plot in the Victorian setting, the novel begins with the protagonist Bill Unwin in present and the plot is developed by his first-person narration. Even though the novel is totally narrated by Bill's first-person narration, Matthew Pearce's

[4] Nick Bentley, **Contemporary British Fiction**, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2008, p.131.
[5] Bentley, **Loc. Cit**.

notebooks foreground a second narrative line to the novel. In the light of both perspectives, first I would like to make an overall examination on Bill's characterization as a narrator in the plot in order to examine the Victorian parallel in the storyline and his approach to his Victorian ancestor Matthew Pearce. The way Bill is characterized and set as the narrator is significant since his story contains various historiographic elements from his childhood days in Paris in the 1940s to present. However, though rich in historiographic elements, the Victorian storyline is the major focus to be examined in this chapter. This way, examining Bill Unwin as a narrator, it is aimed to observe how Matthew Pearce's crisis of faith in the 19th century which is foregrounded by his notebooks is re-examined and represented through Bill's perception. How Bill perceives and reflects Matthew's crisis represents a contemporary perception of the Victorian society struggling between science and religion. On the other hand, however, it becomes a link to Bill's lost hope and faith in his life. While creating this link, Swift also draws attention to history as a construction, which is provided by Matthew's textual sources. Thus, through textuality, we are able to reach to the Victorian world stuck between science and religion and reconsider it with a contemporary perspective.

As stated above, the first aspect to focus on is the narrator Bill Unwin in order to grasp the novel's eventual shift to the Victorian Era. This is a story beginning just after the failed suicide attempt of the protagonist Bill Unwin who begins his story warning the reader: "These are I should warn you, the words of a dead man."[6] The protagonist and the narrator of the novel, Bill Unwin is a middle-aged literature scholar whose life is destroyed by the deaths of three major figures of his life: his wife, his mother and his stepfather. The losses he experiences at short notice end up with a failed suicide attempt: "I am talking of that experience, given to few, of being returned to life from almost-death. I am talking, in my case, of attempted self-slaughter." [7] Beginning in the present, Bill starts to narrate his story which does not follow any linear structure. By the fragmented and non-chronological order of

[6]Swift, **Op.Cit**., p.1.
[7] **Ibid**., p.3.

events, first, we observe his present self-struggle in the 1980s which is followed by his childhood memories in Paris in the 1940s to the recent encounter with his Victorian ancestor Matthew Pearce and his notebooks. Due to his depressive thoughts, Bill goes back to his past retrospectively, thus his narration is not able to follow a linear line.[8] What matters about his childhood memories, which constitutes one of the major lines of the story, is the problematic relationship with his parents. Much of Bill's childhood passes with his mother Sylvia, a lively young woman in Paris. However, all the joy he had with his mother as a child does not replace the father's place. It neither covers the fact of his mother's adulterous relationship with his stepfather, a young American plastic manufacturer Sam, which becomes even more frustrating for Bill after his father's suicide; "We were alive, my father was dead. She had taken Sam into her life. She had known what she was doing; she had made her choice."[9] Even though it is later revealed that one of the reasons behind his father's suicide is his involvement in World War II, for Bill, his mother's responsibility still remains a strong reason. Besides, he also finds out that Colonel Unwin may not even be his biological father. Therefore, his complex emotions of love and hate towards his parents do not come to an end and above all the losses, his father's loss remains the one which haunts him since his childhood. While this is one of the major problematics of his life, the death of his wife becomes another damaging loss. Bill gets married to a successful artist, Ruth with whom he believes he shall live "happily ever after." However, Ruth commits suicide after being diagnosed with a deadly disease. Ruth's loss draws him back to academia which he has given away long ago in order to work as Ruth's manager. In a brief outlook to Bill's life, the damages of familial ties on his personality can be observed. As David Malcolm underlines in **Understanding Graham Swift**, the narrators in Swift's novels experience the biggest battles with their families and Bill Unwin is no different than

[8] Christian Gutleben, "Shock Tactics: The Art of Linking and Transcending Victorian and Postmodern Traumas in Graham Swift's Ever After", **Neo-Victorian Studies**, 2010, p.138.
[9] Swift, **Op.Cit.**, p.23.

the other narrators.[10] Bill's ruined life, thus, also shapes his narration style. In sense of Bill's narration, Swift creates a postmodern narrator:

> I am not me. Therefore, was I ever me? That is the gist of it. A proof of all this lies before your very eyes. Or at least before mine, since you have no means of comparison and only my word to go on. But that is the point: these words, or rather the tone, the pitch, the style of them and consequently of the thoughts that underlie them, are not mine. I have penned in my time – a long ago – a thesis and an academic paper or two, but I have never begun to write anything as – personal – as this. Yet this way in which I write is surely not me. [11]

The early questioning of Bill foregrounds **Ever After** in total, and his self-questioning and confessing in the manner of a monologist creates the non-chronological and fragmented storyline. Besides, as it serves to the problematic personality of Bill, it also reflects the postmodern premises of the novel. The postmodernist writers distrust the wholeness of the text and they prefer to break their texts into short fragments or sections in order to structure their narrative.[12] As Patricia Waugh argues, contemporary authors have the tendency of becoming aware of the theoretical issues constructing fiction, therefore their novels tend to embody self-reflexive and formal uncertainty.[13] What Waugh claims can be traced widely in Swift's characterization of Bill Unwin and construction of the storyline which is accompanied by Victorian ancestor Matthew Pearce's notebooks in the continuation of the story. The link between history and metafiction is intertwined through Bill's ruined family life. Even though Bill has the biggest damages from his family members, he still seeks for restoration and consolation from a distant ancestor who leads his way back to Victorian times which is the major framework of this chapter.

[10] Malcolm, **Op.Cit.**, p.17.
[11] Swift, **Op.Cit**., p.4.
[12] Barry Lewis, "Postmodern and Literature or (Word Salad Days:1960-90)", ed. Stuart Sim, **The Routledge Companion to Postmodernism**, London, Routledge, 2001, p.127.
[13] Patricia Waugh, **Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction**, New York, Methuen, 1984, p.2.

Deciding to edit and make an academic publication of Pearce Manuscripts which is about Matthew's loss of faith in the 19th century, Bill finds a new way to challenge his depression. Matthew Pearce is a distant ancestor of Sylvia Unwin who kept a journal between the years of 1840 to 1860. Matthew Pearce as a dead character constructs the second narrative voice of the novel through his notebooks. Nevertheless, Matthew's narration is still prone to Bill's fragmented narration, since he is not alive.[14] His presence is constructed as a written text and we are able to hear his voice as far as Bill permits. However, as a dead and un-autonomous narrator in the shadow of the main narrator Bill, Matthew Pearce foregrounds the major historiographic line of the novel. Influenced by Charles Darwin and Charles Lyell, Matthew Pearce undergoes the crisis of faith in Victorian England. Matthew's journal on its own would have presented a historical novel in classical terms, since it is "an important historical-cultural document, charting as it does the impact of 19th century thought on the life of an individual."[15] However, Swift brings a postmodern outlook to Victorian England through Bill's research, questioning history as a construction. Thus the crisis of faith in Victorian England does not only appear as a historical fact, but it is represented through individual perspectives in **Ever After**, which can be examined in terms of Linda Hutcheon's theory.

From society to industry, Mid-Victorian England underwent many social and scientific changes. However, the most salient controversy remained between science and religion. Darwin's evolution theory, which remains a controversial issue even today, had a shocking effect in Victorian England which led to the wave named scholarly as "Victorian Crisis of Faith." Sally Mitchell in **Daily Life in Victorian England** draws attention to the impact of the growth of scientific knowledge, noting that many skilled workers of the middle class had scientific hobbies such as collecting shells or fossils, classifying insects or plants which provided useful evidence to professional scientists.[16] Among those scientific practices, Charles Darwin's publication of **The Origin of Species** which brought the theory of "natural

[14] Malcolm, **Op.Cit.**, p.137.
[15] **Ibid.**, p.134.
[16] Sally Mitchell, **Daily Life in Victorian England**, Westport, Greenwood Press, 2009, p.84.

selection", had the largest effect on what is named as the crisis of faith. What Darwin argued by term "natural selection" is basically related to the environmental factors of the species. According to his argument, the living species transformed according to their environment which required "the survival of the fittest" since the ones who could not fit into the environment they live would die. Thus, his theory brought a contradiction to Christian religious doctrine which was foregrounded by "God's creation in his image." Darwin's comprehensive study on the classification of species and their evolution brought various scientific debates in methodological terms. The theory reinforced doubts mostly about Biblical authority.[17] Thus, it fostered a crisis torn between evolution and creation. This is the phase in which Swift constructs and re-interprets his Victorian character, Matthew Pearce. By creating Matthew Pearce, Swift both draws attention to the historical background of the Victorian life torn between science and religion and re-examines it through Bill in postmodern grounds.

Before reading Matthew's notebooks, the first brief introduction is presented by Bill:

> Matthew was a clockmaker's son, from Launceston in Cornwall, who one day fell in love with the daughter of a vicar from a village in Devon and married her and had children, and it seemed they would all live happily ever after. Then one day Matthew told the vicar that he no longer believed in God. Result: scandal, divorce, Matthew's unseemly exit from the village, never to show his face there again…[18]

Bill's story embraces the keyword of Matthew's life, "no longer believing in God" which is the historical account of Matthew's story. This is the part which also interests history professor Michael Potter, Bill Unwin's rival in the novel, whose specialization is "Crisis of Faith in the 19th century." As previously stated, Matthew's notebooks are taken as important historical documents in the novel, since it depicts the 19th century individual social life. Since the notebooks have prominence for

[17] John Hedley Brooke, "Darwin and Victorian Christianity", ed. Jonathan Hodge, ed. Gregory Radick, **The Cambridge Companion to Darwin**, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009, p.197.
[18] Swift, **Op. Cit**., p.47.

academia, editing the scripts for a specialist like Potter is a chance for his academic reputation. Therefore, it creates controversy between history professor Potter and literature professor Bill:

> Potter's argument was, of course, that by the same token that I had a duty, in respect of the manuscripts, to the community of learning, so I had a duty to entrust my material to a specialist best equipped to serve that purpose: i.e. an historian, i.e. Potter, him.[19]

If historical evidence of Pearce Manuscripts is taken in sense of a historian, a generalisation of 19th century crisis of faith can be reached. However, what matters, in this case, is the individual approach and this is what interests Bill:

> So why should I be so possessive? Why not yield to Potter, to the community of learning, the pool of knowledge, or whatever? Why should I hug Matthew Pearce to me and not want to let him go? What is he to me? And why should it be my task to set him before the world?[20]

The reason is the personal matter. As Bill forms attachment to Matthew, it also becomes his re-creation from the official history which would be well-presented by Potter in wider generalization, but could not be re-interpreted. For Bill, Matthew is a new hope to recover from his personal crisis. On the other hand, as a literature scholar, he does not seek for strict history as he claims. He is interested in the personal experience of an ordinary man in the historical framework. Taking the novel in a wider perspective, as in Lyotard's approach, postmodernity does not deal with grand narratives any more, but rather prefers little narratives which offer a qualified truth for a particular situation, instead of overreaching a truth.[21] Considering Lyotard's approach, we can say that Matthew Pearce's manuscripts present an alternative narrative to the grand narrative of both history and the novel's text itself,

[19] **Ibid.**, p.48.
[20] **Ibid.**, p.49.
[21] Bran Nicol, **The Cambridge Introduction to Postmodern Fiction**, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2009, p.12.

since it is a written text of an ordinary man's personal experience in history, rather than a historian's account. In other words, the Victorian crisis of faith in the nineteenth century in **Ever After** is given by an ordinary individual's personal experience by being subject to the reinterpretation of a contemporary character, instead of being told in historical generalization without being subject to any questioning. Most importantly, it is also the reflection of the postmodern author's aspiration since as Elizabeth Wesseling claims:

> Postmodernist writers do not consider it their task to propagate historical knowledge, but to inquire into the very possibility, nature, and use of historical knowledge from an epistemological or a political perspective.[22]

According to Linda Hutcheon, on the other hand, postmodern approach to literature and history presents the fact that both history and fiction are discourses:

> What the postmodern writing of both history and literature has taught us is that both history and fiction are discourses, that both constitute systems of signification by which we make sense of the past ("exertions of the shaping, ordering imagination"). In other words, the meaning and shape are not in the events, but in the systems which make those past "events" into present historical "facts." This is not a "dishonest refuge from truth" but an acknowledgment of the meaning making function of human constructs.[23]

Similarly, Graham Swift does not try to demonstrate Victorian crisis as a historical account but he rather deals with it as a construction, reinterpreted both in Victorian and postmodern perspectives as a written text. Therefore, Swift not only represents the Victorian era through Matthew but also presents how historical account as a written text can be taken with a pluralistic approach in a combination of history and fiction.

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[22] Elizabeth Wesseling, **Writing History as a Prophet: Postmodernist Innovations of the Historical Novel**, Amsterdam, J.Benjamins Publishing, 1991, p.73.
[23] Linda Hutcheon, **A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction**, London, Routledge, 1988, p.89.

Following such a method, Swift not only subverts Bill's narration but also subverts the Victorian storyline. In other words, Matthew's notebooks, which are all dated as a journal, are not presented in the right order which is another method of deconstruction. Before presenting the notebooks we are given Matthew's letter written to his wife Elizabeth. The letter is the final writing extract of Matthew; thus his narration begins from the end. This is because Matthew's narration is predominated by Bill. So, they are presented in Bill's narrative order. Swift reconstructs and mixes the narrations to each other by Bill's interruptions and comments throughout the notebooks.

Beginning from the end, Matthew's narration starts with his letter, written on 12th April 1869 in Plymouth, before his departure to the New World. A whole chapter is dedicated to Matthew's letter, which is, in fact, a retrospective of his life and notebooks. In parallel with Bill, Matthew's family life is destroyed as a result of a wider crisis of his century which is kept in his notebooks. Leaving the old world behind, Matthew thinks he owes one last farewell to his children and to his wife by letting her know about the struggle he had long before and of which she may accuse him. Therefore, he explains his keeping secrets:

> Yet I am not the first, I imagine, to have had a conscience about having a conscience, and to have struggled to keep doubts under guard while maintaining a sanguine face to the world, like a sick person wishing not to infect others. [24]

By this statement, Matthew reflects that he actually had doubts in his conscience which he avoided to share with his wife and the others, however, now he sends the textual evidence to her since he sails for a New World. Giving away the notebooks, Matthew takes his mother's Bible with him. Two written texts, one sent and the other kept are the symbols of the problems in Matthew's life. The representation of his doubts kept by him and the representation of faith mentored by his mother is the key to Matthew's dilemma. Matthew already states that he started to

[24] Swift, **Op. Cit**., p.52.

keep the journal after his son Felix's death. Felix's death and Matthew's mother's death are important factors in Matthew's crisis. Besides, facing the death of family members is the parallel between Matthew and Bill. Nevertheless, as said earlier, Matthew's crisis is nourished by something further, a wider problematic of his century, which dates back to his twenties and revealed by Bill eventually:

> The thing was that he saw an ichthyosaurus. The thing was that he had come face to face with an ichthyosaur, on the cliffs of Dorset in the summer of 1844 (age: twenty-five) [25]

Two chapters later from Matthew's letter, Bill Unwin begins the chapter nine, another chapter mostly dedicated to Matthew, with revealing the truth behind Matthew's crisis by these words. By these words, we are taken to that moment in Bill's imagination, Matthew's facing a fossil in his twenties in Lyme Regis. As it echoes the setting of **The French Lieutenant's Woman,** it also refers to Lyme Regis contextualization in Jane Austen's **Persuasion** and Thomas Hardy's **A Pair of Blue Eyes**. By concentrating on Matthew's Darwinian crisis, Swift manages to create an intertextual framework in his novel, and by referring to both leading Victorian and Postmodern novels he creates cyclicality between centuries.[26] Thus Swift reflects both sides of Lyme Regis, "well known not only for its fossils but for its summer crop of eligible daughters".[27] As being in a literary context, in historical framework too, Lyme Regis was a place famous for fossil hunts. As previously stated, skilled middle-class men and women were dealing with scientific hobbies in the 19th century. Among those, there was famous Mary Anning of Lyme Regis who received little education, but accompanying her father in young age she developed the skill of fossil hunting and discovered the major important fossils of her time which are

[25] **Ibid.**, p.89.
[26] Gutleben, **Op.Cit**., p.139.
[27] Swift, **Op. Cit**., p.89.

exhibited in London museums today.[28] This historical reference, intertwined with intertextual reference, is very well embroidered as Bill enters the depths of Matthew's early life. In this context, Lyme Regis becomes the scene of the accident where Matthew's crisis begins since he faces an ichthyosaur. At first sight, it is interesting to see Matthew to be so shattered by facing a fossil, since he is an Oxford-educated man, already interested in geology and a contributor to the famous historical developments of railways as a surveyor. In a historically famous setting, where a woman used to make fossil hunts, Matthew's doubts begin. However, the thing is not education but consciousness. Though an educated man interested in science, he is raised in Methodist thought. As Timothy Larsen underlines, the Victorian crisis of faith is not alone without a crisis of doubt in the Victorian era.[29] Therefore, between scientific and religious thought his consciousness reaches an epiphany that drives him to doubts. The epiphany begins with seeing an ichthyosaur and is followed step by step by his mother's and son's deaths in the following years. His educated self is torn between scientific knowledge and Biblical knowledge which leads him to doubts where already fossil hunts were made. The interesting thing, on the other hand, is that he confesses to that moment of facing a fossil only after his son Felix's death. Gutleben draws attention to the traumatic experience both Bill and Matthew undergo. When Matthew's mother dies, Matthew takes his mother's Bible as consolation, however, his son's death does not accept a Biblical consolation any more. This traumatic loss, according to Gutleben, thus makes Matthew confess his own doubts he kept until this moment, long begun by the fossil hunt. In other words, Matthew's epiphany is confessed years later, by facing his own traumatic experience.[30] On the other hand, Bill's case is parallel to Matthew, since Bill comes back to the notebooks and begins writing down his story, after a failed suicide attempt that is caused by the deaths in his life. So, a twentieth century and a

[28] Mary R. S. Creese, Thomas M. Creese, "British Women Who Contributed to Research in Geological Sciences in the Nineteenth Century", **Proceedings of the Geologists' Association**, 2006, p.64.
[29] Timothy Larsen, **Crisis of Doubt: Honest Faith in Nineteenth-Century England**, New York, Oxford University Press, 2006, p.17.
[30] Gutleben, **Op.Cit.**, p.144.

nineteenth-century character gather around traumatic experiences in a historiographic context. Besides, the postmodern narrator is able to fictionalize the moment Matthew experienced in his head, but he is not totally able to understand Matthew's feelings even though Matthew's manuscript is there, describing the crisis he undergoes.

In the journal entry written on 10th June 1854, Matthew describes the traumatic moment he experiences in Lyme Regis, which remains a burden on himself ever after, leading him to doubts. Reading it by Matthew's own words, one can sympathize with his situation better since he is the person experiencing the moment and reflecting to us as his first-person experience from the Victorian perspective. As the contemporary reader, we are directed by Bill's approach to Matthew and his story. Thus we already know that Matthew faced an ichthyosaur in his early twenties in Lyme Regis. This is the point in which the historiographic references that are indicated beforehand matter. With today's perspective, we are able to relate the setting to various other literary contexts and we know about famous fossil hunters of the 19th century as historical references. Moreover, seeing fossils today can be possible in museums. As Bill eventually comments, he saw ichthyosaurs too, but in museums and in books:

> Yet museums are safe, orderly, artificial places, and here, still trapped in the rock from which workers employed by the same Mary Anning were labouring to release it, within sight of the plump hills of Dorset and the ruffled waters of Lyme Bay, was the thing itself. Here, in the very spot where—Here. Now. Then.[31]

Museums, where we can see fossils in our century, are safe, artificial places where the fossils are also objectified representing the past. Therefore, Bill comments that he does not feel anything at all about seeing an ichthyosaur, but he is also aware that "it is difficult to know how people will react when they see an ichthyosaur."[32] This is the reason why we first get surprised by Matthew's reaction, considering him as an

[31] Swift, **Op.Cit.**, p.100-101.
[32] **Ibid.**, p.100.

educated man. However, as we read his journal, we are able to understand how he is shattered. Matthew does not see a fossil in an artificial place, as an object of exhibition, but he literally comes face to face in the nineteenth century, in a place full of fossils and skulls. This is such a personal experience which Matthew calls "a moment of acute perspicacity"[33]. This way, Swift creates such a context that leads to question the case of seeing a fossil by an Oxford-educated man in his early ages which is broadened by his son's death which leads him to apostasy from God. Bill is not able to understand Matthew's situation often, but trying to figure out Matthew's experience, he tries to regenerate a meaning to his own situation.

Hereby, a parallel line between Bill's and Matthew's past and present should be highlighted. Both characters are haunted by their pasts in their own centuries and they try to challenge their dilemma in their present circumstances. Yet Matthew's past becomes the preoccupation of a postmodern narrator, who tries to revive Matthew in a critical way. However, there is another fact about Bill's attachment to Matthew. As previously stated, Bill is interested in the personal thing rather than the official historical facts. Matthew's journal is a good opportunity to regain reputation in the academic world and since it is his own ancestor; his objection to giving the journal to Potter is explicable. Yet, even though Bill claims that he is not interested in historical account but rather in the personal account, this is foregrounded by a historical problematic that pushes him to the Victorian past. Bill's present in which he examines Pearce Manuscripts coincides with the Post-World War Era and as previously said, he later learns about Colonel Unwin's involvement in the destructive practices of the World War. Beside Bill's personal traumas, another traumatic fact derives from history. Gutleben draws attention to Bill's historical problematics by referring to Peter Widdowson's statement about **Ever After**:

> As Peter Widdowson argues, The Second World War constitutes "the key formative event" of Bill's present state of affairs particularly because both his biological father and the man he knew as his father prove to be causalities of the war and its nuclear conclusion. "Although

[33] Swift, **Loc.Cit.**

> this event is chronologically closer to Bill than the Darwinian crisis, there is no historical documentation about it and this absence is indeed very meaningful, signalling as it does Bill's exclusion from the history of his own time…"[34]

In other words, since there is no textual record about the historical events in Bill's time, Bill cannot relate himself to his own history. The historical events that occur in his time are only days that have significances for his own memories. For instance, he remembers the day of the release of the first atomic bomb, with celebrating his mother's birthday. His birthdate is related to King Edward's leaving the crown, but he admits that as a new-born he had nothing to do with this event. Ironically, though, Colonel Unwin whom he knows as his father and the obscure biological father are victims of the Warfare and Colonel Unwin is one of the contributors of the Atomic Bomb's production which carries his suicide on a wider historical ground than the personal reasons as Bill believes. Bill finds out this fact by sometime later, however, similarly to the war's ruins, this is only a damaging fact for him. While these historical references corroborate the historiographic qualities of the novel, they also represent a post-world war individual. The post-world war's destructive effects on individuals are highly present in Bill's characteristics. Even though he is not actively involved in the warfare, his childhood life is a result of the effects of the war, especially because of his father's involvement in the production of the nuclear bomb. As a grown up man in present, Bill Unwin still suffers from the lack of the father, and the world he lives in is already a destroyed world with the remains of the war. Considering his personal history, it can be said that it is affected by the warfare even though he is not involved in it. Since he excludes himself from the historical events of his past, he feels himself lost and destroyed, thus he seeks something distant and goes back to the Darwinian crisis of Matthew. Considering Matthew's case, however, we observe that Matthew is aware of the religious and scientific opposition in his era, which reaches today as a historical theme of Victorian England. Thus, we can say that, even though Bill and Matthew both are

[34] Gutleben, **Op.Cit.**, p.140.

haunted by their past and present, Bill himself, as the postmodern narrator, does not have an awareness of his own time, the way Matthew has, thus, he seeks meaning by revisiting Matthew's past by not only editing the scripts but also trying to understand how Matthew let "The Big Question" destroy his life. In order to examine the problematic of the "Big Question" in Matthew's life and observe Bill's aspiration to this problematic, we should turn back to Matthew's journals.

Throughout the journals, Matthew bursts out all his thoughts and doubts which he cannot confide to anyone easily. As stated previously, the early questioning of God begins when he faces an ichthyosaur, and reaches its peak when years later he loses his son. These are Matthew's private sufferings. However, the privacy comes together with the public sphere that destroys Matthew further. Matthew's journal begins in April 1854, when he declares Felix's death. According to Matthew, taking Felix's life is God's punishment to Matthew's false belief:

> 17th June 1854: An impossibility, a contradiction: to pray for belief. He knows everything, He 'unto whom all hearts be open'. He punishes me with Felix's death, for perpetrating this impossibility. Or: for my false belief, the belief in my own pretence. Or: Felix's death: merely proof. [35]

Considering Felix's death as God's punishment, in the following entry Matthew declares his inability to understand God's punishment and his rejection of such a belief:

> But I cannot believe that in this prodigious arbitrariness there is any purpose that grants life to a child only to withdraw it after two years; that it is not the case, rather, that he might as well not have existed; that holds, in truth, in the great course of things, no place, value, or identity compatible with the vain fabric of loving recognition that I, that we all, have built around him…[36]

[35] Swift, **Op.Cit.**, p.102.
[36] Swift, **Loc.Cit**.

Hiding his doubts since his seeing an Ichthyosaur develops Matthew's pretence of believing in God, however, losing his son, which he calls God's punishment, drives him closer to the evoking of Darwinian doubts. As a Victorian man, he is torn between the thoughts of science and religion. This is a typical situation for the age, just as the Cold World Era in Bill's childhood and its effects on the following years as a suffering in a non-stable world. However, as Bill seeks for meaning in the ruins of his life, Matthew should be direct and honest in his decisions since he lives in a stable world. Staying in-between science and religion, he undergoes a crisis. Yet, in the end, he makes his choice, taking the risk of being excluded from his society and leaving his old life behind, sailing to the New World. In this respect, even though torn between science and religion his choice costs his ordinary life, for Bill Matthew's life is a representation of a further case. Frederick M. Holmes underlines the fact that, according to Bill, Matthew's world represents "stability" which is symbolically reflected by Matthew's profession as a surveyor.[37] As Bill digs Matthew's life, he acknowledges that being a surveyor, Matthew's profession is to set a stable ground for the things. Matthew's faith is set on his mother's religious mentorship, yet his eventual apostasy from God and interest in science are grounded by his readings of Darwin. Thus, though ruined, Matthew's life and decisions are based on stable reasons. Since Bill's postmodern world is not stable and already destroyed, Matthew's life and decisions in a stable world attract him. Therefore, as previously stated, Bill's attachment to Matthew becomes something beyond the academic purpose and it causes an argument between him and history Professor Potter:

> 'You can't do it, Bill. You can't fucking do it!'
>
> 'I can't?'
>
> 'You don't have the background.'
>
> 'I'll find out. That's why I was---'
>
> 'Why should you spend a year researching what I could tell you right now?'

[37] Frederick M. Holmes, "The Representation of History as Plastic: The Search for the Real Thing in Graham Swift's 'Ever After'", **Ariel: A Review of International English Literature**, 1996, p.34.

> There was an answer to this, not an easy or a scholarly answer. But this was no time to give it.
>
> 'They're my notebooks,' I said.
>
> 'It's my field.'
>
> 'It's my business.'[38]

As Potter claims, Bill does not have the academic background to edit Victorian manuscripts. Nevertheless, while Pearce manuscripts represent an academic field for Potter, it is Bill's own personal business. What Bill seeks in Matthew Pearce cannot be fulfilled by academic research, thus as he claims, he cannot give a scholarly answer. By seeking meaning in Matthew, Bill tries to use the representation of history to repair the damages of history in his life.[39] Nevertheless, he cannot fully understand Matthew's private life and Darwinian affections in such a fragmented and pluralistic century. Therefore, when he cannot understand Matthew, he chooses to fictionalize it. In terms of fictionalization, Matthew's Darwinian affections and its consequences in his family life should be observed.

As previously stated, Matthew begins his journals after Felix's death and since then the notebooks become his companion to confide in. Interestingly, however, besides the notebooks, Matthew shares his interest in Darwinian thought with his clergyman father-in-law, titled as The Rector in their hometown. As Matthew so long hides his experience of seeing an ichthyosaur from his wife, he also does not prefer to reveal his current studies to her much. Looking back to **The French Lieutenant's Woman**, Ernestina as a member of new aristocracy does not enjoy Charles's interest in Darwin and Charles does not share any further scientific views with her. Though not aristocrats, Matthew and Elizabeth's case is similar. Besides, Elizabeth's father is a man of religion. Yet at an early glance to Matthew's journal entries, we observe a sympathy between Rector and Matthew:

[38] Swift, **Op. Cit.**, p. 163.
[39] Holmes, **Op.Cit**., p.31.

> What a good-hearted, muddle-headed old soul is my father-in-law. He understands – why should he disposed to understand? – so little of the matters I have now begun to raise with him. How we forgive narrowness of mind, when it accompanies largeness of heart. [40]

The Rector may not totally approve of his son-in-law's involvement in further scientific studies that undermine God's power, thus such an opposition can raise problems between the two. Yet the Rector is kind enough to sympathize with Matthew's loss at the early stages of their relation, and he does not directly attack his opinions. Referring to their relationship, Bill takes this issue as a young man's need of guidance:

> Of course! It was Matthew who looked to him. It was the younger man who in these changing times, in a profession which exposed him to so much modern upheaval and innovation, looked to the older man for guidance and certitude. As why should he not to one approved as a spiritual father?[41]

In search of guidance, there is a paternal link. Similar to Bill, Matthew and and his father John Pearce's relationship becomes distant after his mother's death. Day by day Matthew leaves the Methodist thinking, and this link becomes a distant link between the two. Thus, he seeks guidance in his father-in-law. However, as in Bill's view:

> He could not have guessed how this son-in-law, who had so far failed to be his friendly sparring partner, would one day become his earnest antagonist, on terms beyond any he could have predicted?[42]

Not surprisingly, Matthew's antagonism for the Rector emerges from his Darwinian interest and eventual apostasy. Drawing attention to Matthew and

[40] Swift, **Op.Cit,** p.124-25.
[41] **Ibid.**, p. 126.
[42] **Ibid.**, p.127.

Rector's relationship, Swift develops their early opposition mostly in chapter eleven. Throughout the journal entries of this chapter, Matthew draws attention to the Rector's approach to his interest in Darwin and Lyell. According to the Rector, Almighty is the ultimate power to explain and construct the universe. As a response to his father-in-law, Matthew offers a copy of Lyell to Rector. Even though Rector does not have much information on Lyell and may not be so interested in a scientific reading, he does not turn over Matthew's request. In this sense, Rector seems sympathetic even though he does not share parallel thoughts with Matthew. Nevertheless, the Rector's approach does not change after reading Lyell. He kindly returns his book to Matthew stating that "He will not judge what he cannot pretend to have studied"[43], which, Matthew thinks, is a humble way of closing the issue. Considering the opposition between science and religion, the Rector seems at least respectful enough not to hurt Matthew at this stage. Aware of his kindness, Matthew is afraid of letting the Rector down with his thoughts that enrol him in Sunday sermons, charging him with desertion. Yet, at the end, Matthew cannot escape from what he fears and his final confrontation with the Rector breaks all the empathy between the two, which is narrated both by Matthew and Bill.

Matthew notes the turning point between him and the Rector in the journal entry dated 24th June 1860. The confrontation of Matthew and the Rector takes place in a fine afternoon, during the Rector's examination of his honeybee hives, one of his occupations in his household. As the Rector speaks about the bees and their honey-making process, Matthew puts forward Darwin's claims, referring to his chapter written on the instincts and going further by his declaration which he notes:

> And the only principle behind this process is neither the will of God nor, indeed, as you will have it, the work of Darwin's master, the devil, but, in Darwin's phrase' – I confess I had begun to shout, the flapping veil before my eyes seeming to smother my words – 'the continual and irrepressible *struggle for existence*![44]'

[43] **Ibid.**, p.138.
[44] **Ibid.**, p.181.

Matthew's impudent declaration which is responded with the Rector's damnation of Darwin becomes the incident that takes apart Matthew and his old life forever, resulting in the separation of his marriage. Coming to Bill's approach to the journal entry, he fictionalizes Matthew and the Rector's final confrontation through composing a scripted play between the two. Yet, his imaginary construction is interrupted by himself, stating that he cannot know more than what is written in the notebooks or even invent what the Rector said in reality since Bill is aware before fictionalizing the script that, "If it were not for Matthew's Notebooks, nobody might have known it had happened at all, it might have been as though it never was."[45] At this stage, Swift's approach to history as a documentation is observed. Throughout the novel, Bill imagines and contemplates what he cannot fully understand about Matthew, yet he comes to the realization that what remains of Matthew can be reached only by textual evidence. This way, while Bill's fictionalizing approach to the notebooks seems to foreground postmodern affections, it also presents the fact that his fictionalization is constructed upon the past events.[46] Through the link between history and fiction, he reaches a problematization of the two. In other words, Bill as the contemporary narrator applies to postmodern premises, intertwining fiction and reality. Yet, because he is aware that how Matthew's journal is prone to Bill's own narration, Bill's imagination is prone to Matthew's textual evidence which is in relation with his personal search. Besides, he brings another critical approach to Matthew's and Elizabeth's separation which he links to his own condition.

Elizabeth and Matthew's relationship is constructed as a lovely marriage at first glance. Bill fictionalizes the moment when Matthew and Elizabeth first meet in the clockmakers shop which he eventually deconstructs by saying that is all fiction and he cannot know how it actually happened. In this respect Bill blunders around his ancestor's documents in his personal quest; his stance before them oscillates between fantasising, acknowledging history as another narrative, and a more

[45] **Ibid.**, p.185.
[46] Louisa Hadley, **Neo-Victorian Fiction and Historical Narrative: The Victorians and Us**, Palgrave: Macmillan, 2010, p.135.

conventional scholarly approach. Since his revisit to past derives from his personal anxieties, Bill does not primarily aim to observe Matthew in his own terms, but rather he tries to seek his present situation in Matthew.[47] Throughout the journals, the reader witnesses Matthew's intellectual and personal conflicts and early relationship with Elizabeth that is also fictionally told by Bill Unwin, but coming to central years of their marriage there is not sufficient information provided.[48] Therefore, Bill Unwin imagines and fictionalizes a moment about their married life:

> I see Elizabeth turn from the dressing-table, put down her hairbrush. I don't believe that these Victorians were really, when it came to it, so Victorian. So demure and straitlaced. I don't believe they were a different species, who propagated their kind by some method less intimate and passionate than ours. John, Christopher, Felix, Lucy. The atmosphere at Leigh House in those early days was surely ripe with love; as sticky, as fertile, as any pullulating little patch of ground that Matthew would have stopped over with his magnifying glass and collecting bottle ready to trace yet more evidence of nature's astonishing irrepressibility.[49]

The close observation of Elizabeth through fictionalizing echoes the way Fowles entering Ernestina's room and watching her private moment as the omniscient narrator. Similar to Fowles, Swift chooses to uncover the privacy of the Victorians through Bill's perception. However, even though Bill prefers to imagine them as a peaceful, lovely family, it is ruined with the revelation of Matthew's thought by the Rector, resulting in Matthew's sailing to the New World and Elizabeth's departure to her father's house. While it can be taken as a pitiful story for Elizabeth, her re-marriage to Neale, a former acquaintance of their family, opens a new interpretation for Bill. According to Matthew's notes, Neale is a favoured acquaintance of the Rector. Throughout the journal entries, Neale seems to be present in their life. Considering the ties between Neale, the Rector and the Pearce family, Bill puts forward a possibility; "He left her on a July day in 1860. Though she had left him, perhaps, long before that."[50] Bill's critical approach to Elizabeth is prominent in

[47] **Ibid.**,p.132.
[48] Malcolm, **Op.Cit.**, p.152.
[49] Swift, **Op.Cit.**, p.127.
[50] **Ibid.**,p.211.

terms of Bill's own experience with his mother. Bill is already occupied with the idea of adultery because of his mother's relationship. Thus, he seeks another possibility of deception in Elizabeth. Considering Bill's approach it can be said that he looks for possibilities which cannot be put forward in a Victorian basis.[51] Yet, at the end, Bill still wants to believe that Elizabeth loved Matthew since she kept his notebooks and his letter. As the contemporary eye, his interpretations are pluralistic, since he tries to reach a meaning in the notebooks to mirror his life. Taking it in postmodern terms, he is able to construct his own approach to reality and fiction by bringing personal and historical facts together.

Coming to the end, however, Bill's obsession with Pearce manuscripts leaves its place to his rival, Professor Potter. Throughout Bill's interpretation of the Notebooks, there are several times when Potter and Bill argue with each other. At the final stage, Potter's wife, a young academic, also enters the scene in order to persuade Bill. Interestingly, Bill sends the notebooks to Potter with his wife, at a stage when he begins to deal with the academic approach, working on Darwin and Lyell. Before he starts to work on Lyell, Potter insults him asking about the edition of Lyell he consults, knowing that Bill is not even aware of the different editions. Besides, after finishing his fictional interpretation of Matthew's notebooks, during which he comes to the realization that he cannot totally revive him but can fictionalize the past, he cannot still make a reading of Darwin without contemplation:

> These great men of ideas, they get turned themselves into ideas. So Darwin becomes a kind of abstract condition, a sort of irrevocable tinge that settled on the world around the middle of the nineteenth century. The world before Darwin, the world after Darwin. Who thinks of Darwin the man? Was he a man or a mind? [52]

At the end, Bill does not need to understand Darwin at all by leaving the Notebooks to the expert Potter. Since the beginning of the novel, Bill's interest into

[51] Hadley, **Op.Cit**., p.138.
[52] Swift, **Op.Cit.**, p.226.

Matthew's journals is presented as a personal interest, and it ends in the same direction with his giving the notebooks to Potter, to someone who can edit the scripts in historical grounds without digging down the personal matters of Matthew. In this respect, it can be said that Bill ends his personal search in Matthew, by freeing his notebooks from himself, the way Matthew did by sending his notebooks to Elizabeth. Besides, the novel literally ends in postmodern terms, without presenting a single consequence, but rather going back to Bill and Ruth's past in a hotel room. In the grounds of postmodern plurality, Swift's novels do not present an aesthetic of closure, but rather leaves an unresolved ending.[53]

Overall, by presenting a story constructed through a dual narrative line, Swift brings together past and present in historiographic basis. Throughout the novel, Bill Unwin seeks for a meaning in Matthew's past in order to restore his own situation. Thus, he opposes to the academic approach to the manuscripts, but prefers to revive Matthew in his imagination. Even though Bill's search reflects a personal attachment, his life is grounded by historical events. Yet, since he is not able to relate himself with his time, he goes back to distant past. By creating such a link through a contemporary character's search, Swift constructs a historiographic story, which represents the Victorian crisis. This way, Matthew's journals are observed in both Victorian and postmodern terms which presents the reader how history is a textual construction. Moreover, Swift also draws attention to the personal aspect of history by constructing the Victorian storyline on an ordinary character's crisis. Thus, constructing past and present in duality, **Ever After** presents a Historiographic metafictional quality in Hutcheon's terms, by being observed in pluralistic perspective with a critical approach.

[53] David Leon Higdon, "Double Closures in Postmodern British Fiction: The Example of Graham Swift", **Critical Survey**, 1991, p.95.

CONCLUSION

Overall, this study aimes to examine how the Victorian era is represented in two postmodern English novels, **The French Lieutenant's Woman** and **Ever After**. Before beginning the examination of the novels, the first chapter focused on the definition of postmodernism as a term. Presenting the problematics in defining postmodernism, the chapter continued to observe the link between history and Postmodern metafiction according to Linda Hutcheon's theorization of Historiographic metafiction. Through presenting the theoretical background of Postmodernism and Historiographic metafiction, the major problematic of history and fiction is observed. Since Postmodernism promotes plurality, it breaks all the conventional practices in literature. Considering the novel genre, Postmodern authors do not position themselves as the author-god any more, but rather they promote the fictional aspect of their works. This way, history, as the definition of past events, is taken in critical approach by the Postmodern authors. Bringing together past and present, what Linda Hutcheon names as Historiographic metafiction aims to gain new interpretations by the problematization of the past and present in metafictional basis. In the light of this approach, how Victorian values and crisis are examined in **The French Lieutenant's Woman** and **Ever After** tried to be observed in the following chapters, since both novels do not only imitate the Victorian novel, but they present a contemporary interpretation of the period.

Focusing on John Fowles's pioneering work, **The French Lieutenant's Woman**, the second chapter closely examines the major social concerns of the Victorian society through concentrating on Charles and Sarah's relationship. In this respect, Fowles draws a subverted picture of the Victorian society with a Postmodern outlook. From the beginning of the novel, Sarah is depicted as a fallen image because of her affair with the French lieutenant. However, the affair with the lieutenant is a fallacy that Sarah uses in order to protect her freedom in the society. Fowles turns Sarah into a free-willed woman who protects her freedom by pretention of the fallen

woman. Her relationship with Charles, which reveals her pretence, ends with Charles's self-realization. Thus extending a Victorian storyline, Fowles constructs a modernised thinking in the Victorian society. Besides, as he constructs the Victorian storyline, he also plays with authorial position of the Victorian author by manifesting the fictionality of his work. He does not let Sarah and Charles to be victimized by the Victorian society, opening them multiple possibilities by destroying the conventional ending. Thus, it can be said that, Fowles in **The French Lieutenant's Woman** represents the Victorian society in a critical way by problematizing the major concerns.

Coming to the third chapter, **Ever After** by Graham Swift is examined. Contrary to **The French Lieutenant's Woman**, **Ever After** begins in the present time but adopts dual narrative by the construction of the Victorian storyline through the journals of Matthew Pearce. Rich in a historiographic context, the protagonist and the narrator Bill Unwin's damaged life is tried to be restored by searching meaning in his Victorian ancestor Matthew Pearce. The postmodern revisit of the notebooks presents how Victorians approached science and religion at a first glance. However, Bill Unwin's reinterpretation of Matthew's crisis is a personal problematic. In order to present scholarly approach and individual approach to the history, Swift creates a rival, Professor Potter against Bill. Since Bill's life is already ruined mostly by familial reasons, it is later presented that his familial ties already has the remains of the warfare which shapes his lost identity. Thus he seeks consolation in the distant past. Even though Bill is never able to fully understand Matthew, he imagines and fictionalizes him. Through such an approach, Swift both presents how history is textual evidence and how it can be related with fiction. For the ruined and unstable world of Bill, Matthew represents stability. Nevertheless, by his contemplation and finally giving the notebooks to Potter, Bill acknowledges that textual remains are what belong to Matthew Pearce. In this respect, Swift aims to revive Victorian past for his contemporary character with individual crisis and he attracts him by the wider social crisis of an ordinary man as Matthew Pearce. By trying to find himself in Matthew Pearce, Bill comes to realize that he lives in a

nonstable world and discovers the ruins of his family. Thus it can be said that, by using Victorianism and postmodernism, Swift depicts two traumatic events of distant centuries by gathering two ordinary characters by a historical event that become constructions.

As a result, considering both novels in terms of historiography, it can be said that both novels do not only aim to imitate a Victorian story, but rather, they try to demonstrate Victorians with a new interpretation by uncovering the hidden aspects through fiction. While Fowles chooses to reinterpret Victorians in a fictional Victorian setting, Swift creates a ruined character in an unstable world who seeks his Victorian past. Doing this, they reflect Victorians through a contemporary perspective, representing doubts and different approaches to them. Besides, both postmodern authors do not hesitate to play with the novel genre and they promote metafictional qualities of the postmodern pluralistic approach by subverting realistic novel structure through history and fiction.

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