



**BREAKING THE FOURTH WALL VIA SELF-  
CONSCIOUS ARTIFACTS: METAFICTION IN  
JOHN FOWLES' THE FRENCH LIEUTENANT'S  
WOMAN, KURT VONNEGUT'S  
SLAUGHTERHOUSE-FIVE, AND GRAHAM  
SWIFT'S WATERLAND**

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GRAHAM SWIFT'S WATERLAND**

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## THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that in my opinion the thesis submitted by Mohammed Saher MOHAMEDTAHR titled “BREAKING THE FOURTH WALL VIA SELF-CONSCIOUS ARTIFACTS: METAFICTION IN JOHN FOWLES’ *THE FRENCH LIEUTENANT’S WOMAN*, KURT VONNEGUT’S *SLAUGHTERHOUSE-FIVE*, AND GRAHAM SWIFT’S *WATERLAND* ” is fully adequate in scope and in quality as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

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This thesis is accepted by the examining committee with a unanimous vote in the Department of English Language and Literature as a Master Thesis. July 5, 2022

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The degree of Master by the thesis submitted is approved by the Administrative Board of the Institute of Graduate Programs, Karabuk University.

Prof. Dr. Hasan SOLMAZ

Director of the Institute of Graduate Programs

## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own work and all information included has been obtained and expounded in accordance with the academic rules and ethical policy specified by the institute. Besides, I declare that all the statements, results, materials, not original to this thesis have been cited and referenced literally.

Without being bound by a particular time, I accept all moral and legal consequences of any detection contrary to the aforementioned statement.

**Name Surname: Mohammed Saher MOHAMEDTAHR**

**Signature :**

## FOREWORD

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ  
﴿ تَرْفَعُ دَرَجَاتٍ مِّنْ نَّشَآءٍ ۗ وَفَوْقَ كُلِّ ذِي عِلْمٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴾  
﴿یوسف:۷۶﴾

I extend my sincere thanks and gratitude to everyone who contributed to bringing this modest effort to light, led by my professor and supervisor, Dr. Amjed Lateef Jabbar ALI, and my professors who enriched me with experiences and skills that effectively contributed to the completion of this work. I also extend my thanks and gratitude to the Deanship of English Language and Literature department and the Deanship of Institute of Graduate Programs for their patience and their consideration of the circumstances that befell me during my work.

All thanks and gratitude to you, my family, for your long patience with me and for giving up your time and supporting and encouraging me. You were the first credit to me after Almighty God for getting to where I am today; I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

## **DEDICATION**

*This thesis is dedicated to my parents, to whom I owe everything  
For their endless love, support and encouragement*

## ABSTRACT

The difficulty in depicting reality, as well as the deconstruction of centers, the abandonment of traditions, and the weakening of epistemic and absolute rules, predominated in the conception of fiction throughout the 1950's and 1960's. The cultural upheavals that have occurred in the Western world, notably after the WW II, have resulted in the development of a collection of ideas, assumptions, experiences, discourses, forms, and suggestions that are referred to as postmodernism. One of the greatest examples of postmodernism is seen in a new genre of literature known as metafiction. As literary genres, realism and modernism required writing to reflect reality, which was dependent on particular meaning-creating centers such as the consciousness of the author or the reader, among other things. However, the self-reflexive deconstruction of logocentric binaries has resulted in multiplicity and plurality as a result of metafictional questioning of the reality. Therefore, this thesis first explores and assesses postmodern literature, metafiction, and metafictional aspects from a theoretical standpoint, and then it explicates metafiction as a piece of work that reveals its own fictionality. Then, the thesis examines and analyzes the novels under scrutiny, namely, *The French Lieutenant's Woman* by John Fowles, *Slaughterhouse-Five* by Kurt Vonnegut, and *Waterland* by Graham Swift as examples of the metafictional craft. The purpose of this thesis is to do a comprehensive research on the novels in order to illustrate how metafiction subverts the norms of narrative in traditions that came before it.

**Keywords:** Metafiction; Postmodernism; John Fowles; *The French Lieutenant's Woman*; *Slaughterhouse-Five*; Graham Swift; *Waterland*



## ÖZ (ABSTRACT IN TURKISH)

Gerçekliđi tasvir etmenin yanı sıra, merkezlerin deşşası, geleneklerin terk edilmesi ve 1950'ler ve 1960'ler boyunca kurgu kavramıyla prezervaz edilmiş olan bitkisel ve mutlak kuralların zayıflaması. Batı dünyasında, özellikle de İkinci Dünya Savaşı'ndan sonra meydana gelen kültür ayaklanmaları, modern sonrası bir dizi fikir, varsayım, deneyim, diskurs, form geliştirmeyele sonuçlandı. ve erteleme olarak adlandırılan öneriler. Post modernizmin en büyük örneklerinden biri, metaforyon olarak bilinen yeni bir edebiyat türünde görülüyor. Edebiyat türleri olarak, gerçekçiliđin ve modernizmin, yazarın veya okuyucunun bilinci gibi anlam yaratma merkezlerine ve diđer şeylere bađlı olan gerçekliđi yansıtmak için yazması gerekiyordu. Bununla birlikte, logomerkezli ikili gruplar için yeniden esnek bir şekilde ayrışan bu yapı, gerçekliđin metaforik sorgulanması sonucunda çođulculuk ve çođulculuk ile sonuçlandı. İlk olarak bu tez, son teknoloji edebiyat, metaforasyon, ve metaforik yönler bir teorik bakış açısından inceleyip deđerlendirir ve ardından kendi kurgusal özelliklerini ortaya koyan bir iş olarak metaforu ortaya koyar. Tezin ikinci bölümünde roman, John Fowles'ın *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, Kurt Vonnegut'un *Slaughterhouse-Five* ve Graham Swift'in *Waterland*'ı metaforlaşmaya örnek olarak inceleniyor. Bu tezin amacı, metaforun hikayenin normlarını daha önce gelen geleneklerle nasıl ifade edeceđini göstermek için romanlar hakkında kapsamlı araştırmalar yapmaktır.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Üstkurmaca; Postmodernizm; John Fowles; *The French Lieutenant's Woman*; *Slaughterhouse-Five*; Graham Swift; *Waterland*

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

**ETC** : Et cetra

**i.e.** : That is

**P/P.P.** : Page/Paper

**POW** : Prisoner of War

**VOL** : Volume

**VS** : Versa

**WW** : World War

## INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

In the decades after World War II, in the 1960's, the classic novel forms were challenged by postmodern investigation of reality. Postmodernist perspectives had a large impact on the appraisal of an uncommon subgenre of fiction known as metafiction, in which authors began to include aspects of social, political, and cultural self-awareness into their works. Metafiction, in general, refers to a “fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artifact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality” (Waugh, 1984, p.2). Thus, by crafting their work between the lines of reality and fiction, novelists were able to question the standards of the writing process.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine how John Fowles, Kurt Vonnegut, and Graham Swift use metafictional elements in their novels, *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, *Slaughterhouse-Five*, and *Waterland*, respectively, within a framework based on certain postmodern approaches, particularly in which we allude to the views of some of the most notable metafiction critics as well as practitioners like Patricia Waugh and Linda Hutcheon.

The first chapter of the thesis seeks to afford a theoretical foundation of metafiction, including its definition, techniques, characteristics, and purpose, by drawing on the views of many postmodernist scholars and metafiction practitioners. In keeping with this, the chapter includes the notions of postmodernism and postmodern literature. This chapter establishes the theoretical background for discussions in the following chapters.

The second chapter examines the metafictional ingredients in John Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman*; the third chapter discusses Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*; and the fourth chapter analyses Graham Swift's *Waterland*. These three chapters examine the concepts of reality, the impossibility of a single truth, the reader's birth, the author's death, intertextuality, parody, self-reflexivity, and self-awareness, the non-traditional narrator and narration, and “non-God-like” narrators, all of which defy the novel genre's and history's traditional frameworks.

The fifth chapter, Conclusion Chapter, summarizes the aspects introduced and explored in the preceding three chapters. Through a comparative analysis, this last

chapter establishes a connection between the three novels and the aspects under consideration. The concluding section underlines the significance of the reasons for highlighting the metafictional components of John Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*, and Graham Swift's *Waterland*.

## **SUBJECT OF THE RESEARCH**

The thesis is focuses on breaking the fourth wall, which is known in literature as ‘Metafiction’. It will examine the metafictional elements in three novels by three distinct authors: John Fowles, Kurt Vonnegut, and Graham Swift. Those authors, in their novels, *The French Lieutenant’s Woman*, *Slaughterhouse-Five*, and *Waterland*, stressed the writing process of the novel while portraying the link between the real and the fictional. Their metafiction technique blurs the lines between these two genres. This study will evaluate the metafictional themes in three novels: *The French Lieutenant’s Woman* by John Fowles, *Slaughterhouse-Five* by Kurt Vonnegut, and *Waterland* by Graham Swift.

## **PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH**

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate postmodern metafiction and metafictional literary approaches in order to expose the banality of conventional ideas such as reality, truth, linear plotting, and storytelling (narrative) strategies. As a result, the relevance of the thesis is found in the study's testifying procedure. The thesis also flips the long-held assumption that conventional components should be used inside fictional literary works by employing fiction itself.

## **METHOD OF THE RESEARCH**

First and foremost, for the theoretical chapter, the theories of Patricia Waugh, Linda Hutcheon, Mark Currie, Roland Barthes, Jean Jacques Derrida, Larry McCaffery, John Barth, and Terry Eagleton on postmodernism, metafiction, and postmodern literature were read and studied. A detailed reading of the ideas in the three books was done in accordance with the theories of the aforementioned thinkers. The books were also read with deconstructionist methodological aspects in mind.

## CHAPTER ONE: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### 1.1. Postmodernism

Due to persistent arguments on its definition and relevance from the beginning of the late 1950's, the term "postmodernism" came to be used interchangeably with the term "confusion". It has been called a new historical phenomenon by some critics, while others argue that it merely follows modernist methods. This ambiguity is exacerbated not just by the name postmodern, but also by the notions associated with it. Terry Eagleton, a noted British literary critic, describes the two conflicting concepts of postmodernism and postmodernity in his book, *The Illusions of Postmodernism*, that rather than referring to a historical era, the term "postmodernity" refers to a certain kind of current society. When seen through this new lens, the world appears as a patchwork of disparate cultures and interpretations that cast doubt on the objectivity of truth, history, and standards, as well as the inherent certainty of human nature and identity. The term "postmodernism" refers to a cultural movement that seeks to capture this momentous shift in society via work that is at once superficial, devoid of context, self-reflexive, playful, derivative, eclectic, and pluralistic. (Eagleton, 2013, p. vii)

The rise of postmodernism in literary criticism is also something to keep in mind. The formation of postmodernism in literature prompted as the desire for, relation to, or being an ideology that entails a dramatic rethinking of contemporary assumptions about society, personality, history, or language as a response to modernism, whether in architecture or literature, and commonly defined by a return to old elements and patterns, according to Merriam Webster Online Dictionary. Additionally, this comment might be seen as evidence that postmodern literature is a new way to convey rapidly changing world realities. A distinct break with realistic narrative style may be noted in particular in the seminal works of American writers from the 1960s who broke new ground in their respective fields.

As a consequence, the postmodernist credo of "anything goes!" has found its way into 1960's fiction. The absurdity of ordinary existence, as expressed in Stouck's statement, has also had a significant effect on the narratives. This absurdity is thought to have given rise to the notion of "mass society". Irving Howe, an American social and literary critic, coined the phrase "mass society":



By mass society we mean a relatively comfortable, half welfare and half garrison society in which the population grows passive, indifferent and atomized; in which traditional loyalties, ties and associations become lax or dissolve entirely; in which coherent publics based on definite interests and opinions gradually fall apart; and in which man becomes a consumer, himself mass-produced like the products, diversions and values that he absorbs. (Howe, 1959, p.24)

Leslie Fiedler, an American literary critic, says that when it comes to modernist ideas, “High Art” becomes ‘vaudeville’ and ‘burlesque’, once viewed through the lens of the notion of “mass society” developed by Howe. Post-Modernism, on the other hand, if by critic one means “leader of taste,” and by audience one means “follower,” this entails differentiating between critic and audience. And, most crucially, this then means that the gap of artist and audience, and hence, perhaps at the least, between professional and amateur throughout the field of art, is being bridged. (Fiedler, 1972 in Waugh, 1992, p.43) As a consequence, postmodernism in literature reduced the aristocratic notions associated with modernism also welcomed the reader with its everyday discourse.

Ronald Sukenick points out in his work *The Death of the Novel and Other Stories*; an important function of the postmodern writer is to reflect shifting social ideals. He asserts that in today’s world, the writer must start from scratch since there is no such thing as reality, time, or a unique personality for him to draw on. However, since, according to him, our reality is devoid of a creator's imprimatur, no one can be certain that what has been transmitted is the original work of an omniscient author. (Sukenick, 2003, p.41)

It also meant ‘revolt’ for postmodern writers, and it is important to understand what they were rebelling against so as to understand the Enlightenment and the shift from modernism to postmodernism, which those authors are adamantly against. The allusions to Habermas and Lyotard’s work will explain the argument about the Enlightenment in order to highlight postmodern authors’ problematic connection with the Enlightenment project. With the help of Habermas and Lyotard, it is also necessary to explain what Enlightenment is.

Habermas, who favors modernism and the ideal of the Enlightenment, opposes the totalizing approach of postmodernism since it lacks the required. Unlike Habermas, Jean-François Lyotard, a French literary theorist, does not see postmodernism as a

continuing trend of modernity. Lyotard emphasizes that “The ‘post-‘ of ‘postmodern’ does not signify a movement of *comeback*, *flashback*, or *feedback*- that is, not a movement of repetition but a procedure in ‘ana’: a procedure of analysis, anamnesis, anagogy, and anamorphosis that elaborates an ‘initial forgetting.;

” (1993, p.412). Postmodernism is defined by Lyotard as “incredulity toward meta-narratives”. Postmodernism, according to Lyotard, deconstructs the Enlightenment’s central goal, and the goal is the concept of a unified finish to subject and history .Frederic Jameson goes even farther; claiming that postmodernism’s embrace of commodification at any costs is the pinnacle of late capitalism. In terms of aesthetic output, in addition, Jameson disproves the notion that postmodernism is the last stage of modernism, he asserts that no matter how much it resembles the earlier modernism, today’s art has taken on a new significance in our society. Furthermore, we cannot imagine today’s culture without the influence of postmodernism in the arts, which feeds our advertising and other forms of mass production like clothes, furniture, architecture, and other artifacts. (Jameson, 1985, p.124)

Realization that reality is a relative and contested topic has been modified by concepts such as “loss of faith” in conventional activities, as well as the positive and optimistic character of postmodern literature. Consequently, the theories of French postmodernist Jean Baudrillard stand out because he proposes the notion of “loss of real”. That is, what individuals see as ‘real’ in the postmodern period is substantially influenced, overstated, or as a result of the media's filtering. Images in the media, movies, and especially television cause a blurring of the line between the real and the illusory. As a result, miniature parts, mediums, and memory banks are used to create the ‘real’, which may be replicated infinitely. Due to the lack of comparison, it is no longer necessary in being objective. It is just operable over this point. It is no longer real since it is no longer surrounded by an imaginary (Baudrillard, 1994, p.2). Accordingly, a phenomenon known as ‘hyperreality’ emerges. Hyperreality, instead, is meant to include the four diverse stages of the image, which all are postmodern era’s ideals. The picture itself, in these terms:

- 1- It is the reflection of a basic reality.
- 2- It masks and perverts a basic reality.
- 3- It masks the absence of a basic reality.
- 4- It bears no relation to any reality whatever: it is its own pure simulacrum. (Baudrillard, 1994, p.368)

The word 'simulation' is derived "*from the radical negation of the sign as value, from the sign as reversion and death sentence of every reference. Whereas representation tries to absorb simulation by interpreting it as false representation, simulation envelops the whole edifice of representation as itself a simulacrum*" (Baudrillard, 2020, p.368).

Postmodernism might be misconstrued for being very individualistic since the perception and the notion of the real, is rebuilt or re-formed throughout each literary work. Postmodernism, according to Hutcheon, includes both past and current imagery via storytelling forms such as parody, quotation, orientation, allusion, and imitation (Hutcheon, 2002, p.90). Furthermore, although postmodernism has been condemned as a postmodernist afterthought, it has many parallels with modernism.

Above all, the mid-to-late 1960's and early 1970's saw a boom in postmodern American writing. With the publishing of their works, writers such as John Barth, Kurt Vonnegut, Thomas Pynchon, William Burroughs, Donald Barthelme, Richard Brautigan, and Jerzy Kosinski established a strong reputation. They aimed to change the forms of modernist fiction by using new postmodern storytelling approaches that blurred the border between the imagined and the real, allowing readers to reflect on daily life as well as changing global situations. Important historical events that shaped American history, for example, the Vietnam War, Second World War, and the Cold War era, were critiqued in a variety of ways. The advent of these distinctive postmodern works created a gap between history and fiction, owing to the necessity for self-reflection and the conviction in personal awareness. Literary genres including parody, imitation, and burlesque were often used in conjunction with the intertextuality approach.

## 1.2. Metafiction

Self-reflexivity is frequently the major topic of postmodern literature, despite its presence in many other genres of fiction. In a 1970 article, William H. Gass used the term “metafiction” to describe the novel’s self-reflexive propensity. Critics contend that postmodern metafiction heralds the death or weariness of the book as a genre, while proponents argue that it heralds its revival. Devotees argue that comparable critical self-reflection has occurred in other genres, and that the novel's premise “notoriously defies definition” (Waugh, 1984, p.5). Patricia Waugh goes on to say that, “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 external verities but a series of constructions, artifices, impermanent structures” (Waugh, 1984, p.7). As Waugh explains it, the explicit use of metafictional method originates from modernist questions about consciousness and reality. The terms introspective, self-consciousness, narcissism, introverted, and auto-representational are often used to describe contemporary metafiction (Currie, 1995, p.14).

Theorists relate metafictional method to previous literary works in an attempt to justify 20<sup>th</sup> century metafiction. Some advocates connect self-reflexivity all the way back to Miguel Cervantes’ *Don Quixote*, a 15<sup>th</sup> century novel. Waugh even goes so far as to say, “by studying metafiction, one is, in effect, studying that which gives the novel its identity” (Waugh, 1984, p.5). Linda Hutcheon, on the other hand, claims that “in overtly or covertly baring its fictional and linguistic systems, narcissistic narrative transforms the authorial process of shaping, of making, into part of the pleasure and challenge of reading as a co-operative, interpretative experience” (Hutcheon, 1987, p.154).

Some critics argue that using the word “metafiction” to describe both profoundly self-reflexive modern works and works with just a few self-reflection lines leads to crucial ambiguity or imprecision. Ann Jefferson claims in her review of Patricia Waugh’s *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-conscious Fiction* (1984) that “the trouble is that Waugh cannot have it both ways, and present metafiction both as an inherent characteristic of narrative fiction and as a response to the contemporary social and cultural vision” (Jefferson, 1968, p.574). Others use a similar double definition of metafiction, making it hard to determine if the word

applies to modern metafiction or all works that feature self-reflexivity. Metafiction, as defined by John Barth and quoted by Mark Currie, is “novel that imitates a novel rather than the real world” (Waugh, n.d.).

Patricia Waugh moreover offers a full description of metafiction, defining it as “fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artifact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality” (Waugh 1984, p.2). Metafictional works, in her opinion, “explore a theory of writing fiction through the practice of writing fiction” (Waugh 1984, p.2). Additionally Mark Currie illustrates the self-critical trend of modern metafiction by presenting it as “a borderline discourse, a kind of writing which places itself on the border between fiction and criticism, which takes the border as its subject” (Currie, 1995, p.2).

Regardless of their classifications, metafiction according to most academics cannot be classified as a genre or as the ultimate style of postmodern fiction. Metafiction, they say, illustrates “a self-reflexivity prompted by the author’s awareness of the theory underlying the construction of fictional works” without drawing a distinction between modern metafiction and earlier works that use similar self-reflective approaches (Waugh, 1984, p.2).

Patricia Waugh categorizes current metafiction into three kinds. The first kind is shown by John Fowles’ inversion of the “omniscient narrator” stance in *The French Lieutenant’s Woman* (1969), which Waugh defines as disturbing a specific novel tradition. She adds mechanisms that provide a parody on a certain text or literary style in the second kind. *Mantissa* (1982) by John Fowles, for instance, is “a metafictional parody of metafiction” (Ommundsen, 1993, pp.1-2). Works in the third category are not as much of explicitly metafictional. These works, such as Richard Brautigan’s *Trout Fishing in America* (1967), aim to build new language frameworks or just suggest ancient forms by eliciting the reader’s understanding of established literary norms (Waugh, 1984, p.4).

Additionally, Ommundeson tries to discern between metafiction’s components. She classifies metafiction into three categories based on the usage of three typical metaphorical plot techniques. The first technique is using sexual acts as an analogy for the writing process. The detective is used as a model for the reader’s actions in the

second technique. The usage of gaming structures to symbolize codes of fictitious systems is the third typical metaphor she notes.

Certain forms of contemporary metafiction may also be referred to as neo-baroque fiction, surfiction, postmodernist fiction, fabulation, irrealism, introverted novel, or the self-begetting novel (Waugh, 1984, p.13). In spite of the broad variety of techniques used, a pattern of numerous similar elements can be seen in metafiction. These methods are often used in conjunction, although they may simply occur on their own. For example, metafiction uses intertextual references to examine fictional systems; include features of theory and criticism; establish biographies of fictitious writers and debate, present, and criticize their fictional works.

Metafictional writers regularly go beyond the bounds of the story by making comments about the writing process, assuming the personas of fictional characters, and speaking directly to the audience, all in an effort to demonstrate that there are no absolute meanings or truths. Furthermore, metafiction incorporates unusual and empirical approaches, such as rejecting traditional narratives, being unable to accept the fact of “real life”, undermining traditions to make reality a very suspicious idea, exposing and magnifying underpinnings of volatility, and demonstrating reflectance.

Proponents argue that by pushing its inner self-reflective tendencies outside, the metafictional book has relevance beyond its fictional domains. It becomes real, ironically, by pretending to be fake. Metafiction, according to Mark Currie, provides a realistic pattern for comprehending the contemporary experience of the world as a set of contrived systems while also allowing readers to better grasp the underlying patterns of story (Currie, 1995, p.7). When talking about the necessity of metafiction, he states that it delivers an: “unlimited vitality: which was once thought introspective and self-referential is in fact outward looking” (Currie, 1995, p.2). Waugh goes on to say the following:

Far from ‘dying’, the novel has reached a mature recognition of its existence as writing, which can only ensure its continued viability in and relevance to a contemporary world which is similarly beginning to gain awareness of precisely how its values and practices are constructed and legitimized. (1984, p.19)

### **1.3. Connection between Metafiction and Postmodernism**

People nowadays prefer to identify the word metafiction with the contentious term “postmodernism,” demonstrating the tight relationship between the two concepts. People are constantly intrigued about the origins of metafiction and how it relates to the apparently all-encompassing term “postmodernism.” Here, we will look at the relationship between the two concepts.

William Gass, who coined the term “metafiction”, seems to be the best choice to start. He publicly rejects that he is a postmodern writer since he has never been clear on the essence of postmodernism in literature at his time. It is only in passing that he refers to his work as ‘late or decaying modern’. Sarah Lauzen’s thoughts vary from those of Gass. As she sees it, metafiction involves using metafictional methods or components on a regular basis in order to highlight features of writing or a work’s structure. Paul Maltby, an American critic, makes a similar argument. Metafiction, he believes, has a far broader reach than postmodernism. The argument he gives is that, although many metafictionists are postmodernists, Cervantes and Sterne’s works are metafictional, despite the fact that their writers are not postmodernists. To put it another way, Maltby feels that postmodernism encompasses just contemporary metafiction. The distinction between metafiction and postmodernism, according to Maltby, is “While postmodernism may be conceived as relating the fiction to a postmodern culture or postmodernity, metafiction, as a term, altogether lacks sociohistorical reference” (1992, p.16). In Larry McCaffery’s opinion, Maltby’s is right on target. However, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, McCaffery asserts that metafictional works are not new since they can be linked to Miguel de Cervantes and Lawrence Sterne. The use of metafiction is a recurring theme in most of the most prominent postmodern fiction, according to him, and it is a key genre in postmodern literature. His asserts that the metafictional urge is one of the differentiating aspects of postmodern writing from the fiction of the 1930’s, 1940’s, and 1950’s. (Fang, 2006, p.26). Patricia Waugh’s point of view is similar to McCaffery’s which claims that metafiction is part of a larger cultural trend known as post-modernism, which includes a wide range of literary styles. Many research and experimental writers use metafictional techniques even if it is just one kind of post-modernism. (Waugh, 1984, pp.21-22). She also claims that although metafictional technique has been especially prevalent in literature since the 1960’s, it is incorrect to assign it just to current fiction

because “the term ‘metafiction’ might be new, the practice is as old (if not older than) as the novel itself” (Waugh, 1984, p.5). Linda Hutcheon makes her own decisions as well. She acknowledges to rejecting the label “postmodernist” in favor of the more descriptive term “metafiction,” but she believes it would be stupid to deny it is generally widely accepted that metafiction is an expression of postmodernism. She contends that “the formal and thematic self-consciousness of metafiction today is paradigmatic of most of the cultural forms of what Jean François Lyotard calls our ‘postmodern’ world- from television commercials to movies, from comic books to video art” (Hutcheon, 2014, p. xii). Postmodernism’s poetics are fully realized in her exploration of “historiographic metafiction,” which she calls the new exploratory writing that emerges from merging metafiction with historiography and other forms of writing.

Metafiction and postmodernism have a tense relationship, yet critics usually agree on the following: In literary history, metafiction and postmodernism go hand in hand; metafiction has existed for a long time but has only just been given the name; postmodernism includes metafiction, but it is not the only one.



## CHAPTER TWO: METAFICTION IN JOHN FOWLES' THE FRENCH LIEUTENANT'S WOMAN

*The French Lieutenant's Woman* written and released in 1969 by John Fowles, is a postmodern metafictional novel. The novel's storyline examines the link between the Victorian and contemporary eras, with the primary action taking place in Lyme Regis in the 1860's, when readers meet three key characters, Charles, Ernestina, and Sarah. At first sight, the work seems to be a classic Victorian novel; nonetheless, it is a deconstruction of the accepted conventions of Victorian fiction. Furthermore, the work is regarded as a profoundly metafictional novel in which Fowles experiments with the traditions of the Victorian novel genre. Furthermore, as a metafictionist, Fowles uses several metafictional aspects to thrash the standard perceptions of truth, reality, history, narration, characters, and readers. He turns the novel's structure and production into a work of fiction. His 20<sup>th</sup> century experimental narrators disrupt the notions of time and reality. He deconstructs the Victorian book tradition and repurposes its tropes to build his own constructed fiction (Gaggi, 1986, p.324).

*The French Lieutenant's Woman* is an important metafictional work that deconstructs typical novel writing and reading processes. For readers who have preconceived notions about how books should be organized, this is the most challenging task (Salami, 1992). One of the novel's most pivotal metafictional characteristics is its self-reflexivity. However, the novel's first 12 chapters do not indicate that it is a work of fiction. The plot flows effortlessly, as if it were a classic Victorian novel. The narrator says at the end of chapter 12, "who is Sarah? Out of what shadows does she come? I do not know. This story I am telling is all imagination" (Fowles, 1969, p.40). In chapter 13, the novel's most vivid metafictional and self-reflexive components are revealed. The readers are obviously aware that they are reading fiction in this chapter. The barrier between fiction and reality is blurred and the fourth wall is broken by Fowles. In the novel, he emphasizes that "Fiction is woven into all" (Fowles, 1969, p.41) , implying that a work should not be taken seriously as actual fiction.

Furthermore, the intrusive narrator draws attention to the novel's fictionality. "This story I am telling is all imagination. These characters I create never existed outside my own mind" (Fowles, 1969, p.41). The intrusive narrator expresses the

novel's status as fiction in a clear-cut and self-aware manner. The text's various voices make readers wonder who the narrator is and whether or not each signifier in the text has a signified. The intrusive metafictional narrator states "So perhaps I am writing a transposed autobiography: perhaps now in one of the houses I have brought into fiction and perhaps Charles is myself disguised" (Fowles, 1969, p.41). This is perplexing to readers since this sort of novel does not follow a straight path based on the notion of verisimilitude. By deconstructing the ancient God-like all-knowing narrator function, Fowles likewise confuses the readers. "You may think novelists have fixed plans to which they work, so that the future predicted by Chapter One is always inexorably the actuality of Chapter Thirteen" (Fowles, 1969, p.41). By providing several unexpected and unreliable narratives, Fowles deconstructs typical realistic fiction storytelling strategies. Furthermore, readers have an active role in the reading/writing process. They are co-creators of the fiction, not passive readers who follow the pre-set paths and meanings. Not only is Fowles in charge of the writing process, but he also wants his readers to have authority over the imaginary characters. "Any more than you control," he says to the reader (Fowles, 1969, p.42). The text is used by the readers to build this fiction. After all, the novel asserts that the novelists who "have a habit of writing fictional futures" are the readers (Fowles, 1969, p.145). When the narrator introduces Ernestina in chapter five, he states that she "died on the day Hitler invaded Poland" (Fowles, 1969, p.12). The invasion happened in 1939, yet the narrative is set during the Victorian period. As a result, by blurring the lines between then and now, the traditional impression of a novel is altered. "She was born with a computer in her heart," the narrator adds another time (Fowles, 1969, p.23). Because the computer had not yet been invented, this is also self-reflexive. These instances demonstrate that the text is conscious of its fictionality, and that it deconstructs standard writing processes through its numerous times and narrative voices. Furthermore, the text blatantly reveals how it is created as a text through its multiple times and narrative voices (M. P. Buchberger, 2009, p.68)

John Fowles intentionally merges Victorian novel features with postmodernist elements in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. The dialogue, detailed descriptions, and mannerisms of the characters persuade the reader that the work is set in the Victorian era. In both life and fiction, Fowles employs the Victorian era's atmosphere and language to challenge the linear process. The characterization of the two primary

female characters exemplifies this. Ernestina represents a traditional Victorian lady, whereas Sarah represents a woman who defies convention. Ernestina is described in the novel as a typical Victorian lady who lives her life according to society's set common conventions, which are founded on essentialism, rather than her own goals and ambitions. She carries out the responsibilities of a Victorian woman at the time. She is a lady who is admired by many men and is well aware of her beauty (M. P. Buchberger, 2009, p.72). She is described as follows in a novel description:

In her room that afternoon she unbuttoned her dress and stood before her mirror in her chemise and petticoats... she raised her arms and unloosed her hair, a thing she knew to be vaguely sinful, yet necessary... she suddenly stopped turning and admiring herself in profile. (Fowles, 1969, p.13)

She suppresses her inner sexual desires by stating "I must not" when she stares in the mirror and observes her body lustfully (Fowles, 1969, p.13). "Ernestina wanted a husband, wanted Charles to be that husband, wanted children," she said, like the female characters in a typical Victorian novel (Fowles, 1969, p.13). She, like other Victorian female characters, cannot continue her life and achieve her aspirations on her own; she needs the assistance of a man to do so. Ernestina, unlike most modern women, is emotionally, psychologically, and physically vulnerable. When Charles wants to break up with her, she is upset, and she begs him to reconsider since she cannot live without Charles' protection. She says, "Perhaps I am just a child. But under your love and protection... and your education... I believe I should become better. I learn to please you, I should learn to make you love me for what I had become" (Fowles, 1969, p.162). Then she begs, "Charles, I beg you, I beg you to wait a little" (Fowles, 1969, p.162). She is terrified because she is not ready to be alone; in fact, she has never been ready. She is completely reliant on Charles, and she is constantly in need of a man in her life to complete her. She is an appendage who is always in need of the protection, control, and influence of others.

Sarah, in contrast to Ernestina, portrays women who achieve liberation in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. She has her own consciousness and awareness as a post/modern character. Furthermore, Fowles sprinkles Sarah with metafictional mystery, leaving the novel's narrators and Fowles as a writer unable to comprehend and explain her psyche. She is liberated, and she is solely accountable for her own choices. She does not need males to sustain her existence. In the novel, she takes three crucial decisions that

highlight her own independence. Perhaps this is why she has so many nicknames, the most notable of which being ‘The French Lieutenant’s Woman’; Sarah is a confluence of numerous signifiers, and her depiction exemplifies Derrida’s ‘différance’. Sarah is shameless, licentious, and a rebel in Victorian society. Sarah is unconcerned by these assertions since she understands what she wants and what she is doing. She dismantles all metanarratives based on phallogocentric binaries (Buxton, 1996, p.199). Sarah states,

Why I sacrifice a woman’s most precious possession for the transient gratification of a man I did not love. I did it so that I should never be the same again. I did it so that people should point at me, should say, there walks the French Lieutenant’s Whore...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.... I think I have a freedom they cannot understand. No insult, no blame, can touch me”. (Fowles, 1969, pp.74-75)

Sarah understands why others call her by nicknames and she allows them. Traditional conventions and stereotypical standards are peeled away from her. Her second option is to meet with Charles and tell him her story, despite the fact that it is not true. To put it another way, she is a liar. She first establishes herself as a strange, motionless, and helpless lady, and then she manages to get Charles’ sympathies. “There was something intensely tender and yet sexual in the way she lay; it awakened a dim echo of Charles of a moment from his time in Paris”(Fowles, 1969, p.30). When Charles is with Ernestina, he remembers the times when he was free, but he does not feel the same way. Sarah mysteriously slides on her knee at the second meeting, and unable to look at him, shaking, and silent. Charles is once again enthralled by her frailty and extraordinary beauty. Sarah is also an excellent puppet to distract him from his boredom. During their third meeting, Charles overhears a portion of Sarah’s story and believes he is a rescuer. Charles and Sarah’s next meeting will be very different. Sarah is going to mock Charles and tell a story that is not true. Charles believes her and is even more in love with her now. Charles also wants to be with Sarah, but she does not want to be with him and wants to be free and independent. She does not want to be a part of someone else’s life, and she does not want anyone to be a part of hers either. She is just a picture of a modern woman who wants to make all of her own decisions and take all of her own steps. In the text, her story does not go in a traditional way. She is the embodiment of metafictional multiplicity (Warburton, 1996).

There are unconventional narrators and narrative frameworks in *The French Lieutenant’s Woman*. The novel’s meaning-creating core, the God-like narrator, is

dismantled. In the novel, Fowles employs two separate narrations: one is an omniscient narrator, and the other is an intrusive contemporary storyteller who alternates between first- and second-person narration. The book's intrusive narrator is mostly subjective, while the third person narrator is more conventional and primarily objective (Holmes, 1981). One of the most focal metafictional mechanisms is the employment of several narrators. The narrator of the book changes between 'I' and 'He', reality and fiction, since Fowles combines conventional Victorian novel elements with postmodern elements. This implies that using the 'I' narrative undercuts the narration's and the writer's authority. For instance when the intrusive narrator states, "But I live in the age of Alain Robbe-Grillet and Roland Barthes," he is referring to his own life as a writer and a narrator from the postmodern period (Fowles, 1969, p.41). The narrator's self-reflexive and self-conscious voice takes control of the writing process to show that what is being read is just fiction and to make readers aware that the creation of meaning is not in the hands of the writer or narrator, but is dependent on the linguistic signs on the page, and thus in the hands of the characters and readers (Brantlinger et al., 1972).

The obnoxious narrator serves as a commentator, making observations on story events and other characters. However, they are only assumptions. He often makes educated assumptions and expresses his own subjective views and sentiments. As a result, the typical God-like narrator is undercut once again. This narrator is distinct from the narrator of a realism fiction in that he does not know everything or imposes pre-set interpretations based on the realist novel's verisimilitude concept. His ignorance is shown when he refers to Millie as "nineteen or so" (Fowles, 1969, p.67). Later in the novel, when Charles is contemplating lesbianism, he says, "I doubt if Mrs. Poultney had ever heard of the word 'lesbian'; and if she had..." (Fowles, 1969, p.67). Because he says "I doubt," the narrator is hesitant, he does not have the ability to know or mould anything, indicating that he is only experimenting with the signifiers. Another noteworthy feature of this self-aware narrator is that lesbianism "did not exist" at that time period (Fowles, 1969, p.67). He emphasizes this and criticizes the Victorian era by claiming that "some vices were then so unnatural that they did not exist" (Fowles, 1969, p.67). Because the text's Victorian ambiance is consciously and historically dismantled, the use of the phrase lesbianism is an example of self-reflexivity. When he says "A thought has swept into your mind," the narrator

addresses the readers directly and introduces a digression in the narrative (Fowles, 1969, p.67). The narrator makes it clear that this is not a Victorian novel, and the narrator's job is not the same as it is in a realism novel. As a result, Fowles' story combines past and present, and the narrative is conscious of this (Higdon, 1984).

Sarah takes away the narrators' ability to create logocentric metanarratives. She perplexes and constrains the novel's narrators. She is a mysterious woman, and the narrators have no insight into her mind or the motivations behind her acts. They cannot read her mind; everything about her is a mystery, and the narrators can only guess at her inner thoughts. Sarah and the narrators are not traditional realism characters; they are also conscious of their fictionality and their limited presence in the text as linguistic entities. Sarah's "vigour, a pink bloom" section of her skin is described by the intrusive narrator (Fowles, 1969, p.50), who claims that he does not know "whether it was because she had slipped, or he held her arm, or the colder air," and he continues, "I do not know" (Fowles, 1969, p.50) Sarah is "not to be explained" (Fowles, 1969, p.50) and "not to be understood" (Fowles, 1969, p.152) throughout the novel. The novel's two narrators are "not at all sure where she is at the moment" (Fowles, 1969, p.173). Thus, metafictional questionings of the centers demolish the authority of the all-knowing traditional narrator, and the textuality of the characters is highlighted throughout the novel (Hutcheon, 1978).

The work also emphasizes the development of the readers. The use of phrases like "I think," "I doubt," "I have no doubt," and "I do not know" emphasizes the readers' autonomy, allowing them to make their own observations and conclusions about the novel's events. The novel does not give readers with fully developed settings, characterizations, or facts. Readers are asked to fill in the narrative, linguistic, chronological, and textual gaps in this metafictional work on their own. This is emphasized when the obtrusive narrator states, "You will guess now why Sam and Mary were on their way to the barn" (Fowles, 1969, p.166). The narrator does not provide a comprehensive statement, but he allows the readers to fill in the blanks. The readers may deduce that they went to the barn to make love based on this statement. Another example is when Sarah sets up a trap for Charles at an Exeter hotel. She's dressed in a dark-green shawl and a nightgown, and she's acting as if she's hurt her ankle. She dresses seductively for Charles, and when he comes to see Sarah, she says, "Forgive me. I ... I did not expect..." (Fowles, 1969, p.148) The text, on the other hand,

employs Sarah to move across the several plots. Although the work incorporates Victorian motifs, it does so in order to deconstruct and reassemble new narrative frames and paths. In contrast to the traditional linear and complete plot and characterization, the novel does not provide every detail, nor does it present itself as a close and complete system mirroring outside realities. It raises questions about predetermined narrative techniques and meanings, as well as its own fictionality as an artifact (Holmes, 1981).

*The French Lieutenant's Woman* is a metafictional novel that blurs the lines between truth and fiction. Its inclination is to use real-world characters, events, and artworks to highlight its artificiality. Although imaginary characters such as Sarah, Charles, and Ernestina appear, real names such as Darwin, Hitler, Jane Austen, J. S. Mill, and George Sand appear. When Charles looks at Sarah, she looks like Emma Bovary, and when he walks with Ernestina, she feels like “the very steps that Jane Austen made Louisa Musgrove fall down in *Persuasion*” (Fowles, 1969, p.4). The concept that every written word by the author is unique is deconstructed by these intertextual aspects. Every work is preceded and surpassed by others, and uniqueness is a metanarrative in itself. Furthermore, when the author appears in the narrative, the classic novel structure is shattered. This is one of the novel's most important self-reflexive metafictional instances. He emphasizes that his characters and work are just the fruit of his imagination, and that they are therefore merely imaginary materials on blank pages. The presence of Fowles in the narrative demonstrates the ontological gap between reality and fiction. Readers of conventional novels are led to assume that every character in the novel is real, and that every occurrence in the story happened. However, in chapter 13, the author begins to describe a new sort of fiction that is completely distinct from conventional fiction and emphasizes the novel's fictionality (Cooper, 1991, p.174). This self-reflexive narrative digression deconstructs and critiques the illusion of reality generated in traditional realist fiction:

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. I have disgracefully broken the illusion? No. My characters still exist, and in a reality no less, or no more, real than the one I have just broken. Fiction is woven into all, as a Greek observed some two and a half thousand years ago. I find this new reality (or unreality) more valid; and I would have you share my own sense that I do not fully control these creatures of my mind, any more than you control—however hard you try, however much

of a latter day Mrs. Poulteney you may be—your children, colleagues, friends, or even yourself. (Fowles, 1969, p.41)

Fowles emphasizes his participation in the novel by contrasting the Victorian novel with the metafictional novel. This example also demonstrates that the text is conscious of its textuality and makes a direct reference to it. The intrusive narrator makes an appearance as a character in the novel in chapter 55, sharing a railway cabin with Charles. Charles, on the other hand, is unaware of his presence, and Fowles wonders, “Now could I use you? Now what could I do with you?” (Fowles, 1969, p.173) Later, in the following quotation, Charles recognizes Fowles:

And I am suddenly aware that Charles has opened his eyes and is looking at me. There is something more than disapproval in his eyes now; he perceives I am either a gambler or mentally deranged. I return his disapproval, and my florin tomy purse. He picks up his hat, brushes some invisible speck of dirt (a surrogatefor myself) from its nap and places it on his head. We draw under one of the great cast-iron beams that support the roof of Paddington station. We arrive, he steps down to the platform, beckoning to a porter. In a few moments, having given his instructions, he turns. The bearded man has disappeared in the throng. (Fowles, 1969, p.174)

In Chapter 55, Fowles considers Charles’ future in the novel and deconstructs conventional authorship by traveling through it. This also demonstrates that the whole text is essentially a series of signifiers with no central point from which absolutes may be derived. Furthermore, when Fowles, as narrator, depicts Marry as “a better educated though three years younger girl in the real world” (Fowles, 1969, p.117), he deconstructs the realistic frames and emphasizes that the text is purely fictitious. The narrator/character/author emphasizes that he is in the world of fiction, claiming to share an ontological world with the other characters, which are only signifiers on the pages and can only move inside the text. Fowles is a scriptor, not a classic creative author, as Barthes asserts, and he is participating in the production as a narrator and a character at times. He also wants his audience to participate actively in the writing and creation process. The actual and fictitious worlds coexist, and Fowles poses ontological issues about both.

Multiple endings or non-traditional endings are common in metafictional novels. One of the most remarkable elements of *The French Lieutenant’s Woman* is its multiple endings (Scruggs, 1985). Fowles gives his readers three distinct endings to select from, and he encourages them to do so. The first ending is found in Chapter 44, and it involves Charles leaving Sarah and marrying Ernestina. This is how it ends: “Charles and Ernestina did not live happily ever after; but they lived together,



though Charles finally survived her by a decade (and earnestly mourned her throughout it). They begat what shall it be—let us say seven children.” (Fowles, 1969, p.44)

It is a classic Victorian ending, but the narrator rejects it and constructs another ending in chapter 60, in which Charles abandons Ernestina and returns to Sarah.

Charles wants to be able to see Sarah again, but she doesn't want to. Charles's dreams have not come true. This is the third ending in Chapter 61. Sarah wants to be alone and do things on her own, and this is the one. This means that Charles is on his own. However, he knows that Sarah wants to be free and independent. With these endings, Fowles completely demolishes the linear progress of a traditional book. Even the endings show how the metafictional texts are fun and how they like to celebrate different things. It is not like a typical Victorian novel, which is like a tight and planned system that gives certain meanings or truths. It is not that way at all. The novel is a type of metafiction that always points out that it is a work of fiction and talks about how it was made. There are many options in life, and people should make their own decisions because each step takes them to a new place. This is what Fowles says. Life is not one-dimensional, but many-dimensional, so Fowles celebrates the multitude of the signifiers (Scruggs, 1985).

The novel seems to be a Victorian love story at first look, however it is parodic since the work's major feature is juxtaposing the Victorian and contemporary eras. Critical narrations and remarks from an odd and unconventional narrator throw the portrayal of the mid-Victorian era and society on its head. Fowles mocks the period's typicality and conventions, as well as the novel writing of the day.

Fowles parodies the notion of freedom in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. The novel's narrator points out that “There is only one good definition of God: the freedom that allows other freedoms to exist” (Fowles, 1969, p.4). The intrusive narrator observes that Fowles expressly plays games on the fact that reality is a fabrication, and that the narrator observes that “A convention universally accepted [during the nineteenth-century] that the novelist stands next to God” (Fowles, 1969, p.41). Fowles addresses the problem of conventional fiction's passive readers by claiming that the readers share his feeling that he does not have complete control over the characters in his work, despite the fact that they are fictitious creations of his imagination. Another

characteristic of parody is Fowles' obtrusive narrator. In the story, the intrusive narrator's duty is to openly ridicule a conventional narrator who knows every detail and can even read people's minds. Furthermore, in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, the intrusive narrator does not profess to know all about the protagonists. He is usually uninformed of the characters' inner thoughts or is apprehensive of what they will do. However, in several passages of the story, Fowles mocks Charles' liberty. Fowles is a mix of three characters; firstly he is a member of a Victorian upper-class family. Second, he is not totally free to form his relationship with Sarah according to his own desires; and third, he is a prisoner since he is nothing more than a linguistic entity in the text and cannot move beyond the text's limits.

The novel's endings are equally satirical, with the intrusive narrator claiming that he would want to serve all endings at random. "That only leaves me with one problem: I cannot give both versions at once, yet whichever is the second will seem, so strong is the tyranny of the last chapter, the final, the 'real' version" (Fowles, 1969, p.173). These ends raise questions about Charles' freedom and imprisonment. Finally, Fowles gives the readers true freedom and power, but he also acknowledges that "this story [he is] telling is all imagination" (Fowles, 1969, p.41). He emphasizes that what the reader is experiencing is just fiction, not reality, as it reflects the outer world. One of the features of metafiction is the purposeful parodization of God-like writers and narrators. Because the novel's various endings enable readers to pick their own ending or endings, Fowles might be considered to have relinquished control over the writing process.

*The French Lieutenant's Woman* uses a variety of unconventional literary approaches, including parody. The book's three endings are an unconventional and drastic departure from the standard cut-and-dry format of a novel, and some readers who are used to reading classic realistic fictions may find the novel upsetting or perplexing. Furthermore, the intrusive narration's self-awareness and self-reflexivity is another element of this unsettling radicality. Fowles' intrusive narrator not only addresses the reader directly, for example, "Let us imagine the impossible" (Fowles, 1969, p.24) or "Oh, but you say, come on" (Fowles, 1969, p.41) but he also makes two short cameos in the text himself, masquerading as an important looking guy with a so-called patriarchal beard. One may feel defamiliarized by being personally addressed and watching this modern author make an inconceivable entry into his own 19<sup>th</sup>

century story. In general, Fowles pushes the boundaries of what is deemed appropriate content for inclusion in a novel. This may be seen in his wide use of epigraphs and his provision of a considerable lot of explanatory historical material, typically in the form of footnotes.

*The French Lieutenant's Woman* is a novel written by John Fowles, according to the book's cover. Readers will notice, however, that the novel is filled with texts, quotes, poems, and footnotes by various artists, authors, and intellectuals as they explore and read the novel. The novel is a smorgasbord of many literary sources. To emphasize that nothing is really unique, and that a work cannot be made without the influence of previous works, John Fowles shares authorship with a number of other artists. Each chapter of the book begins with epigraphs and excerpts from the works of other artists. These intertexts match the topics of the chapters and introduce the storyline of the subsequent chapters. Fowles, for example, begins the first chapter with a quotation from Hardy's poem "*The Riddle*"

Stretching eyes west Over the sea,  
Wind foul or fair, Always stood she Prospect-impressed;Solely out there  
Did her gaze rest, Never elsewhere  
Seemed charm to be. (Fowles, 1969, p.1)

He quotes this passage because he meets Sarah later in the chapter, who "stood motionless, staring, staring out to sea, more like a living memorial to the drowned, a figure from myth" (Fowles, 1969, p.2). Both works include similar women; in Hardy's poem, the lady is a "riddle" while Fowles' Sarah is a "myth".

Fowles emphasizes Sarah's enigmatic character in chapter 13 by quoting Tennyson's *Maud*: "For the drift of the Maker is dark, an Isis hid by the veil..." (Fowles, 1969, p.13). Fowles is influenced by Tennyson's 'Maker' and 'Isis' because he wishes to demonstrate that The Maker is the writer of the poem and that the veil symbolizes Sarah's mystery. Another instance of intertextuality occurs when Karl Marx's *Capital* introduces Charles's servant to demonstrate the "constantly extending scale, of the ancient domestic slaves under the name of a servant class" (Fowles, 1969, p.7). Fowles also refers to the prostitute with whom Charles sleeps in Arnold's poem "*Parting*"

“To the lips, ah, of others,  
Those lips have been prest, And  
others, ere I was,  
Were clasped to that breast...” (Fowles, 1969, p.40)

In chapter 44, Fowles quotes from Clough’s “*Duty*” to show Charles’ duty,

Duty – that’s to say complying With  
whate’er’s expected here ... [...]  
'Tis the coward acquiescence In a  
destiny’s behest ... (Fowles, 1969, p.44)

The uniqueness of a work is emphasized in traditional novels; nevertheless, there can be no original work in metafictional novels. Each piece is a continuation of the one before it. Fowles employs intertextuality to enhance and highlight the unoriginality of his metafictional work. The intertexts he employs are linked to the plot. By blurring the barrier between reality and fiction, Fowles disrupts literary creativity and the Victorian period (Buchberger, 2009, p.72). He employs intertexts from a variety of artists from various eras. As a result, he distorts the usual linear time line. Furthermore, readers may observe several points of view and works in a single text. Using intertexts, Fowles emphasizes the variety and subjectivity of texts.

In *The French Lieutenant’s Woman*, Fowles deconstructs the barriers between the past and the present. This is most noticeable in the writer’s intrusive remarks, which act as a narrator. This narrator freely admits that he is writing in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and contrasts the two eras in a deconstructive manner. He rewrites the characters’ histories and recreates the Victorian era at times, much like a historian. As a result, Fowles challenges the conventional notion of time.

There are three-time layers in the novel. The first is “if you had turned northward and landward in 1867, as the man that day did” (Fowles, 1969, p.90). In 1867, the narrator describes the Cobb area. Furthermore, the narrator used the present as his second time layer, stating in his narration, “I can be put to test, for the Cobb has changed very little since the year of which I write” (Fowles, 1969, p.1). The last time layer is the future, which refers to the “style that the resident ladies of Lyme would not dare to wear for at least another year” (Fowles, 1969, p.2). These time layers are all interconnected, and Fowles adds the comparison of the Victorian era with the modern world to these layers, as seen in the following example, “The colours of the young

lady's clothes would strike us today as distinctly strident; but the world was then in the first fine throes of the discovery of anilinedyes" (Fowles, 1969, p.2).

As a narrator, Fowles is not bound by the present and moves across temporal layers. Readers are also witness to Charles' nonlinear experiences. As an example, "His travels abroad had regrettably rubbed away some of that patina of profound humourlessness (called by the Victorian earnestness, moral rectitude, probity, and a thousand other misleading names) that one real required of a proper English gentleman of the time" (Fowles, 1969, p.8). The narrator exhibits typical Victorian gentlemanly behavior, and he interprets and rewrites history by emphasizing his own points. The narrator also mocks the Victorian era, stating, "Nothing is more incomprehensible to us than the methodicality of the Victorians" (Fowles, 1969, p.21). Fowles, however, does not represent 19<sup>th</sup> century as a lesser or worse era than the present, but rather contrasts the two eras and highlights the distinctions. The narrator, for example, says of sexuality and intimacy, "We are not frustrated as the Victorians? Perhaps, But if you can only enjoy one apple a day, there's a great deal to be said against living in an orchard ... you might even find apples sweeter if you were allowed only one a week" (Fowles, 1969, p.115).

The incorporation of real historical persons into literary works is one facet of historiographic metafiction. The French Lieutenant's *Woman's* narrator makes several references to real-world figures. Karl Marx is one among them, as the narrator says, "Needless to say, Charles knew nothing of the beavered German Jew quietly working, as it so happened, that very afternoon in the British Museum library; and whose work in those somber walls was to bear such bright red fruit." (Fowles, 1969, p.6)

Marx is introduced to the characters' ontological world not long before the publication of his important book: "...in only six months from this March of 1867, the first volume of Capital was to appear in Hamburg" (Fowles, 1969, p.6).

The novel also casts doubt on the historical accuracy. The narrator denies the idea of a single reality, claiming that "those visions" are "as stupid and pernicious a sentimentalization, therefore a suppression of reality, as that in our own Hollywood films of 'real' life" (Fowles, 1969, p.68). He rejects these views, believing them to be nothing more than walls, "and personally [he] hates those walls most when they are made by literature and art" (Fowles, 1969, p.68). The narrator also casts doubt on

Enlightenment ideals' notion of objective and ultimate truth, claiming that "The vast majority of witnesses and reporters, in every age, belong to the educated class; and this has produced, throughout history a kind of minority distortion of reality" (Fowles, 1969, p.115). The narrator emphasizes that there is no such thing as a single, definitive reality. Throughout history, reality has always been linked to fiction, and it has always been distorted. As a result, the boundary between reality and fiction is blurred by Fowles and the narrator.

## CHAPTER THREE: METAFICTION IN KURT VONNEGUT'S *SLAUGHTERHOUSE-FIVE*

*Slaughterhouse-Five*, Kurt Vonnegut's masterwork, is a distinctive metafiction with numerous diverse storytelling methods. To get a deeper understanding of Vonnegut's distinctive postmodern storytelling tactics, it is vital to have a sufficient grasp of the writer's personal experience as well as the historical and cultural context of his period.

Kurt Vonnegut (1922–2007) was one of America's greatest authors of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Vonnegut is widely regarded as a master of postmodern literature. In the face of misery and calamity, he was good at creating comically depressing tales and sneering at the insane society. He was also well-known for his unique writing style. His storytelling styles included satire, collage, and other techniques. For example, his books were usually full of fragmented fragments that featured magnificent poetry quotes, amusing verses, and obscene quartettes. Furthermore, the bulk of his writings were a blend of memoir and fiction. During World War II, Vonnegut spent a heart-breaking time of his time in prison as an American POW. Dresden Prison was where he was detained and saw the city's destruction, which influenced his subsequent works as a survivor of the Dresden bombing. *Slaughterhouse-Five* was the most typical novel (1969). Vonnegut moreover wrote scripts, articles, and novelettes in addition to novels. However, in terms of the thesis, the novel's narrative approaches are given more weight. *The Children's Crusade: a Duty-Dance with Death* is another title for *Slaughterhouse-Five*. As a main character, Vonnegut wrote about Billy Pilgrim, who was both a prisoner and a survivor of the bombing attack of Dresden that took place when he was there. So, some scholars believe that this novel is indeed Vonnegut's autobiography. The novel depicts the Protagonist Billy Pilgrim on an odd adventure, or more precisely, an almost frenetic time travel. Vonnegut brilliantly crafted a story about Billy's journey across time, who had the same horrible World War II experience as Vonnegut. In the novel, certain unconventional storytelling techniques developed.

To begin, the author used a clever non-linear storytelling technique in order to tell Billy's life story, including his phase in prison during the war in Dresden, his time in home after the war in America, and his time on a Utopian Plant Tralfamadore

forward through a lot of different perspectives and disordered time-space views to show how war is both ridiculous and brutal. Furthermore, the author referenced a large number of fragmentary paragraphs or lines from various sources to indirectly explain the character of conflict. Aside from these two separate storytelling qualities, Vonnegut also produced a new text in *Slaughterhouse-Five* by mimicking several original religious tales, such as John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim Progress* (1678). He then used the new text in an improper or completely opposite context to enhance the ironic effect.

*Slaughterhouse-five*'s narrator begins the novel with a confession, declaring, "All this happened, more or less" (Vonnegut, 1991, p.1). In the opening chapter, he explains why he wrote this novel, stating that he wanted to break rid of the awful memories of World War II, as well as how much time and effort he put into it:

I would hate to tell you what this lousy little book cost me in money and anxiety and time. When I got home from the Second World War twenty-three years ago, I thought it would be easy for me to write about the destruction of Dresden, since all I would have to do would be to report what I had seen. And I thought, too, that it would be a masterpiece or at least make me a lot of money, since the subject was so big. (Vonnegut, 1991, p.2)

As the narrator follows Billy Pilgrim's every move, the heroine's experiences were formed into those of the unidentified narrator. As Thomas F. Marvin underlines "Creating the character of Billy Pilgrim allows Vonnegut to present his experiences indirectly, as if they had happened to someone else, even as the autobiographical first chapter reminds readers that "all this happened, more or less"" (2002, p.131). Herefore, the novel has three dimensions in which Kurt Vonnegut himself, the narrator, and the protagonist combined when it comes to Kurt Vonnegut's life. The reader is able to reassess the narrative's subject point by looking at Kurt Vonnegut's real world, the narrator's fictitious world, and the protagonist's super-fictional world. It's worth noting that the narrator starts by describing about himself and his life, which are all eerily similar to Kurt Vonnegut's. The storyteller and the author cannot be the same person and therefore cannot be treated so, yet opposite to this genuine perspective, the creator and the created one mixes in the story. That is a sarcastic inversion of literary conventions. He even goes into detail about the publication process, saying that, based on his conversation with publisher Seymour Lawrence, the Dresden book will entail three-volumes. The narrator, who has a Vonnegut-like voice, states



It is so short and jumbled and jangled, Sam, because there is nothing intelligent to say about a massacre. Everybody is supposed to be dead, to never say anything or want anything ever again. Everything is supposed to be very quiet after a massacre, and it always is, except for the birds. (Vonnegut, 1991, p.14).

In *Slaughterhouse-Five*, Kurt Vonnegut explores his feelings of ambivalence and disbelief after surviving World War II. Probably the main possible explanation he's still breathing after such a tragedy is to retell it. By breaking the contemporary narrative's code, *Slaughterhouse-Five's* narrator provides the reader with a sense of the story's beginning and ending. Additionally, Vonnegut's Dresden encounter 20 years later and his fear about producing an anti-war novel inside the tale are masterpieces, in contrast to Vonnegut's biggest worries that *Slaughterhouse-Five* "is a failure, and had to be, since it was written by a pillar of salt. It begins like this" (Vonnegut, 1991, p.16). Using an Old Testament figure, Lot's wife, the narrator vows never to stop staring back and recall the painful memories of battle. In chapter five, the narrator professes his awe and adoration for Billy's epitaph notion, saying, "It would make a good epitaph for Billy Pilgrim—and for me, too" (Vonnegut, 1991, p.89). The reader learns at this moment that, like Billy, the narrator has no regrets despite all that has transpired in his life. Another thrill of the 'I' narrator occurs in Chapter six, when the narrator declares, "Somebody behind him in the boxcar said, "Oz." That was I. That was me" (Vonnegut, 1991, p.113). They are among the war captives who are watching the transfer of German troops in this odd scene. They were supposed to hang tight till policemen locate them in chapter 10, when the narrator (like Vonnegut) claims he was also in the slaughterhouse. (Vonnegut, 1991, p.154). These proofs point to the presence of a narrator who bears a striking resemblance to Billy and Vonnegut while flirting with the concept of being a prisoner of war. The narrator avoids depicting horrible fighting scenes or cursing the troops, exhibiting Vonnegut's inventiveness. By stressing that the novel is about everything except war, he succeeds in making it a one-of-a-kind anti-war effort. Klinkowitz notes out Vonnegut's involvement in the novel in his book, *The Vonnegut Statement*, stating that it is clear that he was using his own narrative voice throughout the book, and the allusions to him sprinkled throughout the tale help to further establish this. (Caramello Charles A., 1975, p.64)

While *Slaughterhouse-Five* may embrace Billy and Vonnegut's experiences as war prisoners, it adds that in fact, it's the narrative of how Vonnegut came to write this

novel. Then for what should Vonnegut present a work that is equally metafictional and chronologically difficult to follow? Klinkowitz's explanation provides the answer, which *Slaughterhouse-Five* cannot be reduced to a basic storyline (Caramello Charles A., 1975, p.64). Vonnegut, regarding to make sense of his war memories, fulfills number of roles as a creator, writer, and character, getting main position at both the opening and the end plus showing as a Dresden POW. Billy and Vonnegut, let us say, have the same birthplace at one point, and then it becomes the same shelter for being saved from one of history's most awful tragedies at another moment. In "*Vonnegut in Fact*", Klinkowitz shows in what way Vonnegut violates conventional thinking by saying in one of his third book's editions *Mother Night* (1962), "while writing, I become what I seem to be" (Kaveny E. Philip, 1999, p.271). The reader's response removed by the 'familiarities', which contribute to Klinkowitz's success in *Slaughterhouse-Five*. Moreover he confirms that Vonnegut understands he must use the technique of defamiliarization in order to make a genuinely striking and successful anti-war book. Vonnegut draws the reader in by portraying a parodic image of war, pushing them to see the conflict's futility through the eyes of an obsessive ex-prisoner of war. The narrator's preoccupation originates from his insistence on being there at all times throughout the fighting scenes, as well as his claims to have shared Billy's combat experiences. When it comes to the chronology of the novel, *Slaughterhouse-Five's* nameless narrator is likewise crucial in balancing the plot's metanarrativity. That is, the narrator does not take part in the events, or, to put it another way, when Billy travels through time to planet Tralfamadore, he does not pretend to be there. He does, however, appear close to the end of the novel, notably in final chapter, just as he did at the beginning.

There is no doubt that the narrator, like Billy; and Vonnegut once it comes to his wartime experiences, enjoys life as it is while simultaneously generating a tangible manifestation of war criticism via the tale he produces. When it comes to the Tralfamadorian literary concept, there is one more point to consider *Slaughterhouse-Five's* metafictional form. Vonnegut assures the reader on the first page of the novel that he lived to narrate and the usage of 'short clusters of symbols separated by stars' is what makes Tralfamadorian narrative telegraphic, and when Billy inquires about them, a Tralfamadorian response also gives a fresh insight into the schizophrenic manner in which their novels' symbols work:

There are no telegrams on Tralfamadore [...] each clump of symbols is a brief, urgent message—describing a situation, a scene. We Tralfamadoreans read them all at once.[...] There isn't any particular relationship between all the messages, except that the author has chosen them carefully, so that, when seen all at once, they produce an image of life that is beautiful and surprising and deep. (Vonnegut, 1991, p.64)

Because, like a collection of Tralfamadorian symbols, it conveys the idea of disparate pieces coming together as the reading is finished, to produce a harmonious whole, this basic explanation outlines how *Slaughterhouse-Five* came to be. Additionally, it demonstrates Vonnegut's metafictional style of prescribing his methodology via the utterances of a monster, which defamiliarizes the reader. A story that is loaded with "brief, urgent message", for example, "*Listen: Billy Pilgrim has come unstuck in time*" using disjointed timeline that allows the story to be read "all at once," which has a beautiful, unexpected meaning. Tralfamadorian notion is too a mocking allusion to postmodern storytelling style, due to the fact that he says that their story has "no beginning, no middle, no end, no suspense, no moral, no causes, no effects. What we love in our books are the depths of many marvelous moments seen all at one time" (Vonnegut, 1991, p.77). Billy's brief biography, which appears at the commencement of chapter two and ironically refers to the chronological linear seen in realistic war literature which is the most essential tool utilized to chronologically connect the fragmented narrative

Vonnegut intentionally enables the reader to come to their own conclusions, which are then wrapped up in the form of an 'anti-war' novel. He manages to keep his criticism constant throughout the story by interfering with and disrupting the chronology of this framework. On the other hand, according to Klinkowitz, it is hard for readers to continue as if they knew the plot, since Vonnegut's narrative is so confusing and disjointed. In each chapter, he flips things on their heads and jumps back and forth in time and space, which keeps the reader engaged and, most importantly, open to new and startling ideas (Mustazza, 2022, 54).

However, by making the material defamiliarized and omitting the brutal battle sequences, Vonnegut, on the other hand, calls attention to the folly of a slaughter that he thinks "there is nothing rational to say" (Vonnegut, 1991, p.14). In the same way that Billy represents 'every man', people are compelled to participate in conflicts without the opportunity to examine why. Those disappointed characters' ludicrous relationship to the events going occurring is examined by David Ketterer, and he finds

that it is as if the Dresden firebombing is as crazily conceivable as the science-fictional universe of Tralfamadore in *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1978, p.82). The tale implies that the multiple odd instances are plausible by bringing up the real-life Dresden atrocity. If such a massacre is not possible, the narrator suggests that time travel or Billy's capture by Tralfamadoreans are other options. Furthermore, the narrator indicates sarcastically that if fighting can be considered as a solution, then alien suggestions may be as well. Another point of contention for Hutcheon and Waugh was whether history is literally reflected in Vonnegut's writings, or, to put it another way, how reality and fiction collide in his writings. Like Vonnegut, these works address the inherent ideological ramifications of fiction and the process by which it is made, but in different ways. It is also possible to regard fiction as a way to escape from the past's pains and pleasures (p.194).

Metanarrative signals, on the other hand, contribute to the narrative's form and have a defamiliarizing effect. Most of the time, it is included into a tale via unexpected definitions. In the second chapter, while telling the tale of an undesirable picture owned by Roland Weary, and offering a brief history and description of photography art, the narrator claims that:

The word *photography* was first used in 1839, and it was in that year, too, that Louis J. M. Daguerre revealed to the French Academy that an image formed on a silvered metal plate covered with a thin film of silver iodide could be developed in the presence of mercury vapor. (Vonnegut, 1991, p.29)

As an additional illustration, the narrator highlights the importance of an illness known as 'Echolalia', "Echolalia is a mental disease which makes people immediately repeat things that people around them say." (Vonnegut, 1991, p.140) analogous to the story's unexpected pictorial depiction. Moreover, another very obvious metanarrative form in *Slaughterhouse-Five* put right at the start of Chapter Two, trying to tell that the "real" tale is going to be revealed and that they must "Listen" (Vonnegut, 1991, p.17). Vonnegut's main purpose in employing metafiction in his work, according to Todd F. Davis, was to have "an open relationship with the reader that allows for more communication than the traditional modernist paradigm (Davis, 2006, p.80). As a result, *Slaughterhouse-Five* serves as a mechanism for Vonnegut to express his feelings to the reader. Regardless of the usual bounds of the contemporary book, this contact between Vonnegut and the reader may be considered as one of the primary aspects of postmodernism in Vonnegut works.

Kilgore Trout, conversely, is the most notable intertextual character in Vonnegut's writings, and in *Slaughterhouse-Five*, he also acts as a metafictional device. "the world had never allowed him to think of himself in this way." as a result, Trout claims he cannot picture himself as a writer (Vonnegut, 1991, p.123). Despite the fact that Vonnegut often refers to him as his alter persona, an "unknown" and a failed science fiction writer, in his works, he is well-known enough to be invited to dinner by a few wealthy individuals in *Slaughterhouse-Five*. Trout advises one of the attendees at Pilgrim's home party in chapter eight, talking, "Do you think you might put *us* in a book sometime?" said Maggie White; Kilgore Trout replays "I put everything that happens to me in books.", Maggie White goes, "I guess I better be careful what I say" (Vonnegut, 1991, p.125).

Readers are reminded that what they are reading is a book when a character in a book expresses concern about being a part of it. It correspondingly asks the reader to evaluate if humans are a part of a world that is totally made up of and impacted by external factors. On the other hand, it is possible to infer that if *Slaughterhouse-Five* had been written in a more realistic tone and using traditional narrative methods, the reader's perception would have been diminished. The novel's success is aided by Vonnegut's artistic detachment, as well as his own traces in several chapters. *Slaughterhouse-Five*'s appeal is boosted by the fact that it is based on actual events. The topic matter is serious, yet the subjects chosen are not. Instead of maintaining the seriousness and insolvability of the situation, by inserting himself into it, the author creates a comedic aspect that provides the much-needed respite of a solution (Mustazza, 2022, p.83).

Vonnegut defamiliarizes a common history and contemporary context well-known to his target audience by reversing style and approach, offering a position to rethink their planet's existence. He is a staunch supporter of equality and human rights, which are fundamental elements in all of his works, despite his opinion that life has no meaning. He succeeds in recreating historical facts in a postmodern way, enhancing them with postmodern strategies, and feeding them to his reader without a doubt.

In *Slaughterhouse-Five*, the metafiction of Vonnegut's style manifests itself in three separate ways: collage, parody, and non-linear storytelling. Each approach has its own set of characteristics. Non-linear storytelling deviates from the chronological

sequence of events and exhibits unusual behavior, such as a tumultuous picture of space and time or a shift in individual views. Collage is the procedure of mixing numerous original elements from other sources and reconstituting together to write something new. Parody is when a book purposefully mimics the contents and structures of other novels in which the plot and style of one work are adapted to fit the context of another, that satire and irony may be fully realized. Professor Dentith, S. states in his book *Parody*,

My contention is simply this: that parody is one of the many forms of intertextual allusion out of which texts are produced. In this sense, parody forms part of a range of cultural practices, which allude, with deliberate evaluative intonation, to precursor texts. (2000, p.3)

To put it briefly, using these three ways gives *Slaughterhouse-Five* more energy and life. They are involved in the novel's writing process. A single word about the Dresden firebombing was insufficient to describe Vonnegut's rage and contempt. Furthermore, there is no logic to a true battle. Consequently, Vonnegut adopted metafiction here as "architectural blueprint," employing this kind of methods to differentiate the novel out from standard, which is constrained under the cause-effect linkage, temporal sequence, and storytelling completion. Readers may utilize the case of *Slaughterhouse-Five* in conjunction with the form of meta-fiction to grasp the novel's topic and the metafictional formation. The next sections of *Slaughterhouse-Five* examine their unique ability to enlarge the horizons of readers.

In light of the above, Vonnegut was supposed to look for fresh ways to illustrate World War II atrocities so as to keep the book from becoming a typical memoir. It's unlikely that the extraordinary effect would be achieved using the more standard linear storytelling style. A linear storyline is common in traditional realistic novels. One of the distinguishing characteristics of a linear narrative is that only the story's timeline and the narrative's timeline are inextricably linked. Storytellers who use this style try to tell stories according to their original development, whether in time or place. Under these conditions, readers are receptive to and even embrace some of the author's desired facts. Non-linear narratives, on the other hand, provide readers a unique perspective on books. Linear narratives are also known for their logical sequences, examples include chronology, the transfer of space, and the chain of events relationships. It's possible for readers to deduce the novel's underlying order despite the fact that certain episodes are reversed, like flashback. In addition, in a typical book,

first-person or third-person narration is used. Non-linear storytelling, on the other hand, does not have a certain logical sequence to adhere to storytelling with several perspectives or a jumping narrative space and time view is the norm. The use of non-linear storytelling in a book allows it to examine itself more deeply. So Vonnegut used non-linear storytelling to depict the misperception and powerlessness of human beings in the face of conflict, creating a rough-and-tumble book. As a result, the emphasis of this chapter will be on the rationale for and the usefulness of non-linear storytelling.

Non-linear narrative was taken by Vonnegut for a particular purpose, and that reason created non-linear narrative in turn. The post-war experiences of Vonnegut mostly influenced the use of non-linear narratives. Readers must have a deeper grasp of his mental scars as a result of the Dresden bombing in order to fully comprehend the story. The tragedy of Hiroshima is well-known, but few people are aware of Dresden's mystery. Dresden was a culturally rich city with no military industry. According to Frederick Taylor, the city was virtually undefended. The bombing was not something that anybody expected to happen. Despite this, the bombing took place and thousands of peoples were killed and more than 1,500 estates of Dresden were devastated by United States and British air forces in February 1945, during the bombardment of Dresden. The Dresden attack was more violent and vicious than the Hiroshima atomic explosion. He was there when the bomb went off. Consequently, compared to other reviews, his perspectives on the battle seemed quite honest and trustworthy. Nonetheless, the blast resulted in a lifetime of agony for him. His non-linear story was built on this inherent grief. As stated above, Vonnegut's decision to use non-linear storytelling is a direct result of his time in the military. In his mind, the Dresden bombing left an indelible mark. For a man who had seen a horrific and senseless massacre, recalling his memories in a rational and sequential manner seemed to be difficult. He had no idea if he would be able to complete it. He was left with a fractured war trauma as a result of the conflict. Vonnegut selected non-linear narrative because of a succession of post-traumatic stress illnesses brought on by combat trauma. To put it another way, this is a "Dresden complex."

The Oxford English Dictionary defines 'trauma' as "a wound, or outward physiological harm" (Dictionary, n.d., p.1252). It takes on a broader connotation as a mental illness brought on by an emotional stimulation. In the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, published in 1980, psychological reactions to

trauma were formally recognized as post-traumatic stress disorder. Vonnegut did not want to look back, and he was actually scared of recalling the massacre. Refusing to recollect is one of the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. Memory problems are another example. Vonnegut caused a breakdown in memory by repeatedly repeating certain material, such as the narrator's name. As a result, it took a lot of blood, sweat, and tears for Vonnegut to write a novel on the slaughter as part of his "Dresden complex." In *Slaughterhouse-Five*, he described the war as something he was concerned about. It was only possible for Vonnegut, an aberrant narrator with post-traumatic stress disorder, to convey this idea in such a hazy and illogical manner. Billy, like Vonnegut, was one of the people who were there when Dresden was bombed and survived and could not function normally, becoming addicted to traveling in time between reality and fiction. For all intents and purposes, Vonnegut used non-linear storytelling as a critical technique to disclose the horrors of war for the human race and to demonstrate his abhorrence of aggressive warfare as a whole.

To demonstrate a unique anti-war book to his audience, Vonnegut used a brand-new narrative technique. Readers' comprehensions of Vonnegut's military experience improved dramatically as a result of his work. Vonnegut interfered in the novel's narrative in three ways: as an author, a narrator and a character. He served like a "narrator," explaining Billy's frantic time travel, which took place within the text and outside the text. Meanwhile, he purposefully inserted himself into the beginning and end chapters of the work, therefore becoming a character. For starters, readers could quickly locate Vonnegut's self-introduction, which was put under his autograph on *Slaughterhouse-Five's* cover and included his name, locations he had visited, and the preparation for the work. In other words, Vonnegut's name appeared on the first page of the novel as the author. Then, in the first chapter, as we mentioned previously, the author Kurt Vonnegut was mentioned. Nonetheless, for his audience, he had previously presented Dresden's catastrophe in a character-based style.

The author said that he intended to write a book on his experiences during World War II, but that he quickly recognized that he could not adequately explain all that the war had given us. The Dresden bombing was the only event in the author's life that was not depicted. As a result, readers may be confused by the fact that the first chapter's "Vonnegut" and the novel's real author Vonnegut appeared to be the same person due to their eerily identical life experiences. Thus, during World War II, both of



them spent a heart-breaking time of their lives as American prisoners of war. As Dresden Bombing survivors, they were forced to watch the city's devastation while they were imprisoned there. 'The Vonnegut' in the novel was really a pseudonym for someone else. In brief, the author's explicit publicly available information tries to expose his identity as an author, fooling readers into believing the work is fake. Second, beginning in the second chapter, Vonnegut started to weave a tale. Readers were introduced to the protagonist Billy and his bizarre time travel. Meanwhile, novelist Kurt Vonnegut took over as the novel's first-person narrator. To his actual audience, Vonnegut started to recount what had transpired in Billy's life. In the next chapters, he disappeared from the story. Nonetheless, the character voice of Kurt Vonnegut continues to emerge throughout the story until the end. From time to time, he as a character urged readers to make a careful distinction between Vonnegut, the narrator, and Vonnegut, the character. As a result, Vonnegut's imaginary meta-narrative from the opening of the novel was debunked. Observing Vonnegut's use of an omniscient and all-encompassing technique of a whole to convey Billy's horrendous time in the Dresden bombing and his prosperous professional life following the war is not a difficult task at all. Billy could not shake the stench of battle, even after the conflict had finished. As a result, Vonnegut provides a thorough clarification of the novel's plot and themes throughout, with particular emphasis on the book's opening and conclusion.

Overall, regardless of whether Vonnegut was an author, a character, or a narrator in the novel, he used an aloof and sarcastic tone to reflect on several pivotal events in Billy's life. In particular, the short phrase "so it goes," that appeared over 100 times. Readers might sense Vonnegut's disinterest in what was going on around him. Its significance grew with each appearance, until it became a forerunner of death. His careless approach, on the other hand, starkly revealed the war's savagery to readers as well as the extinction of mankind. Narrator and character, according to the novel's narrative perspective, Vonnegut presented his own ideas and astonishment about the world and humanity in *Slaughterhouse-five*. Through the shift of views, Vonnegut merged himself with the novel's character, which was hailed as a breakthrough in narrative perspective. Vonnegut constructed a unique metafictional dialectic between the production and deconstruction of fictionality. Overall, the shift in viewpoints not only demonstrates Vonnegut's superb storytelling talents, but it also develops the

novel's themes uncovering the awful experience of certain World War II soldiers to illustrate the absurdity and abnormality of wars via dark comedy.

A whole other distinguishing aspect of Vonnegut's non-linear storytelling is the chaotic time-space perspective. *Slaughterhouse-Five* has a sophisticated time and space structure. The story's time line changes between the past and the present, while the setting alternates between Earth and the planet Tralfamadore. He invented a modern narrative modality, combining fact and fiction, and synchronicity and asynchrony, in order to produce a unique kind of storytelling experience. The book seems to mostly be a work of fragmentary art. Readers may be a little bewildered too until they start reading the book. Reading from a deeper and broader viewpoint might reveal the author's genuine aim. Most importantly, *Slaughterhouse-Five's* intertwined narrative timeline sets it apart. He formerly explained Billy's ailment of missing time to demonstrate the pattern of fractured time and space. There follows a short introduction,

Billy is spastic in time, has no control over where he is going next, and the trips aren't necessarily fun. He is in a constant state of stage fright, he says, because he never knows what part of his life he is going to have to act in next. (Vonnegut, 1991, p.25)

Billy's existence was "mixedly loaded" by Vonnegut from 1922 until 1976.

Fragmentary snapshots of post-war and pre-war life were in continual flux. The author's and Billy's recollections of the conflict were clouded without any need to follow the standard perception of time or a single trajectory going from the past to the future. For Vonnegut, using this method of looking at time, the past and present were placed on a certain footing. Actually, the author wished to express Billy's preoccupation with the trauma of war, his disregard for the present, and his despair for the future. Billy's present life has brought him back to the battlefield several times. To put it another way, it was because he could not stop thinking about the battle. As a result of the conflict, he had a psychic illness besides physical symptom memory problems. Overall, Vonnegut aimed to expose the brutality of war via the chaos of wartime. In addition to the chaotic time, twisted space detracts from typical narrative.

A fictional world, Tralfamadore, was invented by Vonnegut so that Billy could voice his disdain for violence and death on that planet. Although Vonnegut's hypothetical world was intended to create an illusion, it also served to reveal certain facts. Billy's experience on Tralfamadore provided him with a new perspective on

death, one in which death was seen as a means of self-renewal. Tralfamadore, as seen from this perspective, seems to be a perfect fit for Billy. To communicate his feelings about death and contempt for war, Vonnegut designed the perfect planet. Finally, this jumbled space-time vision offers the readers a fresh vantage point from which to appreciate the work. To begin, this viewpoint allows Billy to liberate from constraints of space and time on Earth, allowing us to see Billy's post-war trauma in all its fullness for the first time. To put it another way, it helps Vonnegut expose the human condition to the world.

The use of collage in Vonnegut's work is also a prevalent kind of metafiction. In *Slaughterhouse-Five*, collages are quite popular. Collages are made up of a combination of related pieces and chaotic material created by the novel's chaotic time-space perspective. The consistency of the narrative is shattered in both types of collages, resulting in narration confusion. Readers are left in the dark about what will happen next since authors do not give them any hints. It twists and irrationalizes the material of a narrative. Despite this, irrationality and chaos outline the perplexity of existence so that in such a "dementia praecox kingdom", they might better express the indifference and passive acceptance of the world around them. Here, the former is selected to deconstruct citation collages in the novel's core. When one first enjoys it, one may get the impression that the whole book is made up of random bits and pieces that lack the overall beauty. In fact, one of the finest lines in *Slaughterhouse-Five* is the usage of collages. Collage, as previously said, is a broad citation of diverse things from multiple sources. A war's description differs depending on who you ask, when you ask them, and where you ask them. Vonnegut's intention is evident in every item he carefully selects. To summarize, the novel's elements about the Dresden bombing and other killings give a weighty feeling of history, while funny and ludicrous folk cultures relieve readers' stress.

Vonnegut did not express any comments or provide any documents related to the Dresden firebombing. Instead, he used certain official materials, the majority of which pertain to a Truman speech and a census of the city's residents. The author implied via the reference that humans sought to subjugate the whole earth at the expense of many lives. He criticized people of having inhuman ambitions at the risk of humanity's extinction, and he also opposed conflicts that infringed on the value of life.

Furthermore, while speaking with his buddy O'Hare, Vonnegut appeared to unintentionally absorb knowledge about Dresden's populace. According to the records,

*On an average, 324,000 new babies are born into the world every day. During that same day, 10,000 persons, on an average, will have starved to death or died from malnutrition. So it goes. In addition 123,000 persons will die for other reasons. So it goes.* (Vonnegut, 1991, p.176)

Wars have claimed many lives, whether in the bombing of Dresden or the atomic bombs of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Death, on the other hand, seemed to be an everyday occurrence, as natural as breathing. He seemed to imply that death is a passive and hesitant reality. Both of the quotations seemed to be unrelated to the plot of the work. However, these formal publications served as justifications for war and emphasized the inevitability of death. Vonnegut's disdain of warfare and hopelessness of existence were expressed in these quotes in an indirect way. The anti-war message becomes much more pronounced.

Varied writers have different perspectives on the Dresden massacre. In *Slaughterhouse-Five*, works by other notable authors on war are regularly quoted to highlight the sin of war in detail. Vonnegut used a lot of verbatim quotes to describe the Dresden bombing. In a roundabout way, he portrayed this chronological disaster. In the next paragraphs, we will look at several common citations in depth. Even if Vonnegut did not depict extremely gruesome events, readers could nevertheless feel the despair and anguish of war. War's destruction not only resulted in a large number of deaths, but it also destroyed humanity's spiritual civilization art. As a result, War's repercussions are incomprehensible, resulting in not only individual deaths but a genuine global decline. To put it briefly, every term that the author steals from other works helps to increase the anti-war impact. Finally, Vonnegut elicits great resonance from readers, both implicitly and mechanically.

As a metafiction method, parody is extensively used in post-modern literature. By using parodies to portray certain fears and anxieties, postmodern novels undermine conventional novels. Parody possesses imitative items with a broad scope, such as a term, a classic work, a book, or even a historical event that has already occurred. Simply said, parody is when a work borrows from another to achieve its ironic and scoffing impact.

Parody subjects are mostly comprised of Pilgrim's Progress, Jesus' Prediction of Death, and Adam and Eve in Eden in *Slaughterhouse-Five*. To obtain an amusing impact and deliver certain messages, parodies use marked differences between both the parodic items and the parodied texts. A religious book by John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678), is one of the best. The story alternates between Christian's trip to heavenly city. A religious trip and battle from disbelief and sin to redemption and grandeur are shown in the metaphorical story of Christian, the main character. If readers are paying attention, they may notice Billy Pilgrim uses identical name as the Pilgrim. That is not a fluke, but a deliberate choice. In fact, Vonnegut cleverly reduces the gap between Christian and Billy by using the term "Pilgrim". Billy Pilgrim, on the other hand, went to another planet called Tralfamadore in search of a method to escape the earth he could not confront, unlike Christian. Billy had to go back in time in escaping the horrors of war and death that he had experienced during the Dresden bombings. In general, Christian compares Celestial City to Billy's Tralfamadore. What distinguishes Christian from Vonnegut is that Christian sought a path to a heavenly city to restore his faith in God, while Vonnegut sought refuge on a fictitious planet to avoid bloodshed and conflict after losing his faith. Christian's individuality was muted by his unwavering pursuit of faith. Billy, ironically, suffered from mental detachment and lost his bearings while traveling through time. Overall, Vonnegut's apparently sloppy imitative style masterfully reveals his despair to live on Earth in the face of unending violence. As a result, there are no Adam and Eve in this world, and readers are shocked to find that Tralfamadorean is not the Garden of Eden.

Vonnegut disassembled and reimaged them in order to achieve dramatic absurdity and irrevocability. The whole universe is warped and absurd in Vonnegut's eyes. Thus, the old world must be destroyed and a new "Eden" rebuilt. Vonnegut, in a nutshell, at no time felt that religion could assist people solve issues. After World War II, he used parodies to deconstruct Bible tales in order to communicate his anti-Christianity, anti-God, and anti-other conventional faiths. In a similar vein, the author said, "Early in 1968, a group of optometrists, with Billy among them, [...] The plane crashed on top of Sugarbush Mountain, in Vermont. Everybody was killed but Billy" (Vonnegut, 1991, p.26). Billy seemed to have given birth after the accident. In order to assassinate Jesus in Bethlehem, the king massacred all children under the age of two, according to the Bible. In the same way as Billy, Jesus was the only one who lived to

see another day. Billy and Jesus undoubtedly cross paths to some degree. Vonnegut, on the other hand, overthrows the consistency of Billy and Jesus' identities when readers approve of their constancy. In postmodern culture, an anti-hero, a lifeless puppet, Billy was like that. As a new 'Christian,' Billy had been manipulated and forced to bend to the will of others. As a last point, the death of Jesus was sacrifice. Billy's death, on the other hand, was meaningless. In Tralfamadorian, Billy learned negative acceptance or death avoidance. Because all of the problems might be explained in a single sentence "so it goes".

As a result, Vonnegut uses a mimicked "Jesus-Billy" to critique religion in a subtle and ambiguous manner. This kind of satire lets readers understand that in this absurd and chaotic world, many have already lost faith in religion. Because, he sees, that there is no religion that was able to give a method to relieve their spiritual stress and establish a spiritual home that is eternally serene. In Vonnegut's opinion, Jesus Christ is both powerless and preposterous. The lack of spiritual ballast causes postmodern individuals to be engulfed in a belief crisis to some level. The crisis, on the other hand, is a result of the tumultuous times and the disorderly social order.

## CHAPTER FOUR: METAFICTION IN GRAHAM SWIFT'S *WATERLAND*

It has been said many times that postmodernism cannot be understood without first understanding the historical and ideological framework that surrounds, and in some cases creates, its basis. Critical studies of the era's literature have spawned an endless variety of interpretations from a literary standpoint. The artificiality of ideas and the constructiveness of history are the two major foundations on which postmodernity is based. At this stage, aspects that were formerly employed to read literature are now considered narratives. Because of the focus on narrative, these assertions are linked to the novels as a literary form. In novels where the link between fiction and reality is a prominent issue, these difficulties with narrative are strongly portrayed. These assertions are crucial because they provide the groundwork for metafiction. Graham Swift's *Waterland* is one of the many novels that have employed metafiction to give a sense of the postmodern situation. In this work, metafiction goes beyond its basic function of exposing the artificiality of fictional descriptions of reality. It also reveals characteristics of fictional structural manipulation in order to elicit responses to narratological postmodernist issues. Through narrative structure, symbolism, and themes, *Waterland* emphasizes its identity as a metafictional work. It also employs a variety of strategies to make observations on postmodern metanarrative cautiousness.

Swift's most famous novel is *Waterland*. Since its release in 1983, it has gotten positive reviews. Tom Crick, a history teacher at a school, is the narrator of this work. He gives a series of historical teachings that span decades. His objective is to provide a definitive account of history as a result of Tom's personal and household circumstances. Due to an administration decision to "cut back history" from the curriculum, these courses are initially his final ones. Add to it the strain he is under; he has been told that he has to retire willingly as a result of his wife's crime. She kidnaps an infant from a store, saying it was God's command. Along with his own problems, he feels compelled to underline the significance of history. Price, one of his students, makes these allegations. In an effort to discover an explanation for his present condition, Tom navigates via his courses into numerous historical eras. National, regional, natural, social, and personal histories are all part of his historical

narrative. He tells the narrative of his forefathers, the Atkinsons and Cricks, and their founding of the Fen. He recounts various events, including the establishment of the Atkinson brewery and the legend surrounding his grandmother, Sarah Atkinson. The Fen's development is also shown, as well as national and international events (like the two World Wars and the fall of the British Empire). He focuses on significant events in European history, such as the French Revolution. He also despises natural history, dedicating several pages to discussing the eel's mating cycle and the topography of England's rivers. Tom also recounts his own biography, including his early life, adolescence, and eventual adulthood and marriage to Mary Metcalf. Tom relates history to fairytales while investigating the origins of his present disasters. He doubts the veracity of historical documents. The novel is divided over three timelines: the history of the Fens and its creators, Tom's background, and the novel's present. All of these events are negotiated by Tom, who is looking for a pattern that would explain how his life has come to this point.

*Waterland* is a collection of interconnected historical tales provided by Tom, a history teacher and, in essence, a practitioner of historiography. Tom delves into great storylines such as the Roman invasion of Britain, the French revolution, the fall of the Bastille, and the First and Second World Wars throughout the novel. Simultaneously, he weaves in other personal experiences, including tales from his boyhood and a family history. Tom seeks to make his personal history as realistic as public history by combining it with public history. A postmodernist approach to storytelling is enacted through this integration. The conventional view of story is that it is the only output of literary work. Nonetheless, narrative breadth has broadened as a result of its association with a variety of works (such as science or history). Based on postmodern norms, these tales are approached with caution. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* by Lyotard has been regarded as a key effect on current narrative comprehension. Lyotard adopts the term "metanarrative" in this book to characterize large tales or grand narratives that reinforce ideological systems and generate a false impression of unity and wholeness. As a result, postmodernism is described as "an incredulity towards metanarrative" (Lyotard, 1994, p.xxiv). Metanarratives, he says, are created to support a political ideology. As a result, in representing 'reality', selection and concealed prejudice are nurtured. Postmodernism, on the other hand, recognizes this tendency by embracing "*petit récit*"; small or big narratives (Lyotard,



1994, p.60). Reality has lost its coherent narrative status, and it is instead seen as a kaleidoscope of unique human experiences. *Petit récits*, although not comprehensive, are created under comparable circumstances as large narratives. As a result, truth transmitted through them is considered as imperfect and partial. Metafiction brings this referential error to light.

Tom tells a narrative from the past in an attempt to figure out what is causing his troubles. He even admits the narratorship of his historical stories to his students; “he breaks off and starts telling – these stories” (Swift, 1983, p.5). This suggests that the relationship between history and fiction in this novel is not always straightforward. Stories are frequently viewed as historical narratives, while history is usually given in a story-like format. This inter-relationship is often elaborated inside the narrative fabric of the novel, where the concept of history is debated. This assimilation, according to Cooper, indicates a “dialectical opposition... between the conjuring up of fictions and the setting down of facts” (1996: 317). Both history and tale may be seen as similar representations of a close experience with reality on this premise. Linda Hutcheon is credited with coining the phrase “historiographic metafiction” to characterize books that purposefully emphasize historical representation. These novels “both intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and personages... it evaluates narrative -be it in literature, history, or theory- that has usually been the major focus of attention” (Hutcheon, 2002, p.5). The novel is written in a story-like structure; thus, the analysis of historiography and metafiction is there from the start.

The epigraph may be used as a starting point for a metafictional discussion. It offers narrative premises. In the introduction, the Latin term *historia* is defined as “1. inquiry, investigation, learning. 2. a) a narrative of past events, history. b) any kind of narrative: account, tale, story”. The epigraph emphasizes the connection between history and fiction. By embracing their shared formalist medium, storytelling, it goes beyond the fundamental understanding of them. Their documentation is subject to interrogation since they use the same medium. It foreshadows the conflict that Tom’s view of history as a “fairy-tale” would cause. It also underlines the parallels between writing history and writing stories. As Decoste points out, the novel focuses on the tension between “*historia* as narrative and *historia* as inquiry” (2002, p.379). Having this in mind, *Waterland* will be explored first as a historiographic account related to

historiographic metafiction, and then as a metafictional statement addressing the nature of fiction and its depiction of reality.

Issues of large historical narratives are disclosed from the start, based on the notion that truth is partly presented via history. Tom delivers “the complete and final version” of history in response to his pupils’ rejection of history (Swift, 1983, p.8). This announcement increases the stakes for the audience. It encourages the belief that personal experience should be expressed directly. Tom, on the other hand, begins his narrative of the Fens by describing it as a “fairy-tale” (Swift, 1983, p.1). The credibility of Tom’s story is harmed by blurring the lines between true and fictitious accounts of the past. He begins by establishing the groundwork for giving history as “the Grand Narrative, the filler of vacuums, the dispeller of fears of the dark” (Swift, 1983, p.26). While Tom’s revelation lacks the appeal of vast history, he confronts it by calling it “the fabrication, the diversion, the reality-obscuring drama...Histrionics” (Swift, 1983, p.40). The postmodernist effort to retain a meaningful vision of history is marked by the expansion and deflation of this idea. Consequently, history is accused of not only being selective, but also of being a fabrication. The absence of history in fiction necessitates the development of a postmodernist narrative method. On the surface, narrative may be interpreted as a progression of events, but switching between modes and places sows the seeds of fictiveness. Tom’s abandoning of the curriculum and fixation on sharing tales also signals a change to story-telling. However, in order to have an objective grasp of narrative, two words must be understood: narration and narrativity. The former refers to narrating as an act or a process. In the novel, the protagonist’s major method of accessing the past is via storytelling, since “after the happening, only the telling of it” is possible (Swift, 1983, p.328). This refers to the beginning of history, as well as the book in general. Narrativity refers to the characteristic or state of creating a story, as well as its consistency with reality. Add to it a shift in how the story is approached. Its research has extended to emphasize the blurry border between truth and fantasy, rather than just enjoying its magnificence.

History is regarded as a narrative of past events, much like literature, and especially novels. Because they are both subject to the same system of meaning construction, discourse, historical and fictional tales have a lot in common. Historiography, according to Hayden White, cannot achieve objectivity since it is

associated with fictitious storytelling tactics. Because of its use of rhetoric and metaphorical language, historiography is literarily enriched. White stresses the substance rather than the form of the divide between historical and literary discourse. Literature is a mediation of “imaginary” events, whereas history is founded on “real” events (White, 1984, p.2). He believes that history is a collection of meaningless occurrences that are given meaning after being converted into a narrative framework. He elaborates on this problem saying that

It is a fiction of the historian that the various states of affairs which he constitutes as the beginning, the middle, and the end of a course of development are all “actual” or “real” and that he has merely recorded “what happened” in the transition from the inaugural to the terminal phase. (White, 1974, p.208)

This is to argue that putting historical events into a chronologically cohesive storyline (despite the temporal gaps) is a poetic endeavor that incorporates imagination and figurative language. As a result, history is seen in the same way that writers use to depict life in fiction, casting doubt on the veracity of historical documents. White does not, however, imply a complete rejection of history. He agrees that fictionalization is an unavoidable part of portraying historical truth. By turning history into a tale, it takes on a more identifiable and familiar shape (White, 1974, p.209). Narration gives historical events shape, resulting in a need for “coherence, integrity, fullness, and closure” (White, 1996, p.24). Despite this, there is still debate over narrativity. History, according to Tom, is “a luckydip of meanings. Events elude meaning, but we look for meanings” (White, 1996, p.140). Once narrated, history is inclined to adopt ideological orientations that accuse it of bias.

A self-aware understanding of fictionalization in the development of historical documents and the novel itself is the answer to this problem. This is essentially what *Waterland* aspires to emphasize. Tom proposes numerous hypotheses on man’s relationship with history. He refers to man as “the story-telling animal” (White, 1996, p.62), implying that the capacity to generate narrative is the last relic of humanity. Grand narratives, on the other hand, fade away when people lose touch with the principles of comprehending the world and its connection to time. As a result, when the world is in chaos and systems are unable to cope, stories are held up as the only possible answer. They provide a limitless outlet for people’s emotions as well as solutions to their questions. They provide illogical explanations for seemingly inexplicable events. Where uncertainty is declared as the norm, stories protect human

sanity. Man “wherever he goes he wants to leave behind not a chaotic wake, not an empty space, but the comforting marker-buoys and trail-signs of stories” (White, 1996, p.63). This urge justifies the drive to piece together disjointed history and construct comforting fables, regardless of whether or not they are true to life. As Tom explains “even if we miss the grand repertoire of history, we yet imitate it in miniature and endorse, in miniature, its longing for presence, for feature, for purpose” (White, 1996, p.41). Small narratives replace grand history, but this does not imply that history is no longer relevant. It recognizes the importance of small narratives in filling the hole left by the decline in popularity of great narratives. Schad proposes that “history ends more than once, or rather is always already ended” (1992, p.991). That is, history comes to a halt when its objectivity is called into doubt. History is marked inaccessible because the events have already happened. Furthermore, criticism of narrativity emphasizes fiction’s interpretative potential.

The novel’s preoccupation with historiography is mirrored in the historicity of human experience, it may be claimed. Personal and public history is intertwined in the novel. When faced with a career and personal crisis, Tom looks to the past for answers to his jumbled-up present. His personal story is set against huge historical events that purportedly dominate the stage. It emphasizes the importance of historiography for “while all historical events are direct experience to someone, to everyone else, they are simply stories” (Lee, 2014, p.45). This synthesis promotes a direct projection of parallelism in the creation of fiction and history. Tom’s account of the founding of Glidsy by his forefathers (the Atkinsons and Cricks) looks to be “the complete and final version” of history at first. It has a fictive tone due to the use of literary indicators with important referents. This is explained by Tom’s description of the Fen as a “fairy-tale land” that is “both palpable and unreal”(Swift, 1983, pp.1-5). Add to that Tom’s characterization of the town’s residents, the Cricks, as folks with an overabundance of tales to tell. These portrayals instill apprehension in the face of a history that emerges from this setting. Incorporating fairy tales also creates a flexible framework that compensates for the constraints of grand narrative. Cooper considers this synthesis as a dialogue between “discursive practices of narrative and historiography, between the conjuring up of fictions and the setting down of facts” (1996, p.317). This dialogue is vital to comprehending the protagonist’s desire to

recount his personal and familial history, despite the fact that it is shrouded in generic obscurity.

Tom, like his forefathers, has a strong desire to share his story and heritage. The integration of several narrative forms leads to a comprehensive grasp of both the nature of history and metafiction. Tom's lectures are diverse; they include both a critique and a defense of history. His pupils have lost interest in history, calling it a "fairy-tale", and have resorted to imagining an apocalyptic future. He observes his kids' concerns and decides to do something about it. He gives a personal story of his life interspersed with the key events. They listened to Tom "the way they never listened to the stranger-than-fiction prodigies of the French Revolution" (Swift, 1983, p.6). Despite the fact that his classes combine fictitious and true tales, they are quite popular with youngsters because they see him as a victim of history, a guy who provides a more believable version of history that they can connect to. The French Revolution, their history class's major topic, is utilized to stage Tom's denial of history's veracity. The French Revolution is the carrier of freedom, equality, and fraternity to France, as well as a huge effect on Europe and the globe, according to the designated curriculum. By including details that were not included in the official record, the book questions this ideologically totalized narrative.

The French Revolution has been used as a metaphor for historical inaccuracy. For example, the Fall of the Bastille is seen to be a significant event in the process of monarchy's abolition. Tom challenges this assumption by offering a critical examination of its relevance; "let us not overestimate the actual character or the actual achievements of the Fall of the Bastille" (Swift, 1983, p.175). In reality, just seven captives are released, including "two madmen, four forgers, and a hapless roué" (Swift, 1983, p.175), while 200 revolutionary soldiers are killed or injured. In contrast to historical accounts of the Bastille's fall, Tom's discoveries proclaim history's insufficiency, and it is the foregrounding of particular features that gives it relevance. The French Revolution, according to Irish, "points to Crick's underlying belief that the events that history chooses to privilege are nonevents and fabrications in the face of mundane reality" (1998, p.927). History extols the importance of the prison's collapse while ignoring facts that cast doubt on its implications. Furthermore, the Fall of the Bastille (and the French Revolution in general) has been a significant historical event that has been depicted in a number of literary works. *A Tale of Two*

*Cities* by Charles Dickens is a literary classic that references the French Revolution. Dickens' story interweaves a historical event into a narrative that emphasizes its relevance. The events of the story are based on Thomas Carlyle's *The French Revolution*, which is considered a reliable historical source. As a result, the character of historical fiction is examined when Swift alludes to the same historical event. Literature has a huge impact on individuals, and including historical information makes it easier to build cultural memory. Both books focus on these events, although for different reasons. Swift's work identifies the form of historical depiction in fiction, but Dickens' book exposes its textuality. This connection highlights a change in fiction's history, from generating literature as a mirror of reality to turning it into a critique of how that reality is created and consumed.

The history of the Fen and its founders, the Atkinsons and Cricks, should be studied in order to understand Tom's rejection of big history and acquire a greater understanding of how local history works to undermine it. Tom begins his account of his hometown by telling how the Fen came to be. It was a collection of wetlands and lagoons that could only be converted into a solid land by draining. The Atkinsons came from Norfolk to engage in land reclamation and to open the Leem River to goods transportation. The Cricks began working for them at that time. The Fen's creation symbolizes the story of development. To put it another way, it emphasizes the sequential narrative style acquired from history and conventional (Victorian) literature. This narrative style attests to one of *Waterland's* key beliefs, which is that history is "the reality-obscuring drama" (Swift, 1983, p.40). Two story threads are set in motion by the two families' collaboration. "While the Atkinsons made history, the Cricks spun yarns", Tom adds (Swift, 1983, p.17). The Atkinsons' chronicle is akin to producing a standard history of progress, but the Cricks write non-progress stories. The Fen is a "great flat monotony of reality; the wide empty space of reality" for each of them, but they approach it in different ways. The Atkinsons set about making it into a model for the big story of development. In a parallel to the establishment of Great Britain, they converted the Fen into a cosmopolitan town, created amenities, and drove the development of the Fens.

Britain has become a dismantled economic power as a result of the industrial revolution. The economy of the nation has shifted from agrarian to industrial. Railroads were constructed, and canals were established. The Atkinson's goal was to

build a new world that matched the prestige of the United Kingdom. While this may best be understood as a period of history at the time, putting the Atkinsons at the center of it as historians has additional implications. The Atkinsons, according to Decoste, “obscure the real by conjuring up universalist narratives which underwrites the active transformation of the Fens to their end, and which enables the recasting of the Fens into the image of their own desire” (2002, p.386). The Atkinson’s modify the actual to match their idea of development, according to Decoste’s argument. This may be accurate up to a degree, but their big story is jeopardized. Tom expresses his thoughts on the Atkinsons’ achievements. He asks rhetorically, “are not all these works, and others, proof of that great idea that sways the Atkinsons; proof that all private interest is subsumed by the National Interest and all private empires do but pay tribute to the Empire of Great Britain?” (Swift, 1983, p.93). This is a two-fold declaration. To begin with, it demonstrates how great narratives are hesitant to recognize the existence of little narratives; they subsume them under a “regime of truth” formed by the ruling system, in Foucault’s terms. Second, it ironically demonstrates how the Great Empire’s master story obscures Atkinson’s achievements.

The Cricks are responsible for the second thread of the story. They have a way of managing history by turning it into a story that debunks progress beliefs. Tom encourages his students to “grand metamorphoses of history” and “consider, instead, the slow and arduous process, the interminable and ambiguous process – the process of humansiltation – of land reclamation” (Swift, 1983, p.10). To return to the metaphor of the Fen land as actuality, land reclamation represents the second approach to history. Rather of imposing a rigid understanding of history, the Cricks advocate for a more flexible approach. Lands, like history, “are never reclaimed, only being reclaimed” (Swift, 1983, p.10). The nature of slit, which “neither progress nor decay” emphasizes this uncertainty. Because “it may rise up and turn all your labours to nothing” its state is uncertain (Swift, 1983, p.13). So, how does this second strain come to be represented in history? The focus on the process implies a greater dependence on epistemic approaches to verifying history. According to Berlatsky, it is “a progress toward accurately representing the “real” of the past, a progress that can only be achieved through notions of process” (2006, p.273). To put it another way, he thinks reality is unattainable, but the act of achieving it demonstrates the presence of a higher reality. The novel delves further into the dilemma of story-telling, which is the

inverse of history-making, by concentrating on the process of achieving reality. In addition to being “an ideologically narrow myth”, the novel takes this argument a step further by depicting history as a pleasant fiction (Berlatsky, 2006, p.269). The Cricks suggest this orientation, and their “*stories*” provide an alternate level for studying master narratives. Narrating the history of the Atkinsons might be considered as an enactment of writing to get a fresh perspective. Tom’s lectures look at how fiction inspires history writing and how history informs fiction. Tom is trying to stick to facts, yet he is sometimes carried away by a fictional narrative style. His historical project exemplifies historians’ effort to be true to the facts and “keep clear of fairy-tales” (Swift, 1983, p.11). This problem is fully established throughout the story of the Atkinson Empire’s development and demise. The finest illustration of this idea is Sarah Atkinson’s (Tom’s great grandmother) anecdote. Sarah married Thomas Atkinson, the family’s brewery’s employ, despite the fact that she was considerably younger than him. Thomas began to mistrust his youthful wife while he was in his sixties. Thomas assaulted Sarah in a jealous rage, permanently damaging her mental health. The relevance of this event lies in Tom’s delivery of it to his pupils. He refers to it as “an incident ... for which no first-hand account exists yet which is indelibly recorded in innumerable versions in the annals of Gildsey” (Swift, 1983, p.76). The enigmatic tone of this remark raises questions about the circumstances surrounding the incident. There is no firsthand knowledge of what occurred that night. Furthermore, the annals of Glidsey affirm the story, albeit with no further proof than legends spoken at the time of its occurrence. Tom then moves on to people’s theories on what caused Sarah’s mental illness. Was it “the knock against the writing-table”, “the original blow”, or “the moral shock of the sudden fury of her husband” (Swift, 1983, p.77)? All of these issues remain unsolved, yet they continue to occupy the minds of people. People began to regard Sarah differently after her husband’s death and the success of her sons’ company, since “popular opinion learns scarcely anything of Sarah Atkinson, though it knows that she sits constantly in that upper room, surveying the town like a goddess” (Swift, 1983, p.83). People constructed myths and legends about her to fill in the knowledge gap and “the vacuum” generated by this conundrum; they considered her as “a guardian angel” safeguarding the city. People even blamed her death on a water flood on October 25th; some claimed to have seen her ghost, while others



claimed to have seen her turn into a mermaid and dive into the river. They concocted a legend to help them deal with the unavoidable truth of Sarah's death.

But, despite his determination to adhere to facts, Tom continues to weave those stories into his story. Initially, it enacts widespread fears about historical fabrication. When facts are discredited by pluralism, the only way to save a glimmer of truth is to emphasize their production process. Postmodernism, according to Goodman, shifts from "unique truth and a world fixed and found to a diversity of right and even conflicting versions or worlds in the making" (1978, P.X). As a result, the novel's primary purpose is to portray truth as the epistemology of each world in the creation. In other words, postmodern novels do not indicate a complete separation from ontological problems; rather, when actions of producing knowledge are linked to the creation of new worlds, difficulties of knowing are addressed. There is no such thing as a singular truth; rather, there is a multidimensional truth. Tom adds, "rumour is but rumour... But several rumours, of similar vein, from different sources, cannot be ignored" (Swift, 1983, p.102). Pluralism ensures the inclusion of facts; rumors and legends must be considered as well. Integrating those storylines, on a deeper level, demonstrates how all historical documents include fictitious components. Tom expands on his point by claiming that "There are times when we have to disentangle history from fairy-tale. There are times (they come round really quite often) when good dry textbook history takes a plunge into the old swamps of myth and has to be retrieved with empirical fishing lines." (Swift, 1983, p.86)

This, Tom believes, is a natural continuation of his previous talk on the nature of history. Any historiographic project's contradiction of mixing reality and fiction is reaffirmed. Even official documents are based on "fairy tales", turning history into a legend. Thus, "empirical fishing lines" are used to extract history from the sense of fictitious storytelling. Experimenting with narrative structures is how history is made. The emergence of the Atkinsons might be seen as a metaphor for the writing of history. The novel does not suggest a thorough denial of history, while highlighting how historical records are tinted by the interpretative power of people who witness their unfolding and the flaws of their medium. Rather, it sees the many interpretations as evidence of a deeper reality; that of history-making. In a similar way, its inclusion strengthens the sense of history as a myth. The overuse of these tales emphasizes the distinction between reality and fantasy. The myth-maker is typically free to choose

facts and put them together in a meaningful whole (story). The issue, on the other hand, stems from the belief that selection reduces the reliability of historical documents. Furthermore, adding stories to the original Glidsey annals highlights history's bias. Historical records are meant to be objective, yet annals chronicle occurrences with insufficient information. The question "why?" causes these cognitive voids to emerge. History is likened to a scientific "inquiry" which entails a look into cause and effect. It represents people's need to provide meaning to an ambiguous world full of meaningless events. Man is "the animal which demands an explanation, the animal which asks Why" as the novel explains. His curious endeavors and need for story are motivated by curiosity. Tom associates love with curiosity, claiming that it "begets love. It weds us to the world" (Swift, 1983, pp.106-206). Curiosity is a project that entraps individuals in a maze of explanations, leaving them with no way out. This highlights the importance of the process above the outcome. The book suggests that the process of generating history may be validated, but the ontology of reality can never be fulfilled, by equating curiosity with "whywhywhy" The world will come to an end when people stop asking why. As a result, Tom compares history to an investigation into the reasons and origins of issues. It begins "at the point where things go wrong" (Swift, 1983, p.106). However, this inquiry throws man into a whirlpool of questions, mirroring the novel's disjointed structure. This affinity is shown by Tom's trail of assumptions about Louis XIV's execution:

But why, we ask, did Louis' neck happen to be—?... Because ... And when we have gleaned that reason we will want to know, But why that reason? Because ... And when we have that further reason, But why again—? Because ... Why?... Because ... Why? ... Until, in order to find out why Louis died, it is necessary not only to reanimate in our imaginations his troubled life and times but even to penetrate the generations before him. (Swift, 1983, p.107)

Tom, likewise, delves deep into his family's history in search of answers, inspired by his curiosity about "our natural and fundamental condition" (Swift, 1983, p.194). As a result, history<sup>1</sup> is a living representation of interest; it "bogs us down in arduous meditations and can lead to the writing of history books". It's an insatiable quest for information that never yields solid facts or appropriate answers, because "even if we learnt how, and what and where and when, will we ever know why?"

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<sup>1</sup> The concept of history has acquired different meanings during the postmodern period. New ideas and approaches have emerged due to applying theories belonging to other disciplines. The study of history is structured by the belief that history is a constructed text authored by historians. It is partial and inconclusive though it promotes itself as a medium of truth.

(Swift, 1983, p.204) After all, man eventually reaches a point when he can no longer depend on facts. The only stories remaining are those that aim to stifle enquiry. Curiosity, according to Landow, is “the force of narrative”. It works as long as the “why” is left unanswered. Curiosity, on the other hand, has a negative consequence: it restricts people to the past. Curiosity “doesn’t want to push ahead... always wants to say, Hey, that’s interesting, let’s stop awhile, let’s take a look-see, let’s retrace” (Swift, 1983, p.194). It creates the historical inquiry process that implies the existence of a cause and effect relationship. Curiosity obstructs a straightforward depiction of history and replaces it with questions about its nature. To put it another way, it is incompatible with historical development. Curiosity confines individuals to a single point of view while empires are constructed.

Tom’s natural history narration projects curiosity’s link to narrative and history. A whole chapter is devoted to looking at how the mystery of the eels’ reproduction circle has been solved through history. “Eel can teach us about curiosity - considerably more than curiosity can tell us about the eel”, Tom claims (Swift, 1983, p.196). This is usually seen as a distinction between natural and manufactured history. Natural history follows a set of natural rules. It offers information that practitioners have discovered to be reliable. A natural occurrence is unavoidable, yet how it affects human existence is open to a wide range of interpretations. Historians in the subject of natural history do not have the opportunity to go beyond what scientists agree on. So, in order to back up their observations of the eels, they create a narrative that explains how they came to know what they know. History, on the other hand, does not adhere to any principles since it deals with people’s responses to events. It is influenced by people’s preferences. The book establishes the authority of natural history while questioning the authority of human history. Tom sets aside his notes once more to describe how eels have been researched throughout history. He delves into the origins of the European eel. It begins with Egyptian, Greek, and Roman ideas and continues until the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when their reproductive cycle was scientifically investigated. Johannes Schmidt began his expeditions to find the eel’s nesting grounds in 1904. He came to the conclusion that they came from the Sargasso Sea. He also proposed that eels’ lives are cyclical, in that they leave fresh water to swim back to their birthplace and die. Schmidt’s finding, however, is classified as a hypothesis since it is only the best guess at the truth. For “curiosity begets counter curiosity, knowledge begets

skepticism” reality stays uncertain (Swift, 1983, p.202). To put it differently, curiosity stays unfulfilled, and the information gained as a result of it is suspect due to its limited scope. Tom says “which doesn’t go anywhere. Which cleaves to itself. Which perpetually travels back to where it came from” (Swift, 1983, p.205). As previously mentioned, history is an investigation in which progress stifles curiosity, a trait shared with natural history. The quest for knowledge persists because, as the metonymy of natural history shows, enigmatic components that are beyond human comprehension always exist. The “anonymous eel-existence” arouses curiosity, yet transcription continues. Presenting human vs natural history favors, according to McKinney “the absolutist pretensions of artificial history and the perpetual curiosity of natural history to be an ongoing one” (1997, p.282). McKinney’s argument seems to assume that curiosity is the driving force behind both types of history, and that circularity is an inherited trait.

Eels’ natural history is also a metaphor for history’s cyclical character. The book claims that progressive historical ideas are myths. Natural history has certain parallels in all types of history. Nonetheless, natural history sees things for as they really are. Because it does not allow its practitioner to interpret, it offers “Reality made plain. Reality with no nonsense” (Swift, 1983, p.205). That is why it becomes “better of the artificial stuff” which is based on people’s “love of life” (Swift, 1983, p.207), a force Tom considers “anarchic”. Because it displays “reality cut to size” (Swift, 1983, p.206). The failure of revolutionary aspirations is justified in this perspective of human history. Revolutions proceed with goals of advancement formed in previous ideals, while eels return to their origins and die. They ignore life’s inherent elements, the “unsolved mysteries of mysteries”. Says the author “history teaches us no shortcuts to Salvation, no recipe for a New World, only the dogged and patient art of making do” (Swift, 1983, pp.105-108). It is all too tempting to see human history as a series of anecdotes about how revolutions began, with little mention of the ambiguous and illusory conclusions.

So, how can individuals cope in a constantly changing environment when “reality is uneventfulness, vacancy, flatness. Reality is that nothing happens” (Swift, 1983, p.40)? Reality is not predetermined in terms of form or meaning. There are no markers or distinguishing characteristics in this “flat land”. The relevance of it might be linked to the belief that reality had no form or meaning before being written in

language. This sense of reality is symbolized by water. The Fen is reclaimed land; it is a flat land that has been rebuilt from the water which “makes everything level, which has no taste nor colour of its own but a liquid form of nothing”, it is “most approximate to nothing” (Swift, 1983, p.13). As with water, reality has no form other than the one assigned by humans, it is built similarly to Fen land; it is created, not discovered. Water is analogous to the notion of postmodern reality. There is consensus on the presence of reality in its basic state, but it remains inaccessible owing to its ‘flatness’. Tom demonstrates his assertion by highlighting that living in the Fen entails “receiving strong doses of reality” (Swift, 1983, p.17). People perpetuate reality via their imaginations and narratives. Reality is in a state of flux, which finally results in the illusion of its nonexistence. However, reality returns to demolish all that has been built. It emphasizes the clarity of reality. It assaults in order to seize everything. Which is why “when you labour to subdue it, you have to understand that one day it may rise up and turn all your labours to nothing” (Swift, 1983, p.13). Even when people make tales or narrate history, they are constructing a picture of reality. There is always a risk that they will be contradicted or perhaps destroyed by the “Here and Now”.

When confronted with the “Here and Now” the complexity of reality is revealed. The amalgamation of humans with a sequence of dramatic occurrences dubbed “Here and Now” implies an unfathomable reality. What Tom refers to as “Here and Now” is an emotional upheaval brought about by catastrophic occurrences; it elicits a strong need for meaning. Janik suggests a new strategy for their relationship. He contends that history and the ‘Here and Now’ are complementary “polarities” (Janik, 1989, p.85). The ‘Here and Now’ manifests itself via “surprise attacks” which reawaken people’s desire for history. Additionally, it lends relevance to historical investigations. The narrator’s reservations about history are shattered by the fatality of the ‘Here and Now’. Tom describes how his perception of history changed as a result of his firsthand engagement with it. He saw history as a fair-tale “until the Here and Now, gripping me by the arm... informed me that history was no invention but indeed existed” (Swift, 1983, p.102). Although the Here and Now implies the existence of a powerful experience, it is not present since it conjures up a memory of the past. As a result, life “is one-tenth Here and Now, nine-tenths a history lesson” (Swift, 1983, p.61) that makes an effort to explain the ten percent. Furthermore, the

significance of history is emphasized when it is compared with the immediate present. This supports Tom's opinion that "only animals live entirely in the Here and Now. Only nature knows neither memory nor history" (Swift, 1983, p.62). Humans build up comforting stories and seek solace in history. Dick's attitude to the "Here and Now" is the polar opposite of this inclination. Despite Tom's description of him as a potato head, Dick symbolizes information that is out of reach owing to its ambiguity. Dick is never heard speaking for himself, but he is constantly represented by Tom. He represents the incomprehensible purpose of existence. Dick "splinters the rational discourse in the novel, overwhelming the narration with the radical strangeness of the nonnarrated" (Gunnarsdóttir Champion, 2003, p.41). He embodies the Here and Now since he shares many of its characteristics. He is just concerned with the here and now, with little regard for the past or future. Dick could not comprehend the details of his birth after learning that he was the result of a connection between Ernest Atkinson and his daughter Helen. As a result, he commits suicide because he could not get to terms with the *real*.

People approach the real through storytelling to fulfill that desperate want for meaning and explanation, as well as to combat destruction. This is where fiction comes in to help untangle the complexities that surround today's sense of reality, which is tainted by a lack of purpose. The Fens are profoundly linked with tales, according to Tom, and storytelling is their means of "outwit reality", which is the "great flat monotony of reality; the wide empty space of reality" (Swift, 1983, p.17). The assassination of Freddie Parr confirms this notion. It serves as an analogy for a historical investigation and the mechanism of reality construction. The authorities believe that Freddie's death was an accident caused by his drinking and inability to swim after inspecting his corpse. They made up a scenario based on the evidence they had: he was intoxicated, fell in the water, and drowned because he could not swim. The burst that Henry Crick caused on the corpse while removing it from the water altered how the case was seen. All of the murder inspections were skipped. The officers' pooled thoughts resulted in a narrative that is widely believed to be true. Tom is transfixed by the 'Here and Now' after discovering Freddie's corpse. Tom eventually discovers that Freddie was killed rather than drowned, despite the official report stating that his death was accidental. "History is a thin garment, easily punctured by a knife blade called Now" he understands years after the tragedy (Swift,

1983, p.360). In other words, the breadth of history as a narrative is constrained by the time period in which it is provided. This adds a new dimension to it. The present provides fresh symbols against which history is interpreted and studied on a regular basis. The finding of Freddie's corpse, although not completely shown by Tom, illustrates what cannot be said in words. The Here and Now, according to Berlatsky, are "antinarrative" moments that "exceed the discourse engendered to contain and explain them" (2011, p.24). They bring attention to the inability of language to accurately portray reality.

Furthermore, Freddie's murder serves as a metaphor for the postmodern function of "*peti recite*". Despite its huge influence on the plot, his death is undervalued; "why make a fuss about one drowned boy when over the far horizon and in the sky a war is being fought; when mothers are losing their sons every day..?" In comparison to the excitement created by larger stories or the smaller ones because "the wide world takes priority". After all, Freddie's death is nothing more than an accident. "is not exactly every day, but not unusual" (Swift, 1983, p.33). Freddie's body, on the other hand, represents a history that cannot be recovered. Human life and historical significance are irrevocably lost when a place is desecrated. Despite Tom's father's tireless efforts, he was unable to effect any change. He "labours to refute reality, labours against the law of nature" (Swift, 1983, p.33). Lacan's theory of the *real* provides an explanation for this. The *real*, according to Lacan, is life's and language's impossibilities. As a result of comprehending Freddie's death, Tom and his father are confronted with the truth, which they strive to ignore via their hope of recovering him.

As a result, reality is defined as humans' inability to deal with major occurrences. People come to grips with these experiences after they are given a verbal shape (translated into narrative). Despite this, Tom is traumatized by Freddie's death, and the *real* returns in his life in the shape of words, i.e. stories. Tom's narrative talent is reactivated by a sequence of unexpected occurrences (history revisions and Mary's insanity). He flits back and forth, attempting to explain the circumstances of the crime. Because adults "unload those most unbelievable yet haunting of fairy-tales, their own lives" via stories, the "Here and Now" shuffles him to the past (Swift, 1983, p.4). Children watch and experience the act of creating tales from an early age. As it did in Tom's case, it becomes their survival mechanism later in life; "First it was a story – what our parents told us, at bedtime. Then it becomes real, then it becomes here

and now. Then it becomes a story again” (Swift, 1983, p.328). This mechanism is paralleled in order to account for the significance of fiction in generating an intelligible narrative of existence, “first there is nothing; then there is happening. And after the happening only the telling of it” (Swift, 1983, p.329). These examples show that narrative is a good approach to deal with the absurdity of historical events and a strategy to avoid their fatality.

This gives insight on other narrative motifs. Aside from curiosity, narrative or “Once upon a time...” has been identified as “contagious symptoms of fear” (Swift, 1983, p.7). One of the narrative’s driving motivations is the dread of the unknown. The clarity of events that lacks articulation generates vertigo of sinking into the symbol of the unknown. Fear is triggered when reality surpasses the ability of explanation. As a result, Tom tells his story not just to defend himself, but also to make sense of the absurdity and give his life purpose. Individualism is threatened by life’s cyclical character, which pulls individuals into a recurrent tide. This is something that the novel supports. Tom, on the other hand, emphasizes the link between curiosity and dread by underlining the circularity of history. Generations are tied by fantasies of mending the world, as history shows, yet they finally get imprisoned in an eternal circle of repeated mistakes.

The novel proposes history as a means of breaking out from this loop. Compiling it is comparable to a detective’s inquiry. Humans may get a chance for a fresh beginning by tracing their mistakes from the past. Tom’s story is a detective act in that it tries to figure out what’s causing his problems. Tom describes how he brought his wife to return the stolen baby in a chapter titled “Begin Again”. He explains it as follows:

It’s called reconstructing the crime. From last to first. It’s an analogy of the historical method; an analogy of how you discover how you’ve become what you are. If you’re lucky you might find out. If you’re lucky you might get back to where you can begin again. Revolution. (Swift, 1983, p.132)

In this description, three elements are emphasized. Initially, historiography is contrasted to an inquiry, which, as previously said, is based on the investigator’s subjective assumptions. Their results are markedly dependable to build upon reasonable explanations, despite its similarity to fantasy. Thus, the potential of rationalizing reality by pinpointing the source of issues is at risk. People might



respond by taking drastic measures to solve their concerns. They receive a revolution; a fresh start where previous mistakes may be avoided and a new stride toward the future are assured. What happens, on the other hand, is the polar opposite. Tom advocates revolutions as “categorical change, transformation - a leap into the future” (Swift, 1983, p.137) through his lectures, but they also hold the seeds of nostalgia and anarchy. Their concept is the perfect past; it transforms a revolution into a “restoration” endeavor. When a revolution occurs, people are filled with hope for the future. When they take power, they are unable to operate the government effectively. As they become disorganized, they recall old ideas and attempt to resurrect them. With their own well, they tolerate old systems. During the French Revolution, the same thing occurred. It was followed by a terrifying experience brought on by the guillotines. Napoleon was subsequently appointed as a commander, but he quickly rose to the position of Emperor with imperial aspirations. People backed him because they saw him as a better alternative to the chaos. They returned to the start, carrying the torches of the ideal past, and the reduction became “a turning round, a completing of a cycle” (Swift, 1983, p.137). So, although history is primarily a blueprint for the future, it may also be a means by which future generations might reverse the world’s descent into oblivion. As previously stated, “if in becoming like their parents, they’ve struggled not to be like them.... if they’ve tried and so prevented things slipping. If they haven’t let the world get any worse—” (Swift, 1983, p.240). The ellipsis at the end of this statement symbolizes the ambiguity of such a revolutionary endeavour as well as its success in breaking history’s circularity.

Another argument may be drawn from the relationship between historiography, and respectivel narrativity, and detective fiction. According to Waugh’s metafiction research, detective fiction is a popular narrative style that has been altered to fulfill metafictional aims (Waugh, 1984, p.82). The usage of this format is important since it helps readers’ comprehension of topics in postmodern literature. In terms of the link between fiction and history, Todorov’s view is the most probable. Todorov emphasizes the duality of a “whodunit novel” that falls somewhere between thriller and suspense in his essay *The Typology of Detective Fiction*. A whodunit “contains not one but two stories: the story of the crime and the story of the investigation” (Tzvetan, 1977, p.44). While the first recounts the events leading up to the crime, the second focuses on the writing process, shedding light on “the story of that very book”

(Tzvetan, 1977, p.45). A thorough investigation of the plot of the novel reveals a considerable application of Todorov's argument. A peep into story creation is what a detective mode implementation entails. Crimes are retraced and then compiled into a logical sequence. The goal of linking them is to provide a solution to a mystery or provide insight into a crime. The reader takes an active role in this process, raising awareness of the novel's fictive nature. Tom, the protagonist, tells his story in a detective-like manner. Tom's argument is based on the desire to look back on life. A belief in the indispensability of a "detective spirit" seems to exist. Swift emphasizes both the act of recounting events and the way of exposing them in order to satisfy the inquiring appetite. The mysteries surrounding Tom's life are not presented in a linear fashion. More details emerge as the narrative progresses. The link between Freddie's murder, Dick's suicide, and Mary's kidnapping is revealed at the end. The reader starts to comprehend Tom's predicament. The "Because... Why?" congruence is enacted by the discovery. By stressing its driving power, the book reflects the act of its own creation. It does more than just repeat facts; it also assesses them and the manner by which they were gathered.

The reader's part is also taken into consideration in this explanation. The detective mode that governs the novel places a high value on the reader's participation in preserving metafiction. There is no clear narrative of the circumstances that led to Tom's present condition, nor of the mystery underlying countless fatalities. Evidence and clues are strewn throughout the text, encouraging the reader to take a more active part. *Waterland* is a "writerly" novel in which readers arrange events into an understandable storyline to generate meaning for the novel. The purpose of postmodern novels, according to Roland Barthes, "is to make the reader no longer a consumer, but a producer of the text" (1976, p.4). The reader in classical novels totally trusts the author's direction throughout the novel. Contemporary novels, on the other hand, immerse the reader in a pool of symbols and challenge them to piece together a plot. In the absence of a dependable narrator, the reader becomes a co-author of the text.

Readers alter the novel to fit their own worldview, resulting in a variety of interpretations. Metafiction is created by enticing the reader to investigate the truth. The reader, Hutcheon admits, is "now forced to control, to organize, to interpret" the text by bringing it to life in a well-structured, realistic experience (Hutcheon, 2014,

p.26). The novel's artificiality is emphasized by the reader's awareness of narrative gaps and his participation in filling them. The greater issue of narrative structure is addressed when discussing "writerly" novels. The events in this novel are not presented in any particular sequence. Swift creates a multifaceted story that spans several eras and locales. The novel is organized like a jigsaw puzzle, and the reader is tasked with putting it all together. Throughout the work, there are many multi-path storylines. The reader is led through a maze of fractured narratives and asked to make sense of them. To compensate for the absence of sequential development, the reader's involvement is reinforced through a significant emphasis on narrative frames. Framing is a literary technique that allows supplementary storylines to be inserted into the primary narrative framework before it is completed. These frames usually go undetected by readers since they have no literary purpose other than to set the stage for adding underlying narratives. Frames, according to Derrida, are "half-work and half-outside-the-work, neither work nor outside-the-work and arising in order to supplement it because of the lack within the work" (Jacques, 1987, p.122).

Frame narratives, on the other hand, are revealed in modern literature as the process of creating reality. Frames in *Waterland* are employed not simply to travel between Tom's numerous stories, but they also self-reflexively demonstrate their position as mediators. Framing may be utilized for self-referential goals in a variety of ways. The term "once upon a time" is used to explore Mary's tale in chapter 12, "About a change of life". Each time this statement is used, it highlights a different aspect of Mary's life and her connection with Tom. It progresses from her childhood with her father through her connection with Tom, her abortion, their planned marriage, her employment at a senior center when they moved to London, and eventually her choice to have a child, which foreshadows her kidnapping. The use of the phrase "let me tell you" multiple times throughout the novel is another example of framing. It's frequently followed by the next chapter's title. For example, "About the Fens" (Swift, 1983, p.8) or "About the Ouse" (Swift, 1983, p.142). This marks a transition in the narrative's timeline from the present to the past. It also helps to demolish the concept of narrative continuity by highlighting the deliberate usage of frames. Using the preposition "about" to start new chapters, according to Higdon, "foregrounds the novel's search for meanings" (Higdon, 1991, p.90). It takes us on a journey through the centuries. This exposes the reader to a variety of perspectives and forces him or

her to address contextual circumstances of meaning construction.

Additionally, framing indicates the narrative's choice in conveying reality. According to Roland Barthes, it symbolizes the depletion of conventional representational forms. That is, the futility of producing a unique form is demonstrated by presenting the same tale from many angles. This work makes heavy use of frame narrative for the most part. This is referred to as a "recurrent frame" by William. The frequent summoning of secondary storylines is referred to as this word. Metafiction, on the other hand, isn't only about describing the process of framing. Metafiction's value is diminished if narrative substance is not taken into account. After all, framing is a strategy that belongs to the *syuzhet* domain and is linked to metanarrative (self-reflexivity). *Histoire*, on the other hand, is concerned with reported events as mediated through *syuzhet*. Both levels use metafiction, the first through structural features in the narrative and the second through meaning. As a consequence, the work has many endings, each of which corresponds to a key plot point. It begins with Tom's farewell statement in Chapter 49, after his reunion with Price. This 'ending', however, is not final. The circumstances of Dick's death are recounted in three additional chapters after this one. Multiple endings and framing, in addition to frame-breaking, generate metafiction on two levels: first, on the level of *syuzhet*, because it exposes chronology and the reader's expectation, and second, on the level of *histoire*, which draws attention to the shift in the story frame and, as a result, the process of meaning production. The novel's last chapter examines Dick's suicide (one of three murders that lead to other tales) as the novel's ultimate event, despite the fact that all of the novel's events are repercussions of it. The narrative structure reflects the arbitrary nature of starting and terminating a narrative frame. The novel starts out as if it were an excerpt from a previous work. The novel creates a feeling of unfinishedness and fragmentation. It does not continue from where the first chapter ended. It instead switches to the future (the narrative's present) and establishes it as the major story. As the story switches to a new time or scene, a sense of immediacy is formed, and then dismantled. The change is maintained throughout the story, even after the primary plot has concluded. This sequence of events builds tension and keeps the reader's attention until the very end. Despite the fact that practically all narrative strands are intertwined, the ending should have been large enough to "stop the asking of a thousand questions" (Swift, 1983, p.96), so that the reader realizes that "it's not all... Though it's over,

that's not the end" (Swift, 1983, p.314). Sequences of events that have been detailed in earlier chapters begin with Dick's death. As a result, when Stan Booth adds, "someone best explain", the reader is aware of both the "full version" and the narrative's circularity. Readers are free to express their whole understanding of what occurred. They have seen how narrative is born out of a need to explain upsetting events.

The novel's structure is similar; it is written in the style of a detective tale, with an emphasis on deduction while also emphasizing narrative composition. Returning to the subject of history, which is considered as a remedy for people's encounters with pure reality, it seems that, although knowledge's epistemology may be realized (albeit mutably), its ontological position will always be a mystery. All views on the importance of history were sarcastically destroyed by Tom: "I don't care, what you call it – explaining, evading the facts, making up meanings, taking a larger view, putting things into perspective, dodging the hereand now, education, history, fairy-tales – it helps to eliminate fear." (Swift, 1983, p.241)

Tom attributes it to human beings' innate need to be free of dread of the unknown. Although historical investigations are prone to varying degrees of accuracy, the vast majority of their occurrences retain a feeling of reality. Fear, sympathy, and curiosity are the three aspects that make up the novel. Tom asserts that "if you add to pity and curiosity just a touch of fear ... then you have the tangled stuff of which stories are made" (Swift, 1983, p.247). They collaborate to create a story. The quotations, in their broadest meaning, pertain to what might be described as a common tendency in postmodern fiction. They are bemoaning the loss of metanarratives, which are supposed to preserve history. In its absence, the world is gripped by dread, resulting in a loss of basics. This condition is represented by the sentiments of insecurity that pervade people's brains. Swift shows us that "every Fen man suffers now and then the illusion that the land he walks over is not there" (Swift, 1983, p.13). Tom's story is dominated by his dread of losing "solid ground". As a result, he chooses to cling to facts because "History, if it is to keep on constructing its road into the future, must do so on solid ground" (Swift, 1983, p.86), which eliminates the possibility of doubting its veracity. These three main features operate in tandem to emphasize the significance of stories and their function in historical representation.

Therefore, Swift's work aims to build the novel's metafictional mode by projecting the process of constructing history as a component of the mechanism of writing novels. Both aspects represent the creative process. History demonstrates how narrative helps us understand reality, while stories are shaped by historical events. The processes of making history and fiction are shown side by side in *Waterland* to provide insight on the present understanding of reality. It also reveals their dependency on one another to provide a coherent, though incomplete, picture of existence.

## CONCLUSION

This thesis examined key terms in postmodernism, postmodern literature, metafiction, and historiographic metafiction in order to understand how mechanisms of metafiction made the concept of realism to change, followed by an extensive review and analysis of three selected novels, *The French Lieutenant's Woman* by John Fowles, *Slaughterhouse-Five* by Kurt Vonnegut, and *Waterland* by Graham Swift. These fundamental concepts have been covered. Thus, the thesis examined a metafictional deconstruction of the traditions of contemporary and realistic novels by questioning, disputing, subverting, and illustrating the link between reality and fiction.

As a result, the first chapter of this thesis provided a wide definition and examination of such conceptual terms as postmodernism, postmodern literature, metafiction, metafictional components, and historiographic metafiction. Many theorists' thoughts have developed a full comprehension of these notions. It is acknowledged that the realistic and classic novel genres were questioned, reevaluated, and deconstructed with the rise of postmodernism. After World War II, during the 1960's, 20<sup>th</sup> century critics, authors, and researchers who added social, political, and cultural self-consciousness components in their works led to the assessment of metafiction. Thus, metafiction allowed novelists and writers to question established writing rules by constructing their works between the lines of truth and fiction. Furthermore, metafiction is examined in this chapter in order to represent developments in modern/realistic narratives. In simple terms, metafictional tales depict the death of the author and the birth of the reader. It was decided that the introduction of metafictional elements encouraged readers to contribute in the reading/writing procedure of a novel and to fill in the gaps in the narrative. It was shown in this chapter that various strategies used in metafictional works bring out their fictionality. It has been discussed that the use of self-reflexivity, self-awareness, self-consciousness, parody, and intertextuality in metafictional novels aimed to point out that there is no ultimate truth, but that multiple truths exist only as textual and illusionary constructs; additionally, these elements remind readers that the novel is artificial and an illusion of reality, not reality itself. The interpretations also imply that historiographic metafiction distorts standard perceptions of history in order to connect the past to the present and to the future and prevent history from being definitive,

absolute, and teleological. Furthermore, it has been noted how historiographic metafiction complicates history by fusing the known/real with the unknown/fictional.

The second chapter of this thesis scrutinized metafictional elements in John Fowles' novel *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. The work has been concluded to be highly metafictional, and it further deconstructs typical novel writing and reading practices. At a first glance, the tale seems to be a typical Victorian love story. However, Fowles combines Victorian book features with postmodern metafictional aspects. The novel's fictionality is pointed up by the intrusive narrator, who dismisses the impression of a God-like narrator. The novel's self-reflexivity suggests that it is only a fictitious invention, and so Fowles' characters and narrative are the outcome of a creation. Furthermore, Fowles contributes in the death of the author via killing himself as an author and engages the audience in the writing/reading process. By providing several unexpected and untrustworthy tales, Fowles deconstructs the old orthodox narrative approaches in realistic literature. The novel's three endings add another metafictional feature. These endings indicate that a novel's typical frame has been altered by offering readers with numerous variants. By contrasting the boundary between truth and fiction, Fowles reinterprets and reevaluates the concepts of reality, history, and freedom in his metafictional book. The novel's intrusive narrator and alternative endings emphasize the independence of the readers and Fowles in the writing and reading process. The novel's location, storyline, and historical personalities all represent Fowles' mockery of Victorian norms and customs. Fowles weaves known history with his own fantasy. Sarah, the heroine, represents all that is antithetical to dullness and convention. Fowles deconstructs the norms of the established writer's function and toys with literary conventions. The work's self-reflexivity indicates its fictionality and provides diverse and subjective perspectives on the narrative. In the book, Fowles rewrites history and recreates the Victorian period by contrasting the borders between the past and the present. As a result, the novel's historiographic metafictional elements challenge the conventional notion of time.

The third chapter of this thesis inspected metafictional elements in Kurt Vonnegut's novel *Slaughterhouse-Five*. In in this novel, Vonnegut effectively manipulated metafiction to communicate its anti-war sentiment extremely. Vonnegut pioneered metafiction by incorporating elements of non-linear storytelling, parody, and collage. His literary tactics overturn the narrative framework of classic books. For



starters, his employment of unconventional storytelling tactics was influenced by his post-World War II mental trauma or psychiatric sickness. Although Vonnegut attempted to remember wartime recollections, he was unable to do it in a well-organized and logical manner. As a result, in *Slaughterhouse-Five*, a non-linear story arises. The tangled time-space interpretation of the Dresden atrocity casts a shadow over Billy and Vonnegut. Person transformations cause the narrative to veer between reality and fiction. Second, collage elements are used to create contrasts between different stories of the Dresden firebombing. References of official sources and other works bring the ugliness and cruelty of war to light in a serious manner. Folk culture, on the other hand, alleviates suppression by showing powerlessness and despair to death in a hilarious way. Finally, via parodies, Vonnegut condemned religion for failing to aid humanity and he demonstrated that individuals in postmodern civilization were trapped in a spiritual wasteland. Overall, every tactic used in *Slaughterhouse-Five* purposefully displays the abhorrence of violence and the desperate need for survival. Without any extraneous personal judgments, Vonnegut presented numerous phases of Billy objectively and organically. It quickly conveys the author's disinterest and arrogance to the reader. Deaths were recurrent occurrences throughout the story. Vonnegut's attitude to every death was the same: "So it goes." It appeared about a hundred times throughout the book. "So it goes" became a death symbol throughout time. This is the pinnacle of the author's dark humour. It also contrasted the author's careless stance with the story's harsh scenario. Vonnegut did not express his view explicitly, but his unusual response demonstrated his stance regarding conflicts. Vonnegut recounted a depressing narrative of a survivor's postwar existence from spectator viewpoint in order to lessen his suffering. The publication of "So it goes" completely represented the author's impotence and satire in the face of reality.

The fourth chapter of this thesis examined elements of metafiction in Graham Swift's novel *Waterland*. Swift's *Waterland* offers much more metafictional implications. The novel's metafiction premise centres on two key pivots. First, it has been discovered that the novel thematizes the act of narrative. Tom's stories of historical events and his family lore were used as a subplot inside the main plot. As a consequence, Tom has been considered as a self-referential author who remarks on the process of producing tales. Several of Tom's statements were seen as evidence of narrative's limited ability to capture reality. Tom combines fiction with truth in what

has been seen as an assimilation that destroys narrative credibility. Nonetheless, it is an inescapable decision since story is a user-friendly medium that can make historical facts comprehensible and relevant. It has been discovered to be a method of coming to grips with the actual. Second, historiography was brought up as an essential component that stimulates metafictional investigation. Historiography is discovered to enter the realm of fiction; history is considered with skepticism owing to the unreliability of the narrator, as well as the inflation/deflation utilized in this novel's discussion of it. The present work has emphasized the subject of storytelling and its importance by exploring the link between fiction and history. The extensive contrast between history and fiction underlines the relevance of Tom's teachings. This element's research has shown a self-conscious knowledge of the artificiality of historical documents and the fiction. It was also shown that the process of producing story is linked to a succession of "Here and Now" that elicits a demand for explanations in order to comprehend reality. Although the association between fiction and reality is frequently questioned, *Waterland* endorses it as the only way for people to come closer to reality. As a result, the novel is discovered to be an expression of ontological issues about the nature of writing.

In comparison, it has been noticed that one of the most pivotal metafictional characteristics of the novels is their self-reflexivity. The readers are obviously aware that they are reading fiction. The barrier between fiction and reality is blurred and the fourth wall is broken by the authors. The presence of the authors in the narratives demonstrates the ontological gap between reality and fiction. Readers of conventional novels are led to assume that every character in the novel is real, and that every occurrence in the story happened. However, the author begins to describe a new sort of fiction that is completely distinct from conventional fiction and emphasizes the novel's fictionality. This self-reflexive narrative digression deconstructs and critiques the illusion of reality generated in traditional realist fiction.

Multiple endings or non-traditional endings are common in these novels. One of the most remarkable elements of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and *Waterlad* is their multiple endings. With these endings, the author completely demolishes the linear progress of a traditional book. Even the endings show how the metafictional texts are fun and how they like to celebrate different things. The novels are a type of metafiction that always points out that it is a work of fiction and talks about how it was made.

There are many options in life, and people should make their own decisions because each step takes them to a new place. Multiple endings generate metafiction on two levels: first, on the level of *syuzhet*, because it exposes chronology and the reader's expectation, and second, on the level of *historie*, which draws attention to the shift in the story frame and, as a result, the process of meaning production. Consequently, the novels' various endings enable readers to pick their own ending or endings, the authors might be considered to have relinquished control over the writing process. By using parodies to portray certain fears and anxieties, postmodern novels undermine conventional novels. Parody possesses imitative items with a broad scope, such as a term, a classic work, a book, or even a historical event that has already occurred. Another characteristic of parody is Fowles' obtrusive narrator. In the story, the intrusive narrator's duty is to openly ridicule a conventional narrator who knows every detail and can even read people's minds. In *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, the intrusive narrator does not profess to know all about the protagonists. He is usually uninformed of the characters' inner thoughts or is apprehensive of what they will do. However, in several passages of the story, Fowles mocks Charles' liberty. Fowles is a mix of three characters; firstly he is a member of a Victorian upper-class family. Second, he is not totally free to form his relationship with Sarah according to his own desires; and third, he is a prisoner since he is nothing more than a linguistic entity in the text and cannot move beyond the text's limits. Parody subjects are mostly comprised of Pilgrim's Progress, Jesus' Prediction of Death, and Adam and Eve in Eden in *Slaughterhouse-Five*. To obtain an amusing impact and deliver certain messages, parodies use marked differences between both the parodic items and the parodied texts.

In conclusion, post-modern and metafictional authors have radically altered people's insights and notions of reality by purposefully using relativity and subjectivity in practically every scenario involving reality in their works, notably by deconstructing the long-held conventional novel structure, elements and parts. They have dismantled and rebuilt fiction, the narrator, the conventional storyline, binary oppositions, and the signifier-to-signifier relationship. Accordingly, these writers, Fowles and Swift being British and Vonnegut being American, might be regarded significant players in the metafictional literary universe for reflecting the aforementioned notions.

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