AUTHORIAL INTRUSION AS A TECHNIQUE OF SELF-CONSCIOUS NARRATION IN THE ENGLISH NOVEL

by

Fevziye Deniz (Tarba) Ceylan

B.A. in Engl. Lit., Boğaziçi University, 1983

M.A. in Engl. Lit., Southern Illinois University, 1985

Submitted to the Institute for Graduate Studies in

Social Sciences in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

Doctor

of

Philosophy

T. C.
Yükseköğretim Kurulu
Dokümantasyon Merkezi

Boğaziçi University

1991

AUTHORIAL INTRUSION AS A TECHNIQUE OF

SELF-CONSCIOUS NARRATION IN THE ENGLISH NOVEL

APPROVED BY

Prof. Dr. Cevza Sevgen ....

(Dissertation Supervisor)

Prof. Dr. Oya Başak ....

Prof. Dr. Dilek Doltaş ....

Prof. Dr. Jale Parla ....

Prof. Dr. Sencer Tonguç ....

DATE OF APPROVAL

ABSTRACT

The use of authorial intrusion gives a self-conscious quality to the novel by underlining the distance between its fictional world and the real world from which the reader and the writer approach to that fiction. Eighteenth-century writers Sterne and Fielding have interrupted their narratives to comment on the action, characters, and the creative process of their novels. Thackeray and Trollope stand out with their use of the intrusive authorial narrator in the nineteenth century. A twentieth-century writer, John Fowles, comments extensively and systematically on the art of fiction writing as well as the role and functions of the writer by means of authorial intrusion in The French Lieutenant's Woman, which consequently appears as an example of metafiction.

ÖZET

Anlatıcı/yazarın kendi öyküsüne müdahalesi onsekizinci yüzyıldan beri İngiliz romanında kullanılagelen bir anlatı yöntemidir. Bu tür müdahaleler romanın öyküselliğini de vurgularlar. Onsekizinci yüzyıl yazarlarından Sterne ve Fielding anlatıcı/yazar müdahalesini kullanarak romandaki kişiler, olaylar ve romanın yazılış sürecine ilişkin yorumlar yapmışlardır. Ondokuzuncu yüzyıl Gerçekçi romancılarından Thackeray ve A. Trollope bu anlatı yöntemi ile yapıtlarının öyküselliğini vurgulayan en önemli yazarlardandır. Yirminci yüzyılda ise John Fowles Fransız Teğmeninin Kadını adlı romanında kullandığı diğer "üst-kurmaca" yöntemlerine ek olarak anlatıcı/yazar müdahalesi yönteminden yararlanarak yazın sanatı ve yazarın rol ve görevleri üstüne düşüncelerini okuyucuya aktarmıştır.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

PAGE OF APPROVAL ii

ABSTRACT iii

ÖZET iv

TABLE OF CONTENTS v

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION 1

CHAPTER II: TERMS, DEFINTIONS, CONCEPTS 6

CHAPTER III: THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY: FIELDING AND STERNE 29

CHAPTER IV: THE NINETEENTH CENTURY: THACKERAY AND A. TROLLOPE 47

CHAPTER V: THE TWENTIETH CENTURY: JOHN FOWLES'S _THE FRENCH LIEUTENANT'S WOMAN_ 89

CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION 128

BIBLIOGRAPHY 134

CHAPTER I:

INTRODUCTION

Much of contemporary literary theory and criticism focuses on the ways a literary work conveys its message and content to the reader. In fact, for many critics of literature, how the work has passed on its message has been quite as important, and occasionally more so, than the message itself. The narrative strategies employed in a particular literary work is not of concern to twentieth-century literary scholars and critics only: creative artists from the narrator of Beowulf or the teller of Canterbury Tales to the present have worried about how they could best tell their stories, and the critical eye of the reader may find traces of their artistic concerns implicitly or explicitly expressed within those works.

The writers' concern with their artistic methods and with the fictionality of their work is not new, though this concern is usually not stated overtly. Compared to the earlier novelists, contemporary writers are more articulate on these issues, and many of them examine and candidly comment on the artistic and narrative methods which they use within their own literary products, thus making such commentary on fiction writing part of the message of their work. Recent critical theory calls the latter practise "metafiction," adding a new term to the critical studies of literature. Although metafiction has been defined as "self-

conscious fiction" (Waugh title page), it does not cover all self-conscious fiction. The term can be applied usefully only to certain works which are written by contemporary novelists and which systematically and consistently use one or more self-conscious narrative, linguistic, and/or stylistic device(s) throughout their entirety. Alongside this group, there are also many works of fiction which cannot be called "metafiction" in this strict sense but which nevertheless make an effective use of self-consciousness in narration. This dissertation focuses on novels which fall within the broader category of self-conscious fiction by employing the narrative technique called authorial intrusion.

The main interest of this dissertation is the self-conscious authorial intrusions in the writing of Fielding, Sterne, Thackeray, A. Trollope, and Fowles. Before the examination of particular novels, however, self-consciousness in the novel needs to be defined. This discussion will start with an analysis of narration techniques that are used in novels. Since authorial intrusions occur in the conventional novel as well as in metafictional works of the twentieth century, a review of the basic narrative features of the conventional novel as well as of narrative voices, functions of the narrative voice in the novel, and the types of narrators which are employed by conventional writers will be helpful. Often, authorial intrusions are practised by third-person narrators who refer to themselves as "I." This particular blend of two different narrative voices, used by

almost all of the novelists whose works will be studied in this dissertation, creates self-consciousness in the novel. In order to fully understand how authorial intrusion creates self-conscious effects, it is necessary to define the types of self-consciousness in the novel, and to distinguish metafiction and self-conscious fiction.

The historical development of self-conscious narrative techniques goes back to the eighteenth century. The use of authorial intrusions and its effects can first be observed in the works of eighteenth-century novelists who thus add the quality of self-consciousness to their experimental works. Fielding and Sterne have both extensively used a conversant authorial narrator, thereby producing some of the earliest examples of self-conscious writing in the English novel. Moreover, Sterne's narrative strategy has many similarities with contemporary metafictional writing. His overt commentary and discussions on the art of writing which take up a considerable part of his "story" foreshadow the techniques of many contemporary metafictionists among whom Fowles holds a unique place.

It is a widely shared opinion that as opposed to the experimental works of the preceding century, nineteenth-century novels appear as more conventional works of fiction. However, this opinion proves to be not entirely correct when the narrative techniques of some important novelists of that period are studied carefully. One of the most prominent novelists of nineteenth century is William M. Thackeray.

His reputation as an artist is founded on his masterful combination of literary quality with a moral purpose. Vanity Fair, which by its title bears allegorical implications, stands out as a perfectly "moral" work which entertains and educates in the ideal way that the nineteenth century reading public and critics expected from literature. In this as well as the narrative technique he employs, Thackeray resembles Fielding, and his "self-conscious" use of the intrusive authorial narrator is inspired by Fielding's example.

Another very popular writer of the time is Anthony Trollope who is one of the most traditional of all nineteenth-century novelists, judged both by the value systems he advocates and by the literary techniques he employs. In these and other literary aspects such as plot and characterization, Trollope's novels clearly pertain to the norms of the realist novel. However, his use of the intrusive authorial narrator adds to his novels a surprisingly (and even disturbingly) self-conscious tone. Although Thackeray's influence on Trollope has been pointed out by several critics, one should not be led to believe that Trollope simply imitates Thackeray's example. Trollope's narrative strategy is unique and consistent throughout his prolific literary career, and The Warden and Barchester Towers are excellent examples of self-conscious narration in the nineteenth-century English novel. These two novels need to be reviewed together since they are very closely tied: the

characters and the action of The Warden are developed and brought to completion in Barchester Towers.

With the twentieth-century novelists, self-conscious narration is not simply the product of the early experimental spirit which set out in the eighteenth century to explore the limits of the new genre. Twentieth-century artists use self-conscious narration more "self-consciously," as a possible way of questioning the limits of convention and to break new ground. Thus, the term "metafiction" and other terms with similar though slightly different shades of meaning have been used to qualify these modern works. The French Lieutenant's Woman offers not only a very unique use of the self-conscious intrusive authorial narrator but also displays another interesting quality which recommends it strongly for a close review in this dissertation: it is a parody of the conventional nineteenth century novel narrated by an overtly "modern" twentieth-century voice. This parody, however, is not simply an imitation of an earlier work, but a complicated re-working of the conventions of the nineteenth-century realist novel. The definition of parody as it is used in this contemporary work will be followed by a close study of Fowles's novel. The synthesis which Fowles has accomplished in The French Lieutenant's Woman is a nostalgic nineteenth-century novel with an enchanting modern touch. After the analysis of this work, the conclusion chapter will briefly highlight some of the observations made throughout the dissertation.

CHAPTER II:

TERMS, DEFINITIONS, CONCEPTS

Although the practise of self-conscious fiction dates back to the early stages of the English novel, the critical attention it has received is relatively new. One may wonder why the issue has been neglected until the second half of the twentieth century although there are examples of self-conscious writing dating back to the seventeen hundreds. It must be noted, however, that these examples do not employ a single common technique that make them "self-conscious." In fact, some of the earlier novels may not even qualify as self-conscious novels when they are judged by some of the more strict criteria used in the twentieth century. One basic yet often forgotten fact is that these works, written over a long period of time during the development of the English novel, cannot fairly be evaluated by the same measuring stick. As Robert Alter comments, "the self-consciousness of a Sterne or a Fielding is that of the pioneer of a new genre exploring its possibilities and its relation to its antecedents" (Partial Magic 180-181) whereas the examples of twentieth century self-conscious fiction have been written after the possibilities of the genre have been defined and perhaps exhausted.

The eighteenth century readers witnessed the development of a genre where conventions in the use of plot, character or tone, as we understand them today, were not yet established.

The critical response to the eighteenth-century novels from their contemporary audiences deals mostly with the content of the work and usually has moral overtones; therefore, these responses may not even qualify as literary criticism in the eyes of late twentieth-century scholars. Such "moral" criticism is understandable since just as the novelists themselves did not quite know the boundaries of the new genre they were experimenting with, the critics of the period had not yet determined the criteria by which to read these novels. Thus, they viewed these early examples of the English novel with suspicion, fearing that these invented stories which aimed to entertain the readers might corrupt their minds. Thus, moral issues as well as rhetorical ones became an important concern for the reading public who was exposed to novels with subjects which had not been considered suitable for literature until then.

Nineteenth-century criticism also emphasizes the content of the novel, thereby commenting on moral issues as well as on social ones. As the nineteenth century brought great economical, technological, and social changes to England as it did to the rest of Europe, most of the nineteenth-century novelists employed their literary talents to deal with the on-goings in their society. Similarly, critics treated the novel as a potential tool to cope with the overwhelming changes taking place in their time. Nevertheless, the English novel flourished and became established with all of its conventions during this period, and the criticism of

plot, character, and language also made their appearance and developed. By the end of the nineteenth century, critics like Henry James started to direct their attention from the content of the novel to the techniques employed by the writer.

With such attention, discussion of narrative techniques starts to occupy a more prominent place in the criticism of the novel. In the twentieth century, the attention directed to the question of how writing becomes effective reaches a climax with the New Critics. It may even be suggested that the emphasis on the technique of writing has prepared an open-minded environment for self-conscious fiction, in which it has bloomed in the second half of the twentieth century. Taking a closer look at how critics have defined the novel and developed the theory of narrative techniques in the twentieth century is necessary for a better understanding of self-conscious fiction.

At the Clark Lectures at Cambridge University Trinity College in 1927, E.M. Forster starts his lecture on the novel with the question "What does a novel do?" and gives a simple answer: "The novel tells a story" (40). If story is defined as "narrated events, abstracted from their disposition in the text and reconstructed in their chronological order, together with the participants in these events" (Rimmon-Kenan 3), Forster's response sounds too general for the novel which had long ago distinguished itself as a separate genre from all other story-telling genres. Since most narrative fiction

attempts to tell a story, one must assume that Forster refers to an additional quality in the novel that distinguishes it from all other genres. This additional quality relates to how the novel tells its story; in other words, the secret of the novel lies in the different techniques it has employed to tell its story.

As novelists have focused more and more on how to tell their story better, critics have also focused their studies on the form and techniques employed by the novelist rather than commenting on the content. Thus, a general shift of attention from the content of the novel to its form marks the new critical theory of the novel. Wallace Martin, in his book titled Recent Theories of Narrative (published in 1986), quotes from Mark Schorer whose 1947 essay "Technique as Discovery" points to the fact that this shift had become necessary by the 1940's: Schorer stated that although criticism of poetry had long ago accepted form as an essential part of its study, the criticism of fiction still needed to do that.

> Modern criticism has shown us that to speak of content as such is not to speak of art at all, but of experience; and that it is only when we speak of the achieved content, the form, the work of art as a work of art, that we speak as critics. The difference between content, or experience, and achieved content, or art, is technique.... (quot. in Martin 16)

Thus, writers and critics after the 1940's have increasingly directed their energies to discussing and mastering new forms and techniques, regarding content as a secondary point of emphasis in novel criticism. Wallace Martin summarizes what

has been achieved since the 1970's:

> During the past fifteen years, the theory of narrative has displaced the theory of the novel as a topic of central concern in literary study. The difference between the two is not simply one of generality--as if, having analyzed one species of narration, we went on to study others and then described the genus. By changing the definition of what is being studied, we change what we see; and when different definitions are used to chart the same territory, the results will differ.... (15)

What distinguishes the more recent narrative theory from its earlier counterpart is its consciousness that the long narrative tradition is now best represented by the novel and therefore needs new vocabulary and definitions for a healthier criticism of this particular genre.

As the techniques of the novel were differentiated from those of other long narratives, critics of the novel recognized the inadequacy of the terminology that had so far been employed in the theory and the criticism of the novel. Moreover, it was accepted that the relation of the novel to "reality" and the representation of the "real" in the novel partly determine the techniques of the novelist. Many critics tend to agree with Ian Watt who has qualified realism as "the defining characteristic which differentiates the work of the early eighteenth-century novelists from previous fiction" (10). Self-conscious fiction is often a result of the breach of the norms of realism and a departure from the commonly accepted techniques employed in realist novels. What critics call the "conventional" or "traditional" novel is in truth the realist novel. Therefore the issue of

realism in the novel will always have to be examined while the self-conscious divergences from its norms are discussed.

In the first chapter of The Rise of the Novel, Watt studies the concurrent schools of philosophical and literary realism in the eighteenth century. After noting that this parallel cannot and should not be stretched too far as these two fields have their own dynamics and interests, he states that one should look for the parallelism in "the general temper of realist thought, the methods of investigation it has used, and the kinds of problems it has raised" (13). That general temper, which he qualifies as "critical, anti-traditional, and innovating," has its analogies in the novel, "analogies which draw attention to the characteristic kind of correspondence between life and literature" which he claims have been present in prose fiction since the eighteenth century (13). Watt argues that the development of philosophical and literary realism in the eighteenth century are "parallel manifestations of larger change"; they should be seen as part of the new world view which has replaced "the unified world picture of the Middle Ages" with an "unplanned aggregate of particular individuals having particular experiences at particular times and at particular places" (34). He finally suggests that this conception of the new world view has helped to develop "the distinctive narrative mode of the novel" which he defines as "the sum of literary techniques whereby the novel's imitation of human life

follows the procedures adopted by philosophical realism in its attempt to ascertain and report the truth" (34).

The attempt of the conventional novelist to imitate human life as accurately as possible constitutes the basis for the realist novel. Even in the most devoted followers of this trend, however, it is possible to observe traces of the "artificiality" of the work at hand; in other words, the reader often realizes that what claims to be a depiction of real life or an embodiment of actual human experience is in fact the figment of the writer's imagination. Such a realization breaks the illusion of the reality of the fictive world of the novel which has started off with the intention of replacing the outside world by the "truthfulness" of its construct.

The breakdown of the illusion has defamiliarizing or alienating effects on the reader. Novels which include literary elements that serve to defamiliarize the reader to the fictional world of the work have a self-conscious quality. Since most of the self-conscious elements of the novel are created through the narrative technique employed by the writer, the definition, functions, and types of narrative voices used in novels need to be studied before a more detailed analysis of the self-conscious novel can be made.

One very significant aspect of the narrative technique of the novel is its use of the narrator. In its attempt to create the illusion of reality and "report the truth," the conventional novelist makes use of a unique narrator, "a

self-contained visual entity that stands between the subject and the reader" (Pearce 47). The simplicity of the definition is deceptive since the function of the narrator is essential in the novel; in fact, it has even been suggested that the so-called mimesis of the novel lies not in the imitation of reality but of narration. Sheridan Baker writes: "Fiction does not imitate reality out there. It imitates a fellow telling about it. And in so doing, it creates a kind of existential parable about the realities of the modern world" (156).

The writer's choice of a narrator may display great variety: for example, the narrator of a novel need not be fixed; that is, there may be several narrators in a novel, and the writer may switch from one to the other. Furthermore, the narrator may not even qualify as a "self-contained visual entity," as in the celebrated case of the mentally retarded Benjy, one of Faulkner's four narrators in _The Sound and the Fury_. There is also the important issue of what Wayne Booth calls the narrator's "privilege" which means the narrator's ability "to know what could not be learned by strictly natural means" (160). This privilege, when absolute, is called "omniscience," a term which has been used with such freedom that it has turned into a cliche. Schlomith Rimmon-Kenan has adapted from Joseph Ewen a handy list of characteristics shared by the so-called omniscient narrators:

> familiarity, in principle, with the characters' innermost thoughts and feelings; knowledge of past,

> present and future; presence in locations where characters are supposed to be unaccompanied ... and knowledge of what happens in several places at the same time. (95)

Obviously, omniscience is in contrast with "realistic vision and inference" (Booth 160) where the narrator is limited in his or her access to the minds of the characters and the underlying factors behind the events of the novel.

Although narrators may be categorized according to their varying characteristics, they all share an important feature which Roy Pascal calls the "fundamental presupposition of story telling": "the narrator is removed in time from the events described, so that these are recounted from the perspective of their outcome" (3). In other words, the narrator tells the story after the events have taken place. The importance of the relationship between the time of the events of the novel and the time when they are related to the reader, which puzzles and eventually causes the incompetence of the narrator of _Tristram Shandy_, has drawn the attention of many critics. Sheridan Baker, who has underlined the role of the narrator in the mimetic function of the novel, states that "the author's essential mimesis is man telling, and man telling is, in turn, imitating the reality of events that have happened, even if the happening is projected light-years into the future" (156). Therefore, it follows that "the tense of fiction is the past" (Baker 157). Another critic who emphasizes the "pastness" of all narration is Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth. She claims that:

> by providing a single fixed viewpoint existing always in the future of any narrated episode, the narrator unifies into a single mnemonic (i.e., past-tense) sequence the various fragments of history, each with its own point of view. (45)

Ermarth explains this problematic relationship by using the analogy of painting in _Realism and Consensus in the Novel_. She suggests that past, present, and future are the linear coordinates of fiction, and they correspond to the spatial coordinates of painting which are front, side, and back (40). Just as there needs to be an implied spectator to unify and homogenize the several coordinates of a painting from outside the frame (1-40), fiction needs a "narrative perspective":

> The narrative perspective (or "narrator") coordinates these relative measurements [of time] into a unified, collective vision. At every moment in a past-tense narration, more than one viewpoint is represented. Every moment is grasped automatically from more than one viewpoint because every moment is both "present" and at the same time already past, already part of a recollection taking place some time in the future of the event. (40-41)

In cases where the narrator moves within the events of the novel, i.e. when he or she is one of the characters, the continuity of the time of narration and the time of the narrated events becomes more obvious since first-person narration "tends to confirm more conclusively that continuity between virtual and actual time upon which fictional realism rests" (Ermarth 88). However, the tense of narration is past regardless of whether the narrator is first- or third-person.

Thus having a retrospective stance, the narrator has the advantage of sorting out details which do not have a direct impact on the main story or which do not contribute for a

better understanding of the characters. On the other hand, mismanagement of this advantageous position may turn the novel into a chaotic bunch of events. Regardless of whether the narrator is competent in its role as the arbiter of information, the retrospective position of the narrator may be used as a technique of self-conscious writing. The seemingly mismanaged time factor will be briefly examined in the discussion of Tristram Shandy, whereas the contribution of the retrospective stance of the narrator to the self-conscious nature of the novel can be observed in The French Lieutenant's Woman.

The narrator unifies not only the temporal elements but the action of the novel as well. Real life presents people with a variety of choices and possible decisions to be made, and people have to use their faculties of memory and reason to understand their past, to act in their present, and to project into their future. The novel, as a form which aims to capture "the real," has to give its characters just such a disorganized and non-deterministic variety of choices. Left to their own, the characters in a particular situation will present the reader with chaotic, dispersed, and disorganized pieces of information about that event. Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth comments that the attraction between the forces of "unity" and "dispersal" is an essential element of realism:

> The important constant in realistic fiction at all levels is maintaining a tension between the centripetal and the centrifugal impulses: between a potential for mobility and the form of mobility contained; between the arena of freedom or even

> dispersal on the one hand, and, on the other, the arena of stable, verifiable meanings. What is crucial in this language of inside and outside, of surface and depth, is the need for _both_ terms of the opposition to any fully realistic conception. (49)

What the narrator does, Ermarth suggests, is to unify and reorganize those varied bits of information under the sifting and cementing viewpoint of one consciousness. In this sense, whether that consciousness finds a voice in the first- or third-person makes little difference.

With regard to other aspects of the novel, however, the writer's preference of first-or third-person narration brings along certain limitations in the way the action is presented to the reader. In first-person narration the story-teller calls himself or herself "I." In third-person narration, on the other hand, the speaker may or may not have an identity for the reader; that is, the narrator may be figural or authorial. Generally speaking, the writer's choices of the person of the narrator are as follows: a) first-person participating (eg.: Moll Flanders); b) first-person observing (active, eg.: Nick in _The Great Gatsby_); c) first-person reporting (passive, eg.: Lockwood in _Wuthering Heights_); d) third-person limited (limited-omniscient who has access to some characters' minds, eg.: the narrator of _The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man_); e) third-person unlimited (omniscient, eg.: the narrators in most of Dickens' novels); and f) third-person dramatic (objective, eg.: narrators in most of Hemingway's stories) (Howell 2). Obviously, the writer may choose to use several types of narrators in one

work or modify these categories according to his needs. Both first-person and third-person narrators may be used by the writer to create self-conscious fiction. Therefore, the potentials of both types need to be briefly reviewed.

Most first-person narrators are characters within the novel and report directly from within the events of the novel. They may be narrating the events of their own lives (like Moll Flanders) or may tell the stories of others' lives (like Lockwood in Wuthering Heights). They have either witnessed the events themselves, or have gathered the information from others who have. First-person narrators both impede and help their writers. If the writer wants to use a convincing character who will at the same time narrate the events, then he or she is limited to the cognitive abilities of that character. This point is formulated by David Goldknopf in his book titled The Life of the Novel. He says: "a primary, built-in restriction in I-narration [is] the fact that no fictional character can be as smart--as profound, sensitive, eloquent--as his maker..." (35). Moreover, the language of the narrator has to be in accordance with that character's social and intellectual status. To keep the character and the narrator consistent requires an extra effort on the part of the writer. David Goldknopf confirms that writers may "cheat" with I-narrators when the character/narrators do not live up to the literary expectations of their writers. In that case, Goldknopf states, the writer

> will ascribe to [the narrator] a sensibility or a diction for which his characterization to that point has not prepared us. At such times, it really is the author who is speaking, ventriloquially, through I. (34)

However, writers may "cheat" well enough to integrate their ventriloquism into the words of the character which will give them an advantage over the "built-in restriction" in first-person narration.

On the other hand, the first-person narrator has advantages for the realist writer. For example, a convincing first-person narrator helps the writer to get the readers involved in the events of the novel and accept the fictive world of the novel as "real" without much difficulty since the reader can more readily identify himself or herself with an "I" than with a "he" or "she." Another obvious advantage of the first-person narrator is its ability to directly address the reader as one individual addressing another. The use of the first-person narrator is potentially the ideal technique to narrate events in their natural course rather than revealing them in a rearranged manner. However, this potential is seldom realized in the first-person novel; most first-person narrators act like the omniscient third-person narrator and reveal information in a reorganized manner as in the case of Pip, the narrator of _Great Expectations._ John Fowles, in _The French Lieutenant's Woman_, refers to this paradox when his first-person narrator (who, however, is not a proper "I" narrator nor a proper character in the novel) claims that he has no knowledge about Sarah's past in Chapter

13. This supposed limitation inherent in first-person narration thus helps Fowles to interrupt his story and add a self-conscious quality to his novel.

Michal Glowinski refers to some problems of first-person novels, especially problems of credibility and authority of the narrator. In the case of first-person narrators, the reader is limited to the words of those characters about themselves. That is, a first-person narrator who says "I have always loved my mother" has to be taken at his or her word. However, in the case of the third-person novel, a character's statement will be verified by the information that the narrator provides about that character. Glowinski refers to the fact that the reader of the first-person novel "cannot refer to an authoritative narrator, for when a story is told in the first person, the narrator is equal to any character belonging to the realm of ordinary mortals and, therefore, fallible" (104).

Third-person narration, on the other hand, is not always completely authoritative or free of the disadvantage of "fallibility," either. One obvious advantage of the third-person narrator is that it eliminates, for the writer, the problem of keeping in accordance with the intellectual and linguistic abilities of a first-person character/narrator. Moreover, the ability to select information from the mind and experiences of whichever character the writer desires is undoubtedly another advantage of third-person narration in terms of providing the writer with freedom of action. The

writer may use this freedom with or without limitations as already suggested by the terms "third-person limited," "third-person unlimited," and "third-person dramatic" narrators (Howell). Besides, the writer's extent of "familiarity" with a character's mind can deepen and widen as the novel progresses, and the character's mind may be revealed to the reader in increasing penetration. An excellent example of how the writer may use differing levels of limited and unlimited omniscience in narration throughout the course of a novel is D.M. Thomas's The White Hotel. Sheridan Baker points out that although the writer imitates a person talking both in first and third-person narration, there is one important difference: in the case of the third person narrator,

> the speaker is a storyteller, the anonymous personage revived at each telling of the old familiar, or unfamiliar, tale. Mimesis has one less layer and infinitely more freedom, as the anonymous voice can select at will from time and space, can meditate and comment, and can even break off the imitated storytelling to comment on the process and its problems ... all without damage to the reality of the events and speech.... (159)

Baker's statement about how the anonymous voice "can meditate and comment" requires further discussion. Baker also points to the fact that the commentary may relate to several features of the story itself, i.e., events, characters, and the social, historical, philosophical implications of any of these. Furthermore, the storyteller may interrupt the story and comment on the task of storytelling itself. This latter type of commentary often

qualifies the work as self-conscious writing. Therefore Baker's following statement that none of the comments do "damage to the reality of the events and speech" would most likely be rejected by critics like Henry James who consider all commentary as a breach of the reality of fiction.

Often, the third-person narrator who comments on the events or on the task of storytelling refers to himself or herself as "I," thus creating a unique combination of first- and third-person narration. Of the works which will be studied in this dissertation, <u>Tom Jones</u>, <u>Vanity Fair</u>, <u>The Warden</u>, <u>Barchester Towers</u> and <u>The French Lieutenant's Woman</u> have narrators which unite third- and first-person narrative voices. This is yet another "I" who appears in the novel as the narrator but is not one of the characters. In one sense, the third-person narrator who occasionally refers to himself or herself as "I" has similarities with the first-person narrator; David Goldknopf writes:

> normally, the mimetic membrane operates as a one-way screen, permitting the reader to look into the fictional world but preventing fictional characters from taking cognizance of the reader. The I narrator, on the other hand, ruptures the screen from the <u>fictional</u> side. (32)

However, if the "I" speaking is not a character but the narrator, he or she can easily be identified as the creator of the novel, and often enough, the narrative voice itself explicitly claims to be the writer of the work at hand. It would be wrong to accept this author/narrator as the historical writer of the novel: he or she is simply an author

surrogate, another fictive character which the writer employs as a mask. An interruption of the story of the novel made by this authorial narrative figure is called "authorial intrusion." This unique combination of first-and third-person narration is a potential device for self-conscious writing.

It must be emphasized that authorial intrusion is only one of the techniques which create a self-conscious effect in fiction. Self-conscious writing utilizes a variety of narrative, typographical, and linguistic devices to achieve its ends. All of these devices will not be examined here since they fall outside the realm of interest of this dissertation. Before studying authorial intrusion as a self-conscious device as it is used in particular novels, however, it is necessary to discuss self-conscious writing at more length. Robert Alter provides the following, rather strict definition of the self-conscious novel which would limit the term almost wholly to a certain type of contemporary novel:

> A self-conscious novel is one that systematically flaunts its own necessary condition of artifice, and that by so doing probes into the problematic relationship between real-seeming artifice and reality. (Tri Quarterly 238-39)

As pointed out earlier, self-conscious fiction is categorized by other terms as well. "Metafiction," "surfiction," and "self-reflexive fiction" refer to slightly different types of self-conscious writing although the terms are often used interchangeably. The definitions of these terms suggest that critics approach self-conscious fiction from basically three

angles: the role of the reader, the positioning of the narrator, and the overall picture that appears as a result of the new roles assumed by the reader and the narrator in the self-conscious novel.

The most widely used term for self-conscious fiction is "metafiction." Patricia Waugh's definition of "metafiction" bears a significant resemblance to Alter's definition of the self-conscious novel:

> Metafiction is a term given to fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality. (2)

Needless to say, the novelist may "pose questions" in implicit or explicit ways. Waugh's definition, like Alter's, emphasizes the vital relationship between self-conscious writing and reality. She suggests that metafictional works underline their fictionality in order to question the realness of all fiction.

The ways in which the conventional novelist and the metafictionist relate to reality are essentially different. As Inger Christensen comments, while the conventional novel aims to imitate reality as well as it can, "metafiction does not concern itself with its ability *per se* to imitate reality. It focuses on the difference between art and reality and displays its consciousness of this distance" (22). Thus, while the conventional novelist, who is as aware of the difference between art and reality as the metafictionist, endeavours to cover up that distance, the

metafictionist deliberately and flamboyantly underlines it. Still, one needs to remember that the writer of a self-conscious novel starts off with some of the same basic literary concerns as the conventional novelist. As Christensen reminds us, they both deal with questions such as "the narrator's conception of his own role and art, and of the reader" (13). Moreover, the conventional novelist and the metafictionist both create a fictional world. Patricia Waugh notes that the difference starts with the creation of that world:

> Metafictional novels tend to be constructed on the principle of a fundamental and sustained opposition: the construction of a fictional illusion (as in traditional realism) and the laying bare of that illusion. In other words, the lowest common denominator of metafiction is simultaneously to create a fiction and to make a statement about the creation of that fiction. (6)

In her book titled Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox, Linda Hutcheon, another important critic of postmodern fiction, defines metafiction as "fiction about fiction --that is, fiction that includes within itself a commentary on its own narrative and/or linguistic identity" (1). Hutcheon highlights the fact that metafiction draws the reader more actively into the work, by making the reader conscious about the reading process. In the "Preface" to the paperback edition of Narcissistic Narrative, Hutcheon claims that metafiction can teach us both the ontological status of all fiction and the "complex nature of reading":

> [The] central paradox for readers [of metafiction] is that, while being made aware of the linguistic and fictive nature of what is being read, and

> thereby distanced from any unself-conscious identification on the level of character or plot, readers of metafiction are at the same time made mindful of their active role in reading. (xi)

Thus, the readers of metafiction are not allowed to identify with the characters and the fictive events of the novel. Instead, they are invited to observe the fictionality of those events and enjoy the artistry which has made that fiction possible. This does not necessarily mean that metafictional works do not give their readers the kind of pleasure that conventional novels offer by drawing the reader into the fictive world of the novel. Although readers of a metafictional novel are not allowed to identify with the events and characters in the novel, they still become part of the microcosm of the novel due to the active role that is offered to them in the reading process.

Not only the role of the reader but that of the narrator, too, has changed in self-conscious fiction. Richard Pearce suggests that the position of the narrator in conventional novels is between the subject and the reader: "the narrator's view follows from his choosing a detached and fixed vantage, even when he narrows his focus to the mind of a central intelligence" (47). Pearce argues that in "a new fiction, aptly named 'surfiction'" (48) this fixed vantage is lost, and the narrator enters the frame of the fiction which he or she no longer narrates from a distance:

> What the reader sees is no longer a clear picture contained within the narrator's purview, but an erratic image where the narrator, the subject, and the medium are brought into the same imaginative field of interaction, an image that is shattered,

> confused, self-contradictory but with an independent and individual life of its own. (48)

Therefore, self-conscious fiction does not grant an easy identification with the work, but instead challenges the readers who have to adjust their norms of novel reading.

What Waugh, Hutcheon, and Pearce all argue is that metafiction or surfiction is deliberately self-conscious; in other words, metafictionists deliberately and systematically draw the attention of their readers to the process of writing and the techniques which have been employed in the production of the text. A systematic effort requires a plan which will unfold several features of the text to enable the reader to perceive the text as an artefact. Alter and Waugh suggest that conventional novelists such as Fielding, Trollope, or Thackeray who have self-conscious features in their novels due to their authorial intrusions may not have "intended" to alienate the reader to their works. These critics believe that the use of authorial intrusion alone is not adequate to make a novel an example of metafiction. They further claim that in the novels of Thackeray and Trollope, for example, references to the fictionality of the work are random and therefore these novels do not qualify as metafiction proper although the text displays self-consciousness. Indeed, the distinction between what is strictly metafiction and what can be termed self-conscious fiction is important in defining some early examples of self-conscious writing from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries which, though displaying self-conscious

narrative features, do not have the closely knit self-conscious texture of most metafictional writing. However, this dissertation proposes to show that the extensive and consistent use of authorial intrusion in the works of these conventional novelists does create the same overall effect on the reader as metafictional writing of the twentieth century.

CHAPTER III:

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY: FIELDING AND STERNE

Eighteenth-century novelists such as Fielding and Sterne are the forerunners of the metafictionists of the twentieth century. In fact, Tristram Shandy is widely accepted as one of the earliest examples of "metafiction" strictly defined. Patricia Waugh calls it "the prototype for the contemporary metafictional novel" (70), and Linda Hutcheon suggests that it is, along with Don Quixote, "the major forerunner of modern metafiction" (Narcissistic Narrative 8). Robert Alter, on the other hand, qualifies Tom Jones and Fielding respectively as "a principal model for the self-conscious novel [and] a writer who realized its possibilities with a superbly confident artistic poise that has not been surpassed" (Partial Magic "Preface" xiv).

Novels like Tristram Shandy and Tom Jones achieve their self-conscious quality by shifting the reader's position from the outside into the frame of the text through their narrators. Although they are early products in terms of the development of the English novel, eighteenth-century novels have had a significant impact on the development of self-conscious narrative techniques. Their contribution to fictional narrative techniques is complemented by the new themes and subject matter they have ventured to bring into fiction writing.

Erich Kahler, in his book called _The Inward Turn of Narrative_, argues that the eighteenth century has accepted sentiment as subject matter in fiction, and this acceptance has brought along new forms of expression (143). Conventional themes and the forms which were employed to write on those themes were replaced by an innovative search for new techniques to express the intricacies of the human soul:

> The ego enlarged in monologue and in dialogue became the vehicle of the new narrative. That is to say, first-person narrative and epistolary narrative became the new techniques for revealing and exploring the psyche. (Kahler 143)

Thus, the first-person narrator appears as a tool who can directly express a character's emotions and explore the psychological and philosophical dilemma of the soul. Sterne uses a first-person narrator in _Tristram Shandy_ whereas the narrator of _Tom Jones_ is the intrusive third-person narrator, often taken for Fielding himself. However, Sterne's narrator is not an ordinary first-person narrator/story-teller, but a narrator who is aware that he is not just telling but _writing_ his own story. One must note that Sterne is indebted to Fielding and often parodies his interpolations. His choice of a first-person narrator, however, has given _Tristram Shandy_ an additional chance to achieve self-exploration more directly, or in David Goldknopf's words, "in employing an I-narrator, the author has delegated his most primitive responsibility to a creation of his, a specialist _within_ the story" (25). Fielding, on the other hand, employs a third

person narrator who systematically (in the introductory chapters at the beginning of each book) intrudes into his narrative and refers to himself as "I." What Sterne borrows from Fielding and later develops and supports by other devices can be better appreciated after Fielding's self-conscious narrative strategy is studied.

The narrator of Tom Jones appears as a very organized story-teller from the very beginning of his work. For example, he decides to define the genre to which his work belongs at the beginning of Book II. He informs the reader that although the work is titled a "History," he intends "to pursue the methods of those writers who profess to disclose the revolutions of countries, [rather] than to imitate the voluminous and painful historian" (40); the latter has to record insignificant periods along with the important for the sake of accuracy whereas his method will be to expand on significant events only. Therefore, "if whole years should pass without producing anything worthy ... [we will] leave such periods of time totally unobserved" (41). (These unobserved lapses of time are called "blanks in the great lottery of time" (41), which is later taken quite literally by Tristram who leaves actual blank space in his book for events and periods which he decides to omit in his narration). The end product of this method, the narrator of Tom Jones observes, will be chapters of varying length, covering very short or very long periods of time: he therefore asks his reader not be surprised "if my history

sometimes seems to stand still, and sometimes to fly" (41). Such a deliberate declaration of purpose and strategy on the part of the narrator gives the novel a self-conscious tone right from the beginning of the work. The narrator's systematic discussion of narrative strategy and the moral, social, and literary implications of the events of the novel in the introductory chapters continue and strengthen that self-conscious trend throughout the work.

Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan observes that the narrator of Tom Jones is "extradiegetic," i.e., not a character of the novel but one who is "'above' or superior to the story he narrates" (94), never taking part in the action. Yet, as Rimmon-Kenan further comments, "it is precisely [his] being absent from the story and [his] higher narratorial authority in relation to it that confers on such narrators the quality which has often been called 'omniscience'" (95). Moreover, this omniscient voice also claims to be the author who, for most readers, means Henry Fielding. However, one must remember that this assumed identity does not necessarily stand for the historical Fielding. Robert Alter defines this figure in the following manner:

> The consistently defined figure that narrates Tom Jones, a voice projected by Henry Fielding but not confused with his nonliterary self, is appropriately both an author pondering authorial obligations, theorizing about fiction, and the arch ironist and literary gamesman who so adroitly manoeuvres characters and readers alike. (Partial Magic 121)

The narrator of Tom Jones makes his presence felt as liberally as a first-person narrator and comments on his on presence overtly, as in Book III, Chapter 7 which is titled "In Which the Author Himself Makes His Appearance on the Stage." In this chapter, the narrator decides to give "a very useful lesson to those well-disposed youths who shall thereafter be our readers" (97) about the necessity of prudence and circumspection as companions to virtue. After his warning, the narrator takes leave of his readers with an apology and an explanation about the absolute necessity of his personal comments on the issue:

> I ask pardon for this short appearance, by way of chorus, on the stage. It is in reality for my own sake, that, while I am discovering the rocks on which innocence and goodness often split, I may not be misunderstood ... And this, as I could not prevail on any of my actors to speak, I myself was obliged to declare. (98)

Here, one cannot but agree with Dorrit Cohn who comments that Fielding's "vocal authorial narrator" is "far more interested in his own commentary on events than in the meditations these events may release within his characters" (22).

It is not only to offer advice to his inexperienced young readers that the narrator of Tom Jones "appears on the stage." He makes one of his earliest appearances to inform the readers that he has full authority over the handling of his story and characters:

> Reader, I think proper, before we proceed any farther together, to acquaint thee that I intend to digress, through this whole, history, as often as I see occasion, of which I am myself a better judge than any pitiful critic whatever; and here I must desire all those critics to mind their own

> business, and nor intermeddle with affairs or works which no ways concern them; for till they produce the authority by which they are constituted judges, I shall not plead to their jurisdiction. (5; Vol.I Ch.2)

Although the narrator thus justifies from the beginning his probable interpolations, he actually digresses less often than Tristram, whom Sterne has based on Fielding's narrator. Robert Alter observes that Fielding does not altogether avoid digressions since the mid-eighteenth century imitations of Cervantes almost required interpolation as part of the novel. Still, Alter observes, "Fielding puts interpolation ... in a far more symmetrically fashioned narrative design" as opposed to Sterne who "insists on the ultimate implications, aesthetic, psychological, and epistemological, of telling stories within stories" (Partial Magic 31).

Instead of digressing anywhere and anytime in the course of events, the digressions of Fielding's narrator occur systematically in the form of introductory chapters to each book. In the introductory chapter to Book V, the narrator justifies "the reasons which have induced us to intersperse these several digressive essays in the course of this work" (161):

> To say the truth, these soporific parts are so many scenes of Serious artfully interwoven, in order to contrast and set off the rest; and this is the true meaning of a late facetious writer, who told the public that whenever he was dull they might be assured there was a design in it.
>
> In this light, then, or rather in this darkness, I would have the reader to consider these initial essays. And after this warning, if he shall be of opinion that he can find enough of Serious in other parts of this story, he may pass over these, in

> which we profess to be laboriously dull, and begin the following books at the second chapter. (163)

Thus, it is supposedly with the best intentions that the authorial narrator produces these chapters: he intends to support the factor of amusement in his story by contrasting it with the dullness of the digressions. However, as he is aware that these digressions may indeed be too dull for reading, he "allows" the reader to skip them. In other words, as Linda Hutcheon observes, "Fielding tells his reader, as consumer of his wares, how to read; he prescribes his imaginative participation" (Narcissistic 142) by asking the reader either to consider those chapters as foils to the amusing ones or to avoid them if they are found to be too dull.

In this way, the narrator tries to establish an understanding between the reader and himself. He also seems aware of the fact that the reader has no choice but to accept him as he is:

> for as I am, in reality, the founder of a new province of writing, so I am at liberty to make what laws I please therein. And these laws, my readers, whom I consider as my subjects, are bound to believe in and to obey; with which that they may readily and cheerfully comply, I do hereby assure them that I shall principally regard their ease and advantage in such institutions; for I do not, like a *jure divino* tyrant, imagine that they are my slaves or my commodity. Nor do I doubt, while I make their interest the great rule of my writing, they will unanimously concur in supporting my dignity, and in rendering me all the honour I shall deserve or desire. (41-42; Vol.2 Ch.1)

Indeed, it is not as difficult to obey and honour the narrator of *Tom Jones* as it may be to follow Tristram's

wishes. The narrator of Tom Jones is much more organized, much less prone to digressions, and much less self-occupied than Tristram. He develops a colourful personality as the novel progresses; most readers tend to think of this narrator as a humorous and paternal figure, aware of his characters' (especially Tom's) weaknesses but willing to accept them as they come. Wayne C. Booth mentions Henry James among the many admirers of this narrator. This example is significant indeed since James has always been a very severe critic of authorial intrusions as his criticism of Trollope cited in the following chapter of this study shows. Yet, in Booth's words, "even Henry James, in spite of his mistrust of the author's voice, cannot resist the appeal of a great loquacious author like Fielding" (213).

However, Fielding could not have selected an intrusive narrative voice just to amuse his readers. The intrusive narrator is an important unifying factor in Tom Jones which, according to Ian Watt, "is only in part a novel, and there is much else --picaresque tale, comic drama, occasional essay" (327). Wayne C. Booth also discusses the significant functions the narrator fulfils in the novel:

> Though the dramatized Fielding does serve to pull together many parts of Tom Jones that might otherwise seem disconnected, and though he serves dozens of other functions, from the standpoint of strict function he goes too far: much of his commentary relates to nothing but the reader and himself ... If we read straight through all of the seemingly gratuitous appearances by the narrator, leaving out the story of Tom, we discover a running account of growing intimacy between the narrator and the reader .... (215-16)

Indeed, it is that "growing intimacy" that endears the narrator to the readers and enables the readers to get to know and understand the narrator. This understanding, in turn, helps the reader to accept Tom's misfortunes as natural consequences of his actions since "it is from the narrator's norms that Tom departs when he gets himself into trouble" (Booth 216). Yet, the same intimacy may not be to the taste of others who would like to keep the distance between the fictional world of the novel and the reader. E.M. Forster questions whether it is right for a writer to "take the reader into his confidence":

> It is dangerous, it generally leads to a drop in the temperature, to intellectual and emotional laxity, and worse still to facetiousness, and to a friendly invitation to see how the figures hook up behind ... Intimacy is gained but at the expense of illusion and nobility ... With all respect to Fielding and Thackeray, it is devastating, it is bar-parlour chattiness, and nothing has been more harmful to the novels of the past. (84)

What Forster considers as the dangerous habit of disturbing the illusion of the novel through "chattiness" in part constitutes the self-conscious nature of Tom Jones. Ian Watt also draws attention to this in his summary of the overall effect of Fielding's technique:

> This approach to the novel is quite consistent with Fielding's major intention -- it promotes a distancing effect which prevents us from being so fully immersed in the lives of the characters that we lose our alertness to the larger implications of their actions --implications which Fielding brings out in his capacity of omniscient chorus. On the other hand, Fielding's interventions obviously interfere with any sense of narrative illusion .... (325)

Looking at the distancing effect discussed by Watt from a different angle, one sees that the shattering of the illusion of the fictional world through authorial commentary is indeed one of the factors which contribute to the self-conscious quality of _Tom Jones_. Moreover, Fielding enhances the tone of self-consciousness by relating the authorial narrative voice to the historical author, that is himself. Intrusive narrators who claim to be the author of the novel should not readily be accepted as the historical writer of the work; however, there are several passages in _Tom Jones_ in which the narrator directly refers to the acquaintances and physical environment of Fielding. The most often quoted example is the introductory chapter to Book XIII where the authorial narrative voice invokes the "bright love of fame":

> Foretell me that some tender dame, whose grandmother is yet unborn, hereafter, when, under the fictitious name of Sophia, she reads the real worth which once existed in my Charlotte, shall from her sympathetic breast send forth the heaving sigh ... Comfort me by a solemn assurance, that when the little parlour in which I sit at this instant shall be reduced to a worse furnished box, I shall be read with honour by those who never knew nor saw me, and whom I shall neither know nor see. (597)

If Sophia is designed after and stands for Charlotte, Fielding's wife, then the "I" speaking in this and other intrusive passages can be accepted as Henry Fielding himself. Ian Watt notes that this passage, along with other references to several of Fielding's patrons and other acquaintances (which he lists in _The Rise of the Novel_), serve "to break the spell of the imaginary world represented in the novel"

(324). In other words, they give the novel a self-conscious quality. Still, as Watt further observes, the most obviously interruptive (or self-conscious) elements in the novel are the introductory chapters at the beginning of each book. The personal references to Fielding's contemporaries, the "bill of fare," or the introductory chapters, and the occasional commentary dispersed in the novel combine with the fictional characters and events and create a unique effect: the readers are drawn further into this world of which they have already been made part of by the active role that they have taken in the reading process.

In the case of Tristram Shandy, on the other hand, the narrator himself never really allows a fictional illusion to be established since his primary concern is not creating that illusion but finding (and discussing with his reader) the best method of approaching that illusion. Thus captured in the process, he cannot achieve the product. Sterne's first-person narrator has set out to explore his own mind and feelings as he narrates "The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman." However, his over-indulgence in his own psychological and philosophical problems is accompanied by his intention to inform his readers about his narrative strategy and plans for the work at hand; as Howard Anderson phrases, "Sterne is seldom willing to make his literary innovations quietly" (967). With these two occupations going hand in hand for the narrator, Tristram Shandy appears both as a typical work of its time and as a "modern" one; as

Erich Kahler suggests, "Sterne's material is still the eighteenth-century world, and his idiosyncracies are exceedingly British. But the strategy to which his eccentricities lead him extends far into our own era" (198).

Although Tristram intends to write the story of his life, he cannot narrate events without interrupting the story to make observations, speculate about other possibilities, or simply to digress into barely relevant fields. He writes as though it would be a waste and a pity to leave out any idea, observation, or memory that passes through his mind regardless of whether or not that thought may have any direct bearing on his task. Interpolation is one of the several conventional deficiencies blamed on Tristram, the narrator. As opposed to other narrators, Tristram does not rely on the chronological order of events to organize his work. Dorothy Van Ghent observes that "chronological and plot continuity are not ... definitively organizational to _Tristram Shandy_" (84); she notes that what organizes and unifies the apparently sporadic and haphazard events of the novel is "the unity of Tristram's --the narrator's -- consciousness" (85). Erich Kahler's earlier quoted observation of sentiment becoming the subject matter for the eighteenth-century novel proves true: as Van Ghent further comments, Tristram's consciousness becomes the subject of the novel, making the merit of Sterne's art lie

> in the "objectifying" of this "subjective" material in its own right and for its own sake, so that the "subjective" becomes an object to be manipulated

> and designed and given aesthetic form according to laws inherent in it. (86)

This new subject matter, that is, the consciousness of the narrator or the inner world of Tristram Shandy, gives rise to new forms of narration.

Moreover, Tristram the narrator feels obliged to let his readers know about "how" he intends to write his life. It is his deliberate and systematic insistence on discussing his literary strategies with his readers which makes _Tristram Shandy_ a self-conscious novel. Not only does the narrator talk about his inner world, but he also expands on the difficulties of writing about that world. Dorothy Van Ghent states that the process of writing constitutes part of the subject matter of the life story of Tristram:

> In reading _Tristram Shandy_, we are never allowed to forget that the activity of creation, as an activity of forming perceptions and manoeuvring them into an expressive order, _is itself the subject_ .... (87)

Volume VI Chapter 40 is only one of the chapters in which Tristram discusses his progress so far. In this case, he provides the reader with visual aids to graph the lines in which his story has moved in the first five volumes of his work and his plans for the coming volumes. As opposed to the broken and cracked lines with loops and circular divergences which stand for the digressions and intrusions in the first four volumes, the narrator promises that

> by the help of a vegitable [sic] diet, with a few of the cold feeds, I make no doubt but I shall be able to go on with my Uncle Toby's story, and my own, in a tolerable straight line. (379)

Such a declaration of strategy is typical of many metafictional works, though quite surprising to the reader of conventional (or realist) novels. Traditional novelists refrain from reminding their readers that they are reading fiction. Therefore, they seldom volunteer self-criticism about their own techniques of writing within their novels. In the case of Tristram Shandy, however, right from the very beginning of the book, Tristram not only discusses quite explicitly the process of writing but also demands the contribution of readers:

> ... my dear friend and companion, if you should think me somewhat sparing of my narrative on my first setting out, - bear with me, - and let me go on, and tell my story my own way: - or if I should seem now and then to trifle upon the road ... rather courteously give me credit for a little more wisdom than appears upon my outside; - and as we jog on, either laugh with me, or at me, or in short, do any thing, - only keep your temper. (10-11; Vol.I Ch.6)

As Howard Anderson observes in relation to the passage quoted above, Tristram seems unexpectedly conscious of the growing impatience that his reader has developed so far (966). Although he accepts the fact that some of what he narrates may sound irrelevant or insignificant, he still expects the reader to compose a unified whole from the unrelated episodes and give him the credit which he does not quite merit. By asking for the active participation of his reader in making sense of what does not seem to make any, he is, like the metafictionist of the twentieth century, inviting the reader to step into the frame of the text, making the reader part of the microcosm of the novel.

The active participation of the reader is expected in the numerous instances where parts of the text are filled with asterisks (308; Vol.V Ch.27 or 318; Vol.V Ch.31 or 348; Vol.VI Ch.14), contain missing letters or sentences which imply curses or improper language (254; Vol.IV Ch.27), or present the reader with blank spaces to be filled out. In one of the examples of this last technique, Tristram attempts to describe Widow Wadman; trying to justify Toby's love for her, he starts to praise her beauty and attractions (375; Vol.VI Ch.37), but he is dissatisfied with his description and decides, in the following chapter, to leave the task to the reader:

> To conceive this right, - call for pen and ink - here's paper ready to your hand. - Sit down, Sir, paint her to your own mind - as like your mistress as you can - as unlike your wife as your conscience will let you - 'tis all one to me - please but your own fancy in it. (376-77; Vol.VI Ch.38)

The implications of this blank space are, in fact, bewildering: as Ira Konisberg comments, the reader is left all by himself to complete the task of describing Widow Wadman:

> There are no words for him, no signs to suggest how he is to do the job: the reader must become novelist. ... since the words are missing, the novel, with all its characters and actions, for the moment has ceased to exist. We are forced to realize that the novel is, after all, an artifact ... . (164)

Another significant example of a blank space that needs to be filled by the reader occurs in the long-awaited meeting scene between Uncle Toby and Widow Wadman in Volume IX.

Tristram brings Uncle Toby to her door with great care and an abundance of detail that is usual with him (Ch.16) but decides to omit the greetings and the beginning of their conversation by leaving two empty pages for chapters 18 and 19 (512-13). This is more than leaving Widow Wadman's physiognomy to the reader's fancy since Tristram later expects the reader to follow their conversation to which the reader is introduced at a very critical point: the "place" where Uncle Toby has been wounded. The question is of a physiological character for Widow Wadman who is rather worried about his sexual capacities in view of their prospective marriage, whereas the same question is interpreted by Uncle Toby simply as a geographical one, about the site on the battle field where he had received his wound. However, the question is never quoted by Tristram, and it is left to the reader to decide about the exact wording of the question which has caused such confusion in the conversation. Tristram, on the other hand, continues to narrate the dialogue with the assumption that the reader will make the necessary connections in the missing chapters.

It is difficult for the reader to guess how much time has passed since Uncle Toby has been admitted to Widow Wadman's living room, but given the digressive mode and slow pace of Tristram, it should not be too long. Time management is another important problem of the narrator who cannot make much progress due to his interpolations. He seems well aware

of the impossibility of narrating his life at the speed he has been going:

> I am this month one whole year older than I was this time twelve-month; and having got, as you perceive, almost into the middle of my fourth volume -and no farther than to my first day's life- 'tis demonstrative that I have three hundred and sixty-four days more life to write just now, than when I first set out ... at this rate I should just live 364 times faster than I should write ... write as I wish ... I shall never overtake myself .... (228; Vol.IV Ch.13)

Tristram is referring to a problem discussed earlier in the second chapter of this dissertation: the discrepancy between the time of composition and the time narrated, as well as the duration of time necessary to narrate any period of time. The narrator, who is expected to coordinate "the relative measurements [of time] into a unified, collective vision" (Ermarth 40) fails to perform the task. By drawing attention to the negative example that Tristram sets in his function as narrator, Sterne in fact points to the vital role played by narrative perspective in the novel.

By such mismanagement of the element of time, as well as through typographical irregularities, asterisks, blank pages and the like, Sterne establishes his reader's dual position: the reader is both drawn into the frame of the text, being forced to participate in the process of composition, and at the same time distanced from the novel, for he or she is constantly reminded of its fictionality. Sterne's genius seems to lie in his having created this effect much earlier than the experimental era of the twentieth century. The typographical oddities of the book such as the inscription

and black pages devoted to the memory of Yorick (27-29; Vol.I Ch.12), the marbled pages (181-82; Vol.III Ch.36), crossed-out words (345; Vol.VI Ch.11) resemble the techniques employed by some twentieth-century writers to distance the reader from the text. As David I. Grossvogel states,

> few works prior to the surrealists' experiments with the printed word have attempted in such a variety of ways to turn the book into an object, something external to both the author and his reader, which will allow them both to view it from the same spatial perspective. (151)

As such, Sterne appears as an innovator who has paved the way not particularly for his immediate followers in the nineteenth century, but more for twentieth century metafictionists.

Both Sterne and Fielding have served as the forerunners of self-conscious fiction in several ways: they both use, though in different ways, the intrusive narrative voice to comment on the characters and the action of their novel as well as to inform the reader of their intentions and plans for the creative process at hand. Moreover, the active role they demanded from the readers have drawn the readers into the novel, making them not only part of the story-telling process but also of the fictive world of the novel. It is obvious that these two novelists, in spite of their differences, mark an important stage in the development of self-consciousness in the English novel.

CHAPTER IV:

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY: THACKERAY AND A. TROLLOPE

As the novel continued to develop and define its own conventions in the nineteenth century, the early experimental spirit of Sterne lost popularity with novelists although Fielding was widely admired and often imitated. Not only the development of the novel as a genre, but also the changing social conditions of the nineteenth century have determined the course of self-conscious fiction. The immediate needs of the reading public demanded a re-ordering of the turbulent social environment in which the reader and the writer alike felt disoriented. Due to the Agricultural Enclosures in the eighteenth and the Industrial Revolution in the following century, social classes were assuming new roles and developing tastes and demands which were inspired by their new roles. Robin Gilmour's comments about the Victorian attitude to change are illuminating:

> the only key to this period of unprecedented change is the fact of change itself, and the Victorians' consciousness of it: they were the first people to prove on their pulses that change -- social, cultural, intellectual, religious -- was not an interruption of an otherwise stable and predictable existence, but the inescapable condition of life in the modern world. (2)

One of the most important technological influences on the cultural life of literate Victorians was the use of the electric telegram in journalism. As the electric telegram transmitted information rapidly to all parts of the country, daily newspapers started to present news to the public almost

as soon as an event took place. Consequently, daily newspapers began to replace the weekly or monthly intellectual publications of the eighteenth century. Not only news, but fiction, too, reached the masses sooner than ever in the history of written literature: the serial novels were published in instalments, often before the novelist had finished the work. The novel, as a form of the printed word, not only entertained and educated but informed as well: Robert Alter suggests that "in an age of rapidly expanding mass audiences and serial publication, the novel was enormously important as a source of information in a way it had not been before and would not be afterward" (Partial Magic 88). Writers could feel the pulse of their readers while the work was still in the process of being written, and readers often wrote to the publishers or directly to the novelist to express their likes and dislikes about the episodes published so far. No doubt writers were influenced by this feedback; Dickens, whose serial novels enjoyed great popularity and evoked immediate response, often modified or developed a character (e.g. Sam Weller in Pickwick Papers) or lingered unnecessarily on an episode (e.g. the death of Little Nell in The Old Curiosity Shop) in order to satisfy his readers' demands. This kind of influence probably accounts for some of the much criticized Dickensian sentimentalism as well as the stretching of plausibility in his plots. William H. Gass writes:

> The author of any popular serial knows, as Dickens did, that to the degree he makes his world real to his readers, to that degree they will acknowledge his authorship; hold him responsible; and beg him to make the world good, although evil seems present in it; beg him to bring all to a moral and materially glorious close ... . (19)

Thus, the success of a writer like Dickens in creating a "real" world in his fiction brought along a reader-response to smooth out some of the unpleasantness in that world at the expense of making it less real.

One cannot but accept that the pecuniary interests of novelists must have played a significant role in their taking the readers' views into account. Robin Gilmour notes that serial novels such as Trollope's Framley Parsonage could sell 100,000 copies at a shilling each (7). When one considers the fact that about 40,000 separate titles were published between 1837 and 1901 (Gilmour 1), the economic proportions of the novel industry can be better imagined. Novelists were certainly making a living out of written work, and to deny the direct appeals and demands of their readers about a novel required serious resistance and determination.

However, the novel was not simply a form of amusement for the reader and a commodity for the writer. The hectic social world which the reader and the writer alike shared needed explanations. It is safe to say that history became the main driving force not only in their lives but in their fiction as well. Novelists were expected to comprehend the chaotic social reality of the day and present it to their readers in a reorganized and possibly intelligible manner.

However, the task of reorganizing reality had to go hand in hand with representing that reality in a way which was "true" to its original so that it could be recognized as the same reality. That is, the novelist had to make sense of -- and fiction from -- the chaos of the times, and, at the same time, depict it not as a totally new world, but one which is representative of the dispersed and haphazard texture of the present day.

One other important feature of the Victorian novel is its insistence on teaching morally correct behaviour. This view was no doubt held by many eighteenth-century novelists as well; for example, Fielding never intends to totally disregard Richardson's moral teachings but simply underlines his unrealistic expectations and his disregard of the frailties of human nature. Fielding's fictional world has its own moral values; his sympathy for Tom does not imply an approval of that character's improper behaviour but his understanding of Tom's motivations for that act. It is safe to argue that literary developments at the end of the eighteenth century made moral purpose an integral part of the success (critical as well as pecuniary success) of every novel. The early nineteenth-century English novelists also propagate proper behaviour: the novels of Jane Austen or Sir Walter Scott cannot be stripped off of their moral implications. However, the Victorian insistence on using the novel as the most opportune vehicle for teaching perfect

morals is much stronger than the didactic inclinations of early nineteenth-century novelists.

Samuel F. Pickering observes that the moral course of Victorian fiction had been nourished by the popularity of religious "tracts" which appeared during the last decade of the eighteenth century. These tracts were religious stories or "novellas based on latitudinarian ethics" which promoted the belief that "sound politics and religion led to earthly rewards" (Pickering 133). They were very widely read and taught in the Church-sponsored Sunday schools where many people learned how to read and write. Pickering notes that a very popular collection called _Cheap Repository Tracts_ by one Hannah More had sold over two million copies between 1794-96, and the publications of the Religious Tract Society had gone up to over twenty millions in 1861 (133). The immense popularity of such religious publications shaped the critical tendencies of the period, which in turn led novelists to satisfy this demand:

> Among differing critical interpretations of "moral," two broad church principles were widespread: first, the novel should make men actively charitable, and second, this was done by creating sympathetic characters who would arouse readers' benevolent feelings. Trollope ignored these principles in his first two novels, and as a consequence, the books were criticized. (Pickering 134)

After his first two "Irish" novels, Trollope finds his own voice as "a preacher of sermons" and claims that his novels, which are the pulpit of his sermons, can be "both salutary and agreeable" (_Autobiography_ 146).

These different tasks are not carried very easily under the same yoke; the novelists of the nineteenth century, however, managed to balance their burdens well. Writers occupied with the conditions and (what they considered) the endangered moral standards of their present day wrote "chronicles" and works descriptive of exemplary lifestyles such as Trollope's Barsetshire Chronicles or George Eliot's Middlemarch, subtitled "A Study of Provincial Life." Such novels included details of everyday activities of people: the books they read, the trains they took, the inns they stayed in, the streets in which their houses were located, or the politicians they voted for. Some of the details in the realist novel of the nineteenth century may appear unnecessary or irrelevant to the modern (or postmodern) reader; Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth attempts to explain this practise of the realist novelist:

> The loose bagginess of realistic novels reflects not some disagreeable authorial limitation but rather the author's close adherence to the logic of realism that insists on the serial expression of truth. The subjection of characters to various kinds of journeys, the proliferation of episodes and of sequences in realistic novels, are devices managed with the reader's developing depth-perception in mind. (50)

This insistence on detail and specifics was new to the nineteenth-century readers who had been denied or spared such information in what Robert Alter calls "the circumstantial realism" of the eighteenth-century novels (Partial Magic 88). For example, Moll Flanders has a realistic depiction of the underworld of its time; still, the readers can hardly accept

the characters of the novel as "real" since they are not even informed of the names of some of Moll's husbands.

Excess of detail and the parallel use of subplots which may or may not have a direct bearing on the main plot is in fact an attempt to re-create life as it is. Basing his views on Roman Jakobson's theory, Wallace Martin writes that one of the most typical literary techniques associated with nineteenth-century realism is "the inclusion of reportorial detail that is not essential to the movement of the story" (64) and that the "inclusion of meaningless or random details characteristic of everyday life serves as evidence that the story 'really happened'" (65). The most important events in our lives are often accompanied by several irrelevant, or at least insignificant, events over which we have no control. Nineteenth-century writers most assiduously attempted to capture this aspect of real life and to reflect it in their fiction. James Druff emphasizes the fact that nineteenth-century novelists, while portraying the everyday activities of Victorians, were trying to satisfy their own standard of believability :

> for the novelist of the time continues to dramatize in fiction an interaction of social forces whose apparently remote plausibility he clearly expects the reader to put to the test of his own experience. The only real stretching of the form during this period seems to have been an occasional implausibility of plot. (297)

Not only the setting and the events, but the narrative technique employed by the writer had to suit the needs of the nineteenth-century novel. Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth writes:

> In its construction of a consistent and uniform world out of the material of consciousness, the realistic narration coordinates into one single mnemonic sequence the various points of view ... What most distinguishes realistic from other kinds of narration is the fact that the narrative perspective is, by virtue of this mnemonic act, a consensus. ... in the most immediate moments of experience, the presiding consciousness posits, by its doubling act of memory, the possibility of hidden meaning, of emergent pattern. Not absorbed in the particular world of events, the narrator, like the implied spectator, stands outside it, as if behind a lens: a witness whose distinct faceless presence maintains a consensus that supports the realistic world. (52)

Thus, the narration of realistic novels offers subplots and an abundance of minor characters which are nevertheless well developed and of interest to the reader. It is the co-presence of the main and the minor action and characters that creates the consensus. To achieve this, the narrator needs to have full access to the minds of all the characters. Omniscience is almost taken for granted in the case of nineteenth-century narrators; J. Hillis Miller goes as far as calling the omniscient narrator "the standard convention of Victorian fiction" and writes that it "is so crucial to nineteenth-century English fiction, so inclusive in its implications, that it may be called the determining principle of its form" (63).

Indeed, omniscience is more than a handy tool for the realist writer whose energies are directed towards the creation of a plausible world. At the same time, omniscient narrators have helped to create self-conscious effects in the nineteenth-century novel. Using their advantage of having access to the minds and emotions of characters, omniscient

narrators may comment on the motivations of a character, or reveal the consequences of that character's actions. Such commentary may be in the form of mere speculation, or it may have a more decisive tone, clearly revealing how the plot develops in the following pages. This latter attitude also signifies the writer's authority and control over the events and characters of the novel: declarations of this sort serve as reminders to the reader that the work at hand is a creation of the writer and is disclosed to readers by way of the omniscient narrator.

As the earlier discussion in the second chapter on the retrospective (that is, "past tense") point of view of all narrators have shown, first- and third-person narrators alike may enjoy the advantage of reorganizing information and revealing it when they choose to. Most omniscient narrators of the nineteenth-century novel are third-person narrators who occasionally refer to themselves as "I" and act like the creator of the novel. In this respect, they remind one superficially of Sterne's first-person self-conscious narrator; however, the third-person omniscient narrators of the nineteenth century are usually less willing to refer to their own status as the creator of the fictional world of the novel as directly and overtly as Tristram. Moreover, there is almost none of the typographical self-conscious devices in the nineteenth-century novel that Sterne so generously employs to underline the fictionality of his work. Neither are his irregular chapter divisions and long digressions

popular with the nineteenth century writers. The reluctance of most nineteenth-century writers to use Sterne's direct and overt self-conscious devices may be explained by their insistent effort to replace the unpleasant reality of their world with a more desirable fictive world. As Robert Alter comments,

> if your purpose is to _outdo_ a threatening or at least bewildering historical reality by remaking it imaginatively, the last thing you want to remind yourself of is that everything you write, is, necessarily and ambiguously, artifice. (_Partial Magic_ 97)

However, this is not to say that the nineteenth century realistic novel is totally devoid of self-conscious devices, or that it contains no elements that remind the readers that what they are reading is not factual but fictive. Both Thackeray and Trollope have developed their unique methods of integrating into the realistic novel certain subtle and at times (almost bluntly) overt allusions about the ontological status of the work at hand, thereby questioning the "realness" of the fictive world of the novel. Such self-conscious effects generally remind one of Fielding's narratorial self-conscious devices rather than Sterne's technique. Fielding's obtrusive authorial voice is used by almost all nineteenth-century novelists, and often, but not always, the narrator takes on a figural presence much like the narrator of _Tom Jones_. In almost all nineteenth-century novels, the narrators appear as moralizing and critical agents who keep their distance to the characters except for

occasional bursts of anger or sympathy. They also make comments which point to the significance or the implications of a part of the action. Dickens occasionally interrupts his narration for these reasons. An example can be given from the chapter in which Mr. Gradgrind's relationship with his children is described in Hard Times:

> ... The first object with which [the young Gradgrinds] had an association, or of which they had a remembrance, was a large blackboard with a dry Ogre chalking ghastly white figures on it.
>
> Not that they knew, by name or nature, anything about an Ogre. Fact forbid! I only use the word to express a monster in a lecturing castle, with Heaven knows how many heads manipulated into one, taking Childhood captive, and dragging it into gloomy statistical dens by the hair. (54)

Gradgrind is an excellent tool of the Utilitarian education system which crushed children under the pretence of scientific learning. Dickens does not need a long narratorial interruption to make his opinion clear to his reader; he accomplishes that in one short passage where he informs his readers how the Gradgrind children are raised with "Facts" alone, without the mental distraction of fairy tale entertainments such as castles and ogres. At the same time, he describes the terrifying appearance of Gradgrind in a school room. Finally, he does all this economically, without too much damage to the flow of his narrative.

In fact, Dickens often blends in his narratorial commentary into the text so ingeniously that the reader cannot at once identify whether it is narratorial commentary or what passes thorough a character's mind. Chapter 2

(titled "Murdering the Innocents") in Hard Times begins in the following manner:

> Thomas Gradgrind, sir. A man of realities. A man of fact and calculations. A man who proceeds upon the principle that two and two are four, and nothing over, and who is not to be talked into allowing for anything over. ... With a rule and a pair of scales, and the multiplication table always in his pocket, sir, ready to weigh and measure any parcel of human nature, and tell you exactly what it comes to. ... You might hope to get some other nonsensical belief into the head of George Gradgrind, or Augustus Gradgrind ... but into the head of Thomas Gradgrind -- no, sir! (48)

The reader accustomed to Fielding's address to his readers as "sir" or "madam" could easily read this paragraph as a direct address by the narrator to the reader. However, the following paragraph immediately corrects this mistake, informing the reader that "in such terms Mr. Gradgrind always mentally introduced himself, whether to his private circle of acquaintance or to the public in general" (48). Obviously, the reader has heard an interior monologue, a technique often employed by nineteenth-century novelists. Dickens "quotes" from the character's interior monologue and does not mix Gradgrind's words with his own (or the narrator's) commentary. Thus, in this passage Dickens' omniscient narrator fulfils his duty of telling the reader what Gradgrind thinks about himself; still, the narrator does not openly comment on the character, leaving the passage speak for itself about Gradgrind's self-assumed significance and arrogance.

Although authorial intrusion is freely used in the nineteenth-century novel, it is more often restricted to commentary provoked by a character's actions rather than direct references to the fictionality of the work at hand. In this, nineteenth-century novelists not only refrain from Sterne's overt devices, but take care to adapt those of Fielding to suit their own needs. George Eliot, in one of her infrequent authorial intrusions, explains why her commentary does not cover as extensive a range as Fielding's:

> [Fielding] glories in his copious remarks and digressions as the least imitable part of his work, and especially in those initial chapters to the successive books of his history ... But Fielding lived when the days were longer (for time, like money, is measured by our needs), when summer afternoons were spacious, and the clock ticked slowly in the winter evenings. We belated historians must not linger after his example ... all the light I can command ... [must be] not dispersed over that tempting range of relevancies called the universe. (Middlemarch 170)

Although George Eliot hesitated to follow Fielding's example, Thackeray and Trollope have not. Vanity Fair is a novel in which the influence of Fielding is strongly felt in the use of the narrative voice as well as in the usual promotion of the moral views of the writer. Fielding's influence can be observed --although less explicitly-- in Anthony Trollope's works as well: Trollope was a fervent admirer of Thackeray, and Fielding's influence on Trollope has been more through Thackeray's channel. Trollope's authorial intrusions are startlingly overt as self-conscious devices although his novels are mainly in the realistic tradition. On the other hand, the self-conscious quality of

Thackeray's work is established not only by the use of the intrusive narrator, but also by the varying roles and definitions he attributes to the narrator and the novel.

The most striking similarity between _Tom Jones_ and _Vanity Fair_, in terms of their narrative strategies, is the way the third-person narrator has been used in these novels to give these works a self-conscious quality. Although the narrators remain in the third-person voice for the most part in both of these novels, their occasional references to themselves as the first-person creator/writer of the work inevitably draw attention to the process of creation of the novel, hence its fictionality. Apart from this similarity, _Tom Jones_ and _Vanity Fair_ share qualities which are common in many eighteenth- and nineteenth-century novels: for example, both of these works criticize their own times by the direct commentary of the narrator. Needless to say, such commentary also contributes to the self-conscious quality of both novels. These novels are both centred around a character whose adventures give the writer a chance to comment on morally correct behaviour. These qualities may be observed not only in Fielding and Thackeray, but in the works of many other realist writers who were genuinely concerned with the changing values in their society and felt the need to comment on these trends of change. While writers like Dickens have emphasized plot as a means of showing "right" and "wrong" behaviour, others like Thackeray, Eliot, or Trollope have concentrated on the depiction of character to do that.

Moreover, Fielding and Thackeray have criticized what they consider to be a deterioration of moral standards in their respective societies with a humour that should not be taken for lenience. These two writers have acknowledged the self-conscious third-person intrusive narrator as an obviously functional tool for their literary purposes, and they have also realized that when the intrusive self-conscious narrator is complemented by a satirical tone, the "moral" mission assumed by the novelist can be achieved more easily. Both Fielding and Thackeray have intended to entertain while they delivered their edifying messages, and the entertainment of the reader has been mostly achieved by the satirical handling of character and the humorous tone of the narrator.

Thackeray has set the events of _Vanity Fair_ (1847-8) in the period of the Regency (1810-20), a period which is associated with the Battle of Waterloo, and which displayed a lifestyle that stood for decadence and corruption for the majority of the English public after Queen Victoria was crowned in 1837. The Regency was still fresh in the memory of the reading public and conveniently equipped with morally improper behaviour which easily rendered itself to criticism. Thus, Joseph Sedley's military pretensions, Rebecca's opportunist endeavours, or what Mrs. O'Dowd considers as a suitable opera outfit become targets for Thackeray's satirical humour. The narrator comments on the significance of Waterloo and Napoleon for _Vanity Fair_ as he informs the reader of the approaching French army:

> ... the French Emperor comes in to perform a part in this domestic comedy of Vanity Fair which we are now playing, and which would never have been enacted without the intervention of this august mute personage. It was he who ruined the Bourbons and Mr. John Sedley. It was he whose arrival in his Capital called up all France in arms to defend him there, and all the Europe to oust him. (221)

As is typical of Thackeray, the authorial narrator blends fact and fiction, humour and social reality in this passage. No doubt the effect of Napoleon on France and Europe is well observed; however, the sentence which places the Bourbons and Joseph Sedley on the same footing as those ruined by the French Emperor is clearly rendered from Joseph's self-centered point of view and undermines the Bourbons' ruin by the comparison. At the same time, it is true that without the emperor, the "ruin" if not of Joseph then of his sister (Amelia) would not be complete, and the novel could not be what it is without Waterloo.

Robert Alter reminds us that the subtitle to the serial form of Vanity Fair was "Pen and Pencil Sketches of English Society" and argues that this subtitle is "a description that alluded not only to Thackeray's illustrations but also to the method and aims of his fiction" (Partial Magic 86). Indeed, Thackeray, like his predecessor Fielding and his contemporary Dickens, portrays people from all classes vividly. The brief yet memorable appearances of Misses Pinkerton in the first few chapters, or the introduction of Joseph Sedley to the readers show that Thackeray's talents in pencil drawings were surpassed by his mastery in the written portraits he produced

with his pen. In Joseph's description, he blends the physical and mental qualities of the man smoothly; he first mentions the fact that Joseph often decided to get rid of his extra weight but failed each time since "his indolence and love of good living speedily got the better of these endeavours at reform" (59). Then, Thackeray describes Joseph's dress:

> He was never well dressed; but he took the hugest pains to adorn his big person, and passed many hours daily in that occupation. His valet made a fortune out of his wardrobe; his toilet-table was covered with as many pomatums and essences as ever were employed by an old beauty; he had tried, in order to give himself a waist, every girth, stay, and waistband then invented. Like most fat men, he <u>would</u> have his clothes made too tight, and took care they should be of the most brilliant colours and youthful cut. (59)

With this description, Thackeray gives his readers a chance to decide about the personality of this particular character. However, being a moralist, he wants to guarantee that the readers form the "correct" judgment about John Sedley. Therefore he presents his own opinion of Joseph later in the description, observing that "he was as vain as a girl; and perhaps his extreme shyness was one of the results of his extreme vanity" (60).

Thackeray had a genius for close observation and criticism of his society which had replaced some of its traditional values with new ones that were neither as pleasant nor as desirable to Thackeray and to some other moralists as the old ones had been. No doubt Thackeray's role as a moral critic had its earlier examples in the prose

writers of the eighteenth century. Still, as Robert Alter writes,

> Confronted with a new mobile society of shifting appearances where rapacity, connivance, and pretense were common currency, with the Napoleonic upheaval in the background of his vision, he imposes a moralist's categories of classification and judgment on his contemporary materials as he represents them, and in this manner he makes the new fluid society imaginatively tractable. (Partial Magic 124)

Some members of the middle class, particularly the prospering merchants of the nineteenth century, often displayed that "rapacity, connivance and pretense" in the way they acquired and lost their wealth, in the means they employed to obtain their riches, and in their assumed elitism. Therefore, the nouveau rich was a favourite target of Thackeray's criticism. The wealth of most of the members of this group was only one or two generations old. However, as their wealth often surpassed that of the aristocracy, they demanded a supremacy in public opinion and influence over their titled contemporaries while they copied the aristocratic lifestyle. However well the copy may have been, it did not have the support of tradition to naturalize it; such pretension almost always took away the glory of what was established by studied behaviour. Rebecca is an embodiment of all that Thackeray criticizes in the newly rich: in spite of her hatred for most of her aristocratic acquaintances, she not only imitates but also flatters and entertains them in order to climb up the social ladder. Thackeray does not approve of all segments of the aristocracy, either. One can

see that he is equally intolerant of assumed gentility and of corrupt aristocracy in his handling of Mr. Osborne and of the decadent aristocrat, Lord Steyne. Although Osborne appears to be a respectable, successful, and morally upright businessman, his lifestyle and moral conduct lack generosity and tolerance. Therefore, he is depicted with as bitter a disapproval as Lord Steyne who represents the corrupt values of most of the aristocrats gathered around the Prince Regent.

The Sedleys and the Osbornes are two middle class families whose wealth have been acquired by hard work and not through inheritance. Both families live in fashionable houses, and they socialize in the manner of their titled neighbours, though with less splendour. Among their ambitions are sending their children to respectable schools where they will associate with children of aristocratic parents, marrying off their daughters well though giving away as little as possible in the way of a dowry, and arranging marriages for their sons with heiresses. The cold-hearted arrogance of Mr. Osborne towards his financially ruined friend Mr. Sedley reflects the lack of tolerance of this class towards the losers amongst them. Thackeray disapproves of this attitude strongly, portraying Osborne as a selfish man whose values are totally mercenary and hypocritical. The narrator's comments, following the passage in which Osborne's sudden affection for the heiress Miss Swartz is described, tell the reader explicitly what Thackeray thinks about Osborne and those like him:

> People in Vanity Fair fasten on to the rich folks quite naturally. ... if the simple look benevolently on money, how much more do your old worldlings regard it! Their affections rush out to meet and welcome money. Their kind sentiments awaken spontaneously towards the interesting possessors of it. I know some respectable people who don't consider themselves at liberty to indulge in friendship for any individual who has not a certain competency, or place in society. (248)

It is significant that in passages like this where Thackeray primarily intends to give a message to his readers, the third-person narrator shifts to "I," thereby assuming the role of the authorial narrator. Thackeray's moral purpose thus initiates and invites authorial commentary and leads to the self-conscious intrusions of the narrative voice.

Thackeray's criticism of his society, though very severe, does not have the high and dry tone George Eliot; his satirical touch makes his fiction not only amusing but perhaps more powerful in its criticism as well. The playfulness in his writing does not undermine but rather supports the moral overtones in his fiction. A typical passage describing Mrs. Bute Crawley's efforts to promote her daughters in society (towards matrimony) shows how Thackeray can imply his disapproval with the help of an ironic question:

> Everything that a good and respectable mother could do Mrs. Bute did. She got over yachting men from Southampton, parsons from the Cathedral Close at Winchester, and officers from the barracks there. She tried to inveigle the young barristers at assizes, and encouraged Jim to bring home friends with whom he went out to hunting with the H. H. What will not a mother do for the benefit of her beloved ones? (468)

Thackeray often ridicules the schemes and manoeuvres people use to arrange marriages for themselves or for their children. His disapproval of Mrs. Crawley can be understood better in the light of an earlier scene in which Thackeray attempts to excuse Rebecca for her too obvious efforts to "catch" Joseph Sedley:

> It was an advance, and as such, perhaps, some ladies of indisputable correctness and gentility will condemn the action as immodest; but, you see, poor dear Rebecca had all this work to do for herself. If a person is too poor to keep a servant, though ever so elegant, he must sweep his own rooms; if a dear girl has no dear Mamma to settle matters with the young man, she must do it for herself. (65)

Though Thackeray's commentary explains Rebecca's motives and her conduct, it hardly approves of her actions or those of the mothers of other young women since such efforts are compared to the menial job of house cleaning.

These passages are examples of narratorial commentary which are generated by an action of a certain character and which give the narrator a chance to express his feelings and thoughts about the issue at hand. They also break the flow of the action which the reader is expected to be absorbed in. Although such interruptions distance the reader to the action, they continue to keep his or her attention within the fictional world of the novel. Often enough, however, the commentary has references beyond the immediate action or character that has aroused it, extending it to as abstract a group as "Humanity" or "Mankind." As Dorrit Cohn observes, in this kind of authorial interruption "the inner life of an

individual character becomes a sounding board for general truths about human nature " (23). These comments serve as more explicit alienation effects since "Humanity" or "Mankind" is not a visible part of the fictional world. This is a higher and a more abstract level of reference; the reader naturally and unconsciously relates the action of the novel to this frame of reference since all characters (as well as the reader) are part of humanity. However, when the authorial intrusion openly refers to "Humanity" with a capital "H", this world which lies outside the fictional world of the novel demands conscious recognition. Consequently, the reader is forced to acknowledge the presence of several worlds of reference: the fictional world of the characters, the real world in which the reader sits and reads a book, and the abstract frame of "Humanity" which helps to connect and explain the other two worlds. The smooth, unconscious recognition of events and characters as part of general human behaviour is now done self-consciously since the narrator demands it.

Thackeray's characters, like Fielding's, are created with this purpose in mind, and with their actions, they furnish the narrator with many occasions for making such commentary possible and relevant. However, one must not assume that these characters are allegorical types; Robert Alter observes that "Thackeray's imagination is directed toward the fictional personages as moral agents quite like those of the real world, only heightened and emphasized for

the purposes of narrative exhibition" (Partial Magic 126). Characters have suggestive names such as Sharp or Crawley; some names such as Bareacres, Moody, or Sir Huddlestone Fuddlestone are almost tagnames. Still, even these are portrayed with a creative energy that make them more than mere types. Rebecca or Lord Steyne are convincingly evil, and Amelia and Dobbin desirably good, though perhaps none of them may be seen in our social gatherings as often as the characters of Trollope or George Eliot. Thackeray can keep the delicate balance between allegorical stereotypes and realistic characters

> by pointing always to a real world beyond the fictional, which is the ultimate standard and judge of the truthfulness of novels. His narration is in touch with that real world, mediating between it and the fiction he might be writing, and the fiction he is writing. (Gilmour 30)

In the shift between the allegorical, the real, and the fictional worlds, the narrator frequently interrupts his narration with comments that refer to the ontological status of the novel. It is this latter type of commentary which gives the work a self-conscious quality. However, Thackeray does not construct as strict a frame as Fielding whose introductory chapters serve as a self-conscious cold shower on the much heated action of Tom Jones at the beginning of each book. Moreover, Thackeray invites his readers to take a more indirect (and therefore more passive) role in the production of the work: the readers of Vanity Fair are often referred to as the audience of a play or a "puppet show," a

role which distances them from the text rather than inviting them into the frame. It must be emphasized, however, that this role clearly reminds the readers that they are confronted with a fictive world rather than the real world of history. The narrator is the showman who unfolds that fictive construct for the audience/readers.

However, the narrator of Vanity Fair is not simply a showman; he assumes a variety of roles, adopting in the process a multitude of tones. In this way, he offers the reader several angles from which to view an event or a character, rather than holding a single secure vantage point. However, the variety of roles assumed by the authorial narrator may disorient the reader --as much of contemporary self-conscious writing emphatically sets out to do. Needless to say, the readers of realistic novels do not expect to be confused but rather relieved of the confusion in their lives while reading. The effect of "confusion" created by the different roles the narrator assumes challenges the conventional expectations of the reader. Since this effect of disorientation may be accepted as Thackeray's personal contribution to self-conscious narrative technique, it needs to be examined closely.

At the very beginning of the novel, there is a Preface titled "Before the Curtain" which presents "the Manager of the Performance" to the reader. What this Manager observes in the fair before him are theft, prostitution, fraud, in short all manner of evil practices. Thackeray then writes:

"a man with a reflective turn of mind, walking through an exhibition of this sort, will not be oppressed, I take it, by his or other people's hilarity ... but the general impression is one more melancholy than mirthful" (33). With these words, the unique satirical note of the novel which successfully combines melancholy with mirth is sounded. The preface continues to identify the writer as the Manager of the Performance who thanks the audience for the popularity his puppet show has enjoyed:

> [The Manager] is proud to think that his Puppets have given satisfaction to the very best company in this empire. The famous little Becky Puppet has been pronounced to be uncommonly flexible in the joints, and lively on the wire: the Amelia Doll, though it has had a smaller circle of admirers, has yet been carved and dressed with the greatest care by the artist: the Dobbin Figure, though apparently clumsy, yet dances in a very amusing and natural manner ... . (34)

The preface ends shortly after this passage as "the Manager retires, and the curtain rises" (34), but the metaphor of the puppet show comes up elsewhere in the novel again, though without the consistency the Preface promises.

Clearly, the characters of the novel are not mere "puppets." They are, for the most part, very well developed and convincing characters. In fact, Robert Alter observes that "the characters that were first introduced as mere puppets come to assume a life independent of the narrator, who proves to be, for long stretches of the novel, not the conductor of an artifice but the faithful chronicler of true events" (Partial Magic 117). The narrator calls his story "a domestic comedy" (221), a comedy (306), a "Comic history"

(574), and in the final paragraph of the novel, a puppet show (797). Moreover, the narrator refers to the work also as a novel (43, 93, 337, 353), and a history (93, 272, 293, 574, 721-25); to himself as the novelist (62, 93, 346, 389, 427-28, 671), a preacher (116-17), a memoir writer (722), a jester (229), and a piper (87). Thus, as Thackeray attributes several roles to the narrator, he offers different ontological options for Vanity Fair: a moral story, almost allegorical as its title from Bunyan clearly suggests; a comedy, though with a keen dose of satire as well as laughter; a puppet show, fit for children (797) (and for the child in every adult); a novel, thus fictive in its content and characters; but also a history, in which "the present writer" actually meets some of the characters (721-25).

In Chapter 62, during the long European tour that Joseph, Amelia, Georgy and Dobbin make, the writer meets them in "the little comfortable Ducal town of Pumpernickel" (721). He observes them as they eat, visit the opera, and socialize. He later writes that "it was on this very tour that I, the present writer of a history of which every word is true, had the pleasure to see them first, and to make their acquaintance" (721). This chapter is one of the most tantalizing chapters for the reader, for although it suggests that the "story" is a "history" and therefore "real," it also seems to contradict that assumption by the very names that Thackeray uses in the chapter: Pumpernickel, Fipps, Sir and Lady Bullminister, Tapeworm, General Tiptoff are names more

suitable for a comedy of humours or of manners than a "history." The reader cannot easily be convinced that all of these funny names belong to actual people and therefore does not believe that "the present writer" and his characters could have met. Moreover, the co-presence of the author/narrator and his characters in the same realm (whether fictional or historical) has not been suggested earlier in the novel. Thus, the chapter brings up yet another question about the "realness" of action and character rather than affirming their historicity. This meeting of the narrator/author with some of the characters in the novel may have inspired John Fowles who travels in the same coach with Charles in _The French Lieutenant's Woman_.

The author's deliberate ambiguity in the qualification of his work sets _Vanity Fair_ apart from strictly conventional realistic novels of the nineteenth century. This blurred definition of the work, consciously offered by the writer who attributes to the novel a multiplicity of identities, makes the reader more aware that the work at hand is fiction. It must be noted that twentieth-century metafictionists also make use of this technique; for example, D. M. Thomas's _The White Hotel_ achieves its self-conscious quality by the combination of different narrative pieces such as letters, memoirs, poems, and prose writing that make up the novel. Although Thackeray does not present his readers with such a pastiche, he achieves the same effect by telling them that the work is a combination of all these things.

To an undiscerning eye, Vanity Fair may appear to be in line with most other eighteenth- and nineteenth-century novels with its basic preoccupation with morally correct behaviour. However, Thackeray goes beyond previous examples in the way he chooses to express his moral concern, i.e. his self-conscious narrative techniques which not only remind the reader of the fictionality of the novel by way of commentary (as Fielding had earlier done) but also by the multiple roles he assumes as the authorial narrator of the novel and by the various definitions he offers for his work.

Anthony Trollope, generally accepted as one of the most prominent realist writers of the English novel, exhibits self-consciousness in his writing with striking power and frequency by intruding and breaking up the illusion of the "realness" of the fictional world of his novel. His works are a unique blend of realistic fiction and self-conscious writing. Trollope has certainly been influenced by Thackeray's works in the employment of self-conscious narratorial commentary in the service of the moral purpose of the work. However, Trollope's moral concerns have found voice differently, through characterization rather than satire, and his references to the fictionality of his novels are more overt. Ramon Saldivar comments that

> while such self-conscious moments distinguish the works of other nineteenth-century novelists, Trollope's self-references differ because they occur so frequently, and within a narrative that defines itself as realistic, and hence, as objectively referential. (168)

A closer look at his understanding of the purpose of fiction and the techniques he has employed to serve that purpose may explain such contradictory seeming qualities in his novels.

In _An Autobiography_, Trollope defines the functions of the novel in the following way:

> A novel should give a picture of common life enlivened by humour and sweetened by pathos. To make that picture worthy of attention, the canvas should be crowded with real portraits, not of individuals known to the world or to the author, but of created personages impregnated with traits of character which are known. To my thinking, the plot is but the vehicle for all this .... (126)

The key words in this definition are "humour," "pathos," and "created personages," or character, and the secret of Trollope's success probably lies in characterization. As D. J. Skilton observes, the action of his novels is based on characters, and "the primacy of character can be seen as the key to his whole theory and practice of the novel" (137). Since his powerful characterization establishes a harmony between the reader's and the character's minds, a consensus about the best mode of action for the character can be easily reached. This consensus is vitally important for Trollope who confesses that he has thought of himself as "a preacher of sermons" (_Autobiography_ 146), and who therefore should convince his readers into accepting his own point of view.

Like most of his contemporaries, the determining principle in Trollope's fiction is its moral function. He conveniently lists what it is that he aims to teach his reader:

> that honesty is the best policy; that truth prevails while falsehood fails; that a girl will be loved as she is pure, and sweet, and unselfish; that a man will be honoured as he is true, and honest, and brave of heart; that things meanly done are ugly and odious, and things nobly done beautiful and gracious. (Autobiography 145)

Although other Victorian novelists such as Dickens, Thackeray, and George Eliot have a similar attitude to the mission of literature, Trollope's morality seems to stand out differently. Trollope's lessons are taught, as it were, by a benevolent story-teller rather than the bitter jester of Thackeray, the intolerant lecturer of Dickens, or the theorizing philosopher of George Eliot. Henry James rates Trollope as a second-rate writer who "sacrificed quality to quantity" (98) but cannot find fault with his tone:

> There is something remarkably tender and friendly in his feeling about all human perplexities; he takes the good-natured, temperate, conciliatory view -- the humorous view, perhaps, for the most part, yet without a touch of pessimistic prejudice. (102)

His tolerant attitude towards people in general and his characters in particular is projected by his narrators. Trollope's novels are narrated by a humorous and kind Victorian gentleman who becomes as familiar to the reader as the characters do in the course of the novel and who also serves as the self-conscious intrusive device of his writing. James Kincaid believes that Trollope's success as an artist "rests principally with his subtle and organic use of the dramatized narrator" (32). This narrator, gentle and prone to making jokes about the characters, never gives the impression that he is a mere observer; on the contrary, he

always appears as the true commander of this fictional world. Trollope the Victorian combines moral teaching and the re-ordering of the unpleasant reality of his world by means of this friendly narrator. He writes in the first chapter of _Dr. Thorne_: "I am too old now to be a hard-hearted author, and so it is probable that [Frank Gresham] may not die of a broken heart" (7). This unwillingness, "in his old age," to "hurt" his characters (he was merely 43 when he wrote _Dr. Thorne_) is extended to characters in his other works as well.

The moral choices that Trollope's characters make are seldom in the clear-cut realms of black and white, but often in the slippery ambiguity of the shades of grey, where more than one mode of action may be acceptable. In spite of his strong moral sense, Trollope is not afraid of admitting that in certain cases, more than one course of action may be taken without much damage to ethical codes. He obviously trusts that the reader may distinguish between the "good" and the "better" choice. This trust in the reader's own judgment is in accordance with his tolerant attitude which sets him apart from Thackeray, Eliot, or Dickens. Ross C. Murfin states that

> Trollope's style, by which I here mean the author's general narrative strategy, is to address the reader as a mature colleague in wisdom while arguing, one at a time and with passionate geniality, for each of the discrete opinions that are to be bridged -- but never quite integrated -- with their neighbours in the text. (21)

In other words, Murfin suggests that Trollope and his readers share the same world of values and will eventually reach a

consensus on judging the actions of a character.

In any Trollope novel, there are several carefully portrayed and well developed characters; D. J. Skilton notes, however, there is always one character who plays a central role:

> Any description of Trollopian realism must account for a central paradox in his novels: that of all novels they are the most 'social', in the sense of depending on the interaction of sets of persons, and of creating a supremely convincing illusion of a functioning fictional community; and yet that an examination of any of the novels will show how very significant a proportion of the book concerns the situation of a single character .... (138)

It is therefore vitally important that this particular character is true to life, or in Skilton's words, "neither wholly good nor wholly bad, but always 'mixed'" (139).

Although "mixed" characters make the most significant contribution to Trollope's realism, the carefully chosen details of everyday Victorian life which he uses to compose the fictional world of his novels are also important. Trollope found out that the correct combination of certain elements of English life and taste could make fiction plausible and popular, especially if the action was carried on by successfully portrayed characters. As he talks about the immense popularity of _Framley Parsonage_, Trollope lists some of the most obvious social concerns and activities which endeared that novel to the readers:

> The story was thoroughly English. There was a little fox-hunting and a little tuft-hunting, some Christian virtue and some Christian cant. There was no heroism and no villainy. There was much Church, but more love-making. (_Autobiography_ 143)

These elements account for the popularity of not only Framley Parsonage but the whole Barsetshire series, perhaps with the exception of The Small House at Allington in which there is almost "no church" but much "love-making." Elements of English life and taste can be observed in the writing of other novelists as well. However, Trollope's special talent for observation, supported by the fact that he chose to write on what he knew best, produced more impressive results than those of his contemporaries.

Not only the vitally important social rituals of the Victorian era such as tea parties, dinners, and fox hunting, but also many contemporary issues such as the Cathedral Act of 1840, the competitive examination which candidates for Civil Service were required to take after 1855, and the Reform Bill of 1832 find their way into Trollope's novels with a remarkable ease. In The French Lieutenant's Woman, John Fowles follows Trollope's example of weaving the daily social issues of the Victorians into the texture of his fiction smoothly. Such issues occupied the conversation of Trollope's readers in their offices, clubs, and drawing rooms, and Trollope's characters, accordingly, talk about these matters in their fictional offices or after their fictional dinners over a glass of port. The fact that he has set most of his novels in the present serves him in appealing to the familiar in his readers' minds. Robert M. Polhemus observes that Trollope is "the first Victorian novelist of stature who consistently set his stories in 'the present';

... he nearly always made the time in his fiction correspond to the real time when he was writing" (3). Thus, the time setting of his novels also contributes to the realist quality of his works. The effect of Trollopian realism is best described by one of his contemporaries, Nathaniel Hawthorne, whose words Trollope quotes in his Autobiography:

> Have you ever read the novels of Anthony Trollope? They precisely suit my taste, --solid and substantial, written on the strength of beef and through the inspiration of ale, and just as real as if some giant had hewn a great lump out of the earth and put it under a glass case, with all its inhabitants going about their daily business, and not suspecting that they were being made a show of. (144)

Trollope adds that regardless of whether he has merited Hawthorne's praise or not, this observation "describes with wonderful accuracy the purport that I have ever had in view in my writing" (Autobiography 145).

While Hawthorne speaks with admiration about Trollope's brand of realism, another contemporary novelist and critic, Henry James, writes very differently about Trollope. James is critical of many aspects of Trollope's writing: "his imagination [had] no light of his own" (102), and his critical "utterances in regard to the object of the novelist and his means of it are of an almost startling simplicity" (105). Yet, what upset James most were his authorial intrusions which he considered as a serious breach of the realist convention:

> there are certain precautions in the way of producing that illusion dear to the intending novelist which Trollope not only habitually scorned to take, but really ... delighted wantonly to

> violate. He took a suicidal satisfaction in reminding the reader that the story he was telling was only, after all, a make-believe. He habitually referred to the work in hand (in the course of that work) as a novel, and to himself as a novelist, and was fond of letting the reader know that this novelist could direct the course of events according to his pleasure. (115-116)

Henry James's enormous influence, as a critic who promoted objective narration, has condemned Trollope for the early twentieth-century reading public. Ironically, it is precisely James's observation about Trollope's breach of the illusion of reality in his novels which now makes his works noteworthy for the study of self-conscious fiction. Indeed, Trollope's intrusions which refer directly to the fictionality of his work are much more frequent and more consistent than other Victorian novelists' self-reflexive authorial commentary. There are also numerous passages of authorial commentary in Trollope's novels which interrupt the flow of the action in order to explain a part of the plot or the motives of a character. Intrusions of both types occur in The Warden and Barchester Towers.

Some of the most overt self-conscious authorial commentary is placed at the beginning and the end of a Trollope novel and is to be observed also each time a new character is introduced. When Trollope introduces Mr. Slope, for example, he declares that "Mr. Slope ... must not be brought before the public at the tail of a chapter" (Barchester Towers 225), thereby drawing the attention to the fictionality of the work and the character. The Warden begins not only with a detailed summary of Mr. Harding's

past life, but also with the narrator's account of the setting he has chosen for the novel.

> The Rev. Septimus Harding was, a few years since, a beneficed clergyman residing in the cathedral town of ------; let us call it Barchester. Were we to name Wells or Salisbury, Exeter, Hereford, or Gloucester, it might be presumed that something personal was intended; and as this tale will refer mainly to the cathedral dignitaries of the town in question, we are anxious that no personality may be suspected. Let us presume that Barchester is a quiet town in the West of England ... (3)

If Trollope had simply left the conventional "------" for the name of the town, the reader would be free to suppose any cathedral town in England as the setting for the novel. However, the narrator underlines the fictionality of the "tale" by insisting that there is no correspondence with persons of the real world and those of the world of the novel. By these references to the fictionality of the work and of its character, Trollope invites the reader to observe the events of the novel from a critical distance. That critical distance will enable the reader to evaluate the characters and their actions from several points of view, approving or disapproving them as Trollope hopes his readers to do. Moreover, these reminders constitute Trollope's critical commentary on the nature of writing and the novel tradition at large.

The endings are equally self-conscious in their insistence on being perceived as endings. The Warden draws to a close with a short chapter in which Trollope ties up all

the loose ends of his story, explicitly declaring that he will do so:

> Our tale is now done, and it only remains to us to collect the scattered threads of our little story, and to tie them into a seemly knot. This will not be a work of labour, either to the author or to his readers; we have not to deal with many personages, or with stirring events, and were it not for the custom of the thing, we might leave it to the imagination of all concerned to conceive how affairs at Barchester arranged themselves. (195)

Ramon Saldivar observes that "passages such as this one disillusion us; they transport us from the immanent world of 'Barchester' back to the actual world in which we sit reading a literary text entitled The Warden" (168). It must be noted that only readers who expect conventional endings may be disappointed or disillusioned by this passage which underlines the artifice behind every ending. Trollope's comment embodies the unpleasant inference (that is, unpleasant for the conventional reader) that the ending could have been otherwise if the writer had chosen it to be so. His commentary contradicts and shakes the assumption behind all realist fiction that the events of the novel are the replica of real life --inevitable, true to the original, and unalterable.

At the beginning of Chapter LI of Barchester Towers, Trollope devotes a much longer passage to the difficulties of ending a novel. He states that "these leave-takings in novels are as disagreeable as they are in real life" though perhaps not so sad "as they want the reality of sadness" (726), thereby underlining the un-realness of the farewell

and the feelings which supposedly accompany it. He nevertheless prolongs this scene by commenting on the difficulty of producing convincing endings which will not only satisfy the readers' expectations but will also fulfil the requirements of the publishers:

> When we begin to tint our final pages with couleur de rose, as in accordance with fixed rule we must do, we altogether extinguish our own powers of pleasing. When we become dull we offend your intellect; and we must become dull or we should offend your taste. ... And who can apportion out and dovetail his incidents, dialogues, characters, and descriptive morsels, so as to fit them exactly into 439 pages, without either compressing them unnaturally, or extending them artificially at the end of his labour? Do I not myself know that I am at this moment in want of a dozen pages, and that I am sick with cudgelling my brains to find them? (726)

These comments no doubt are intended to break up the illusion of the fictive world. That world, made so convincingly real by its own dynamics of action, its moral system, and its "lifelike" characters, is now discussed in terms that point to its nature as an artifice, the ending of which must come not by virtue of the action but by the orders of the publisher. Trollope is fond of using his publisher as an excuse for suspending or contracting the story. Earlier in Barchester Towers, he regrets the fact that he does not have an extra volume to develop one of the subplots:

> But we must go back a little, and it shall be but a little, for a difficulty begins to make itself manifest in the necessity of disposing of all our friends in the small remainder of this one volume. Oh, that Mr. Longman would allow me a fourth! It should transcend the other three as the seventh heaven transcends all the lower stages of celestial bliss. (652)

Apart from the obvious humour of this passage in which the additional writing of another volume is compared to "celestial bliss," Trollope manages to restrict any possible expectation on his readers' part to hear more about that subplot by reminding them that his work cannot afford to be expanded beyond the conventional limits set on a novel's length. In The Warden, too, he comments that "it is indeed a matter of thankfulness that neither the historian nor the novelist hears all that is said by their heroes and heroines, or how would three volumes or twenty suffice!" (60).

Obviously, Trollope's mocking claim that the novelist does not have access to all that passes between his characters is hardly true thanks to all the authorial commentary in which he explains in great detail exactly what a character feels or plans to do. In the description of Eleanor's self-assigned "Iphigeniaic" mission to save her father from her lover's accusations, for example, the narrator tells us that her heart was divided between her filial and womanly concerns. She has undertaken to "sacrifice" herself for her father by meeting her lover in his sister's sitting-room, in the company of that sister:

> Eleanor was certainly thinking more of her father than herself, as she arranged her hair before the glass, and removed the traces of sorrow from her face; and yet I should be untrue if I said that she was nor anxious to appear well before her lover. ... Of course she was anxious to look her best, for she was but a mortal angel after all. But had she been immortal, had she flitted back to the sitting-room on a cherub's wings, she could not have had a more faithful heart, or a truer wish to save her father at any cost to herself. (The Warden 102)

The narrator's comment on her true motives helps the reader to understand her better. Had her toilet before she met Bold been narrated objectively, without the commentary sympathetic yet laced with irony, the reader might justifiably suspect her of hypocrisy, assuming that she was using the occasion only to win her lover's admiration. However, the narratorial commentary sets the reader on the right path: she earnestly wanted to help her father though she also wanted to look her best. Her conduct throughout the novel, too, supports the narrator's comments, and this passage only serves as a more immediate means of portraying her true character. Another instance where Trollope addresses the reader directly to explain Eleanor's disappointment after her "self-sacrifice" supports her characterization:

> she had anticipated her father's kindly kiss and close embrace as he gave sanction to her love. Alas! she could say nothing of this now. In speaking of Mr. Bold, her father had put him aside as one whose thoughts and sayings could be of no moment. Gentle reader, did you ever feel yourself snubbed? Did you ever, when thinking much of your own importance, find yourself suddenly reduced to a nonentity? Such was Eleanor's feeling now. (_The Warden_ 121-22)

Instead of long passages of psychological analysis of Eleanor's feelings, Trollope takes the short cut and appeals to the reader's own experiences of reduced self-importance, asking the reader to identify himself or herself with the character. Such an identification helps the reader in understanding Eleanor, serves Trollope in characterization, and saves him some of the space which he often complains of not having enough of.

The moral commentator and the self-reflexive authorial figure are united in Trollope's narrator who briefly appears in The Warden. In his description of Archdeacon Grantly's family and house, he states that he has always thought of Plumstead Episcopi as a "dull" house, and that he "never could make companions of the boys" (74). Charles, the oldest, contradicts himself in every other sentence, having no fixed view on anything; Henry has quarrelled with the narrator for taking his sister's part and "from that day to this he has not spoken to me, though he speaks at me often enough," and Sammy can occasionally tell lies (75). These statements which indicate an actual encounter of the narrator (or "the present writer") with some of the characters suggest at the same time that the writer is part of the fictional world he creates. Either the writer also belongs to that fictional world, or the characters are of the real world. Trollope manages to question the realness of both by joining these different realms subtly. His brief appearance in the novel, like that of Thackeray's in Vanity Fair, blends the fictional with the real, suggesting that the two are perhaps interchangeable.

Trollope's intrusive authorial narrator often comments on his characters's actions and moral dilemma, thereby creating self-conscious interludes in his narration. Much more significant than such intrusions, however, are the self-reflexive comments that directly relate to the literary strategies the authorial narrator employs in the novel. The

handling of character, as well as the beginnings and endings of the novels, are presented by Trollope's often humorous comments on the possible ways of approaching the task which lies ahead of him. Trollope's purpose is to invite the reader to think about the implications of the action of the novel from a critical distance and also to recognize the conventions of reflecting the important moral and social issues of the real world in fiction. His intrusions clearly break the illusion of his fictive world, warning the readers about fictionality of events and characters.

CHAPTER V:
THE TWENTIETH CENTURY:
JOHN FOWLES'S *THE FRENCH LIEUTENANT'S WOMAN*

Although the twentieth century has seen the full-flowering of self-conscious fiction, the circumstances at the beginning of our era gave little indication that this would be an age of self-conscious fiction. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the intrusive narrator was replaced by the so-called objective narrator. The leading novelist who advocated an objective and dramatic rendering of the story was Henry James. His influence has been enormous both as a writer and as a prominent critic of his day. Later developments in the twentieth-century novel can be explained by his theory of objective narration, either as fulfilments of or as reactions to it.

According to Henry James, "it goes without saying that you will not write a good novel unless you possess the sense of reality" ("The Art of Fiction" 199) although he confesses that an easy recipe to acquire that sense is not readily available. However, one thing which the writer must *not* do is clear: as his criticism of Trollope quoted earlier indicates, Henry James believed that the illusion of the reality of the fictive world should never be threatened by reminding the readers that what they are reading is not a real story but fiction. Therefore, authorial intrusions of both sorts, i.e., comments on the characters or the action

and comments on the creative process of the novel, were to be strictly avoided to achieve and maintain "naturalness."

As Wayne Booth demonstrates in _The Rhetoric of Fiction_, James himself has only infrequently intruded into his narrative (58-59). Booth emphasizes that such occasions are indeed rare since James does not need to rely on a conversant narrator to achieve his ends:

> By the kind of silence he maintains, by the manner in which he leaves his characters to work out their own destinies or tell their own stories, the author can achieve effects which would be difficult or impossible if he allowed himself or a reliable spokesman to speak directly and authoritatively to us. (273)

Although the Jamesean novel incorporates few intrusions, the traditional omniscience of the narrator is loyally kept. There are no comments made by the author/narrator which "show off" his or her access to the minds and "private" activities of the characters; still, the narrator is clearly in full command of the fictive world of the novel and presents that world and its characters to the reader with a masterly manipulation. The narrator in a James novel neither comments on characters or the art of fiction writing, nor appears in the fictive world as a character/intruder like Thackeray or Trollope. This omniscient narrator has clearly been moved out of the fictive world and describes that world and its characters' thoughts and feelings as an outsider.

Still, no reader of a Henry James novel denies the lurking presence of a master-manipulator "behind the scenes" of the novel. The authorial presence has been carried out of

the fictional world, but it presides over that world without emphasizing his presence with overt commentary or intrusions. Silencing the authorial voice and preventing its intrusions have not abolished the significance of the narrator, but given the author a different stance from which he or she can create a fictive world which will fulfil the expectations of the realistic convention.

Still, Wayne Booth remarks that in this type of novel "the life [the author] hopes to be true to is the life of the mind much more than the life of the objective surface" (43). With Henry James and especially the modernists writing after him, the main effort of the novelist has shifted from portraying the struggles of the individual who is trying to find his or her place in society to the exploration of the ways in which the individual thinks and feels. The importance given to human psychology has also encouraged a change from the device of the intrusive narrator to a new narrative technique, one which would be more suitable for the rendering of the inner world of the individual. Dorrit Cohn writes that the audible narrator had to disappear because "a fully developed figural consciousness siphons away the emotional and intellectual energy formerly lodged in the expansive narrator" (25). Precisely because the authorial voice is silenced and its presence as a figural consciousness retreats to the background, its power as an agent which must relate the intellectual and emotional condition of a character has increased. Dorrit Cohn draws our attention to

the fact that "those writers who first insisted on the removal of vociferous narrators from fiction --notably Flaubert and Henry James-- were also the creators of fictional minds with previously unparalleled depth and complexity" (26).

With modernists like James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, the shift of emphasis in the content of the novel from the social to the individual, from the common to the personal becomes more obvious. This shift is accompanied and complemented by the modification of the narrative voice which gradually loses its omniscient confidence as well. Because of their moral concerns about their "good" and "bad" characters, Victorian narrators have approached the virtues and deficiencies of their characters with firmness and the confidence of an all-powerful God-like figure. Similarly, the objective Jamesean narrator has complete control over the characters; their complex inner worlds as well as their interactions with each other and with their surrounding are conveyed authoritatively. For modernist writers, on the other hand, the workings of the human mind or "consciousness" could not be rendered that easily and clearly. The Jamesean and the Joycean novel are both "psychological" novels, but James and Joyce have preferred different strategies in rendering the consciousness of their characters.

Although James has silenced the authorial voice, he has kept it as a powerful entity, an objective and well-informed figural consciousness. Joyce, on the other hand, uses a

narrator "who remains effaced and who readily fuses with the consciousness he narrates" (Cohn 26). In other words, the Joycean narrator dissolves in the consciousness of the character and often loses his/her separate identity. The narration is focused on the individual mind and to a great extent rendered from _inside_ of it. However, the human mind does not work in a methodological way, with a conscious care which will enable it to explain its functional processes intelligibly. On the contrary, the mind works with gaps, associations, and shifts which do not necessarily follow each other logically. Consequently, the reader is often confronted with a seemingly incoherent text. This technique, which in Wayne Booth's words "attempts to give the reader an effect of living thought and sensation" (324), is called stream-of-consciousness.

Due to the importance given to the mental and the emotional world of the characters, one may mistakenly assume that the modernist novel ignores the portrayal of the physical and social setting of the characters. On the contrary, London in _Mrs. Dalloway_ is as crucial as it is in _Our Mutual Friend_, and a Joyce novel cannot be taken out of its Irish context. To the modernists, the world around is as vitally important as it was to the Victorians. Readers of Joyce or Virginia Woolf often witness the associations a character makes while he or she perceives the world and interacts with people; however, they cannot easily decide whether the images appearing in the stream-of-consciousness

passages are "real" images (mirror reflections of the fictive world) or the character's interpretive assessment of his or her world. The reality of the outside world is embedded in the mental world of the character, and the two are interfused. Along with the physical reality surrounding the character, Robert Alter adds, "personal history, cultural heritage, or metaphysical substratum, threatens to crumble into emptiness" (Partial Magic 142). Whereas the Victorian writer describes the surroundings of a character as an involved third party and the Jamesean narrator as an emotionally detached observer, the Joycean narrator is captured within the mind of a character. Therefore, the description of the character's process of internalizing the outside world has replaced the "proper" description of that world. In other words, for the modernist writer, reproducing the processes of that mind has become more important than relating its products.

Whether Jamesean or Joycean, the novel of the earlier half of the twentieth century asks "The Author" to step outside the text and to remain quiet. Brian McHale recalls the popular critical phrase of the period, "Exit Author":

> Coined by the critic Joseph Warren Beach in 1932, it memorably captures what various modernist innovators --Flaubert, James, Joyce-- had been saying all along about their own and others' practice; that the visible, intrusive authorial persona of Thackeray, Balzac, Trollope had been superseded; that henceforth the author would be invisible and unobtrusive, above and behind but not in his creation. (199)

The effacement of the author reaches its peak with the so-called French _nouveau roman_. Removing the authorial presence from the text completely and reflecting the fictional world like a camera are the basic narrative attempts of this group. With this narrative strategy, the modernist technique of the stream-of-consciousness which located the narratorial intelligence in the mind of an emotional, intellectual being was replaced by the optic frame of a presumably unfeeling, non-associative artificial intelligence.

However, the departure from the conventional novel has never been radical enough in England to permit the total disappearance of a figural narrative consciousness from the novel. The Jamesean and the modernist novel have both attempted to downplay the prominent role of nineteenth century authorial narrators. However, Brian McHale observes that the result of their efforts have been quite the contrary: "strategies of self-effacement, while ostensibly obliterating surface traces of the author, in fact call attention to the author as _strategist_. ... Self-effacement, it turns out, is a form of self-advertisement" (199).

After 1950's, the English novelists had a rich narrative past to internalize and rework in their novels: the first- or third-person conversant narrator of the eighteenth-century novel, the omniscient intrusive authorial narrator of the Victorian novel, the externalized objective figural consciousness of James, the stream-of-consciousness of Joyce,

and finally the invisible, silent, effaced narrative stance of the French New Novel. While the historical development clearly suggests an increasingly passive (and eventually inactive) part for the narrator in the fictive world of the novel, the novels of the latter half of the twentieth century have welcomed back the intrusive, vocal, and occasionally physical presence of an authorial narrator. In fact, the rising trend of metafiction after the 1950s has almost necessitated a return to the vocal authorial narrator as a convenient tool of self-conscious writing. Among metafictionists who use the intrusive authorial narrator, John Fowles holds a unique place; he has made a creative synthesis of his narrative heritage by employing another prominent literary tradition, namely parody.

The increased use of parody in contemporary self-conscious fiction can be explained by the strong element of self-criticism that parody embodies in itself. Self-criticism, as Linda Hutcheon observes in A Theory of Parody, has become increasingly popular in twentieth-century literature:

> The "postmodern" world, as Lyotard (1979) calls our postindustrial developed West, may well be suffering today from a lack of faith in systems requiring extrinsic validation. But this has been true of the entire century. Art forms have increasingly appeared to distrust external criticism to the extent that they have sought to incorporate critical commentary within their own structures in a kind of self-legitimizing short-circuit of the normal critical dialogue. (1)

It is indeed no coincidence that the synthesis Fowles achieves in The French Lieutenant's Woman is both

metafictional and parodic; Patricia Waugh suggests that the critical aspect of both metafiction and parody invite the co-presence of these two techniques in the same work:

> metafiction represents a response to a crisis within the novel --to a need for self-conscious parodic undermining in order to "defamiliarize" fictional conventions that have become both automatized and inauthentic, and to release new and more authentic forms. Parody, as a literary strategy, deliberately sets itself up to break norms that have become conventionalized. (65)

It is clear that the quality of familiarity is necessary for both metafiction and parody to be understood, appreciated, and perceived as what they are. If the reader is not familiar with conventional fiction (or the backgrounded text), he or she will take the self-conscious (or parodic) nature of the new text at its face value and accept it literally, without perceiving its ironical and critical nature.

Parody is by no means a technique new to the novel as a genre; since the eighteenth century, it has been often used by English novelists. Fielding's _Shamela_ and _Joseph Andrews_, which are parodies of Richardson's _Pamela_, are critical of the moral implications of the earlier text. Sterne, on the other hand, parodies Cervantes's and Fielding's interpolations. Later in the nineteenth century, too, parody was frequently employed by writers either as an independent work or as part of one. Trollope's parody of Dickens in Chapter XV of _The Warden_ (titled "Tom Towers, Dr. Anticant, and Mr. Sentiment"), for example, focuses on Dickens's

allegorical characters and his use of exaggerated and sentimental language. As in Gilbert Highet's definition of it, parody is often qualified as an imitation of the form and/or content of an existing work for satirical purposes. In her extensive study of parody called A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms, Linda Hutcheon offers a similar definition; she writes that parody is

> another form of imitation, but imitation characterized by ironic inversion, not always at the expense of the parodied text. ... Parody is, in another formulation, repetition with critical distance, which marks difference rather than similarity. (6)

The parodist needs to fully analyze the operative system of the original text in order to re-work that system in a new version. By focusing on the traces of convention and imitating them with a critical distance, parody revitalizes the convention. In this sense, Fowles's parody of the realist Victorian novel in The French Lieutenant's Woman gives new life to the worn-out conventions of the genre by the critical distance it maintains.

Both parody and metafiction have flourished within the novel particularly at periods when literature of the era has turned towards itself either because of the novelty of its possibilities (e.g. in the eighteenth century) or due to the exhaustion of its conventions (e.g. in the twentieth century). In either case, realism has been an integral part of parody because the novel form has constantly been faced with the challenge of either establishing or demolishing the norms of realism. In this sense, realism has also

constituted one of the starting points for the parodist whose work may be recognized as parody only by virtue of being accepted as a variation of and a departure from the norm. Robert Burden, after remarking that the English parodic novel has always stayed within the frame of realism, comments:

> Fowles's yet more masterly and controlled parodies of prominent nineteenth-century writing ... form part of an overall critical appraisal of the conventions and values of nineteenth-century realism, and of the underlying beliefs and life-philosophies which generated that realism and its social and aesthetic status. (137)

Thus, Fowles's parody of the intrusive authorial narrator complies with the conventions of the realistic novel while the critical and ironic distance with which he uses this and other self-conscious devices allow us to qualify _The French Lieutenant's Woman_ simultaneously as an example of the conventional realistic novel, parody, and metafiction.

Dwight Eddins sums up the complex nature of this novel in the following way:

> Fowles's use of a parodic structure in _The French Lieutenant's Woman_, including the introduction of direct communication between the author-persona and the reader, means that it is possible for him to write a piece of fiction concerned with fiction as genre; i.e., a "Victorian" novel that is a contemporary novel "about" the Victorian novel. (217)

Starting with this definition, it is necessary to judge what it is that makes this novel a "Victorian" novel. The most obvious similarity between Victorian novels and _The French Lieutenant's Woman_ is thematic. Fred Kaplan comments that most of the characteristic themes of the Victorian novel are also presented by Fowles:

> Nature red in tooth and claw, religion versus science, the free-thinker in a conventional society, the search for self-identity, the emergence of 'modernism,' the emancipation of women, sexuality in a society in which the Puritan heritage controls the manner in which the body can express itself, and ... the confrontation between a closed Victorian system of known boundaries and rituals of the conscious and unconscious mind and an emerging open system in which traditional beginnings, middles, and endings are called into question. (110)

Apart from these familiar themes, the setting, the language, and the two narrative techniques (i.e. the epigraphs and the intrusive authorial narrator) which Fowles employs also create the effect of a Victorian novel. On the other hand, in all of these literary features the "Victorian" is twisted by a "modern," or rather "postmodern," turn. When the setting, language, and the narrative devices of the novel are reviewed carefully, The French Lieutenant's Woman emerges as both a Victorian and a postmodern novel.

One of the most important factors that give this novel a Victorian quality is the setting of its fictional world. The reader of The French Lieutenant's Woman never doubts the authenticity of the Victorian setting: the time of the events is 1867 as Fowles immediately indicates in the first sentence of the novel (9). As most other Victorian details Fowles uses to paint a convincing picture of the period, the year 1867 is carefully chosen: Peter Conradi notes that 1867 is the year "in which the first volume of Marx's Kapital appeared, in which the British Parliament passed the Second

Reform Bill, and during which Mill campaigned for the emancipation of women" (60). These or other Victorian events are not always directly announced as "news" in the novel; nor do they necessarily have a direct impact on the plot or the characters. Still, several references made in passing help to create the historical atmosphere of the year. Moreover, 1867 happens to precede the time of the composition of _The French Lieutenant's Woman_ (published in 1969) by a round figure of one hundred years. By going back exactly one century, Fowles manages to set the time of the fictive world of his novel at a conveniently distant past, a past not only with differences but also striking parallels to our day. Peter Conradi states that the year 1867 is important because in this year "both the sexual politics against which we are still reacting, and the relative stability of the Victorian synthesis itself, were beyond their point of highest confidence and showing signs of breaking up" (60). The novel, by displaying the signs of that break-up, sheds light on our own age which is still struggling to clear up the debris of the ruins of Victorian sexual politics.

Fowles takes his time (and long passages) to inform the reader of the intricacies of Victorian politics and social life. He informs the reader on topics as many and varied as the significance of the great geologist Lyell (130), the trial of Lieutenant Emile de la Ronciere in 1835 from a medical publication of the time (183-88), Parliamentary voting and discussions on the Second Reform Bill (95), a best

seller of 1860's (94), or the total ignorance of most Victorians about lesbianism (128). All of Chapter 35, for example, is devoted to information about the Victorian understanding of sexuality and the institution of marriage. In this chapter, Fowles quotes from several works written at the time to educate the public about sex and birth control. He also presents passages from the memoirs of several people who observed what was considered an alarming frequency of rape and pre-marital sex especially in the rural areas. Moreover, Fowles refers to Thomas Hardy whose life took an important turn in 1867 when he met his great love, Tryphena, whom he could not marry due to social barriers. Aside from the coincidence in the year, the reference to Hardy's life is interesting because it exemplifies the difficulties and moral boundaries that limited Victorians and the characters of The French Lieutenant's Woman.

Another device Fowles employs to strengthen the reader's view of the Victorian-ness of the fictional world is the use of epigraphs at the beginning of chapters. Robert Burden explains that Fowles's epigraphs work on two different levels; he notes that the first and the more direct of these levels is the conventional use which was employed by the Victorian novelists:

> Quotations from the key figures of the age function in the first instance as epigram to head the chapters. These references, as well as enabling the evocation of a real historical period, signpost the principle thematic concerns running through his portrait of the age. (148)

Burden adds that along with this purpose, Fowles intended to create another effect on the reader: "the epigraphs serve to heighten the illusion of reading a type of novel, a novel arising in a clearly defined historical period" (149). The use of epigraphs alone gives the novel a Victorian aura; this popular convention of the nineteenth century is no longer as widely used by modern writers. In other words, the epigraphs both introduce the content of the chapter and attribute a Victorian quality to the novel.

The epigraphs are chosen from several scholarly works on the period as well as from a wide selection of Victorian writers and poets: Hardy, Darwin, Tennyson, Marx, and A.H. Clough are among the most frequently quoted. Anonymous, popular folk songs and passages from periodicals, books, and newspapers published in the Victorian era are also occasionally used. To understand how Fowles employs the convention of the epigraph, it will be worthwhile to look at the two epigraphs that precede Chapter 10 in which Charles comes across Sarah while she sleeps in the Undercliff. The first epigraph is a short quotation from Tennyson's Maud:

> And once, but once, she lifted her eyes,
> And suddenly, sweetly, strangely blush'd
> To find they were met by my own ... (58)

The second epigraph is from Persuasion:

> ... with its green chasms between romantic rocks, where the scattered forest trees and orchards of luxuriant growth declare that many a generation must have passed away since the first partial falling of the cliff prepared the ground for such a state, where a scene so wonderful and so lovely is

> exhibited, as may more than equal any of the resembling scenes of the far-famed Isle of Wight... (58)

At the surface (i.e. conventional) level, both of these epigraphs are clearly pertinent to this particular chapter; Charles is a man who is an eager observer of nature both in his amateur scientific endeavours and in his personal enjoyment of it. His scientific formation which is clearly influenced by Darwin's The Origin of the Species would agree with Austen's observations about time and the beauty of nature being inseparable partners. Similarly, the Tennyson passage foreshadows the greeting which takes place between Sarah and Charles when she wakes up:

> She looked up at once, so quickly that his step back was in vain. He was detected, and he was too much a gentleman to deny it. So when Sarah scrambled to her feet, gathering her coat about her, and stared back up at him from her ledge, he raised his wideawake and bowed. She said nothing, but fixed him with a look of shock and bewilderment, perhaps not untinged with shame. She had fine eyes, dark eyes.
>
> They stood thus for several seconds, locked in a mutual incomprehension. (62)

As this passage shows, the quotation from Tennyson cannot be taken at its surface value only; it has to be read ironically as well. It is true that Sarah feels uncomfortable because she is caught sleeping; but she is by no means the timid, retiring woman in the Tennyson passage. She does not shy away when her eyes meet Charles's, but stares back at him while he is, in fact, the more embarrassed party in this encounter. The roles are reversed; it is not she but he who gets caught looking at the other.

The ironical twist is true for the Austen passage as well. Although the passage reads in perfect accord with the general meaning of the chapter, the fact that Jane Austen's Persuasion is quoted here is an irony in itself. Fowles has set The French Lieutenant's Woman in Lyme Regis, which is the location for an important part of Persuasion. Fowles does not allow the reader to overlook this parallel; he underlines it in the second chapter of the book while Charles and Ernestina walk on the Cobb. Ernestina reminds Charles that "these are the very steps that Jane Austen made Louisa Musgrove fall down in Persuasion" (13). The reader familiar with Austen cannot help smiling at her words since such a reminder is redundant.

As the novel progresses, it becomes more obvious that Ernestina and Louisa have many things in common. Both of these characters are young, pretty, well-behaved women. Moreover, they both prove to have a mind of their own with which they surprise the men whom they hope to marry. Ernestina, in this sense, is a parody of not only Louisa but some other Victorian women: Trollope's favourite heroine Lily Dale and Jane Austen's Emma are among the better known examples. However, the irony of this passage does not simply lie in its parodic implications; it lies in Ernestina's talking of Louisa Musgrove as a fictional character, keeping quiet about the fact that she herself is of the same ontological standing as Louisa. In his illuminating article titled "Realism in The French Lieutenant's Woman," A.J.B.

Johnson points to the implications of Ernestina's neglect on this issue:

> There is a violent and disturbing oscillation between two different orders of being here. Lyme Regis and the Cobb do exist, in such a way that I can live in one and walk on the other. The Cobb is there as I write... But Louisa Musgrove never fell down its steps, not in the sense that I could. It is, on the other hand, true that Jane Austen said she did, yet it is not true, in the same sense, that Ernestina Freeman ever reported the writer as having done so. Fowles speaks casually as though all these things are true in the same way; he invites us to make certain kinds of confusion which would mark the total success of the putative aspirations of realism --principally, the confusion of the real with the fictitious. (292)

Thus, what initially sounds like a naive remark by Ernestina in fact points to Fowles's complex concern about the limits of reality and fiction and problematizes those concepts as well. It looks like not only Lyme Regis and the Undercliff, but the English novel, too, gets more attractive and complicated as many generations of fictional characters walk in the same setting.

Apart from the documentary details and epigraphs, the illusion of a Victorian novel is sustained by Fowles's language and style which follow his Victorian examples. Peter Wolfe observes that

> the voice of The French Lieutenant's Woman is the same as that of a novel by Dickens, George Eliot, or Trollope. First, Fowles adopts both the fussy formalized syntax and vocabulary of novelists a century ago. ... This idiom lends power to the novelist's all-knowing, decreeing stance. (125-26)

Especially in descriptive passages, Fowles clearly parodies the language of Victorian novelists. A good example is the

description of Mrs. Poulteney's kitchen which he offers at the beginning of Chapter 4:

> The basement kitchen of Mrs. Poulteney's Regency house, which stood, an elegantly clear simile of her social status, in a commanding position on one of the steep hills behind Lyme Regis, would no doubt seem today almost intolerable for its functional inadequacies. Though the occupants in 1867 would have been quite clear as to who was the tyrant in their lives, the more real monster, to an age like ours, would beyond doubt have been the enormous kitchen range that occupied all the inner wall of the large and ill-lit room. It had three fires, all of which had to be stoked twice a day; and since the smooth domestic running of the house depended on it, it could never be allowed to go out. Never mind how much a summer's day sweltered, never mind that every time there was a south-westerly gale the monster blew back clouds of choking fumes --the remorseless furnaces had to be fed. And then the color of those walls! They cried out for some light shade, for white. Instead they were a bilious leaden green --one that was, unknown to the occupants (and to be fair, to the tyrant upstairs), rich in arsenic. Perhaps it was fortunate that the room was damp and that the monster disseminated so much smoke and grease. At least the deadly dust was laid. (21)

This lively description could have easily been written by Dickens or Trollope. The emphasized presence of the kitchen range which is compared to an overwhelming monster reminds the reader of Dickens who likes to attribute allegorical qualities to objects which dominate people's lives. The cynical humour with which Fowles describes the unpleasant and unhealthy working conditions of Mrs. Poulteney's kitchen, on the other hand, is typical of Trollope's attitude towards people and institutions which he disapproves of. In spite of these Victorian traces, however, the description is clearly communicated by a non-Victorian who comes from another period, from "an age like ours" which is "today" as opposed

to "the occupants in 1867" who are unaware of the dangers of the place. This narrator has information that could not be available to the characters in the fictive world, such as the poisonous nature of the green paint. The Victorian language and style are thus "tainted" by the twentieth century information which disorients the reader.

Similarly, only a twentieth-century point of view could juxtapose Charles and Karl Marx in Chapter 3 although they never meet each other in the fictional world of the novel. Fowles writes: "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" (16). Following Johnson's argument cited earlier, Charles could not have possibly known of Das Kapital, not only because of the fictional conjecture which never brings him close to Marx, but because he is not "real" whereas Marx and Das Kapital are. In this novel, on the other hand, they "live" in the same period, and while Charles is taking a walk on the Cobb, Marx is working on his book in London. It is due to Fowles's twentieth century hindsight and his artistic powers that these two figures have become contemporaries. Once again, his treatment of the fictitious as real brings up questions such as "What is real?", "What is fictitious?", and perhaps more puzzling than these two, "What is historical?".

These three questions constitute the realm of what Linda Hutcheon calls "historiographic metafiction." In her article

titled "'The Pastime of Past Time': Fiction, History, Historiographic Metafiction," Hutcheon writes:

> Recent postmodern readings of both history and realist fiction have focused more on what the two modes of writing share than on how they differ. They have both been seen to derive their force more from verisimilitude than from any objective truth; they are both identified as linguistic constructs, highly conventionalized in their narrative forms, and not at all transparent, either in terms of language or structure; and they appear to be equally intertextual, deploying the texts of the past within their own complex textuality. (285)

Hutcheon argues that as a result of this new approach to history and fiction, a new kind of fiction called "historiographic metafiction" is being written. Works of historiographic metafiction (among which _The French Lieutenant's Woman_ is cited as an example) are

> novels that are intensely self-reflexive but that also both reintroduce historical context into metafiction and problematize the entire question of historical knowledge. ... this kind of novel ... forces us to recall that history and fiction are themselves historical terms and their definitions and interrelations are historically determined and vary with time. (285-86)

Thus, metafiction which interrogates its own ontological nature as a work of art is combined with an enquiry about the traditional teachings of history which determine our sense of the past. _The French Lieutenant's Woman_, as an example of historiographic metafiction, brings up questions concerning our preformed concepts about Victorian life styles, particularly their approach to morally correct behaviour and sexuality.

For the reader of fiction, most of these concepts have been shaped by Victorian novels in which Dickens's innocent heroines and Trollope's gentlewomen could never even consider indulging in sexual encounters which have not been sanctioned by the Church and their families. However, many Victorian characters who would be very disturbed by the affair of Sarah and Charles are directly or implicitly evoked throughout the novel. Ernestina's reference to Louisa Musgrove and her similarities with other Victorian woman characters have already been discussed. Charles's Cockney servant Sam cannot but be remembered in relation to Dickens's Sam Weller. In fact, Fowles himself draws the reader's attention to this parallel:

> Of course to us any Cockney servant called Sam evokes immediately the immortal Weller; and it was certainly from that background that this Sam had emerged. But thirty years had passed since Pickwick Papers first coruscated into the world. Sam's love of the equine was not really very deep. He was more like some modern working-class man who thinks a keen knowledge of cars is a sign of his social progress. He even knew of Sam Weller, not from the book, but from a stage version of it: and knew the times had changed. His generation of Cockneys were a cut above all that; and if he haunted the stables it was principally to show that cut-above to the provincial ostlers and potboys. (39)

As this passage also suggests, Fowles parodies the well-known Sam figure, adjusting him to the standards and values of the later nineteenth-century society and to the needs of his modern novel. Similarly, Mrs. Poulteney resembles many Victorian women all at the same time. Fred Kaplan, who

offers a long list of the Victorian characters which Fowles has been inspired by and/or has parodied, writes:

> Mrs. Poulteney has become a melange, a representative figure and a composite portrait. She is neither Mrs. Clennam nor Mrs. Proudie but both and more, a figure from Victorian fiction rather than from a particular novel, described not only with a flair that suggests Dickens but with a summarizing accuracy that suggests Trollope and a sense of moral finality that suggests George Eliot. (113)

In other words, Fowles employs parody in the sense that has been earlier defined in this chapter. These characters are not simple imitations of earlier examples, created for satiric purposes only. They are based on several well-known Victorian characters and portrayed with an ironic twist that make them a more than an imitation, rather a re-assessment of their originals. Fowles's characters are in many ways similar to other Victorian characters with whom the reader is well acquainted since this is essential in establishing the plausibility of their Victorian-ness. Yet, with characters like Mrs. Poulteney, Sam, and also Sarah, Charles, and Ernestina, Fowles offers a new Victorian who thinks and acts in ways which are entirely different from the ways traditional Victorian characters in fiction do. Fred Kaplan observes that the difference is established by Fowles's awareness that history and fiction are essentially the same for the reader.

> His knowledge of the literature of the period underlies the sense of character that Fowles relies upon depicting a world peopled by characters whom we will accept as historically true. The history, then, is more in the fiction than in the fact, more in the literary products of the age than in the

> factual documents of the historians. Fowles has succeeded in writing a fiction, an historical novel of sorts, that is true to our knowledge of the period revealed through the period's imaginative literature. (111)

Thus, Fowles balances what at first appears to be an improbable duality: creating characters who are convincingly "Victorian" (not only by the standards of Victorian novels but also as proven by the historical documents of the age) and who nevertheless resemble twentieth-century readers in their thinking and actions. By making the characters of this postmodern novel more "realistically" Victorian, Fowles brings them closer to us. He presents us with such documentary details from the Victorian era and with such a new type of fictional character that our prejudices are washed away, and we need to reconstruct the Victorian era for ourselves. The novel, as an example of historiographic metafiction, invites us to question through parody our norms about Victorians and their era while it problematizes the fictitious (art) and the historical ("reality"). In other words, his parody forces the reader to take a fresh look at the so-called realistic fiction of the nineteenth century only to show that the Victorian novel is an embodiment of strict "artificial" conventions and not the replica of life which it claims to be.

Along with the setting, language, and the epigraphs, probably the most Victorian aspect of the novel is its intrusive authorial narrator. This authorial voice, like its earlier examples, makes two types of comments: he either

interrupts his story to comment on the action and the characters, or he elaborates on the art of fiction writing. Yet, the narrator of The French Lieutenant's Woman is both "old-fashioned" and "postmodern" at the same time since Fowles's use of this Victorian convention, too, is not simply an imitation but a parodic re-working of the traditional narrator.

The narrator, like other Victorian narrators is willing to "chat" with the reader about the characters. In this way, he smoothly provides most of the documentary details which evoke the Victorian world of the novel. In fact, Fred Kaplan reminds us that not only the information provided but also the very fact that the narrator is willing to inform his readers about the period is another Victorian convention that Fowles employs. He writes that:

> Of the two levels of authorial commentary within the novel, one is meant to be particularly Victorian, to provide the reader with a guide through the environmental details of the novel's physical, moral and cultural complexities. This narrator is never at a loss for unquestionable facts. ... Indeed, entire chapters imitate the Victorian proclivity for incorporating historical and sociological generalization into the fabric of their fictions, amplifying the dimensions of the novelist's interests, creating a fiction that is almost encyclopedic in its absorption of all aspects of culture. (113)

Indeed, Trollope's zeal for describing landscapes and houses in physical and historical details, or his depiction of hunting scenes which are treated with the type of care reserved for a ritual, have a similarly encyclopedic touch. Fowles's narrator, in this sense, follows his Victorian

examples by providing documentary, historical information about the period. Yet, his approach is marked by a modern awareness which points to the weaknesses and the virtues of the Victorian era from a retrospective point of view.

That modern awareness is responsible for the anachronisms in the novel as well. Due to the narrator's modern hindsight, we know that Ernestina died on the day Hitler invaded Poland (28), that Sam had "a very sharp sense of clothes style --quite as sharp as a 'mod' of the 1960s" (39), or that Charles's sexual union with Sarah felt "like a city struck out of a quiet sky by an atom bomb" (275). These anachronisms disorient the reader much in the same way that metafiction intends to do: they serve to distance the reader to events and characters, preventing a total identification with the fictive world. Constantly reminded that the characters and their world are Victorian whereas the world shared by the narrator and the reader is not, the reader is forced to recognize the fictive status of the work.

The narrator takes further pains to destroy the illusion of the reality of the fictive world by directly reminding the reader of the fictive status of the novel. His most overt attempt to destroy that illusion comes towards the end of Chapter 12, which eventually leads to the well-known discussion of the role and authority of the writer in Chapter 13. It is true that the intrusion of the authorial narrative voice is a convention of the Victorian novel and should therefore be expected in _The French Lieutenant's Woman_ which

has so far appeared to be a traditional work. Still, Chapter 13 constitutes a significant turning point in the novel because of the nature of the comments made by Fowles in this particular intrusion. Robert Burden observes that

> with chapter 13, the knowing reader is addressed, and the manipulation of past convention is established as much more widespread and deep-seated than has earlier been apparent. Chapter 13 is the first major defamiliarization of the conventional realist text: that is to say, it disrupts the illusion of history at the level of style. (151)

At the end of Chapter 12, Sarah stands at her bedroom window after having been reprimanded by Mrs. Poulteney for walking in the Ware Commons. Fowles describes her face as she gazes out on the distant sea:

> If you had gone closer still, you would have seen that her face was wet with silent tears. She was not standing at her window as part of her mysterious vigil for Satan's sails; but as a preliminary to jumping from it.
>
> I will not make her teeter on the windowsill; or sway forward, and then collapse sobbing back onto the worn carpet of her room. We know she was alive a fortnight after this incident, and therefore she did not jump. Nor were hers the sobbing, hysterical sort of tears that presage violent action; but those produced by a profound conditional, rather than emotional, misery --slow-welling, unstoppable, creeping like blood through a bandage. (79-80)

If Sarah had swayed and fallen down on the floor, crying hysterically, it would not have surprised the reader who has so far been reading what appears to be a nostalgic Victorian novel written by a modern writer. However, the authorial narrator does not make Sarah act like a proper Victorian heroine; moreover, he states "out loud" that he will not do

that. Instead, he concludes the chapter with two brief questions: "Who is Sarah? Out of what shadows does she come?" (80)

These rhetorical questions, which Dickens or Trollope would have delightedly employed to lead to a long description of Sarah and her past, are not followed up in the next chapter though they receive a reply which surely shocks the reader:

> I do not know. This story I am telling is all imagination. These characters I create never existed outside my own mind. If I have pretended until now to know my characters' minds and innermost thoughts, it is because I am writing in (just as I have assumed some of the vocabulary and "voice" of) a convention universally accepted at the time of my story: that the novelist stands next to God. He may not know all, yet he tries to pretend that he does. But I live in the age of Alan Robbe-Grillet and Roland Barthes; if this is a novel, it cannot be a novel in the modern sense of the word. (80)

With this passage, the tone of the novel is irreversibly changed. William Palmer states that with this first significant intrusion, "Fowles the novelist-god" defines his novel "which to this point had been a conventional historical novel, as a Pirandelloesque metanovel in which the characters who had momentarily found an author begin to rebel against that author's authority" (69). Brian McHale also believes that

> With this gesture, the illusory reality of the fictional world is destroyed, and in its place we are offered, if not _the_ real world, at least _a_ real world. For what is ultimately real in the ontological structure of _The French Lieutenant's Woman_, if not the author's performance in creating that world? (197)

In other words, The French Lieutenant's Woman can no longer be read as a Victorian novel but has to be accepted as a postmodern novel about the Victorian novel.

With the first paragraph of Chapter 13, Fowles starts the discussion of how much control a writer can and should practise on the characters he or she creates. Needless to say, the "I" speaking as the author/narrator throughout this chapter and the rest of the novel should not be taken for Fowles himself. John Fowles, in his essay titled "Notes on an Unfinished Novel," writes:

> The great majority of modern third-person narration is "I" narration very thinly disguised. The real "I" of the Victorian writers --the writer himself-- is as rigorously repressed there (out of fear of seeming pretentious, etc) as it is, for obvious semantic and grammatical reasons, when the narration is in literal first person form. But in [The French Lieutenant's Woman] I shall try to resurrect this technique. ... the "I" who will make first-person commentaries here and there in my story, and who will finally enter it, will not be my real "I" in 1967; but much more just another character, though in a different category from the purely fictional ones. (141-42)

Accordingly, the author-surrogate who speaks in Chapter 13 denies that a modern writer can exercise the power of omniscience over the characters; he suggests that the novelist-god is dead, and "it is only when our characters and events begin to disobey us that they begin to live" (81). He then gives an example of disobedience: Charles, he claims, goes down to the Dairy after having met Sarah in the Undercliff instead of walking back to Lyme Regis as Fowles had "ordered" him to. This claim is obviously tongue-in-

cheek, and Fowles admits that the reader will not take it at its face value:

> Oh, but you say, come on --what I really mean is that the idea crossed my mind as I wrote that it might be more clever to have him stop and drink milk ... and meet Sarah again. That is certainly one explanation of what happened; but I can only report --and I am the most reliable witness-- that the idea seemed to me to come clearly from Charles, not myself. It is not only that he has begun to gain autonomy; I must respect it, and disrespect all my quasi-divine plans for him, if I wish him to be real. ... There is only one good definition of God: the freedom that allows other freedoms to exist. And I must conform to that definition.
>
> 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. (81-82)

Thus, Fowles offers a new role to the omniscient author/narrator of the Victorian novel: a writer who inevitably "knows" all but allows characters to diverge from the plans that their omniscient writer makes about them. In Charles's disobedience cited above, for example, it was Charles who has offered a better mode of action than the one which had first occurred to his creator, and the creator has accepted that offer.

Elsewhere, however, the authorial narrator of The French Lieutenant's Woman acts quite like the novelist-god the role of which he says he rejects. One such case occurs, for example, while Sarah is opening up her last three parcels in her Exeter hotel room; they contain a roll of bandage, a nightgown, and an expensive green shawl the color of which

sets a striking contrast to Sarah's rich brown hair. Fowles writes:

> This she held in a strange sort of trance --no doubt at its sheer expense, for it cost a good deal more than all her other purchases put together. At last she pensively raised and touched its fine soft material against her cheek, staring down at the nightgown; and then in the first truly feminine gesture I have permitted her, moved a tress of her brown-auburn hair to lie on the green cloth.... (220-21)

The fact that the author/narrator has "permitted" and also narrated this particular feminine gesture implies that her other probable feminine gestures have been prevented and/or not related to the reader. Obviously, these characters cannot always exercise the autonomy which the author/narrator has claimed to have granted them in Chapter 13. Their "autonomous" actions have to be filtered through the hands of their all-knowing and all-powerful authorial narrator. He is indeed so powerful that he can, in his mocking way, control the lives of the characters (hence the events of the novel) by simply readjusting the time on his watch in the last chapter of the novel.

The appearance of the author-surrogate in the last chapter of the novel is not his first: he physically steps into his narrative earlier in Chapter 55, during Charles's train journey to London. Fowles portrays the author-surrogate as "a man of forty or so," with a "massively bearded face" and writes that "there was something rather aggressively secure about him; he was perhaps not quite a gentleman" (315). Furthermore, this man has a look with the

"bizarre blend of the inquisitive and the magistral; of the ironic and the soliciting" (317). Fowles qualifies his look as

> the look an omnipotent god --if there were such an absurd thing-- should be shown to have. Not at all what we think of as a divine look; but one of distinctly mean and dubious (as the theoreticians of the _nouveau roman_ have pointed out) moral quality. I see this with particular clarity on the face, only too familiar to me, of the bearded man who stares at Charles. (317)

Then, he reveals that this man is, in fact, himself --the author/narrator.

Although Fowles prefers to give this author-surrogate an "aggressively secure" air, his presence in the wagon is due to his helplessness with Charles. He seems to be at a loss with his character and asks "what the devil am I going to do with you?" (317) He may end the novel by simply leaving Charles travelling to London, "but the conventions of Victorian fiction allow, allowed no place for the open, the inconclusive ending" (317). He realizes that he has to grant Sarah and Charles their freedom to choose a line of action: they will have to fight (with life in general and with each other's will in particular) for what they want to do with their lives. Thus, they will determine the ending of the novel as well. The author-surrogate concludes by saying:

> That leaves me with two alternatives. I let the fight proceed and take no more than a recording part in it; or I take both sides in it. ... I think I see a solution; that is, I see the dilemma is false. The only way I can take no part in the fight is to show two versions of it. That leaves me with only 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.
> I take my purse from the pocket of my frock coat, I extract a florin, I rest it on my thumbnail, I flick it, spinning, two feet into the air and catch it in my left hand. (318)

Thus, the author/narrator decides to present two versions of what might happen as Charles and Sarah meet later.

From a critical point of view, the flip of the coin which determines the order of the endings is far from arbitrary: the second ending, which Fowles admits has a more definitive nature, is in perfect accordance with the portrait of Sarah which has been carefully constructed so far in the novel. She has an existential touch, being a woman who is an enigma for her age and a liberated woman by the standards of any, for she frees herself from society by creating her own version of a fictive life. Thus, the second ending in which she rejects Charles complements her portrait.

The author-surrogate's second appearance occurs as he readjusts time to allow for the second (and final) ending of the novel. Although his role as the omniscient, omnipotent novelist-god is seemingly limited by the autonomy his characters exercise, his second appearance suggests quite the contrary. Fowles introduces the author-surrogate as an "extremely important looking person" who has been watching the first ending (in which Sarah and Charles are united) from the street, across the Rossetti house (361). Fowles writes:

> I did not want to introduce him; but since he is the sort of man who cannot bear to be left out of the limelight, the kind of man who travels first class or not at all, for whom the first is the only pronoun, who in short has first things on the brain, and since I am the kind of man who refuses

> to intervene in nature (even the worst), he has got himself in [the novel] --or as he would put it, has got himself in _as he really is_. ... this personage is, in spite of appearances, a very minor figure -- as minimal, in fact, as gamma-ray particles. (361)

Fowles continues to report that the appearance of this new character has "a distinct touch of the flashy," changed from the preacher-looking man whom the reader had earlier met in the railway compartment to "the successful impresario" (362). This somewhat unpleasant figure watches the Rossetti house "with an almost proprietory air, as if it is some new theater he has just bought and is pretty confident he can fill" (362).

The comparison of the writer to a theater manager or the impresario is not new to the reader of Victorian fiction: Thackeray's narrator is not only the Manager of Vanity Fair but a puppeteer as well. Yet, this tribute to Thackeray is characteristically twisted by Fowles. Thackeray's Manager advocates correct behaviour, occasionally "preaches" about it, and manipulates the puppets in such a way that the novel ends in a way to comply with all the values of his ethical world: the "bad" one (Becky) is punished by being pushed out of the fictive world of the novel, and the "good" ones (Amelia and Dobbin) are rewarded by finally uniting in the happy ending. The happy union scene of _The French Lieutenant's Woman_ has similarities with that of _Vanity Fair_. In both, the couples are accompanied by the women's children. In both scenes, the woman rests her head on the man's shoulder where she either "flutters" (_Vanity Fair_ 792) or

"shakes with a mute vehemence" (The French Lieutenant's Woman 360). These scenes in which the characters are for the most part inarticulate yet quite expressive of their emotions are rendered by short, staccato sentences which match the incoherent thoughts and excited feelings of the characters. Still, in spite of these similarities, the endings diverge radically from one another in the narrator/author's treatment of the scene: while Thackeray's puppeteer is clearly pleased with this scene and bids farewell to his characters ("Good-bye, Colonel. -- God bless you, honest William! Farewell, dear Amelia" (791)), Fowles's impresario simply watches the "right" ending (i.e., the ending which would satisfy the Victorian audience), and then resets his watch to introduce the other ending which is the modern (and therefore by Victorian standards the "unhappy") ending.

The multiple endings of The French Lieutenant's Woman have their precedence in the Victorian novel as Peter Conradi cites in his book titled John Fowles: Dickens's Great Expectations which, although the writer may not have intended to present them to the reader, nevertheless has two endings; Emily Bronte's Wuthering Heights which presents two versions of the same story; Hardy's The Return of the Native which includes, in a footnote, an unhappy ending for those interested; and finally a 1847 novella by James Anthony Froude titled The Lieutenant's Daughter which, Conradi reports (71), clearly leaves the choice of endings to the reader, are some of those Victorian novels. (It is a curious

coincidence that Fowles declares that he has not read the last work before he wrote The French Lieutenant's Woman; the title which echoes Fowles's and the endings clearly offer a parallel).

Apart from the twin endings of the novel, the pseudo-ending in Chapter 44 is also worth attention. In this ending, Charles joins Ernestina in Lyme Regis and confesses to her that he has been interested and somewhat involved in Sarah's affairs; she understands, they get married, and they remain so until death separates them (262-64). He writes at the beginning of the following chapter:

> And now, having brought this fiction to a thoroughly traditional ending, I had better explain that although all I have described in the last two chapters happened, it did not happen quite in the way you may have been led to believe.
> I said earlier that we are all poets, though not many of us write poetry; and so are we all novelists, that is, we have a habit of writing fictional futures for ourselves ...
> Charles was no exception, and the last few pages you have read are not what happened, but what he spent the hours between London and Exeter imagining might happen... . (266)

Although he claims that this was only what Charles had dreamed (or day-dreamed), here Fowles nevertheless points to one of the lines of action which his character may have followed. This is a daydream which does not please the dreamer at all: Fowles writes that Charles, just like the reader, feels there is "an abruptness, a lack of consonance, a betrayal of Charles's deeper potentiality" in this ending (266-67). William J. Palmer observes,

> Just as Charles finds the conventional ending of a love affair with Sarah "distinctly shabby," so also

> does Fowles find the traditional Victorian ending to his novel unsatisfactory. Fowles's characters ... refuse to be Victorianized (victimized, tyrannized), and the novel continues in order to fulfil itself as a lifelike work of art. (73)

The fact that Charles can see the smooth, conventional, and ultimately boring, suffocating option which lies ahead of him proves that he can guess the consequences of the alternative line of action which he finally follows. This is indeed significant in Charles's life since he "grows up" by not conforming to the easier path. Apart from the advantage that the pseudo-ending gives to Fowles in the characterization of Charles, it is obviously of service in problematizing the concepts of the "real" and the "fictitious," and its alienating effect further marks the metafictional qualities of the novel. The reader who has been presented with a thoroughly acceptable Victorian ending is once again disoriented by being told that the Victorian character and his creator/narrator find this ending unsatisfactory. Then a puzzling question comes to mind: who is the "more Victorian" party in this reading process --Charles who "lives" in a Victorian world, the author-surrogate and narrator who can occasionally go in and out of that world, or the reader whose expectations from this Victorian novel are constantly frustrated? The reader is also captured in the world of the characters and the world of the authorial narrative voice, and the three worlds merge to confuse the real with the fictitious and the Victorian with the modern.

Another metafictional strategy Fowles utilizes to merge the modern and the Victorian, and to defamiliarize the fictive world of the novel is to establish imaginary links between the objects and persons in the novel and the world of the reader. In the second paragraph of Chapter 13, for example, the narrator suggests that the novel may be "a transposed autobiography; perhaps I now live in one of the houses I have brought into the fiction" (80). The reader, with this suggestion, is invited to suppose that _The French Lieutenant's Woman_ which had, earlier in Chapter 13, claimed to be "all imagination" may indeed be "real." There are other, similar incidents which attempt to establish a bridge between the twentieth and the nineteenth centuries. The authorial narrator states, for example, that the Toby jug Sarah buys for herself in Exeter was later purchased by himself (220); he also claims that the great-great-granddaughter of Mary (Ernestina's maid) "who is twenty-two years old this month I write in" is a famous English film actress (65). In reference to the last claim, A.J.B. Johnson writes:

> For the briefest instant, I catch myself wondering who it is; for a moment, a technique of realism achieves its ultimate success. But it cannot be sustained, and susceptibility is almost immediately overwhelmed by a combination of reason and the fixed patterns of belief about fiction.... Fowles here pushes the technique of realism so far, he is so insistent upon the 'truth' of his scenario and so devious in the devices by which he seeks to establish it, that (deliberately, I believe) he achieves its undoing. (293)

Johnson is saying that to form a link between the world of the character and the reader is in fact the ultimate purpose of the realist convention which would like to create the verisimilitude of the real world in fiction. Yet, since this illusion of one-ness cannot be kept up throughout the novel, the result is more destructive of that illusion than affirmative.

This deliberate undoing of the illusion of real-ness of the fictive world is Fowles's purpose as a metafictionist. Realism must be part of his novel's effect, but as he states in Chapter 13, he wishes "to create worlds as real as, but other than the world that is. Or was" (81). Therefore, he gives his readers a fictive world which is successfully Victorian in its illusion, only to destroy that illusion by his parody of Victorian fiction and his self-conscious writing techniques which underline the fictionality of his novel. His use of the intrusive authorial narrator is an integral part of his strategy of employing a conventional narrative technique with self-conscious potentials and utilizing that potential to its fullest.

CHAPTER VI:
CONCLUSION

Self-conscious narration in the English novel is not a new phenomenon, and it is not limited to "metafiction," a term often used to define the self-conscious literature arising after 1950s. One of the most important techniques which have been employed by novelists to create self-consciousness is the intrusive authorial narrator. The use of the intrusive narrator goes back to the eighteenth century, along with other self-conscious elements which together constitute an integral part of the pioneering examples of the English novel. In the following century, authorial intrusion has become an almost indispensable feature of the realist tradition among novelists. This self-conscious narrative device has given many writers of the nineteenth century the opportunity to comment freely on the characters and the action in their novels. By the help of such commentary, those novelists have not only given their moral and social messages more directly to their readers, but also expressed their ideas about fiction writing within their narratives. Linda Hutcheon underlines the fact that self-conscious fiction (or the more systematically self-conscious "metafiction") is in a way "traditional":

> metafiction is not new; nor is it in any way more "evolved" or aesthetically better than other forms of fiction. Rather, it is a part of a long novelistic tradition, and it is only its degree of internalized self-consciousness about what are, in fact, realities of reading <u>all</u> literature that

> makes it both different and perhaps especially worth studying today. ("Preface"; Narcissistic Narrative xvii)

The discussion of self-consciousness in the novel has to take into consideration the fact that the novel is a relatively new form in the long history of English literature. It has, therefore, filtered out some of the exhausted conventions used in older forms of narrative and revitalized the ones which were to be maintained in the new genre. Consequently, a critical approach to form became an intrinsic part of the novel from its earliest stages. Novelists of the eighteenth century have experimented with form and technique to produce works which differ from each other considerably in their narrative modes. Defoe's novels follow the model of journalistic-documentary writing, whereas Richardson's works may be qualified as pieces of epistolary-documentary writing. It is in this period that the novels of Fielding and Sterne display some of the earliest examples of self-consciousness. Authorial intrusion appears as an important narrative device in Tom Jones as Fielding starts each book within this novel with a chapter devoted solely to his commentary. His narrator does not hesitate to remind readers that the "history" they are reading is controlled by a writer whose choices direct the action and characters involved. Sterne's first-person narrator Tristram, on the other hand, is so much occupied with reflecting his literary and artistic concerns to the reader that he hardly makes progress in his narrative. Fielding's parodies of Richardson

in this century mark the phase in which the English novel has passed its pioneering stage since parody can only occur after the establishment of norms and conventions.

In the nineteenth century, the English novel has moved on to realism which qualifies the writing of both early nineteenth-century and Victorian novelists. The realist tradition has found the omniscient third-person narrator of Fielding more congenial than the first-person narrative voices employed by Sterne, Defoe, or Richardson. Fielding's conversant, intrusive, and humorous authorial narrator, as developed by nineteenth-century writers, has acquired a "figural" presence and stepped into the frame of the fictional world, appearing among the characters of the novel. Especially the omniscience of this narrator has enabled writers to integrate self-conscious and self-reflexive commentary into their novels.

The omniscient narrator of the Victorian period has complete access to the lives and minds of his characters, a characteristic which has often been called the "God-like" attribute of the narrator. J. Hillis Miller, after pointing to one difference between "God" and a "God-like writer," argues that since this analogy is not altogether accurate, it should not be used too liberally:

> Immanent rather than transcendent, thereby lacking one aspect of divine knowledge, the omniscient narrator also has knowledge of a world which he has not created. God's knowledge is of a world and of human souls which he himself has made. ... The omniscient narrators of Victorian novels, on the other hand, have perfect knowledge of a world they have not made. ... For the most part, narrators of

> Victorian novels talk as if they were confronting directly or in historical retrospect a world independent of their knowledge of it, but a world over which they happen to have extraordinary powers. (64-65)

Thus, these narrators comment freely not only about the events and characters of their fictional world, but also about the fictive nature of that world to underline their position as the "real" creators of it. For example, Thackeray's Master of the Vanity Fair emphasizes the fictionality of the world of the novel by calling it a "puppet show," but also comments on Becky, Amelia, and Dobbin as seriously and consistently as if these characters were "real" acquaintances of his. This blurred vision of the fictive and the real is in fact the realm of self-conscious fiction. Many nineteenth-century novelists, particularly Thackeray and Trollope whose narrative techniques have been reviewed in this dissertation, explore the relationship between reality (or "life") and artifice (or "art") in their novels. In this effort, they try to create a fictive world which is convincingly familiar to the reader in its correspondence to the real world, but they also remind the reader that this world is in fact an artifice based on the expectations of the reader, the writer, and even the publisher.

Thus, Trollope's and Thackeray's novels display a similar blend of realism and self-consciousness which simultaneously pulls the readers into the world of the novel by the realistic action and characters and distances them to

the text by the many intrusions which emphasize the fictiveness of that world. James Kincaid comments:

> As the action pulls us in more strongly, the narrator pushes back on us all the harder. The effect of this technique is to create a balance in our response, complicating greatly our anticipation in the action without simply overturning and thus inverting our position. The narrator never gives us a sense that he can quite manipulate at will; it is always clear that, even if he is subject to no laws, he will good-naturedly agree to abide by certain conventions. Why? Because we, as readers, are more comfortable that way. (39)

The same effect is observed in John Fowles's _The French Lieutenant's Woman_ in which the employment of the omniscient, intrusive third-person narrator creates self-consciousness. Although Fowles's unique intrusive authorial narrator improves on the self-conscious abilities of his conventional Victorian counterpart, he also follows those Victorian predecessors of his in many ways: for example, he too assumes a corporeal being as the novel progresses and establishes direct contact with some of the characters. However, the episodes in which the authorial narrator appears actually serve as a jumping board for Fowles who can thus start a discussion of the ontological status of his characters and of his narrator. His use of the conventions of the Victorian novel is laced with a postmodern hindsight which transforms those traditional devices into even more effective metafictional tools. Fowles's technique as a self-conscious writer is obviously much more daring and overt than those of Victorian novelists, and his novel is perhaps closer to Sterne's example in its vigor than it is to any Victorian

novel. The overall effect of *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, however, is not qualitatively different from the self-consciousness observed in the other works studied in this dissertation. All of these writers have aimed to pass on their moral, social, and/or aesthetic messages to the reader by creating characters "like us" in a fictive world which is plausible in its construct, but also obvious in its artifice since that artifice is constantly underlined by its creator.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alter, Robert. "Mimesis and the Motive for Fiction." Tri Quarterly 42 (Spring 1978): 228-49.

---. Partial Magic: The Novel as a Self-Conscious Genre. Berkeley: U of California P, 1975.

Anderson, Howard. "Tristram Shandy and the Reader's Imagination." PMLA 86: 966-73.

Arthur, R. Anthony. "Authorial Intrusion as Art in The Last Chronical [sic] of Barset." Journal of Narrative Technique 1: 200-06.

Baker, Sheridan. "Narration: The Writer's Essential Mimesis." Journal of Narrative Technique 11 (3): 155-65.

Bayley, John. "Character and Consciousness." New Literary History 5: 225-35.

Booth, Wayne C. The Rhetoric of Fiction. 1961. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987.

Bradbury, Malcolm, and David Palmer, eds. The Contemporary English Novel. London: Arnold, 1979.

Burden, Robert. "The Novel Interrogates itself: Parody as Self-Consciousness in Contemporary English Fiction." Bradbury and Palmer 133-55.

Byatt, A.S. "People in Paper Houses: Attitudes to 'Realism' and 'Experiment' in English Postwar Fiction." Bradbury and Palmer 19-41.

Byrd, Max. Tristram Shandy. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1985.

Campbell, James. "An Interview with John Fowles." Contemporary Literature 17 (4) (Autumn 1976): 455-69.

Christensen, Inger. The Meaning of Metafiction: A Critical Study of Selected Novels by Sterne, Nabokov, Barth, and Beckett. Bergen: Universitetsforlaget, 1981.

Clark, John W. The Language and Style of Anthony Trollope. London: Deutsch, [1975.]

Cohn, Dorrit. Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1978.

Conradi, Peter. John Fowles. in Contemporary Writers series. General eds. Malcolm Bradbury and Christopher Bigsby. London: Methuen, 1982.

Cruise, James. "Reinvesting the Novel: Tristram Shandy and Authority." The Age of Johnson: A Scholarly Annual 1987 (1): 215-35.

Davies, Richard A. "Tristram Shandy: Eccentric Public Orator." English Studies in Canada 5: 154-66.

Dickens, Charles. Hard Times. Ed. David Craig. London and New York: Penguin, 1980.

Druff, James H., Jr. "Genre and Mode: The Formal Dynamics of Doubt." Genre 1981 (Fall) 14 (3): 295-307.

Eddins, Dwight. "John Fowles: Existence as Authorship." Contemporary Literature 17: 204-22.

Eliot, George. Middlemarch. Ed. W.J. Harvey. London and New York: Penguin, 1965.

Ermarth, Elizabeth Deeds. Realism and Consensus in the English Novel. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1983.

Federman, Raymond, ed. Surfiction: Fiction Now ... and Tomorrow. Chicago: Swallow, 1975.

Fielding, Henry. The History of Tom Jones. with an intro. by George Sherburn. New York: Random, 1950.

Forster, E. M. Aspects of the Novel. (1927) Ed. Oliver Stallybrass. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977.

Fowles, John. "Notes on an Unfinished Novel." Afterwords. Ed. Thomas McCormack. London: Harper and Row, 1969. Rpt. The Novel Today: Contemporary Writes on Modern Fiction. Ed. Malcolm Bradbury. Oxford: Manchester UP, 1977. 136-150.

---. The French Lieutenant's Woman. Signet Classics. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1970.

Foucault, Michel. "What is an Author?" Partisan Review 42: 603-14.

Gass, William H. Fiction and the Figures of Life. New York: Knopf, 1970.

Gilmour, Robin. The Novel in the Victorian Age: A Modern Introduction. London: Edward Arnold, 1986.

Glowinski, Michal. "On the First Person Novel." New Literary History 9: 103-14.

Goldknopf, David. The Life of the Novel. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1972.

Grossvogel, David I. Limits of the Novel: Evolutions of a Form from Chaucer to Robbe-Grillet. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1968.

Hall, N. John. "Trollope as Critic of the Novel." Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire 53 (1975): 776-90.

Harvey, Geoffrey M. "The Form of the Story: Trollope's The Last Chronicle of Barset." Texas Studies in Literature and Language 18: 82-97.

Highet, Gilbert. The Anatomy of Satire. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1962. rpt. 1972.

Holland, Norman N. "UNITY IDENTITY TEXT SELF." PMLA 90: 813-22.

Holmes, Frederick M. "The Novel, Illusion, and Reality: The Parodox of Omniscience in The French Lieutenant's Woman." Journal of Narrative Technique 1981 Fall; 11 (3): 184-198.

Howell, John. "English 459: Modern American Fiction." ts. Course handout, 1986.

Hurry, David. "Style, Allusion, and Manipulation of Viewpoint." Critical Quarterly 1981 Summer; 23 (2): 61-71.

Hutcheon, Linda. "The 'Real World(s)' of Fiction: The French Lieutenant's Woman." English Studies in Canada 4: 81-94.

---. Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox. Methuen: New York and London, 1980.

---. "'The Pastime of Past Time': Fiction, History, Historiographic Metafiction." Genre (1987) Fall-Winter 20 (3-4): 285-305.

---. A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms. New York and London: Methuen, 1985.

James, Henry. Partial Portraits. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1970.

---. "The Art of Fiction." first pub. Longman's Magazine Sep. 1884 (4: 502-21). in Victorian Criticism of the Novel ed. Edwin M. Eigner and George J. Worth. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985. 193-212.

Johnson, A.J.B. "Realism in The French Lieutenant's Woman." Journal of Modern Literature 1980-81 8 (2): 287-302.

Kahler, Erich. The Inward Turn of Narrative. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1973.

Kaplan, Fred. "Victorian Modernists: Fowles and Nabokov." Journal of Narrative Technique 3: 108-20.

Kellman, Steven G. The Self-Begetting Novel. London: Macmillan, 1980.

Kincaid, James R. "Trollope's Narrator." The Trollope Critics. Ed. N. John Hall. London: Macmillan, 1981. 196-209.

---. The Novels of Anthony Trollope. Oxford: Clarendon, 1977.

Klotz, Gunther. "Realism and Metafiction in John Fowles's Novels." Zeitschrift fur Anglistik und Amerikanistik 1986 34 (4): 299-308.

Konisberg, Ira. Narrative Technique in the English Novel: Defoe to Austen. Hamden, Connecticut: Archon, 1985.

Lowenkron, David Henry. "The Metanovel." College English 38: 343-55.

Marino, Adrian. "'Modernity' and the Evolution of Literary Consciousness." Diogenes 77: 110-37.

Martin, Wallace. Recent Theories of Narrative. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1986.

McHale, Brian. Postmodernist Fiction. London: Methuen, 1987.

McMaster, Juliet. "The Author in his Novel." The Trollope Critics. Ed. N. John Hall. London: Macmillan, 1981. 210-22.

Mellown, Elgin W. "Narrative Technique in Tristram Shandy." Papers on Language and Literature 9: 263-70.

Miller, J. Hillis. The Form of Victorian Fiction. Cleveland, Ohio: Arete, 1979.

Murfin, Ross C. "The Gap in Trollope's Fiction: The Warden as Example." Studies in the Novel 1982 Spring; 14 (1): 17-30.

Ong, Walter J., S.J. "The Writer's Audience is Always a Fiction." PMLA 90: 9-21.

Palmer, William J. The Fiction of John Fowles: Tradition, Art, and the Loneliness of Selfhood. Columbia: U of Missouri P, 1974.

Pascal, Roy. The Dual Voice: Free Indirect Speech and its Functioning in the Nineteenth-Century European Novel. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1977.

Pearce, Richard. "Enter the Frame." Federman 47-57.

Petrie, Graham. "Rhetoric as Fictional Technique in Tristram Shandy." Philological Quarterly 48 (1969): 479-94.

Pickering, Samuel F., Jr. "Trollope's Poetics and Authorial Intrusion in The Warden and Barchester Towers." Journal of Narrative Technique 3: 131-40.

Polhemus, Robert M. The Changing World of Anthony Trollope. Berkeley: U of California P, 1968.

Preston, J. The Created Self: The Reader's Role in Eighteenth-Century Fiction. London: Heinemann, 1970.

Rimmon-Kenan, Shlomith. Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics. New Accents Series. London: Methuen, 1983.

Ross, Donald, Jr. "Who's Talking? How Characters Become Narrators in Fiction." Modern Language Notes 91: 1222-42.

Saldivar, Ramon. "Trollope's The Warden and the Fiction of Realism." Journal of Narrative Technique 1981 Fall; 11 (3): 166-83.

Skilton, D. J. Anthony Trollope and his Contemporaries. London: Longman, 1972.

Sterne, Laurence. The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman. Ed. Ian Campbell Ross. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1983.

Sukenick, Ronald. "The New Tradition in Fiction." Federman 35-45.

Thackeray, William Makepeace. Vanity Fair. Ed. J.I.M. Stewart. London and New York: Penguin, 1968.

Trollope. Anthony. An Autobiography. Eds. Michael Sadleir and Frederick Page. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1980.

---. Dr. Thorne. with an intro. by David Skilton. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1980.

---. Barchester Towers and The Warden. with an intro. by Harlan Hatcher. The Modern Library series. New York: Random, 1950.

Van Ghent, Dorothy. The English Novel: Form and Function. New York: Harper, 1961.

Warren, Leland E. "The Constant Speaker: Aspects of Conversation in Tristram Shandy." University of Toronto Quarterly 46: 51-67.

Watt, Ian. The Rise of the Novel. Middlesex: Penguin, 1957.

Waugh, Patricia. Metafiction: The Theory and Practise of Self-Conscious Fiction. New Accents Series. Methuen: London, 1984.

West, William A. "The Last Chronicle of Barset: Trollope's Comic Techniques." The Classic British Novel. Eds. Howard M. Harper, Jr., and Charles Edge. with Preface and Intro. Athens: U of Georgia P, 1972. 121-42.

Wolfe, Peter. John Fowles, Magus and Moralist. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 1976.

T. C.
Yükseköğretim Kurulu
Dokümantasyon Merkezi