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The Discourse of Epigraphy in John Fowles's

The French Lieutenants Woman

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Abstract

This study analyses how John Fowles employs the discourse of epigraphy in his most postmodernist and poststructuralist novel *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1969). Fowles has deliberately used realistic historical narratives, intertexts and epigraphs, in order to subvert them from within the very conventions they seek to transgress, and he parades these subversive techniques and the challenges they pose to the tradition of narratology. Fowles cites epigraphs from various sources: literature, history, philosophy, science and even journalism of the 19th-century England in order to wage an attack against the Victorian and, most importantly, the modern English society in terms of history and fiction. This paper shows how the epigraphs echo the intertextual relations of the multiplicity of voices as embodied in the use of a multifaceted narrator who keeps shifting positions over time and develops from a covert to an overt voice in the narrative. The epigraphs reveal the main themes and concerns of the novel and how this narrative style undermines the tradition of narratology. The epigraphs dramatically exhibit how Fowles is able to reconstruct the cultural milieu of the Victorian Age as being vibrant and complex by the representation of aspects of its philosophical, historical, religious, scientific, economic, political, ideological, and literary worlds.

Keywords: Narrative discourse; Epigraphy; Historiography; Intertextuality; Ideology; Victorianism.

The discourse of epigraphy is successfully employed by John Fowles, the renowned late-20th-century novelist, in his radical, existentialist, postmodernist, and poststructuralist novel *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1969). In this novel, Fowles deliberately deploys realistic historical narratives or intertexts (embodied in the epigraphs) in order to subvert them from within the very conventions they seek to transgress. The epigraphs give the impression that the novel is realistic or following the traditional realistic narrative mode of omniscience prevalent in the Victorian novel. But Fowles soon subverts the realistic conventions and challenges the tradition of narratology from Chapter 13 onwards by directly intervening into the narrative and saying that he is writing in the postmodernist age which does not accept old tradition. Fowles thus uses the technique of citing epigraphs from a variety of sources, namely, the literature, history, philosophy, science and journalism of 19th-century England in order to wage an attack against the Victorian and, most importantly, the modern English society in terms of history and fiction.

On the level of narrative fiction and literary practice, the technique of citing epigraphs embodies the poststructuralist discourse of inter- textuality. The novel reveals the intertextual relations of the multiplicity of voices as embodied in the use of a problematic and multifaceted modern narrator, let alone the clash that persists between the hero and heroine of the novel, the problems of subjectivity and the reader's position. On the other level of the historically materialist, existentialist and ideological discourse, the novel also succeeds in employing epigraphs to echo such concerns in history and ideology both past and present. These epigraphs then echo the main themes and concerns of the novel and reveal how Fowles undermines the tradition of narratology as exhibited through the clashes between the different voices adopted by the novel's narrator and also between Charles and Sarah, the Victorian existentialist female who foretells the modern existentialist woman of the West. Through the epigraphs Fowles is able to reconstruct the cultural milieu of the Victorian age as being so vibrant and complex by the representation of aspects of its philosophical, historical, religious, scientific, economic, political, ideological and literary worlds. The epigraphs function thus as contexts within which the characters try to construct their subjectivities and free themselves from the novel's dominant ideology. The

epigraphs are also used as intertexts in various forms and as a device that frequently reveals the nature of conflicts and developments in each chapter. Ultimately, through the use of epigraphs the novel is seen as history in the sense that it constructs the past like any historical text; its narrative is historicised through its evocation of the Victorian period while history is seen as narrative fiction.

An epigraph as a literary device, and as it is used by Fowles in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, is a quotation taken from another text by another author, and is used to shed light on the text which it heads. The function of an epigraph is to set the tone for and to enlarge the horizon of understanding of the whole chapter it introduces and to fully establish the contextual milieu in which it is set with all of its social, political, ideological and religious ramifications. The focal point of each epigraph, then, revolves around the ways in which Fowles uses, for example, literary texts (or their authors), journalism, and science and scientists, such as Charles Darwin and the theory of evolution, as an intertextual device to make the reader believe it as truth, or as evidence to the validity of the story and its historiographic and ideological nature. In exploring how all the epigraphs function in the novel and how they contribute to revealing the implications of the story, the present paper examines the discourse between all of these epigraphs and the narrative. It will also define and classify these epigraphs in a manner which will shed better light on the understanding of the novel as a “historiographic metafiction”.

The paper will show how Fowles succeeds in reconstructing the cultural milieu of the Victorian age by the representation of aspects of its literary world through the poetry of Hardy, Arnold, Tennyson and Clough, and the fiction of Jane Austen. Other epigraphs that deal with politics, economics, ideology, and the question of sexuality are all expressed in prose. Fowles also alludes to Dickens, George Eliot and Thackeray. Darwin and Marx are the principal figures whose writings about social change are widely quoted in the epigraphs, in addition to allusions to Rossetti, Ruskin, Henry Moore and Michelangelo. These epigraphs are arranged in the novel by the narrator in order to function as contexts within which the characters try to construct their subjectivities and to free themselves from the novel's dominant ideology. The discussion of these epigraphs will be linked to the themes of freedom, existentialism and social evolution which are

important aspects of the novel. All these thematic and narrative matters will be elaborated further through the study of the epigraphs, which this paper undertakes as its objective. In order to make this study more comprehensive I shall classify the epigraphs according to their nature or genre, whether fiction or nonfiction, poetry or prose, and to see how much they serve the general narrative of the novel.

‘Discourse’ is used in this study to explore how Fowles manages to achieve his aims in the novel. It embodies what Gerard Genette, in his book *Narrative Discourse* (1972), defines as discourse. Genette differentiates between three categories: *recit* (the actual order of events in the text); *histoire* (the time sequence in which these events actually occur, as we can tell from the text); and narration (which is the act of narrating itself). *Recit* and *histoire* are equivalent to what the Formalists term as *syuzhet* and *fabula*, *plot* and *story*. Genette believes that narrative is a product of the interaction of its different component levels, and that narratology involves the analysis of the relations between these levels. That is why he calls his project *narrative discourse* which means he is looking at these categories as being connected to each other and as having interrelated relationships among them. Indeed two of the central categories of narrative analysis which Genette employs and which suit us here are *mood* and *voice*. He subdivides mood into *distance* (direct or indirect or free indirect speech) and *perspective* which is traditionally called *point of view*. *Voice* involves the act of narrating itself and what kind of narrator and narratee are implied. He concludes that what is important in a narrative is the distinction made between *narration* (the act of telling a story) and *narrative* (what is actually recounted and told, or the events). Genette, thus, provides us with various approaches to texts which furnish us with a metalanguage, words used to describe language, so that we can understand *how* a text like *The French Lieutenant's Woman* means, not *what* it means.⁽¹⁾

Aware of the three levels of discourse and ingenuously utilizing voice and mood, Fowles succeeds in connecting and may be conscripting all these epigraphs together in order to examine the historical world of the novel and its rich web of Victorian intertexts. And just as sentences, as Antony Easthope argues, join together in discourse to make up an individual text, and as these texts themselves join others in a larger discourse, ⁽²⁾epigraph and narrative

join together in *The French Lieutenants Woman* to rejoin in the larger discourse of the Victorian

world: its literature, history, theory, philosophy, biography, archaeology, anthropology, law, science, psychology, sociology, journalism, medicine, and the visual arts, with a repeated sailing into the even larger discourse of the modern times, namely, epigraphs from the world of the 1960s which function as contrasts to those of the Victorians. These larger discourses constitute a communal memory of knowledge, ideologies and attitudes, a repertoire of human experience, and a collective authority, all of which the reader is asked to perceive, navigate, and maybe transcend. This narrative ploy of epigraphy thus reveals the novel to be a true “historiographic metafiction”.

In her book, *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction*, Linda Hutcheon argues that the best characteristic of what is called “historiographic metafiction” is the mixture between fiction and reality. She defines this category as “those well-known and popular novels which are both intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and personages.”⁽³⁾ The idea of self-reflexiveness is another question which is addressed by Hutcheon in another of her earlier books where Fowles is extensively discussed. She uses the term “narcissistic” to describe such novels which fictionalize the outside world into their narratives. “Narcissistic narrative”, for Hutcheon, refers to the narrative technique which is dramatically “self-referring or autorepresentational: it provides, within itself, a commentary on its own status as fiction and as language, and also on its own processes of production and reception.”⁽⁴⁾ This is exactly what Fowles does in *The French Lieutenants Woman*, especially in chapter 13 - he directly tells us that he is not a Victorian novelist telling us a realistic story like those of the Victorians:

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 Alain Robbe-Grillet and Roland Barthes; if this is a novel, it cannot be a novel in the modern sense of the word.

So perhaps I am writing a transposed autobiography; perhaps I now live in one of the houses I have brought into the fiction; perhaps Charles is myself disguised. Perhaps it is only a game. Modern women like Sarah exist, and I have never understood them. Or perhaps I am trying to pass off a concealed book of essays on you. Instead of chapter headings, perhaps I should have written 'On the Horizontality of Existence', 'The Illusions of Progress', 'The History of the Novel Form', 'The Aetiology of Freedom', 'Some Forgotten Aspects of the Victorian Age' ... what you will ⁽⁵⁾

Thus, Fowles is writing in the age of postmodernism where all rules of fiction-making are violated. So the combination of reality and fiction, history and imagination, in one genre means that both are seen as narrative discourses, human constructs, and both have a common marker that they are representations of the "real" world. And this representation is not mimetic or referential in any way, but only artistic.

This is how *The French Lieutenant's Woman* is historiographic in the sense that both Victorian history and Victorian fiction are intertwined into a postmodernist narrative, and both constitute systems of meanings through which the reader is able to feel both histories. That is also why there is no fear of this mixture between history and fiction as Fowles exhibits throughout the novel. On the contrary, such mixture is useful to illuminate the history and politics of the Victorian world and to compare it to the modern world to see where the individual is really freer.

The French Lieutenant's Woman deals with the Victorian story of Sarah Woodruff and Charles Smithson and their plight in Lyme Regis, Dorset. The novel begins with a description of Lyme in 1867 and its Cobb, a harbour quay on which three characters are standing: Charles, Ernestina and Sarah. The narrator very quickly informs us that he is the local spy, observer, almost a voyeur, who tells everything about all the action, particularly the female figure dressed in black, who appears distressed, standing at the end of the Cobb and staring out to sea. We soon learn that this narrator has a double vision, a double voice that makes him as important as the characters in the novel; indeed the

narrative structure of the novel, or the whole genre of the Victorian novel, becomes part of its theme and subject. The narrator constantly interrupts the narrative by making authorial comments with a 20th- century perspective, and through his lens the characters and situations are shaped. The narrative action digresses back and forth from the Victorian Age to the twentieth century, thereby we have a novel set in the nineteenth-century romantic literary genre but with a twentieth century perspective.⁽⁶⁾

The novel is about Charles, an amateur palaeontologist and aristocrat who is engaged to be married to Ernestina Freeman, a wealthy heiress. They meet Sarah, an unemployed governess and the “scarlet woman” of Lyme in whom Charles immediately gets interested. Sarah is an outcast, rebel, the “fallen woman” who had been jilted by her French lieutenant and now wanders the shores in the hope that he would someday return. When he is looking for fossils along the wooded Undercliff, Charles discovers more about her story, her employer Mrs. Poulteney and the miserable life she leads. He becomes intrigued by her, and then he decides to help her, for he finds her very different from other Victorian women. More characters are introduced in the novel such as Charles servant Sam, Ernestina’s maid Mary and Dr. Grogan. The next time Charles meets Sarah she tells him that she thinks she may be going mad. She confesses: “I have sinned,” (123) and that she is suffering in this cruel world but she cannot understand why she “should suffer so much” and why she feels “cast on a desert island, imprisoned, condemned” (124). She then tells him that “you are my last resource. You are not cruel” (125), and that is why she asks him to meet her there once more, when she has more time so that she can tell him the truth about her situation and obtain his advice.

Charles then consults his friend Dr. Grogan about her case. Grogan says that she has as a mental illness called melancholia, and Charles should avoid her because she would lead him to trouble. Charles does not believe him and goes on to meet her again and again to find out for himself that she is a dangerous woman, a woman who has “dark” powers (136). Sarah explains herself: “I think I have a freedom they cannot understand. No insult, no blame, can touch me. Because I have set myself beyond the pale. I am nothing, I am hardly human any more. I am the French Lieutenant’s Whore” (153). But Charles becomes more involved with her, loses interests in Ernestina, and finally breaks his engagement to her at

the cost of signing to her father the declaration of ungentlemanly conduct, the humiliating statement of guilt for breaking the marriage contract. At this stage Charles has already lost Sarah and he discovers that she has jilted him by running away. He then resolves to find her in a melodramatic Victorian fashion. As he follows her by train, a bearded figure sits opposite him and watches him dozing. The character is the narrator himself, who professes not to know where Sarah is or what she wants; indeed, he is wondering what exactly to do with Charles. This is where Fowles discusses how endings in novels are “fixed”, as he intends to fix his own. Charles continues to search for Sarah in the US and Europe but with no luck. He finally receives a message that Sarah is seen in a house in Chelsea, London. He comes to see her there; he finds her living in the house of Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Here she reveals to him that she has a girl from him and he should know it. Both Charles and the reader believe that Charles and Sarah will finally get married and live happily. But the novel concludes otherwise: Charles loses her again and for good as a symbol of her freedom and the freedom of the reader too.

The study of the epigraphs, which head and embrace the story of Charles and Sarah, reveals how the novel constructs a good history of the Victorian period, a Dickensian gallery of characters, a dramatization of the faith-doubt struggle found in the poetry of Tennyson and Arnold, a critique of Victorian and modern cultural malaise, a postmodernist literary conceit, and an archetypal journey with an existentialist twist. It is against that construction or rather reconstruction that the story unfolds. Fowles gives us on various occasions in the novel important reasons of why, and to what effects, he uses these epigraphs. The most important reason appears in the body of chapter 49 when he comments on the Victorian mind and character:

This-the fact that every Victorian had two minds-is the one piece of equipment we must always take with us on our travels back to the nineteenth century. It is a schizophrenia seen at its clearest, its most notorious, in the poets I have quoted from so often-in Tennyson, Clough, Arnold, Hardy; but scarcely less clearly in the extraordinary political veerings from Right to Left and back again of men like the younger Mill and Gladstone; in the ubiquitous neuroses and psychosomatic illnesses of intellectuals otherwise as different as Charles Kingsley and Darwin; in the execration at first poured on the Pre-Raphaelites,

who tried-or seemed to be trying to be one-minded about both art and life; in the endless tug-of-war between Liberty and Restraint, Excess and Moderation, Propriety and Conviction, between the principled mans cry for Universal Education and his terror of Universal Suffrage; transparent also in the mania for editing and revising, so that if we want to know the real Mill or the real Hardy we can learn far more from the deletions and alterations of their autobiographies than from the published versions more from correspondence that somehow escaped burning, from private diaries, from the petty detritus of the concealment operation. Never was the record so completely confused, never a public facade so successfully passed off as the truth on a gullible posterity; and this, I think, makes the best guidebook to the age very possibly *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. Behind its latterday Gothick lies a very profound and epoch-revealing truth. (319)

This rather long quotation shows exactly how much the novel is about the Victorians and how much Victorian thought and literature are part and parcel of its narrative texture. It shows that just as every Victorian had two minds, Charles and Sarah had at least that. It also reveals how much Fowles is drawing our attention to these Victorian figures (as the ones he mentions in this quotation) and that we must go back to them to understand the mental workings and moral attitude of the novels characters and the ideologies of their milieu. It is worth mentioning here that the poetry epigraphs, rather than those written in prose, are the most thematically and structurally important and frequently quoted in the novel. But since Fowles has quoted one important key prose epigraph from Karl Marx on the title page of the novel to head its entirety, and because prose epigraphs dive deep into the general ideology and psyche of the novel's characters (as we shall see), and as a way to setting a format for this analysis, I shall begin this study with the epigraphs taken from non-fiction, especially from Marx and Darwin. Of course, both thinkers are used here in this novel to embody social, individual, ideological, political, existential and evolutionary themes.

Fowles begins *The French Lieutenant's Woman* with a revealing epigraph from *Zur Judenfrage* by Marx: "Every emancipation is a restoration of the human world and of human relationships to man himself." ⁽⁷⁾ The emancipation in the novel does not take the form of a revolutionary triumph, the social ideas

typically associated with Marxist thought, though a lot of class considerations are seen in the development of the novel's characters. Marxism in the novel is affirmed in its recognition of the need for emancipation and restoration. It is in this way that *The French Lieutenant's Woman* undertakes a re-reading of Marxism. It is well-known that Marxism is an interpretation of history, one that attempts to project an ethic upon historical processes and so systematize them. All history, Marx wrote in the *Communist Manifesto*, is understood in terms of class struggle. The genuine liberation is a restoration of relationships. That is why Fowles's novel calls for such liberation to open all possibilities of human freedom. The novel, with this determining epigraph, tends to deconstruct traditional ideas of what Marxist liberation really means. The novel strongly endorses the idea that restoration of human relationships is the nature of true emancipation. The novel is therefore about human emancipation but it is an emancipation that appears as annihilation.

Indeed emancipation and restoration are embodied in the relationship of opposites between Charles and Tina and Sarah on the one hand, and Sam and Mary on the other. This is clear from Sam's attempts at emancipation, his "revolution" against Charles. Mary becomes the channel for change in Sam's life, and this consequently results in a revolutionary impulse. It seems that Sam's and Mary's relationship is more attractive than that of Ernestina and Charles. Whereas Charles and Ernestina are bound by elaborate convention, social ritual and legal considerations, Sam and Mary are direct and honest with each other. There is genuine mutuality, innocence and sincerity in their relationship; there is communication that grows into love based on respect, in sharp contrast to the conventional and artificial relationship between Charles and Ernestina. Sam shows his willingness to speak freely with Mary, a sign which becomes a vision of emancipation for both. Sam and Mary are willing to be transparent in their desires, as is seen when Sam is revealing his plans for the future to Mary. Despite awkwardness in expressing himself, Sam speaks at length of his hope to be free from Charles and to open his own shop. He is willing to speak, communicate, and make himself vulnerable to mockery from Mary (who does not mock).

This communicative bent reveals that love, personal desires, the prospect of marriage, have become a vision of emancipation for Sam.

Charles and Ernestina, on the other hand, do not genuinely communicate. From Charles's first remark to her, "My dear Tina, we have paid our homage to Neptune" (10), there is a particular sterility evident in their language; they hide their inner selves. The quality of their communication is thus symbolic of the lack of genuineness in their relationship. Sarah is also in the same way never genuine in her stories and communications with Charles; she never tells him the truth and she is always enigmatic to the last. Sams and Mary's relationship is symbolical of the true emancipation from their social and economic superiors. Sam and Mary are both practical in correctly surmising that Charles's star wanes as his marriage contract to Ernestina is broken, and so Sam, determined to protect his prospect of marriage to Mary, leaves his position as Charles's valet in hope that Ernestina's aunt and her father will help him. Mary also loses no opportunity to ingratiate herself by telling Aunt Tranter what has happened. This factor is paralleled by the lack of physical expression between Charles and Ernestina, and of its dead end with both Ernestina and Sarah. The successful and true emancipation is then embodied by the love that exists between Sam and Mary. The relationship that Charles has with both Ernestina and Sarah, respectively, is a fake one and never bears fruit in the Marxist fashion to imply emancipation to the human relationship.

From this perspective emancipation appears in the novel as annihilation. It is an existentialist emancipation. Yes, Sarah says that she is free from her own society when she loudly repeats what the people of Lyme call her, "whore", but this never helps her in the long run. She must compromise her personal freedom by working, out of economic necessity, for the tyrannical Mrs. Poulteney; Sarah's father is obsessed with the supposed gentility of his family and eventually is financially ruined and goes mad with this preoccupation; and Sarah's economic marginality is often emphasized. Charles feels sympathy for her but again this leads him to nowhere, especially when she disappears and totally abandons him. Originally, Charles sees Sarah as a way out of the delimiting and sterile relationship he is developing with Ernestina Freeman. He begins dimly to realize in his experience with Sarah the possibilities for human freedom and liberation. He sees her as "alien, enigmatic, and touched with a hint of forbidden sexuality," representing an unbounded otherness that is foreign and fascinating.⁽⁸⁾ Her assumed madness, the title her supposed illicit love affair

has gained her, her bitterly won freedom from the conventions of Lyme village, convey to Charles a sense of remoteness from the world he lives in, the world of carefully wrought formulae, prescribed behaviour, elaborate social convention. In Sarah Charles begins to see the possibilities of personal liberation, emancipation from all that he finds so restrictive. The possibility of sexual expression is also something that seizes Charles and draws him from the repressed and conventionalized engagement with Ernestina to increasing involvement with the outsider, Sarah.

Indeed both Charles and the reader feel lost at the end of the novel to see why he and Sarah cannot unite with each other especially after she tells him about their daughter Lalage, who should unite them symbolically at least. When Lalage does not do that, then their freedom or their sense of emancipation is nihilistic. The same sense of nihilism reverberates throughout Ernestina's "love" relationship to him and their engagement to be married. The final breakdown of Ernestina is the best image of an annihilation of emancipation. Indeed, this idea of annihilation is close to what David Landrum calls "dissolution."⁽⁹⁾ Charles's relationship to both Ernestina and Sarah is characterized by dissolution and termination; it lacks the true nature and substance of emancipation unlike that of Sams and Mary's. As Landrum argues, this "dissolution/emancipation pattern continues throughout the novel. As certainties crumble one after another, restoration and emancipation occur in a pattern that eventually extends from the characters in the novel to the author, the reader, and the text itself."⁽¹⁰⁾ Of course this point will become clearer when we go through all the related epigraphs in the course of this analysis.

The second epigraph from Marx is taken from his book *Capital* (1867) quoted to head chapter 7 of the novel. Marx argues that the productiveness of modern industry led to "*the unproductive employment of a larger and larger part of the working class, and the consequent reproduction, on a constantly extending scale, of the ancient domestic slaves under the name of a servant class, including men-servants, women-servants, lackeys*" (38). This intertext reveals the function of servants in Victorian industrial society as a whole as embodied in the characters of Sam, Mary and other less important figures in the novel. For Marx a servant is doing an unproductive job and therefore such jobs should be abolished and be replaced by other productive functions in society. This chapter

is totally dedicated to Sam Farrow, Charles's valet, who has played a sizable role in the novel. The novel's modern narrator mocks this new breed of servants, of Cockney background, who "evokes immediately the immortal Weller" from Dickens's classic novel *Pickwick Papers* (41). The name "Sam Weller" is so aptly related to considerations of emancipations and class struggle. Sam Weller is a character who rather starkly illustrated to Victorian readers the suffering of the Victorian underclass. Sam Farrow's situation with Charles is not romanticized. Fowles comments, "the difference between Sam Weller and Sam Farrow (that is, between 1836 and 1867) was this: the first was happy with his role, the second suffered it" (42). The solution of the benevolent and innocent master who wins the undying loyalty of his servant is not workable in the case of Sam and Charles. Their antipathy grows as the novel progresses. Charles's relationship with Sam is less than ideal. Some sort of emancipation is necessary, but since both individuals are deeply embedded each in his own social stratum, exterior forces must bring this emancipation about. Sam's emancipation is ultimately achieved through class and economic change; the only path of liberation open to Sam is that of economic advancement. Fowles does not call for revolution; he tells us that government reforms and economic prosperity had at that time blunted the revolutionary edge almost out of existence. Fowles mentions that Sam has only one ambition, to go into business for himself as a haberdasher. This dream keeps him determined to break free from Charles and create the space necessary for personal fulfillment, for emancipation. This is his "revolution" against Charles.

To support Marx's views about the productiveness of such workers, Fowles gives Sam the impetus of change and to refuse such unproductive roles allotted to him by Charles. Sam represents the Marxist revolution at least in one of its aspects, in "his struggle to command the language." Sam's manners of speech "were signs of a social revolution, and this was something Charles failed to recognize" (41). Indeed Sam and Mary are constructed as socially inferior, separated by the barriers of education, language (they speak in dialect), money, manners, sexual mores, privilege—all the indexes of social stratification. And as the novel develops, antipathy between the servants and their superiors grows, especially between Sam and Charles. Mary is actually a servant of Mrs. Tranter but is made subject to Ernestina during the latter's stay at Lyme Regis.

Ernestina tyrannizes Mary, bullying her and ordering her about, using the language and position to intimidate her. Mary senses oppression, but in a different manner from the way Sam reacts to Charles. She is envious of Ernestina's economic superiority and she also feels attracted to Charles. She thinks he is handsome and desirable, "a beautiful man for a husband; a great deal too good for a pallid creature like Ernestina"(69). Mary is also sexually free in contrast to Ernestina's sexual repression: the former was dismissed from Mrs. Poulteney's for kissing a groom there and becomes sexually involved with Sam not too long after they meet. Although Mary's dissatisfaction takes a different form from Sam's, it is none the less profound, and the relationship of the servant girl to her mistress even more repressive than that of Sam to Charles. Mary does not attempt to break out of the repressive relationship with Ernestina (partially because Mrs. Tranter is a genuinely benevolent employer who shows her disregard for class distinctions by occasionally dining-in private-with Mary). Sam, on the other hand, is defiantly determined to find a way out of his situation, to be liberated from the social bonds that hold him in a subservient position. Ultimately, Sam abandons his master to open his own shop, and then working for Freeman of his own free choice. The only path of liberation open to him is that of economic advancement. Sam represents the change that anticipates the social balance in society as Marx generally proclaimed.

The third epigraph from Marx occurs in chapter 12 and is taken from his *Economic and Political Manuscripts* (1844):

In what does the alienation of labour consist? First, that the work is external to the worker, that it is not a part of his nature, that consequently he does not fulfil himself in his work but denies himself, has a feeling of misery, not of well-being. The worker therefore feels himself at home only during his leisure, whereas at work he feels homeless. (76)

This quotation reflects the homelessness and the sense of alienation of Sam with his master Charles, Mary with her mistress Mrs. Tranter, and Sarah with Mrs. Poulteney, if we consider Sarah to be some kind of worker in Mrs. Poulteney's house. It also concludes the narrative story about Mary's relationship to Mrs. Tranter and Ernestina and her real freedom with Sam. It explains the work of the milk-maids at the Dairy. It also illustrates why these workers used to go to

Ware Commons in the Undercliff to enjoy their leisure time. This place has some exotic tradition about it as a leisure haven, even a dark sensual place that stigmatised anyone who goes there to be an outcast. That is why Sarah was classified as a sinful woman to have gone there after being warned more than once, and being seen coming out of the wood as if committing carnal behaviour with some satyr/Charles. For Mrs. Poulteney the place has a satanic texture with a lot of forbidden activities; it is tarnished by reputation of sexual use: “what satanic orgies she divined behind every tree, what French abominations under every leaf. But I think we may safely say that it had become the objective correlative of all that went on in her own subconscious” (83). But Sarah reflects on her own isolation and feels, as Marx argues, that her pleasure and true life is in her solitude: “ I wish for solitude. That is all. That is not a sin. I will not be called a sinner for that” (83). In fact, for Marx these workers/servants are always sinners and will always be punished for demanding their freedom. That is why Sarah runs away, just as Mary ran away before her from Mrs. Poulteney’s house; Sam also runs away from Charles after trying to blackmail him.

The fourth epigraph from Marx occurs in chapter 30 and is taken from his *German Ideology* (1845-6): “*But the more these conscious illusions of the ruling classes are shown to be false and the less they satisfy common sense, the more dogmatically they are asserted and the more deceitful, moralizing and spiritual becomes the language of established society* ” (211). This epigraph reveals what Mrs. Poulteney has installed for Sarah when she was finally dismissed from her work. It deals with the conscious illusions of Mrs. Poulteney’s ruling class, the bourgeoisie class; how false it is, and yet how dogmatic she is to assert her deceitfulness and her false morals. Mrs. Poulteney is determined to crush “this serpent she had so regrettably taken to her bosom. Mrs. Poulteney elected at last for one blow of the axe” (211). Sarah is dismissed because she is classed as “a public scandal” (212), and she defends herself by saying that she is leaving Mrs. Poulteney’s house “with the greatest pleasure Since all I have ever experienced in it is hypocrisy” (212). Mrs. Poulteney employs her “deceitful, moralizing and spiritual” language to inscribe Sarah as “Satan himself” who comes “to claim his own” and torture her for keeping such a maid. There is a lot of irony when Sarah refuses to take her wages and how she suggests to Mrs. Poulteney to

purchase a torture instrument with her wages to torture other future servants. Sarah shows more irony in implying that Mrs. Poulteney will go to hell for what she has done to people around her. This irony is clearly effective when Sarah says all this with a smile which is enough to send Mrs. Poulteney into a swoon.

The fifth epigraph from Marx heads chapter 37 and is taken from his *Communist Manifesto* (1848): "*The bourgeoisie compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilization into their midst, that is, to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image*" (244). This embodies the relationship between Charles and Mr. Freeman, who tries to climb the ladder of the bourgeoisie towards the ranks of gentlemen through his financially flourishing trade. Charles refuses to join such business because he would not accept it believing that his high gentlemanly class should be emulated rather than he to emulate other lower classes-in a bourgeois ideology, trade is lower in rank than that of the aristocracy to which Charles belongs. Charles knows that Mr. Freeman was always trying to appear a gentleman: "Consciously he believed he was a perfect gentleman; and perhaps it was only in his obsessive determination to appear one that we can detect a certain inner doubt" (244). Mr. Freeman will never be an aristocrat; he is only seen as one of the "new recruits to the upper middle class", and among who "knew very well that they were powerful captains in their own world of commerce" (244). As Marx might have suggested, Mr. Freeman created a bourgeois world for himself and his family by adopting a bourgeois civilisation of not only "golf, or roses, or gin and adultery," but "went in for earnestness Profit and Earnestness (in that order) might have been his motto" (244). Fowles makes the point very obvious by comparing Mr. Freeman to Satan, the lower or underground figure who is luring and tempting Charles to fall down from his high class: "he was a gentleman; and gentlemen cannot go into trade" (249). Charles rejects the offer of a job by Mr. Freeman for it denigrates him. Thus, the waning aristocracy is represented by Charles, dilettante and heir to his aging, unmarried uncle's wealth and title. His bride-to-be, Ernestina, heiress to the fortune her father has accumulated at his enormous London emporium, represents the rising, affluent middle class. While Charles and Ernestina seem to share the idealised Victorian view of family life, they are also keenly aware that their engagement is a legal

contract that will benefit each of them in different ways: after Freeman's death, Charles will gain control over the family's money; and for Tina, marriage means an entree into the aristocracy, elevating her above being a mere "tradesman's daughter".

Chapter 42 is headed by the last epigraph from Marx's *Die Heilige Familie* (1845) which deals with the question of history, and projects Charles's "philanthropic" mood which he feels after his encounter with Mr. Freeman: "*History is not like some individual person, which uses men to achieve its ends. History is nothing but the actions of men in pursuit of their ends*" (280). This chapter deals with how both Charles and Sam, each in his own different way, are making their own histories, and thereby, especially Sam, creating the sense of how servants try so many socially approved, accepted or unaccepted ways to achieve their entity and freedom. Charles receives two letters which decide his history: one from Dr. Grogan and the other from Sarah. The one from Grogan talks about the whereabouts of Sarah who disappears from Lyme; the second is from Sarah, and which Sam, "not revealing himself the most honest of men" (286), has steamed and opened to reveal that it only contains an address of an Exeter hotel where Sarah is. Sam's attempts to formulate his history, therefore, are embodied in his wish to marry Mary, leave Charles and quit being servant, and work in his own independent business. Of course, Charles is surprised to see how Sam is thinking of some social change; Charles cannot understand it and would never accept it (283). But Sam is decided: "It ain't I'm not very 'appy with you Mr Charles. On'y a shop's what I halways fancied" (283). Then Charles warns him in a typical bourgeois decree that "once you take ideas above your station you will have nothing but unhappiness. You'll be miserable without a shop. And doubly miserable with it" (284).

This means that Charles does not want Sam to change or become a better man in anyway. Charles's attitude here reflects the bourgeois axiom that "if you are born poor, you shall die poor" and you will not be allowed any change, any evolution, hence the Victorian rejection of Darwin's paradigm of evolution and social development. Indeed, Sam "had always aped the gentleman in his clothes and manners; and now there was vaguely something else about the spurious gentlemen he was aping. It was such an age of change! So many orders beginning to melt and dissolve" (285). Sam gives an excuse for his dishonest

behaviour in spying on his master that he wants to get married, and marriage means responsibility: “Sam did not think of his procedure as dishonest; he called it ‘playing your card right’. In simple terms it meant now that the marriage with Ernestina must go through; only from her dowry could he hope for his two hundred and fifty pounds” that he needs for starting his shop (286).

The second key Victorian figure quoted in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* is Charles Darwin in his controversial book, *The Origin of Species* (1859). Darwin created an uproar during the Victorian age because his theory undermined the creationist myth of Adam and Eve as told in the Bible: man, after all, is not created after the good image of God, but a descendent from ape. This book gave not only Fowles but many other writers, modern and Victorian, a lot of ideas concerning social change through his theory of evolution. *The French Lieutenant's Woman* clearly tells a story involving the great crisis of Darwinism in Victorian England. Fowles demonstrates how people (Victorians and Moderns) should see the significance of Darwin. The novel makes it plain that we have a different Darwin, Charles Smithson, the protagonist, who “called himself a Darwinist, and yet he had not really understood Darwin. But then, nor had Darwin himself” (47). Fowles suggests that even we late twentieth-century readers have corrected some of these earlier misunderstandings and in the process of doing so have defined ourselves historically. This is what Dr. Grogan says at one point that *The Origin of Species* is about the living not the dead. Fowles suggests that our understanding of evolution determines in a profound way our understanding of ourselves as living beings. There are many critics who have discussed this idea, but one stands out, George Levine, in *Darwin and the Novelists*. He discusses the way Darwinism permeates Victorian realism, even “among writers who probably did not know any science first hand.”⁽¹¹⁾ As we mentioned with historiography, Fowles (and Levine in his own way) suggests that fictional narratives and Darwin’s evolutionary narratives get constructed in similar ways; they are all historiographic narratives.

Fowles uses Darwin in a very effective way to explore the mystery of the relationship among most of his characters. The first epigraph from Darwin occurs in chapter 3 and it deals with Charles’s interest in palaeontology and as being a scientist and believer in Darwin’s theory of evolution. This intertext involves the question of “inheritance” and how, according to Darwin, it affects

our life: "*though each being assuredly is well fitted for its place in nature, many structures have now no very close and direct relations to present habits of life*" (15). Charles thinks of himself as rational and analytical as well as intellectually superior to other Victorian men because he holds unusual progressive views, and "he had always asked life too many questions" (15). At the beginning of *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, Charles, the earnest Darwinist, is very satisfied to know that he (and many people of his class) is at the top of the natural order. To Charles the discoveries of Darwin provide "an immensely reassuring orderliness in existence," an "edificality of time, in which inexorable laws... very conveniently arranged themselves for the survival of the fittest and best" (47). Ironically, Charles believes that he symbolizes this "best", humanity. But as we shall see, Charles learns the falseness of this understanding in a very distinctive way. We clearly see Charles undergo a kind of mental evolution—a change from a Victorian to a twentieth-century sense of self-brought about by the manipulations of Sarah.

Charles is idealistic and romantic; he is trained to be a conventional moralist and his first sexual episode makes him run to the Church. But once in Paris, "the City of Sin," he does not mind indulging in what his age proclaims is forbidden pleasure yet at the same time condones it as his father does when he forbids him to take Holy Orders. In Paris he loses some of his idealism and becomes more cynical. The double standards prevalent in the Victorian age destroy Charles' youthful idealism and replace it with a more worldly cynicism. His double standards often confuse him. His age has taught him to think of sex as something evil but he derives pleasure from sometimes deviating from the norm. The reader understands why Charles then is being attracted to Sarah: not only because she is unconventional but also she is sanctioned by her society as an outcast. The narrator intrudes to make statements about the nature of time and the differences in perception from one century to the next. He notes that if the twentieth century suffers from a lack of time, then our Victorian counterparts suffered from tranquil boredom or what is known as ennui (19). However, ennui was experienced by those in the upper classes who did not have to work to live. This epigraph embodies how Charles finds himself dissatisfied with his lazy life and who deliberately chooses to read scientific tracts which he takes up to relieve his boredom. This epigraph, ultimately, reveals Charles as a

pseudo-intellectual who emerges as an existentialist who learns about his own self. It was Sarah who brings about the great change in Charles, and she is often represented as a superior type of self-consciousness, the magus figure who comes to teach Charles the knowledge she already commands. As Katherine Tarbox, argues, Sarah teaches Charles “by parable, by telling stories. It is true that she is the Scheherazade who never runs out of plots to teach him his way out.

The second epigraph from Darwin’s *The Origin of Species* occurs in chapter 19 and deals with the theme of “natural selection”:

*As many more individuals of each species are born than can possibly survive; and as, consequently, there is a frequently recurring struggle for existence, it follows that any being, if it vary however slightly in any manner profitable to itself, under the complex and sometimes varying conditions of life, will have a better chance of surviving, and thus be **naturally selected** (129).*

This epigraph embodies the content of the entire chapter about Dr. Grogan and his philosophical encounter with Charles which reveals them both to be *naturally selected* each in his own ways: both are Darwinists, liberals, and believers in social-political-religious change. Grogan tells Charles about Sarah’s medical case of “obscure melancholia”; how she “*had become addicted to melancholia as one becomes addicted to opium*. Her sadness becomes her happiness. She wants to be a sacrificial victim” (136). Grogan goes on to describe Sarah in lesbian epithets common to a modern reader but very unlikely to have been thought of in the Victorian time when she was sleeping with Millie, another maid, in the same bed in Mrs. Poulteney’s house. The narrator “ascribes this very common Victorian phenomenon of women sleeping together far more to the desolating arrogance of contemporary man than to a more suspect motive. Besides, in such wells of loneliness is not any coming together closer to humanity than perversity?” (139) It is “innocence” rather than perversity, her varying “*struggle for existence*” that governs Sarah’s existence and, more importantly, Charles relationship to her. The narrator and Grogan then confirm the Darwinian element of *natural selection* “*under the complex and sometimes varying conditions of life*” when they talk of both Charles and Sarah as being the only *naturally selected* people in Lyme (142). Thus, because

Charles and Sarah “vary” and are different from anybody else in their society in terms of their behaviour and aims they seem to embody the Darwinian idea of variation, adaptation, the struggle for survival, and hence being naturally selected.

This point of Darwinian *natural selection* is advanced further in the last epigraph taken from Darwin in chapter 50 when Charles finally decides to tell Ernestina about his decision to leave her and go for Sarah: *“The forms which stand in closest competition with those undergoing modification and improvement will naturally suffer most”* (324). Charles seems to be the one who “naturally suffers most” for standing “in closest competition” with Ernestina, the one “undergoing modification and improvement” through her attempts to climb up the ladder of Charles bourgeois society by planning to marry him. She is completely shocked, even devastated, to learn that he will not marry her, will not bring her to his upper class and be *naturally selected* like him. Charles tries to explain to her that he left her not because of class reasons or that her father works in trade but she does not believe him: “I knew it, I knew it. It is because you are marrying into trade. Am I not right?” (326). Charles tries to convince her of the opposite but she knows the reality:

I know to you I have never been anything more than a pretty little article of drawing-room furniture. I know I am innocent. I know I am spoilt. I know I am not unusual. I am not a Helen of Troy or a Cleopatra. I know I say things that sometimes grate on your ears, I bore you about domestic arrangements, I hurt you when I make fun of your fossils. Perhaps I am just a child. *But under your love and protection and your education I believed I should become better.*

I should learn to please you, I should learn to make you love me for what I had become. You may not know it, you cannot know it, but that is why I was first attracted to you. (327; italics mine)

I have emphasised these sentences to indicate how Ernestina plans to get herself to Charles’s upper class, although this may sound ironical and not acceptable to many feminist readers who refuse Ernestina’s submissiveness in this speech. Of course we know how she is so hurt for what he does to her especially when she tells him that he is leaving her for a “slut” of a woman-Sarah; or for “I suppose she is titled-has pretensions to birth” (330). She concludes this by saying that

she and her father know him and his class, “the nobility”, who pretends to have fine manners but it is always false and “unpaid bills” (330). That is why she tells him, and he accepts it, that: “my father will drag your name, both your names, through the mire. You will be spurned and detested by all who know you. You will be hounded out of England” (331).

The next important prosaic epigraphs are taken from Leslie Stephen, *Sketches from Cambridge* 1865, quoted in chapters 8 and 37, and from Lewis Carroll, *The Hunting of the Snark* (1876), quoted in chapter 26 and his *Through the Looking-glass* (1872) in chapter 55. The first Stephen epigraph reveals exactly Charles's situation of keeping himself occupied or doing “*nothing and be respectable*” at the same time through his scientific interests in palaeontology and his constant search for fossils in the Undercliff of Lyme, which serves as “*the best pretext to be at work on some profound study*” while watching and searching for Sarah (43). The second Stephen epigraph in chapter 37 is also revealing: “*Respectability has spread its leaden mantle over the whole country and the man wins the race who can worship that great goddess with the most undivided devotion*” (244). This reflects the respectability that should have been shown by Charles to Ernestina, his Victorian goddess, and to her father who believes himself to be “a perfect gentleman” (244). Ernestina seems a *Victorian goddess* because she embodies beauty, innocence and, most importantly, the naivety of Victorian women in their submissiveness to men and their abiding by the conventions. This epigraph overshadows the entire chapter about Ernestina and her father and his belief in Darwin's theory of evolution as put by Charles when Mr. Freeman agrees that “A species must change in order to survive. It must adapt itself to changes in the environment” (250). As previously mentioned, this chapter is also aptly headed by a text from Marx about the clash between the working class and the bourgeoisie, and how the bourgeoisie will never accept what Mr. Freeman is saying to Charles to convince him that

Times are changing, you know. This is a great age of progress. And progress is like a lively horse. Either one rides it, or it rides one. Heaven forbid I should suggest that being a gentleman is an insufficient pursuit in life. That it can never be. But this is an age of doing, great *doing*, Charles. (250)

But Charles is not convinced and does not “win the race” with Mr. Freeman nor with his daughter and “he saw only Duty and Humiliation down there below” (250) in his barren and hopeless relationship with Ernestina.

The epigraph from Lewis Carroll, *The Hunting of the Snark* (1876), quoted in chapter 26: “*Let me tell you, my friends, that the whole thing depends on an ancient manorial right*” (182) reflects the master-servant relationship between Charles and Sam and between Charles and his uncle Sir Robert who is bequeathing him his ancient manorial right of Winsyatt. This entire chapter talks about this matter and how Charles is worried that his uncle will marry which may make him lose his inheritance. Sam is also shown here as a possible blackmailer who will only take care of his interests as he does towards the end of the novel. The second epigraph by Carroll is from *Through the Looking-glass* (1872) and occurs in chapter 55, which is a revealing dialogue between Alice and a male-character Tweedledee. Alice is described here as a dream, a fantasy character that exists only in the mind of this man, a “*nowhere*” figure, just as Sarah is now for Charles when she is totally lost and he keeps searching for her for nearly three years but nothing is found. Yes, Sarah becomes a fantasy figure, a figment of Charles’s own imagination and he may never find her except in his own healthy mind as he again loses her in the final chapter of the novel after finding her somewhere with the Rossetties.

To emphasise this invisibility of Sarah, her “fictionalized character”, her illusiveness, invincibility, and Charles’s daydreaming of her, the narrator-author stares at Charles in a train bound for London and wonders what to do with him or how to find Sarah for him: Fowles appears as *deus ex machina* or perhaps just as the humble author and tells us that he will give us two endings (in addition to the earlier traditional one when he made Charles go back to Ernestina and marry her as any normal Victorian man who is happily married) to the story in a manner which challenges traditional Victorian realistic fiction: “we judge writers of fiction both by the skill they show in fixing the fights (in other words, in persuading us that they were not fixed) and by the kind of fighter they fix in favour of: the good one, the tragic one, the evil one, the funny one, and so on” (348). We are left, as all the characters have been left, to make up our own minds about which we will accept as Fowles’s own preferred ending, and as our own.

This epigraph emphasises how the modern narrator places such a great emphasis upon the issue of freedom in opposition to the authority of Victorian narrators. The narrator who appears in the train is like a character in the text; he is seen as “an omnipotent god”, not of “a divine look; but one of distinctly mean and dubious moral quality” (348). This narrator does not seem to be as authoritative as his Victorian counterparts. That is, instead of asking “Now what could I do with you?” he asks: “what the devil am I going to do with you?” (348) He conceals his domination by showing that he is simply bemused rather than tyrannical. Also the narrator attempts to conceal his authority by refusing to “fix the fight” between the conflicting characters. Unlike most Victorians, Fowles narrator believes that “the chief argument for fight- fixing is to show ones readers what one thinks of the world around one- whether one is a pessimist, an optimist, what you will.” It is therefore “futile to show optimism or pessimism, or anything else about it, because we know what has happened since [1867]” (348). In order to demonstrate his refusal of an authoritative stance, the narrator, then, displays two versions of the novel’s ending. Significantly, all this illustrates how the narrator rejects the authoritative Victorian persona and focuses instead upon his own decentralizing modern voice.

It is interesting to see the connection between the Victorian godlike author and the anthropocentric Darwinian God advanced in the novel. As we have seen before, to many Victorians the progressive version of natural selection preserved a kind of divine place for humanity. The Victorian novel in its form did much the same; it put forth many ideas concerning human assumptions about progress and freedom. Even in the late twentieth century, Fowles writes, the “novelist is still a god,” though now with a small “g.” What “has changed is that we are no longer the gods of the Victorian image, omniscient and decreeing” (86). Freedom is the first principle now. The author does “not fully control” his creatures because a fully “planned world... is a dead world.” But on the other hand, some sense of determinism is unavoidable: “not even the most aleatory avant-garde modern novel has managed to extirpate its author completely” (86). The novelists difficulty is to avoid a deadening determinism in an inevitably planned world. To do so he must preserve the reality of chance. Hence Fowles considers the option of finishing his novel with the “open, the inconclusive ending”: Charles would simply ride off to London in search of

Sarah. But the conventions of Victorian fiction allow no place for such endings. In the Victorian novel, everything will have necessarily brought about just the one ending. So in spite of the famous Victorian use of coincidence, a strong sense of determinism is hard to avoid. And it is the same kind of determinism that underwrites the teleological, Victorian Darwin. So in order to remain true to his Victorian beginning, but to avoid fixing the ending in a conventional teleological manner, Fowles gives two endings; he flips a coin to decide their order of appearance. Fowles narrative is therefore of a type which tallies with the model of natural selection found in Darwinian theory.

The next important epigraph revealing Charles' spiritual and physical sense of loss is from Newman, *Eighteen Propositions of Liberalism* (1828) in chapter 48: "*It is immoral in a man to believe more than he can spontaneously receive as being congenial to his mental and moral nature*" (310). Charles seems that immoral man who has "walked blindly away" into "that morally dark quarter of Exeter"; his "greatest desire was darkness, invisibility, oblivion in which to regain calm" (310). Charles wants to reconcile and heal the rift within him by entering an empty Exeter church to pray. But he could not pray; how "empty the church was, how silent", and he only saw Sarah's face instead of Christ's

- . It is then immoral of Charles to act as a believer when he and the reader know that he is not because "he had never needed faith, he had quite happily learnt to do without it; and his reason, his knowledge of Lyell and Darwin, had told him he was right to do without its dogma"

. Indeed Charles "was not weeping for Sarah, but for his own inability to speak to God. He knew, in that dark church, that the wires were down. No communication was possible" (312). It is very revealing how then he begins to form a dialogue "between his better and his worse self-or perhaps between him and that spreadeagled figure in the shadows at the church's end" (312). He insists that he was deceived by Sarah, "I was fallen into her snare" (313), and he still feels that he should do his duty towards Ernestina and go back to her. Charles is accused by his other self that Ernestina "is not truly loved" by him; "she is deceived. Not once, but again and again, each day of marriage" (314). He is caught here "in a dilemma that was also a current of indecision" and total loss as to what to do. He is encouraged by that self to act and go to Sarah: "You

know your choice. You stay in prison, what your time calls duty, honour, self-respect, and you are comfortably safe. Or you are free and crucified. Your only companions the stones, the thorns, the turning backs; the silence of cities, and their hate” (314). Charles then realises the meaning of his entire existence: if he chooses Sarah he will pay for it dearly and lose everything about him, will be *crucified* by Victorian society. He sees

all his age, its tumultuous life, its iron certainties and rigid conventions, its repressed emotion and facetious humour, its cautious science and incautious religion, its corrupt politics and immutable castes, as the great hidden enemy of all his deepest yearnings. That was the vicious circle that haunted him, that was the failure, the weakness, the cancer, the vital flaw that had brought him to what he was: more an indecision than a reality, more a dream than a man, more a silence than a word, a bone than an action. And fossils! He had become, while still alive, as if dead. (315)

As we shall see again, this chapter is also headed very aptly by another epigraph from Tennyson’s *In Memoriam* revealing this notion of throwing off completely his age along with the dead. Charles, like Tennyson, believes that “*there must be wisdom with great Death; the dead shall look me thro and thro*”. That is why Charles sees now “a glimpse of another world: a new reality, a new causality, a new creation” (316), and decides to go to Sarah in her Exeter hotel. This is again another indication of the evolution of the self as advanced in Darwinian theory.

The other prosaic epigraphs are embodied in journalistic narratives quoted in the form of reports, letters or advertisements. The first of these is the *Report from the Mining Districts* (1850), in chapter 15 which probes into “the labouring classes”: “*the half - savage manners of the last generation have been exchanged for a deep and almost universally pervading sensuality*” (95). This of course mocks “the half-savage manners” of Sam and Mary and their lower-class sensuality as elaborated in this chapter. Unlike many other Victorians, Charles accepts Sam’s and Mary’s love relationship, as his and Tina’s, as normal and wonderful, with “the wonderful new freedoms their age brought, how wonderful it was to be thoroughly modern young people” in this age (96). Sam tries to defend himself and Charles knows that there is some love- relationship between

Sam and Mary and does not mind it as long as Mrs. Tranter does not. Ultimately, both Mary and Sam continually enjoy their sensual and spiritual relationship which ends in a typical happy traditional Victorian marriage.

The second journalistic report is Dr. John Simon's *City Medical Report* (1849), quoted in chapter 18 involving how "*the laws of society* " *are at times forgotten by those whom the eye of society habitually overlooks, and whom the heart of society often appears to discard*" (119). It is really Sarah who has been forgotten and habitually discarded and overlooked by her Victorian society, more often classified as an outcast and a bad woman. This epigraph embodies in this chapter the revelation of Sarah to Charles for the first time, how she came to Lyme, how she is deserted by her French man, how she has sinned and perhaps adequately punished. It is also here that Charles begins to undergo some changes: "such metamorphosis took place in Charles mind as he stared at the bowed head of the sinner before him" (123). This epigraph echoes exactly the bitterness and anger that Sarah feels towards her society that treated her very badly:

I live among people the world tells me are kind, pious, Christian people. And they seem to me to be crueller than the cruellest heathens, stupider than the stupidest animals. I cannot believe that the truth is so. That life is without understanding or compassion.

That there are not spirits generous enough to understand what I have suffered and why I suffer and that, whatever sins I have committed, it is not right that I should suffer so much. I feel cast on a desert island, imprisoned, condemned, and I know not what crime it is for. (124)

This encounter with Sarah and what she says to Charles reflects a very revealing point about his personality and about one of the novels meanings: Darwins idea of "*cryptic coloration*, survival by learning to blend with ones surroundings-with the unquestioned assumptions of one's age or social caste." Charles is revealed from here onwards in the novel to be a split man not into two but even to three men: "With Sam in the morning, with Ernestina across a gay lunch, and here in the role of Alarmed Propriety he was almost three different men; and there will be others of him before we are finished" (127). Charles seems the only Victorian who understands and practices this idea of cryptic coloration by

accepting to meet and deal with Sarah because he sees “behind her façade of humility” a decent woman other people cannot see (127).

A similar example of gross social injustice committed against women is reflected in a further journalistic epigraph, the *Children s Employment Commission Report* (1867), which is quoted in chapter 35. It reads:

At the infirmary many girls of 14 years of age, and even girls of 13, up to 17 years of age, have been brought in pregnant to be confined here. The girls have acknowledged that their ruin has taken place in going or returning from their (agricultural) work. Girls and boys of this age go five, six, or seven miles to work, walking in droves along the roads and by-lanes. I have myself witnessed gross indecencies between boys and girls of 14 to 16 years of age. I saw once a young girl insulted by some five or six boys on the roadside. Other older persons were about 20 or 30 yards off, but they took no notice. The girl was calling out, which caused me to stop. I have also seen boys bathing in brooks, and girls between 13 and 19 looking on from the bank. (231)

This epigraph embodies the critical issue of sexuality in the Victorian age as discussed in the most philosophical chapter in the novel. It explores the disturbing realities of ruined girls, such as how Sarah is seen in Lyme, or even the free relationship of Mary and Sam, and many other unnamed examples of fallen women in London. The narrator reflects mockingly on a lot of statistical elements relating to the number of prostitutes and brothels in Britain in the nineteenth century, a factor which shows that the Victorians were highly sexed people without acknowledging it: “The Victorians poured their libido into those other fields; as if some genie of evolution, feeling lazy, said to himself: We need some progress, so let us dam and divert this one great canal and see what happens” (232). This diverted canal is sex and remains strongly flowing underneath hidden as if not there *sublimated* in favour of industry, work, religion and progress. This also led to the “error of supposing the Victorians were not in fact highly sexed. But they were quite as highly sexed as our own century. They were certainly preoccupied by love, and devoted far more of their arts to it than we do ours” (232). To elaborate this point even further Fowles gave a lengthy footnote about methods of birth control and the availability of sex manuals well at the turn of the 19th century. He gave the example of Dr.

George Drysdale's book, *The Elements of Social Science; or Physical, Sexual and Natural Religion. An Exposition of the true Cause and only Cure of the Three Primary Evils: Poverty, Prostitution and Celibacy* (1854). The Victorians were indeed serious about something we modern people "treat rather lightly, and the way they expressed their seriousness was not to talk openly about sex, just as part of our way is the very reverse" (233). This also leads to another error about the Victorians: "of equating a high degree of sexual ignorance with a low degree of sexual pleasure" (233). Fowles concludes that we modern people "are the more Victorian-in the derogatory sense of the word-century, since we have, in destroying so much of the mystery, the difficulty, the aura of the forbidden, destroyed also a great deal of the pleasure" (234). This of course explains the whole misunderstanding of how Sarah is looked at by her society and how Charles reads her existence in a rather different and more receptive way.

The way of reading and misreading Victorian women is further elaborated in another prose epigraph taken from a letter in *The Times* (February 24th, 1858), quoted in chapter 39:

Now, what if I am a prostitute, what business has society to abuse me? Have I received any favours at the hands of society? If I am a hideous cancer in society, are not the causes of the disease to be sought in the rottenness of the carcass? Am I not its legitimate child; no bastard, Sir? (259)

This answers for all the prostitutes of London at that time and more importantly for Sarah's classification as the "French Lieutenant's whore"; society makes them so. This epigraph reflects this whole chapter which describes how Charles feels sullied by the encounter with Mr. Freeman and how he is frustrated in his ambition to get out of the marriage contract. Instead, he has been drawn deeper in. He begins to perceive, dimly, that he is a misfit in the new society, a drone rather than a worker; it undermines his self-esteem even more. He feels anger, humiliation, frustration and fear; self-knowledge of this sort is painful to him. This also reflects how he spends one night in the red district of London with his friends; how he picks up a red-haired Sarah-like prostitute in a manner which reflects the constant abuse of women in Victorian society ⁽¹³⁾ Charles finds this whole experience, the sexual entertainment, repellent.

The French Lieutenant's Woman is a good definitive study of the sexual repression of the Victorian age. The prostitute Sarah has no inhibitions and few illusions about the realities of life: for the Victorians "it was universally maintained that women do not have orgasms; and yet every prostitute was taught to simulate them" (232). It is only the more "refined" species of society who have to observe the taboos and keep to the rules. There is a strong sexual/sensual element in the novel and the characters react as they do largely because of the sexual mores of the time. Victorian women of the middle and upper classes were sexually ignorant before marriage. In the novel, we learn from Grogan that at least one couple he knew thought that the navel was the point of entry for sex. Ernestina, who is typical of the time, will not even allow herself to look at her own naked body, or permit Charles to touch her except for the chastest of kisses on the cheek, forehead or hand. Paradoxically, when she is alone she imagines herself very much in love, preferring recitations of poetry and passionate entries in her journal to real intimacy with her fiance. Sarah, on the other hand, because of her lower-class, like Mary and other unknown female servants, is much more fortunate to enjoy and talk about sex; Mary is sexually active with Sam, and Sarah, "the scarlet woman of Lyme," the outcast dismissed by society because of her affair with the French sailor, becomes the figure of sexual intrigue throughout Lyme. Thus, the novel explores that the higher up the social scale, the more freedom a woman had to break the rules, as long as she did not cross over the unwritten rule of being indiscreet or unladylike- hence the absolute hypocrisy of society: it pretends it keeps up with moralities but the opposite seems the norm. Indeed, neither Sarah nor Tina has such assumed luxury: Tina because of her upbringing in trade and her own naivety and Sarah because she is caught between classes.

The last journalistic epigraph appears in chapter 56 and it is a Mid- Victorian advertisement, involving the keen search for Sarah everywhere in England, the Continent and the Colonies. It addresses how distressed and destroyed Charles was when he accepted to sign the admission of guilt sent to him by Mr. Freeman (354-55).

The next prosaic epigraphs are literary and fictional, taken from Jane Austen's novel *Persuasion* (1818) and appear in chapters 5, 10 and 14. Austen is one of Fowles's favourite English novelists mainly for her narrative techniques and for

the comedy, irony, humour and sharp criticism of society she employs throughout her novels. The first of these epigraphs, in chapter 5, is typical of those Austen novels in introducing Ernestina as a simple girl who “had exactly the right face for her age” (27); who “had never had a serious illness in her life;” and who “had certainly a much stronger will of her own than anyone about her had ever allowed for. But fortunately she had a very proper respect for convention” (29). The setting of Lyme is described here also in a typical Austen fashion to explore the relationship between Ernestina and her Aunt Tranters house in Lyme, where she annually visits to recover from the busy life of London. Ernestina, like many of Austen’s heroines, are typical of Victorian women: beautiful, virtuous and cheerful, and yet she is much too controlled by her social conditions to be a true heroine. She epitomizes everything the Victorians demanded out of a woman-shy, pretty, dutiful. She accepts her future role as a wife and mother. She is the symbol of a repressed Victorian woman, a commodified being. Fowles tells us that under normal Victorian circumstances, Ernestina would have been the heroine of his novel. But she has to relinquish her role to the more darkly, intense Sarah who defies conventions and all forms of commodifications.

The second epigraph from Austen’s *Persuasion* occurs in chapter 10 and similarly deals with the description of Englands beautiful southern coastal landscape of Dorset. The epigraph tells of the “*green chasms between romantic rocks, where the scattered forest trees and orchards of luxuriant growth declare that many a generation must have passed away*” in this place, the Undercliff, the “English Garden of Eden” (62), or the mysterious woods of Ware Commons that Fowles describes. This place seems the Garden of Eden for Sarah and Charles where they meet and ferment their love relationship. The last epigraph also from Austen’s *Persuasion* occurs in chapter 14 and deals with the “*idea of good company*” and what it entails regarding Charles feelings and attitude concerning the company he keeps with either Ernestina or Sarah. Very quickly the novel’s modern narrator tells us how when meeting Ernestina, Charles “suffers hours of excruciating boredom”, whereas with Sarah even her silent and brief looks “spoke worlds” for him (93). The chapter very aptly describes the visit by Mrs. Tranter, Ernestina and Charles to Mrs. Poulteney’s Marlborough House. The meeting with Sarah seems natural for Ernestina who is

just looking at a low-class, even “sinned” maid; for Charles, in front of these women she is also just a maid, but deep within him he is looking at her to see how she reacts to their last two secret meetings in the Undercliff. He understands her looks and knows that she “was therefore playing a part; and that the part was one of complete disassociation from, and disapprobation of, her mistress.” Charles realises that the “silent Miss Woodruff was labouring under a sense of injustice” and he inwardly decides to help her out, for both “had recognized they shared a common enemy” (92, 93).

The last literary but philosophical epigraphs are importantly taken from Matthew Arnold’s *Notebooks* (1868) quoted in chapters 29, 61, and his *Culture and Anarchy* (1869) in chapters 51 and 53. The one from the *Notebooks* in chapter 29 epitomizes the concept of “duty” as practiced by the Victorians (Charles or Ernestina as examples) or what one does “*because it is ones duty, or is reasonable*” (207). This chapter explains how Charles is searching for Sarah and finding her in the barn, an act which contradicts his duty towards Ernestina and her Victorian norms, and which embodies the theme of *quest* in the novel. The second epigraph from Arnold’s *Notebooks*, in the final chapter of the novel 61: ‘*True piety is acting what one knows,*’ can ultimately be taken to summarize the story’s compelling theme and purpose. It reflects how the affair between Charles and Sarah is in fact no more than a trick (readers who express disappointment at the ending have no doubt swallowed too much of the bait, reading the novel as a conventional romance). Indeed, Charles’s “true piety” is his final realization that “From the first she had manipulated him. She would do so to the end” (397); he realises that his love for her and his entire existence seem all to be “in vain, all height lost” (398). Charles now understands the fundamental principle of life, namely, that he should only care for his existence; he “has at last found out an atom of faith in himself, a true uniqueness, on which to build,” to realise that life “is not a symbol, is not one riddle and one failure to guess it”; but it is to be “endured” (399). As a true existentialist, Charles realises he should accept Sarah’s own choice of action which embodies Arnold’s epigraph, and which, for Fowles, “a modern existentialist would no doubt substitute ‘humanity’ or ‘authenticity’ for ‘piety’; but he would recognize Arnold’s intent” (398). Thus, this epigraph embodies the quest pattern used in the novel where Charles progresses from ignorance to self-knowledge, contrary

to Marxist theory and, for that matter, inexorable Darwinian laws of natural selection, requires that he separate himself from his “age,” the very culture that has formed him, defined him, and threatens to deform him.

The second two epigraphs from Arnold’s *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), in chapters 51 and 53, embody Arnold’s and Fowles’s political views towards the Victorian society; how “*the strong feudal habits of subordination and deference continued to tell upon the working class*”; how “*the modern spirit has now almost entirely dissolved those habits*” of Englishmen doing whatever they like which ultimately leads to “*anarchy*” (332). Those “feudal habits”, as embodied in Charles’s relationship to Sam, lead the latter to offer his resignation in vengeance against the constant subordination of his working class. Sam expresses disdain at Charles’s *anarchic* actions not only of abandoning Ernestina but also of jeopardizing his chances for social advancement and evolution. Charles feels very shocked at Sam’s daring behaviour, “in truth he felt like a marooned sailor seeing his ship sail away; worse, he had a secret knowledge that he deserved his punishment. Mutiny, I am afraid, was not his only crime” (334).

The second epigraph from *Culture and Anarchy* in chapter 53, similarly, rejects the Victorian attitude towards “*the insisting on perfection in one part of our nature and not in all; the singling out of the moral side, the side of obedience and action*” Yes, the Victorian mind insisted on the “*strictness of the moral conscience*” and neglected “*the care of being complete at all points, the full and harmonious development of humanity*” (339). Fowles reflects such Arnold’s concern about the lack of perfection in Victorian society in this chapter through Grogan’s and Charles’s discussion of Sarah’s case. Grogan gives more words of wisdom about Charles’s conduct as just ‘lust’ and immoral although he knows that his age is full of hypocrisy (340). Then he warns him about his claim that he belongs to the “rational and scientific elect”, which have always “introduced a finer and fairer morality into this dark world.” But if the elect “fail that test” of morality, they will become “no more than despots, sultans, mere seekers after their own pleasure and power... victims of their own baser desires” (342). Grogan will never accept that Charles and Sarah have a life together because she is categorised quite clinically as a hysterical manipulator of men.

The most important epigraphs from Arnold actually come from his poetry, a point which brings us in this study to the second major section of analysis: the poetry epigraphs. Of course, Arnold is not the most frequently quoted poet in this novel; it is Tennyson. But according to Fowles, Arnold's poem "To Marguerite" (1853), quoted in full inside chapter 58 of the novel, is "perhaps the noblest short poem of the whole Victorian era", embodies the theme of isolated existence of not only Charles and Sarah but many others in the novel when Arnold succinctly pronounced: "*We mortal millions live alone*" (365). This sense of loneliness is especially true when Sarah leaves Charles lost with no trace whatsoever about her; he keeps searching for her everywhere but there is only "nothingness, an ultimate vacuity"; his whole life seems to have "a total purposelessness" (364). Through this poem Charles realises the meaning of his existence in relation to Sarah and society; he seems "freed from his age, his ancestry and class and country", but "he had not realized how much the freedom was embodied in Sarah; in the assumption of a sacred exile" (366). But in fact Charles "no longer believed in that freedom; he felt he had merely changed traps, or prisons. But yet there was something in his isolation that he could cling to; he was the outcast, the not like other men" (366) of his age who would not understand his decision to leave a happy marriage with the simple but rich Victorian Ernestina.

The other Arnold poems, which reflect similar themes and situations, are "A Farewell" (1853) in chapters 9, 22; "Parting" (1853) in chapters 21, 40; "The Lake" (1853) in chapter 28; "The Scholar Gipsy" (1853) in chapter 47; and "Self-Dependence" (1854) in chapter 59. Looking into these poems reveals how Fowles has successfully deployed Arnold's themes and ideas (of loss, isolation, and the search for the self) into his novel, how much they reflect the situation of both Charles and Sarah as examples of Victorian society which Arnold nicely exposes and criticizes. For example, his poem "A Farewell", some of whose stanzas are quoted in chapters 9 and 22, embodies the glowing secret love that Charles feels towards Sarah from the moment he sees her; how he sees her, in Arnolds words: "*Too strange, too restless, too untamed*" (49). The same idea of love is repeated in another section of the poem in the epigraph to chapter 22 when the speaker of the poem, just like Charles, feeling "*the load*" of "*too strong emotion*" for Sarah; how he has "*longed for trenchant force*" to hide this

love for Sarah not only from Ernestina but from everybody else around him: “All sympathetic physical feelings towards the girl he would henceforth rigorously suppress, by free will” (164-5). Indeed, Charles, and the speaker of the poem, emphasises this idea of *will* by saying that he has learnt: “*That will, that energy, though rare, / Are yet far, far less rare than love*” (164). Charles proves that “will” and “love” are true concepts in which he deeply believes and acts them out in his life with no regrets at all.

“Parting” (1853), three stanzas quoted in chapters 21 and 40, is another of Arnolds poems which reflects Sarahs story with the Frenchman and which deeply affects Charles. The speaker here in the poem echoes the Frenchman Varguennes who jilted Sarah, and maybe to the contrary effect for Charles, when he says: “*Forgive me! Forgive me! / Ah, Marguerite, fain / Would these arm reach to clasp thee:- But see! tis in vain*” (156). This supports Sarah’s story that Varguennes wanted to come to marry her but circumstances hindered him from doing so. That is also why both she and he kept “*In the void air towards thee / My straind arms in cast. / But a sea rolls between us- / Our different past.*” This strained arm will also always be stretched for her by Charles to rescue her from her plight. A more vivid sense of sensuality and love is expressed in the second epigraph from “Parting” in chapter 40: “*To the lips, ah, of others, / Those lips have been prest, / And others, ere I was, / Were clasped to that breast*” (269). Of course, Charles is comparing here his strong feelings for Sarah and the London prostitute Sarah he met and with whom he could not have sex in a manner which reflects his genuineness and his true love for Sarah Woodruff.

The next Arnold poem epigraph is “The Lake” (1853), one stanza in chapter 28, which reflects on the story of the trial of Lieutenant’s Emile de La Roncière as an accurate and horrific example of sexual repression, which strongly overshadows Sarah’s account of her Frenchman and also her manipulation of Charles as Grogan tells him. Having read this story Charles goes straight out to find Sarah, thereby embodying Arnolds poem: “*Again I spring to make my choice; / Again in tones of ire / I hear a God’s tremendous voice-1 Be counselld, and retire!*” (199) Charles makes his decision to follow Sarah and find her out within and without. He never listens to any advice from anybody although all angry calls for him are correct and just. Charles keeps his head

down and follows his own choice to find Sarah not only here but also throughout his life as the next epigraph from Arnold, “The Scholar Gipsy” (1853) in chapter 47, reveals. This three-line section of the poem also reflects Charles’s situation of being lost as to why Sarah lied to him about her real story with Varguennes. He realises that she is virgin and that Grogan’s story about her as a plotter seems to be true. She embodies Arnold’s poem where she reflects Dido the mythological princess who committed suicide when abandoned by her lover Aeneas. But, Sarah, unlike Dido, did not commit suicide for the loss of Varguennes; she kept her head up, her solitude and identity unknown even to Charles till the end of the story as a sign of her free choice of action while the narrator and Charles kept asking: “for what purpose? Why? Why? Why? To put him totally in her power!” (307) In fact, Charles realises that he is in the end “no more than the dupe of your imaginings” (309).

The last most important epigraph from Arnold’s poetry is one stanza from his poem “Self-Dependence” (1854), quoted in chapter 59:

*Weary of myself, and sick of asking
What I am, and what I ought to be,
At the vessel’s prow I stand, which bears me
Forwards, forwards, o ’er the starlit sea.*

The speaker of this poem can in fact be completely identified with Charles who, in an existential manner, is weary of himself and completely lost and tired of searching for Sarah everywhere in Britain, in the colonies and in America but to no avail. The epigraph embodies what happened in this chapter about Charles’ journey to America and how he compares American life with that of his own Victorian English one.

The most important poet ever quoted in *The French Lieutenant’s Woman* is Alfred Lord Tennyson. Tennyson was quoted twenty times: several stanzas of *Maud* (1855) are quoted as epigraphs in chapters 6, 10, 13, 16, 25, 29, 38, 43, 45, 49, 56, and inside 58. His other key Victorian poem is *In Memoriam* (1850); many lines of which are quoted in chapters 5, 8, 12, 15, 20, 36, 41, and 48. Indeed, Tennyson’s poetry treats various issues of political and historical concerns, as well as scientific matters, classical mythology, and deeply personal

thoughts and feelings. Tennyson is a poet of penetrating depths into the consciousness of man and society. He is also a poet of the natural and psychological landscape; he uses nature as a psychological category, a setting through which he dramatically conveys the consciousness of people. His personal past, too, figures prominently in his work. The sudden death of his closest friend Arthur Henry Hallam when Tennyson was just 24 dealt a great emotional blow to the young poet, who spent the next ten years writing 131 smaller poems of varying length all dedicated to his departed friend, later (in 1850) collected and published as *In Memoriam*. This lengthy work describes Tennyson's memories of the time he spent with Hallam. Because of his preoccupation with issues of urgent social and political concern, Tennyson maintained a keen interest in the developments of his day, remaining deeply committed to reforming the society in which he lived and to which he gave voice; hence becoming a central figure in Fowles's novel.

The vital reference to Tennyson's *Maud* occurs within chapter 58. For Fowles, *Maud* embodies the entire Victorian era and is Charles's favourite poem (in addition of course to Arnold's "To Marguerite", as I mentioned above): "he must have read it a dozen times, and parts of it a hundred." The narrator admits, "It was the one book he carried constantly with him" (365). Indeed Charles sees the poem as exactly reflecting his situation during his exile when he searches for the lost Sarah:

*Oh cruel seas I cross, and mountains harsh,
O hundred cities of an alien tongue,
To me no more than some accursed marsh
Are all your happy scenes I pass among.
Where e'er I go I ask of life the same;
What drove me here? And now what drives me hence?
No more is it at best than flight from shame,
At worst an iron law's mere consequence? (365)*

Maud is thus a key intertext in the novel and embodies all that has been going on to Charles and Sarah. It embodies also the theme of existentialism. *Maud*; A

Monodrama is widely regarded as Tennyson's greatest poem. It is a fragmentary monodrama/narrative poem presented from the viewpoint of an alienated and often mad young unnamed lover; it narrates his disillusion with Victorian commercialism, his love for the beautiful Maud, and his decision to enlist to fight in the Crimean War. Studying the history of psychiatry, psychiatrists count the poem as among the earliest and most subtle descriptions of manic-depression or mental illness (like that of Sarah's in the novel), and literary critics now recognize it also as among the most innovative of Tennyson's works in poetic form.

The first part of the poem dwells on the funeral of the protagonist's father, and a feeling of loss and lament prevails. Then the appearance of Maud transforms the narrative into a pastoral, dwelling on her beauty. The appearance of Maud's brother causes conflict, and the poet kills him in an unwarranted duel. Maud's death causes turbulence within the psyche of the protagonist, and an emotional longing for contact with the deceased echoes the tones of his earlier work, *In Memoriam*. The poem ends in Part III with the poet leaving to fight in the Crimean War, and parallels may be drawn between the death of Maud's brother, and the apparently justified killing of soldiers in war. *Maud* is thus a poem complicated by the compromised position of the speaker and the emotional instability of the poet. It reflects the distorted view of a single reality, and the variation in meter can be seen to reflect the manic-depressive emotional tone of the speaker. Ultimately, *Maud* embodies the poetry of sensation, the fragmented consciousness, and the complex feelings of ephemerality. Tennyson expressed the feelings of an age where identity, intellect and modernity were problematic issues. He does not offer a clear, linear answer; the poem combines love with a lot of contemporary cynicism about faith, life, and death; it shows a greater concern for the afterlife.

The first reference to *Maud* in chapter 6 explains how for the first time Sarah is introduced in detail by the vicar of Lyme to Mrs. Poulteney. Like Maud, Sarah is seen as the "milk-white fawn", the "unmeet for a wife", not suitable for a wife for her low-class position, the innocent-looking girl but the "fallen" and the perfect charity case of a woman (32). In this chapter, we gain a more detailed history of Sarah's past and Mrs. Poulteney's sanctimoniousness as she feigns compassion for a destitute woman. To her, Sarah is the perfect candidate

for charity and she is determined to make sure that her charity-case redeems her fallen status. Sarah is the curse on which she could lay to rest her own sins in order to reach Heaven. Mrs. Poulteney mistakenly assumed Sarah's reserved posture to be that of someone who is remorseful and full of shame. She thinks that Sarah wants to redeem herself. Sarah is made to read a passage from the Bible and successfully passes the test. Mrs. Poulteney exults in Sarah's melancholic demeanour as she mistakenly interprets her to be mourning her loss of moral values.

The reference to *Maud* in chapter 10 also exemplifies how the speaker of the poem is speaking to a woman, in the same manner of Charles's speaking to Sarah, who has attracted his attention and who "*suddenly, sweetly, strangely blushed*" to find that her "*eyes were met by my own*" (61). This epigraph reflects throughout the chapter how Charles met Sarah and how a deep and hidden relation was struck between them. Both the speaker and Charles continue the same quest about the hidden and ambiguous woman in the epigraph to chapter 13 from *Maud*; Sarah is this "*dark maker*" of stories, the "*Isis hid by the veil*" (85). This epigraph adequately heads this chapter which talks about the narrative voice in the novel and the kind of narrators employed in the 19th-century novel as compared to those used in the modern one. Sarah seems the maker of stories which completely leads to the loss of Charles. Throughout his life, Charles is in a muddle, not able to know anything about her. In the epigraph to chapter 16 the same woman, Sarah, "*Maud in the light of her youth and her grace, / Singing of Death, and of Honour that cannot die*" (99), is the one whom Charles actually meets in the Undercliff. As Tennyson says in this poem, Charles will "*weep for a time so sordid and mean*" and finds himself "*so languid and base*" for his decision to leave Ernestina only to find himself searching for an enigma of a woman (110).

Charles is this lost lover who will never find his beloved, as the next *Maud* epigraph in chapter 25 reflects: "*O young lord-lover, what sighs are those, / For one that will never be thine?*" (178) Sarah, as an ambiguous, mysterious, existentialist, and a free woman, will never truly be Charles's. Charles has to wait for quite sometime before he realises, at the end of the novel, that Sarah is someone who cannot be owned or possessed neither by a husband nor by a lover. This epigraph embodies his realization that "Time was the great fallacy;

existence was without history, was always now, was always this being caught in the same fiendish machine.” He discovered that all attempts to shut out reality were all “illusions, mere opium fantasies” (179). Such realization is also heightened in another epigraph from *Maud* in chapter 29 when the speaker of the poem, just like Charles, is experiencing a beautiful morning breeze, “*And the planet of Love is on high*” (207). This epigraph reflects the high spirits that Charles feels in his encounters with Sarah at this stage of their relationship in the novel. He feels that all nature shares with him his pleasure (and maybe reproach) of meeting Sarah: he feels that “the trees, the flowers, even the inanimate things around him were watching him. Flowers became eyes, stones had ears, the trunks of the reproving trees were a numberless Greek chorus” (209).

The next *Maud* epigraph, in chapter 38, is the most philosophical one. It deals with the question of the value of work, of trade, of progress, of death, and of the existence of man as fossil. Here Charles is questioning his prospects of working in trade with Mr. Freeman. He, like the speaker of *Maud*, is sure that he will not make his “*heart as a millstone*” nor “*set my face as a flint*”, nor “*cheat and be cheated, and die.*” Again he casts doubts about all that when he asks: but “*who knows? we are ashes and dust*” (252). As I argued earlier, Charles “was almost invisible, he did not exist, and this gave him a sense of freedom,” but he lost this freedom. “All in his life was lost; and all reminded him that it was lost” (254). The only thing that he wanted now is escape, “*if I could only escape*” Ultimately, Charles “rejects the notion of possession as the purpose of life, whether it be of a woman’s body, or of high profit at all costs, or of the right to dictate the speed of progress.” He is just “a man struggling to overcome history,” but yet he “does not realize it” (257).

Moreover, Charles “was one of life’s victims, one more ammonite caught in the vast movements of history, stranded now for eternity, a potential turned to a fossil” (289). In fact, it was Sarah who made him feel that victimization and fossilization through her ambiguity and invisibility, as the next *Maud* epigraph shows in chapter 43: “*Yet I thought I saw her stand, / A shadow there at my feet, / High over the shadowy land*” (287). The speaker of *Maud* seems here to be Charles himself looking hazily at Sarah, but not sure it was Sarah. Was it Sarah the prostitute he met in London? Or was it any other woman for whom he is

meditating leaving Ernestina? He says that he does not know, but we do know that it was Sarah Woodruff who was that *shadow overshadowing* his land and existence: “Indeed it was hardly Sarah he now thought of-she was merely the symbol around which had accreted all his lost possibilities, his extinct freedoms, his never-to-be-taken journeys. He had to say farewell to something; she was merely and conveniently both close and receding” (288-9). This overshadows the same idea of losing himself alongside his loss of Sarah as embodied in another important *Maud* epigraph in chapter 45: “*And ah for a man to arise in me, / That the man I am may cease to be!*” (295) Here Charles, exactly like the speaker of the poem, is wishing to have a clear decision about his behaviour and to be a strong man and face Ernestina with his decision to leave her. Charles embodies the speaker of this poem by abandoning his earlier choice of marrying Ernestina and succumbing to traditions and conventions; he rather decides to stay at Exeter and meet Sarah, an act which also demands the drastic action of coming forward and admitting the truth to Ernestina. But before he does so his servant Sam, as the next *Maud* epigraph in chapter 49 shows, tries to blackmail him. Sam has secretly read Charles’s letter sent to Sarah, which he does not deliver, and begins to think how to make use of all this to his benefit. Tennyson says: “*I keep but a man and a maid, ever ready to slander and steal*” (318). This is exactly what Sam and Mary do to Charles towards the end of the novel.

The final *Maud* epigraph which occurs in chapter 56 reveals Charles’s severe agony due to his bewildering loss of Sarah. The speaker of the poem, again just like Charles, is begging Christ to offer him the impossible wish of seeing the souls of the dead-Sarah seems dead for him- to make sure about her whereabouts and to find her. Indeed Charles wished to have been dead and not lost her; he even contradicts himself that despite all her deceptions he still believes her: “beneath all her stories and deceptions she had a candour an honesty. Perhaps she has died. She had no money. No family” (357).

The next Tennyson epigraphs are taken from his most famous poem *In Memoriam* (1850); many of which quoted in chapters 5, 8, 12, 15, 20, 36, 41, and 48. Again, the story of the speaker of this poem reflects in so many ways Charles’s situation with Sarah. Indeed all statements by the speaker of *In Memoriam* can be understood as personal statements by the poet himself. Like most elegies, the poem begins with expressions of sorrow and grief, followed by

the poet's recollection of a happy past spent with his friend Hallam. These fond recollections lead the poet to question the powers in the universe that could allow a good person to die, which gives way to more general reflections on the meaning of life. Eventually, the poet's attitude shifts from grief to resignation. In the climax of the poem, generally considered to be Section 95, the poet realizes that his friend is not lost forever but survives in another, higher form. The climax is based on a mystical trance Tennyson had in which he communed with the dead spirit of Hallam late at night on the lawn at his home at Somersby. *In Memoriam* closes with an epithalamion, a wedding poem, which celebrates the marriage of Tennyson's sister Cecilia to Edmund Lushington in 1842. The poet suggests that their marriage will lead to the birth of a child who will serve as a closer link between Tennyson's generation and the *crowning race*. Indeed this birth represents for Tennyson a new life after the death of Hallam, and hints at a greater, transcendent and cosmic survival, similar to that transcendent relation between Charles and Sarah embodied in their illegitimate child in the novel.

In Memoriam, moreover, reflects Tennyson's struggle with the Victorians' growing awareness of another sort of past: the vast expanse of geological time and evolutionary history. Not just an elegy and an epithalamion, the poem is also a deeply philosophical reflection on religion, science, and the promise of immortality. Tennyson was deeply troubled by the proliferation of scientific knowledge about the origins of life and human progress: while he was writing this poem, Sir Charles Lyell published his *Principles of Geology*, which undermined the biblical creation story, and Robert Chambers published his early evolutionary tract, *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation*. The new discoveries in biology, astronomy, and geology then implied a view of humanity that much distressed many Victorians, including Tennyson. Although Tennyson associated evolution with progress, he also worried that the notion seemed to contradict the Biblical story of creation and long-held assumptions about man's place in the world. In this poem he insists that we must keep our faith despite the latest discoveries of science: he writes, "*Strong Son of God, immortal Love, / Whom we, that have not seen thy face, / By faith, and faith alone, embrace, / Believing where we cannot prove.*" Tennyson echoes early evolutionary theories in his faith that man can develop into something greater over long periods of

time. In the end, he replaces the doctrine of the immortality of the soul with the immortality of mankind through evolution, thereby achieving a synthesis between his profound religious faith and the new scientific ideas of his day.

The first epigraph from Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, which occurs in chapter 5, is a reflective commentary on Victorian attitudes towards sexuality and duty and the moral conflicts Victorian men and women faced. This epigraph illustrates how Victorians believed that if love could not be immortalized then it ended in lust; love is transcendental, not physical. This echoes to a great extent what Ernestina believes, as the entire chapter narrates. Ernestina strongly believes that her value is in preserving her physical purity; her commodity is her virginity, which was heavily prized at the time. Like most Victorian women, she is sexually repressed, curious yet ignorant about her sexuality. Her society has trained her to believe that her body is meant for the sole sexual gratification of her husband and to bear his children.

The second epigraph from *In Memoriam*, in chapter 8, is a philosophical one which addresses the earth: "*O earth, what changes hast thou seen!*" (43) This reflects Charles's beliefs in geology, palaeontology, Darwinism and the theory of evolution, which this chapter explores. The speaker of this poem suggests that the past romantic view of the earth has now changed; things now are so busy, the streets roaring and the hills are mere shadows. The same wonder about the universe occurs in the next epigraph from the poem in chapter 12: "*And was the day of my delight / As pure and perfect as I say?*" This reflects Charles's delights, pure, idyllic, and maybe perfect days with Sarah as this chapter shows. This again contrasts with the next epigraph from *In Memoriam* in chapter 15, where Ernestina's smiles are or should be interpreted as secretly inviting Charles in a manner that challenges Victorian norms. But these smiles he quickly recontemplated in relation to Sarah in chapter 20 as the next *In Memoriam* epigraph reveals the horrors of her real story. He very soon realizes that these smiles are the "less attractive aspect of duty;" "he very soon decided that Ernestina had neither the sex nor the experience to understand the altruism of his motives" (144). As Tennyson asks in this stanza of the poem whether "*God and Nature* " are "*at strife* " to reveal if Nature is capable of harbouring "*such evil dreams*" But Nature (like Sarah) is "*So careful of the type she seems, / So careless of the single life*" (143). This epigraph heads one of the most key

chapters in the novel; it reveals the true identity of Sarah; she tells Charles about her agony as a woman in such a society, how she is so lonely “as if I were allowed to live in paradise, but forbidden to enjoy it” (148). She says that she was deceived by her Frenchman; her “innocence was false from the moment I chose to stay”; “I gave myself to him”, and therefore, “I am doubly dishonoured woman” (152). She mysteriously exposes her dual personality (in a society of split personalities) about enjoying what she had done. It is as a form of existential freedom which she says no one understands: “What has kept me alive is my shame, my knowing that I am truly not like other women. I shall never have children, a husband, and those innocent happinesses they have. And they will never understand the reason for my crime” (153). Sarah is really speaking here in platitudes and her emotions are raw and passionate; she seems to have accepted her position as a penance for her actions.

The next *In Memoriam* epigraph occurs in chapter 36 which exemplifies the true identity of Sarah as a dangerous and fiery woman who is going to destroy Charles’s life. She seems that woman in Tennyson’s poem on whose “forehead sits a fire: / She sets her forward countenance / And leaps into the future chance, / Submitting all things to desire” (238). This chapter shows exactly what Sarah did to Charles; how she behaved in the Exeter hotel, how she spent his money, how she was waiting for him “in the quiet light and crackle, the firethrown shadows” (242). Despite this *femme fatale-ness* of Sarah, Charles continues to follow her, to abandon Ernestina and reject the offer of a good trade position with her father as the entire chapter 41 shows where the next epigraph from *In Memoriam* occurs. Here as if Tennyson were expressing Charles’s feelings and situation of taking a decision against Ernestina, asking for a man to act within him, to “Arise and fly / The reeling faun, the sensual feast; / Move upward, working out the beast, / And let the ape and tiger die” (275). The encounter here with Sarah the prostitute makes him decide his future action; the kindness that she shows is generous, as is Charles’s reaction to the child. He is awkward, but there is innocence in the encounter which brings some comfort to Charles. It is the same effect of elevation that Charles feels after discovering the reality of Sarah in the Exeter hotel encounter, as the last epigraph to chapter 48 and also the long quote from the same poem within the same chapter reveal. The speaker of the poem asks if it is possible “That men

may rise on stepping- stones / Of their dead selves to higher things ” (310). Charles, in the church scene, is lost about this possibility; he is in a dilemma about what to do. He sees himself “crucified on her” and reflects on the nature of freedom. His revelation that true freedom is the casting off of hypocrisy is profoundly significant. He realises a fundamental truth that it is possible *that men may rise from death to higher things* as the poet says, and that paradoxically brings him closer to the essence of real Christianity. He realises, as does Tennyson’s speaker of the poem, that “*There must be wisdom with great Death; the dead shall look me thro and thro*” (316). He decides to go back to Sarah, but first he must confess to Tina: “Charles’s whole being rose up against” this foul proposition of going back to “one’s dead fathers instead of “one’s unborn sons” (316). With Sarah he now sees “a new reality, a new causality, a new creation”, and a new existence (316).

The next key Victorian poet from whom Fowles has quoted is Arthur Hugh Clough (1819-1861) whose vision is vividly reflected in *The French Lieutenant’s Woman*. Most of Clough’s poetry has some depth of thoughts and psychological penetration, and some of his lyrics have certain strength of melody. He often went against the popular religious and social ideals of his day, and his verse is said to have the melancholy and the perplexity of an age of transition/¹⁴) It is the same age of transition through which Sarah and Charles were undergoing as most of the epigraphs from Clough show. They are taken from his “Duty” (1841), in chapters 11 and 44, “The Bothie of Tober-na-Voulich” (1848), in chapter 16, *Poem* (1840), in chapter 27 and 28, *Poem* (1844), in chapter 31, *Poem* (1852), in chapter 33, *Poem* (1841), in chapter 54, and *Poem* (1849), in chapters, 46 and 57. Taking these poems together reveals the close relationship between them and Fowles’s novel.

The first striking epigraph from Clough’s poem, “Duty”, in chapters 11 and 44, for example, shows Clough’s and Fowles’s deep criticism of the Victorian concept of duty as exemplified by the traditional love/would-be-marital relationship between Charles and Ernestina, which, of course, failed miserably at the end. Clough mockingly states that everything is done due to duty: “*With the form conforming duly, / Senseless what it meaneth truly, / Go to church-the world require you, / To balls-the world require you too, / And marry-papa and mama desire you, / And your sister and schoolfellows do* ” (67). Duty is

emphasised again in the epigraph to chapter 44 and is mocked and rejected “*As an obvious deadly sin*” through Charles’s final rejection of marriage from Ernestina (290). The same criticism and rejection of society occurs in the next epigraph from Clough’s “The Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich”, in chapter 16. This is a Homeric pastoral poem celebrating the poet’s state of euphoria about the French Revolution and its socialist implications, as it celebrates the discovery of Sarah for the first time by Charles in this chapter.

The next epigraphs from Clough are all entitled as “poem” written in various times but reveal similar questions. For example, the Poem (1840) in chapter 27 and 28 illustrates Charles’s state of mind: “*How often I sit, poring oer / My strange distorted youth, / Seeking in vain, in all my store, / One feeling based on truth*” (190). Of course, Charles spends all his life searching for the truth about Sarah but all turns out to be mysteries and figments of his own imagination. She was all “*assumptions, hasty, crude, and vain*”, elements that, according to the epigraph to chapter 28, are crucial parts of the story of the trial of Emile de La Ronciere. Again the Poem (1844) in the epigraph of chapter 31 embodies the “*panting sighs*”, the “*united thrill*”, the “*delicious pain*”, “*the pulses and the nerves of twain*”, and the “*Ecstatic conscious unison*” which all filled Charles’s heart when he met Sarah in the barn (214). The same feeling of ecstasy and love which Charles felt is also reflected in the next barn scene in chapter 33 when Charles, like the speaker of Clough’s next poem epigraph, is asking to be left alone to enjoy his idyllic moment with Sarah: “*O let me love my love unto myself alone, / And know my knowledge to the world unknown*” (221). But this idyllic life quickly changes when he loses Sarah, as the next poem epigraph from Clough reveals: “*My wind is turned to bitter north / That was so soft a south before*” (343). Charles’s life has actually become very bitter when Sarah left Exeter without leaving any trace.

The last poem quoted from Clough is Poem (1849), in chapters 46 and 57. The stanzas in the epigraph of chapter 46 embody Charles’s discovery of Sarah as a woman and her true identity as a fiction-maker.

As the speaker of the poems says, Charles “*heart still overrules*” his head and he believes his hopes and follows his whims. He also believes that “*what here is faithfully begun / Will be completed, not undone*” he believes that “*some true*

results will yet appear / Of what we are, together, here" (299). His hopes, however, turn very sour and very dark when nothing comes to his satisfaction. His daring behaviour is punished instead of being rewarded by marrying her as he has always wished, and as the final Clough epigraph shows that the last blow from her is devilish: "*The devil take the hindmost, O!*" (358).

The last key Victorian poet, Fowles's favourite writer, who is often quoted in the novel, is Thomas Hardy. Fowles has a deep admiration for Hardy as a poet and novelist for the various themes, ideas, passions, and true romanticism that the entire body of his writing reveals. The first epigraph from Hardy, a stanza from his poem "The Riddle", in chapter 1, aptly opens the novel with an accurate description of Sarah, the girl who is truly a "riddle", who is always "*stretching*" her "*eyes west / Over the sea, / Wind foul or fair / Always stood she*" Here Hardy seemed to be describing in exactness the situation of Sarah in Lyme, as this whole chapter introduces both Lyme and Sarah. Sarah is portrayed as a singular figure, alone against a desolate landscape. The same lonely case is also shown in the next Hardy epigraph from his poem "At a Seaside Town in 1869", which occurs in chapters 17 and 58. This poem again shows the description of Lyme, its people and all what is happening in and around it and how the figure of a woman, Sarah, is hovering around: "*Still, when at night I drew inside / Forward she came, / Sad, but the same*" (111). The same poem epigraph in chapter 58 shows the same miserable mood that Hardy shows about losing his woman, who strongly echoes Sarah's loss: "*I sought and sought. But O her soul / Has not since thrown / Upon my own / One beam! Yes, she is gone, is gone*" (364). Again, Sarah is the "faint figure" that has bewitched Charles when he met her in the woods as it appears in the next Hardy poem epigraph "On a Midsummer Eve" which occurs in chapter 18. Yes, it is Sarah who "*seemed to stand / Above me, with the bygone look*" when he was digging for his fossils in the woods.

The next Hardy poem is called "Transformations" and occurs in chapter 23. It echoes the transformations in Charles's luck concerning the marriage of his uncle and the prospect of losing some of his inheritance as this chapter reveals. This is skillfully connected with Ernestina's story as it is reflected in the next Hardy poem epigraph called "The Musical Box" in chapter 32. Hardy and Fowles seem to mock Ernestina, "white- muslined, waiting there" "*with high-*

expectant heart / While still the thin mechanic air / Went on inside” (218). This aptly describes how mechanic Charles’s entire relationship is with Ernestina in contrast to the most vivid and spiritually invigorating affair with Sarah as the entire chapter describes. But no matter how hard Charles tries to gain Sarah he always loses her as the next Hardy epigraph from his poem “During Wind and Rain”, in chapter 34, shows: “*And the rotten rose is ript from the wall*” (226). Sarah seems to be this rotten rose which is cut off completely of him; his lacerating wound will go on bleeding for ever. But we are always reminded that, is Sarah really a rotten figure to have done that to him? The next Hardy epigraph from his poem “Her Immortality” seems to answer this question indirectly in chapter 35. Here the speaker of the poem and Charles are saying that Sarah is not really rotten: “*In you resides my single power / Of sweet continuance here*” (231). Because of her he still exists and will understand the full meaning of his life with or without her. She teaches him the final lesson of how to endure life. The same realisation happens when in chapter 60 the last of Hardy’s epigraphs from his poem “Timing her”, reveals Charles’s full knowledge of his daughter Lalage: “*Lalage’s come; aye / Come is she now, O!*” (375) This reveals that Fowles may have borrowed the name of Sarah’s daughter from Hardy as this whole chapter concludes. Lalage is taken “from Greek *lalageo*, to babble like a brook” (392); it means that Charles has ultimately learnt his lesson about their babbling, hissing and murmuring life.

All this explains how Charles and Sarah turn from Victorianism into existentialism, how both lose their reassuring beliefs in a well- ordered, unitary cosmos, as for them the world fragments and appears unattainable by unmediated perception. Existentialism for them is embodied in the shattering of the Victorian world-view and of the bourgeois individual unified subject. This is the meaning of Charles loss of faith in a unitary cosmos perfectly accessible to the subject through the senses and his ensuing agonizing feeling of alienation and isolation, as he undergoes a Darwinian metamorphosis from the last Victorian into the first existentialist.⁽¹⁵⁾ Reaching “whole sight” for Charles, at least, only amounts to accepting the modernist “inward turn,” the alienating and isolating realization that chronological time, the reassuring extension of the present from the past to the future, is a human construction, that time is “now,” and that the only knowable reality is the reality of selfperception. Sarah also

knows that she is born to suffer, born to be isolated, to be an outcast: “What has kept me alive,” she openly says to Charles, “is my shame, my knowing that I am truly not like other women. I am nothing, I am hardly human any more” (153). This is of course an existentialist discourse although Sarah does not know that she is an existentialist subject; she cannot unravel the import of such language. She knows that she is miserable and isolated, but she lacks the understanding by which to assess what her misery and isolation mean. In one sense this lack is simply part of her nature. She is unique in part because she cannot think things out, cannot analyse the sources and meanings of her own case. Her intelligence, the narrator tells us earlier, belongs to a “rare kind,” and consists of an “instinctual profundity of insight”. Her intelligence is “not in the least an analytical or problemsolving”. She possesses an “uncanny” ability to classify and make “poetic judgments” about people but “without being able to say how” she does so. She is simply able “to understand [others], in the fullest sense of that word” (50). Evidently, the fullest sense of the word does not include the ability to consider rationally; her perceptions are simply natural, just as she is naturally isolated and alienated.

Sarah can describe her pain and anguish and loneliness well enough, but yet she cannot see that just these qualities themselves constitute a specifiable historical condition. Indeed through these qualities she has attained selfhood, freedom, and existentialism. This is how she gives herself this free entity and tries to teach Charles the same lesson of freedom. Her spontaneous behaviour, which echoes the Darwinian natural evolution, leads eventually to her and Charles freedom. She acts what she feels and what she knows and through this she creates herself authentically and existentially by making very conscious choices of action. Ironically, through this open behaviour Sarah is described by one critic as the “hopeful monster”, a monster who “presumably shares some traits with the already existing set of qualities by which kinds of people are known. In other words, it will be recognizable generally as a human being, but beyond this it will be all wrong.”⁽¹⁶⁾ This means that Sarah’s “monstrosity” defies categorization and this is what Charles finally realises about her. Ultimately, these fragmented fictional characters eventually achieve their self - reunification through existentialism and manage to bridge the gap with the external world when they become their own subjects/authors, when they conquer their fear of

hazard and of the impossibility of human knowledge, and learn the value of true love and human existence⁽¹⁷⁾

There are other less important poetry epigraphs in the novel which include William Barnes, *Poems in the Dorset Dialect* (1869), in chapter 11, which again comments on the Victorian concept of duty as embodied in the relationship between Charles and Ernestina. It also criticizes the social and ideological differences among classes as exemplified in the lower-class attitude to language and also the class differences between Charles and Ernestina. Another epigraph is Mrs. Norton's *The Lady of La Garaye* (1863), in chapter 4 and within 16. Here the poetess speaks about the value of the working-class who are blessed by work for their "life was not purposeless" (21). This epigraph in chapter 4 and the long intertext in chapter 16 support the positive feministic picture of women as embodied in the character of Sarah and exemplified by Mrs. Norton's poem. Fowles cites what *The Edinburgh Review* had said about it when it came first in 1863: "The poem is a pure, tender, touching tale of pain, sorrow, love, duty, piety and death"; hence it was loved by most Victorian women for it marked "the beginning of feminine emancipation in England" (100-1). A similar loved poem which is quoted as an epigraph in chapter 2 is *West-country Folksong*: "As Sylvie was Walking" which reflects the wind blowing hard at the Cobb when Charles sees the woman in black standing at the far end of it as if, like in the poem, spreading "sail of silver and III steer towards the sun, /... And my false love will weep for me after Im gone" (10). When Ernestina tells Charles about that woman, he gets intrigued by her story and curious to meet her, although she has proven the song that her love is and would be false. The last romantic but sad folksong is a *Somerset Folksong*, "By the Banks of Green Willow", in chapter 52, which reveals Ernestina's case after being jilted by Charles. She echoes "Oh, make my love a coffin / Of the gold that shines yellow, / And she shall be buried / By the banks of green willow" (335).

Indeed, Mrs. Norton's poem which Ernestina reads is about a sterile, lofty form of love devoid of real passion-and it promptly puts Charles to sleep. According to Fowles, it was believed that respectable women merely tolerated mens carnal desires, but did not share them. Ernestina must not think about such things, even though they are natural; Nature is to be controlled. She is shown mostly within the confines of her aunt's house or social settings. In contrast, Sarah is first seen

at the Cobb in the wind, exposed symbolically to the world. Later, when Charles discovers her “on the wild cliff meadow”, he “recalled very vividly how she had lain that day” (103). Charles sees her in a way in which he will never see Ernestina; she is sleeping in the barn without cover in a natural position which is, not surprisingly, sexually suggestive. If then the close-minded, tightly-clothed Ernestina represents the Victorian marriage-and-family ideal, Sarah seems to represent the unspoken female ideal, at least for men like Charles—a natural woman, a woman of intelligence, of spirit and independence, who is not afraid to shun the ideal in favour of the real, to prefer passion to pretentiousness. Indeed, her interactions with Charles seem very real although she is outside the norm, although she is ridden with duality of perceptions and desires, with ambiguity, enigma and mysteries.

The French Lieutenant's Woman, moreover, contains key philosophical, historical and scientific epigraphs from the twentieth century. The most important of these are taken from E. Royston Pike's important book *Human Documents of the Victorian Golden Age* (1967) quoted in chapters 2, 4, a book written at the same time of the novel. This book is a commentary on the role of Victorian women and vividly comments on the population of women being higher than that of men. Pike implies that because of these statistics the set role of Victorian women is that of a wife and mother. Yet because there are more women than men, not all women can fulfil their role as wives and mothers; therefore, the quote becomes ironic in the context of *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. Although Sarah's epithet appears to attach her to a man, this man is in fact not present so far in the novel and she is free of the conventional role society attempts to impose on her. Similarly, Pike's next epigraph in chapter 4 compares the social conditions of British upper and middle classes with those of the lower classes; it gives here a portrait of Mrs. Poulteney and her housekeeper/ spy, Mrs. Fairley. Both women profess to be moralistic and upright, but in reality they are hypocrites in the way they look at the lower classes, who live, in Pike's own words, in “cesspools”.

The next most important 20th-century epigraphs are taken from G. M. Young's most famous and long essay on Victorian times in England, *Portrait of an Age* (1936), quoted in chapter 3, and *Victorian Essays* (1934) in chapter 24. *Portrait of an Age* is an expanded version of the 89- page conclusion to *Early Victorian*

England, a two-volume collection which Young had edited in 1934. In print continuously since its first appearance in 1936, this study of the Victorian era is regarded as the greatest history of that time ever written. Young's remarkable study has outstanding clarity and penetrating scholarship which Fowles has admitted to have used to a great effect in his novel. For Young, as it is for Fowles and maybe for Charles, "a wise man would choose the eighteen fifties to be young in" (15). The next Young quote is from his *Victorian Essays*, in chapter 24, and it reflects Charles's relationship to his uncle and the general view towards ones relatives.

Furthermore, William Manchester's *The Death of President Kennedy* (1967), quoted in chapter 20, is another 20th-century epigraph which crystallizes the "horror" that the speaker of this passage is talking about, i.e., the horror of discovering the Presidents killers. It embodies the same horror that Sarah wants people to feel about her story with the French man. Finally, the last epigraph which is in the final chapter of the novel is from Martin Gardiner, *The Ambidextrous Universe* (1967) and it aptly talks about evolution and survival. It reflects Charles's final evolution, change and acceptance of things concerning losing Sarah, and his final knowledge that it is quite normal to endure life without her, and maybe will have a better future.

Thus, through these epigraphs, or the discourse of epigraphy, Fowles has dramatically "opened up" the novel to the present, to go back again to Linda Hutcheon, "to re-present the past in fiction and in history is, in both cases, to open it up to the present."⁽¹⁸⁾ In the novel Fowles not only "opens up" history to the present, but blurs the boundaries between past and present. Hutcheon has already said that the linking of the fictitious to the historical is a typical characteristic of the postmodernist novel, or what she calls "historiographic metafiction." The combination of history and fiction in one genre means that both are considered as narrative discourses, human constructs and both have a common denominator in that they are representations of a "real" world. Thus, *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, opens itself up to history, and indeed to what Edward Said calls the "world. The Victorian world of these epigraphs is both fictional and yet historical, and also this world is available to us only through discourse. The novel thus becomes worldly in the sense that it actually reacts to the circumstances outside the text; it incorporates the intertextual past

as part of its constitutive structure. Indeed this world is not an ordinary one; it is the world of texts, and the world of discourses within which these texts are situated. The novel's narrative, or its discourse of epigraphy, is representational but not referential, and its events do not refer to a quotidian reality. Instead, the novel is representational because it attempts to represent and reconstruct what might have been reality for the Victorians. With these epigraphs, Fowles thus situates his novel within both worlds, or as Foucault argues, "within the archive," and that archive is both artistic and historical.⁽²⁰⁾ For Foucault, the archive is the textualized record of history, and history itself is the narrativization of the past, a narrativization aptly executed through the epigraphs.

And it is through these epigraphs that Fowles has challenged the traditional use of history in fiction, challenged the conventional narratives, the linearity of history, and the conceptual chain of history. In that sense, Fowles heralds the poststructuralists in their critique of such notion of history, particularly Derrida who linked history with the idea of 'trace': "it is difficult to see how there could be history without it;" history is made up of "*repetition and the trace.*"⁽²¹⁾ For Derrida, the narrativization of the real past always means imposing a meaning on the past and this happens through supplying endings, or origins to these narratives. *The French Lieutenant's Woman* conforms to Derrida's notion of the impossibility of locating the origin or ontological conclusion of past events and challenges the imposition of a monologic meaning by actually postulating multiple endings. It, however, emphasizes that meanings become possible only within certain historical contexts. The contexts are linked to and explained through the novel's illusion of referentiality enhanced by the ingenious employment of the epigraphs.

The French Lieutenant's Woman's use of historical detail or its historical faithfulness is really illusory. The history of the Victorians in the novel is entirely imaginary, and this radically undermines any traditional notion of verisimilitude. The novel actually "plays upon the truth and lies of the historical record."⁽²²⁾ Certain historical facts are deliberately fictionalized, mystified, and changed in order to foreground the possible failures of recorded history and the related errors that the record may contain. This is illustrated, as mentioned above, in the documentation of Victorian sexuality in the novel, and the

exaggerated, even falsified statistics. It is also seen in the fictionalized documents about the trial of Lieutenant Emile de La Ronciere and the woman with whom he was involved. The narrator admits the fictionality of the trial through his narrative in chapter 28: he narrates from another text obtained from Dr. Grogan, who in his turn took it from another text by a German doctor, who himself wrote it in his own exaggerated manner in support of a defendant. There are numerous documents like these in the novel where a text is taken from another text, neither of which is totally authentic. The use of epigraphs, therefore, allows the novel to actually reconstruct these discourses as narratives and incorporate them into its own structure. Following Said, we may say that the novel is a textualization of other texts, and the writing of each text “is an interpretation of other writing,” a reconstitution of other texts.⁽²³⁾ In this novel, as in many of Fowles other novels, intertextuality, epigraphy, is the concrete means through which the past is linked and also reconstructed through the mediating narratives of the present. This process of “representation” is not, however, a means through which the past is explicitly evaluated. Indeed, intertextuality, the use of epigraphs, foregrounds the confrontation between the two milieus, often leading to an increase in the reader’s knowledge of both worlds. The novel refuses to give answers or to determine which position the reader should take towards either the modern narrator or towards the Victorians.

In conclusion, epigraphy or intertextuality, as Roland Barthes argues, foregrounds the role of the reader, the interrelation between the reader and the text that displaces the authors monopoly of meanings. The origins of a text “are anonymous, untraceable, and yet *already read*. they are quotations without inverted commas,”⁽²⁴⁾ a description which echoes the epigraphs that are indeed incorporated “without inverted commas.” For Barthes and for Fowles meanings are located within these untraceable origins, within the history of discourses, but are not attributable to the author in any ontological sense. The epigraphs thus promote the notion of nonoriginality in fiction, in historiographic metafiction, where these texts are “already read” and written in the past.

Intertextuality, or the discourse of epigraphy, therefore, challenges both the origins of narrative and its objectives; meanings always reside within other discourses, within other histories. The discourse of epigraphy is finally a liberating discourse, a means of releasing narrativity from authorial

determination where meaning becomes plural because the entire novel is caught up in a discursive system of historical references where each reference constitutes a possible meaning in relation to the novel's multifacetedness. The novel's grandeur is derived then from its plurality and this plurality is derived from the plurality of its texts, and each of these texts, to employ Said's term again, is also "poly textual."⁽²⁵⁾

The question that the novel leaves us with is therefore "do we make history or does history make us?"⁽²⁶⁾ For Fowles this thesis is dialectical. We make history in the sense that we employ its discourses in order to understand its culture; after all, history is made of and by human beings. But when history makes us it means that we become its subjects, be dominated by its ideologies because we are always already determined by society and its state apparatuses, to employ Louis Althusser's terminology.⁽²⁷⁾ *The French Lieutenant's Woman* ultimately deploys historical narratives, the epigraphs, that make sense of the past, but simultaneously it subverts these traditional narratives; it subverts the traditional concepts of subjectivity, and as Foucault observes, shatters "the unity of man's being through which it was thought that he could extend his sovereignty to the events of his past."⁽²⁸⁾

Notes

1. See Gerard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, 2nd ed, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983); also his *Narrative Discourse Revisited*, 2nd ed. trans. Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990); also his *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation: Literature, Culture, Theory*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
2. Antony Easthope, *Poetry as Discourse* (London and New York: Methuen, 1983), p. 8.
3. Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* (New York and London: Routledge, 1988), p. 5. See also Geoff Bennington and Robert Young, eds., *Post-structuralism and the Question of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Keith Jenkins, ed., *The Postmodern History Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997).
4. Linda Hutcheon, *Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox* (New York and London: Methuen, 1980), p. xii.
5. John Fowles, *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1969; rpt., London: Triad/Granada, 1977), p. 85. Further references to this edition will be quoted in the body of the essay.
6. For more details on this topic see my book, Mahmoud Salami, *John Fowles's Fiction and the Poetics of Postmodernism* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1992), pp. 105-134.
7. All the epigraphs I quote here will be italicized to differentiate them from the novel's quotes.
8. M. Keith Booker, "What We Have Instead of God: Sexuality, Textuality and Infinity in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*," *ovel*, 24 (1991), p. 181.

9. David Landrum, "Rewriting Marx: Emancipation and Restoration in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*," *Twentieth Century Literature*, 42.1 (1996), pp. 103-114.
10. *Ibid.* p. 103.
11. George Levine, *Darwin and the Novelists: Patterns of Science in Victorian Fiction* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 3. For a brief analysis of this idea in Fowles see, Tony E. Jackson, "Charles and the Hopeful Monster: Postmodern Evolutionary Theory in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* - Protagonist in Book by Author John Fowles," *Twentieth Century Literature*, Summer, 1997, an on-line reference: *Find Articles at BNET*.
12. Katherine Tarbox, *The Art of John Fowles* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1988), p. 71.
13. For a good account of this and similar questions see Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982); also his "We Other Victorians," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed., Paul Rabinow (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986), pp. 292-300, 301-329.
14. See Anthony Kenny, *Arthur Hugh Clough, a Poets Life* (London & New York: Continuum, 2005), pp. 18-35.
15. See Salami, pp. 124-25, and Jackson, pp. 9-13.
16. Jackson.
17. See Susana Onega, "Self, world, and art in the fiction of John Fowles," *Twentieth Century Literature*, Spring, 1996, an on-line reference: *Find Articles at BNET*.
18. Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction*, p. 110.
19. Edward Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (1983; rpt., London: Faber and Faber, 1984), p. 35. See also his argument in *Beginnings: Intention and Method* (1975; rpt., New York: Columbia University Press,

- 1985), where he locates texts within circumstance, time, place and society, that is, within the writer's world (pp. 191- 275). See also how Leonard Davies, in his book *Resisting Novels: Ideology and Fiction* (London and New York: Methuen, 1987), argues that the novel "is about the world and yet is fictional" (p. 225).
20. Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, trans. Donald Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Oxford: Blackwell, 1977), p. 92. See also his *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. Sheridan Smith (London: Tavistock, 1972), pp. 126-31.
 21. Jacques Derrida, *Positions*, trans. Alan Bass (London: The Athlone Press, 1981), p. 57.
 22. Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction*, p. 114.
 23. - Said, *Beginnings*, p. 218.
 24. - Roland Barthes, *Image - Music -Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana, 1977), p. 160.
 25. - Said, *Beginnings*, p. 205.
 26. - Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction*, p.134.
 27. - See Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: New Left Books, 1977), pp. 127-186.
 28. - Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, p. 153.

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ملخص

تعالج هذه الرسالة كيف نجح الروائي الإنجليزي المعاصر جون فاو=لز في استخدام خطاب الإيغرافيا أو الإسترفاد في روايته امرأة الملازم الفرنسي (1969).

التي تعد من أكثر رواياته إشكالية بطروحاتها التاريخية و الرادبكالية وأسلوبها ما بعد البنيوي والمسائل الفنية لما بعد الحداثة المعقدة التي جسدها والتي أظهرت مكانتها المرموقة في سياق النقد الحديث المعاصر . لقد تعمد فاولز استخدام القصص التاريخية والواقعية أو أسلوب التناص الجسد بالإيغرافيا، وذلك من أجل تفويض تلك القصص وتهديمها بوساطة الأساليب والتقاليد ذاتها التي تسعى لانتهاكها أصلاً. لقد استخدم الكاتب تقنية الاقتباس من المصادر المختلفة من أدب القرن التاسع عشر لإنجلترا وتاريخها وفلسفتها وعلومها وحتى الصحافة فيها، وذلك من أجل شن هجوم عنيف على المجتمع الإنجليزي الفيكتوري والحديث أيضاً من خلال التاريخ والخيال الأدبي معاً. فمن الناحية الأدبية تجسد تقنية الإيغرافيا خطاب التناص ما بعد البنيوي الذي يعكس العلاقات النصية لتعدد الأصوات السردية، وذلك باستعمال راو حديث، ذي أصوات مختلفة، غالباً مادأب على تغيير مواقعه السردية من صوت خفي إلى آخر جلي في الرواية كلها. ومن الناحية التاريخية تم استخدام الإيغرافيا لعكس القلق الشديد تجاه التاريخ والإيديولوجيا في كل من الماضي والحاضر، وتكشف أيضاً كيف استطاع الكاتب إعادة بناء البيئة الثقافية للعصر الفيكتوري بكل حيويته وتعقيداته، وذلك بتمثيل سمات عالمه الأدبي والإيديولوجي والسياسي والاقتصادي والعلمي والديني والتاريخي والفلسفي. تظهر هذه الدراسة كيف أدت الإيغرافيا وظيفتها المحيطة العام التي استطاعت من خلاله شخوص الرواية بناء ذاتياتها وإطلاق حرياتها من الإيديولوجيا المهيمنة في الرواية، وتظهر أيضاً وكأن الرواية تاريخ ، بمعنى أنها أعادت تركيب الماضي كأني نص تاريخي عادي. وحقيقة الأمر أن السرد الروائي تم تأريخه من خلال إحياء العصر الفيكتوري بكل إشكالياته وما يمثله من أفكار وقضايا اجتماعية حية.

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خطاب الإبيغرافيا في رواية جون فاولز

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